



## **Vet on the Loose**

*Gillian Hick*

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## **Vet on the Loose** Gillian Hick

The Hair-Raising Adventures of an Irish Vet: Whether castrating horses in Dublin's inner city or dehorning cattle in the wilds of Wicklow, rescuing mangled cats from mongrels or tending to stoned guard dogs, vet Gillian Hick's sense of humour never deserts her in this engaging account of the challenging situations she encounters in the course of her work as a newly qualified veterinary surgeon. Not only does she have to deal with the animals and their ailments, but she also has to contend with the perils of matchmaking mothers and macho farmers -- not to mention the guys who want to know 'where is the real vet?'

## **Vet on the Loose Details**

Date : Published March 1st 2012 by The O'Brien Press (first published October 14th 2005)

ISBN :

Author : Gillian Hick

Format : Kindle Edition 258 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Animals, Biography

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## **From Reader Review Vet on the Loose for online ebook**

### **Jenni says**

If you love animals and humor then this is just the book for you! My daughter is in the industry so I could relate very well to the authors tales. A lovely read!

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### **MB (What she read) says**

3.5 stars. I enjoyed that.

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### **Jacquie Jerrard says**

#### **Brilliant book**

This was an honest and very true account of the laughter, pitfalls and heartache of a vet, dealing with small and large animals alike. At times I was moved to tears, but the fact that vets face these things every day, makes them in my eyes wonderful would appeal to anyone who loves animals.

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### **Vicki McNally says**

#### **Enjoyable**

I thoroughly enjoy animal stories and especially about Vets during earlier times. I found this book well written, humorous and of course sad parts also. Recommended reading for all animal lovers and aspiring vets.

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### **LeeAnn says**

#### **Interesting and Entertaining**

Having enjoyed James Herriot's books, I am always on the lookout for a well-told story of veterinary medicine in practice. This one adds the perspective of a female in not only a male dominated profession but up against predominantly male clients. Dr. Hick's well-written anecdotes and much needed sense of humor make this a recommended read.

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### **Nicola Hession-Kent says**

A very funny take on becoming a newly qualified female vet in Ireland. As an animal lover with a full Irish family I took to this book very well. There are many a tale told where you just want to hide when reading it (I wouldn't have wanted to be in her shoes) and many lovely tales too. A very good and light-hearted read. Highly recommended.

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### **Derek Mcknight says**

A rambling collection of anecdotes from a lady country vet in Ireland. From her first days just starting out nervously to the final story where she has started to mentor a new vet herself. She overcomes the prejudice of some of the farmers, deals with the intricacies of Irish families and their horses in big cities and tells some amusing tales. A pleasant read.

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### **Nancy McLaughlin says**

#### **Entertaining**

Enjoyable & highly entertaining. Clearly portrays veterinary practice, animals & their owners with all their quirks. Obviously not all outcomes are positive but that is to be expected.

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### **Dor says**

After the disappointment of Anna Birch's *Call The Vet*, my appetite was whetted for a good "My First Year As An ..." book. I had a poke around Amazon's "People Who Bought ..." suggesters and found this one, *Vet on the Loose* by Wicklow vet Gillian Hick. I hadn't previously heard of her, which is either surprising given the size of the place, or perfectly understandable given that I don't actually watch Irish TV, or read Irish newspapers, or interact with anything Irish if I can possibly help it.

I was sold by the end of the prologue. Any story about castrating a horse which includes a young man showing enthusiasm for the testicles with the words "If I put dat in me sister's bed tonight it'll scare de shite ota her!" is going to be for me.

*Vet On The Loose* treads the expected path of a newly qualified Irish vet, more specifically that of a female vet at a time when women were still rare in the profession: the beginning of the 21st century. There are stories of the everyday sexism she faced (farmers asking when the real vet was going to arrive etc) which, having lived in Ireland for a good while, I buy totally. There are stories of Dublin council estates, posh Equine hospitals and bachelor hill farmers, and unlike *Call the Vet*, the stories centre on the cases. To a James Herriot devotee such as myself a couple of them tread familiar ground - there's no wine bottle \*uncrosses legs\* but we have mention of the sugar trick. However, it's done with enough of its own identity to feel fresh and one of them has the best punchline in the whole book.

The writing, in particular, is excellent and Hick's ear for dialogue spot on. She manages with the smallest of details to show us her clients - and herself; I can \*hear\* the accents. Comic writing is tremendously difficult to do well and Hick is funny, educational and engaging. As it was mentioned in a few of the reviews I read, I'll confirm there is some spoken profanity but it's never the crux on which a joke hinges, merely a nod to an

accurate representation of character (although there is not nearly enough to actually \*be\* accurate).

As I'm me, I'll complain that the funniest stories were all in the first half which led to an uneven experience as a whole, but to be honest there isn't a duff chapter in the thing.

Vet On The Loose deserves to have a wider audience that it does - it's published by The O'Brien Press who are small and Irish so you're unlikely to find this in your local bookshop, but - as I mentioned - it's currently £1.19 on Kindle and more than worth it. Hick has a second book out, Vet Among the Pigeons, (which I have already borrowed from the library), and I really, really hope she finds the time to write a third.

4.5 stars.

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### **Joy G. Newton says**

#### **Exhilarating read**

Her stories ring so true and yet seem to have a fun sense of humor to them. Obviously very skilled at what she does but her stories keep you reading for more. Definitely another James Herriot.

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### **Virginia says**

#### **I Quit Early and Do Not recommend**

Perhaps to an Irish reader who understands the language and the references it might be slightly more enjoyable. But with the antiquated writing style and continually being faced with other cultural references since I am an American. I really did not enjoy this book. I almost never stop a book or early but I had to this one

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### **D.D. Chant says**

I wanted to like this book.

I love James Herriot and was delighted by the prospect of finding his female counterpart. Unfortunately I just couldn't warm to Gillian Hick, it seemed to me that she had a perpetual axe to grind. Farmers were misogynistic idiots, pet owners were either bimbos who shouldn't have been let anywhere near an animal or just plain unpleasant.

While I understand that the 'lady vet' no doubt met a lot of rotten clients who should never have been able to look after another living thing, it seems strange to me that those were the cases she chose to write about.

Surely there must have been some more upbeat stories she could have related??? It just seemed a little unbalanced; too much of the bad stuff that had happened and not enough of the good.

The whole 'when's the real vet coming?' gag was funny... for the first few stories, but it got old pretty quick. After a while it started to sound less like humour and a lot more like bitterness. Which again, I can understand, but it didn't make for fun reading.

The thing is that when you read James Herriot, however obnoxious the owner/farmer is being to him, James

always paints himself in a ridiculous light. He's always inadvertently made a fool of himself in some way and THAT was why it's so funny. You feel for him because you know that he knows what he's talking about, it's just that something he's done is making him look silly. Like the story where he's trying to deliver a calf and the cow is in difficulties. Everything's going wrong, the farmers are losing patience: yet what is James worrying about??? The fact that he added and over generous helping of his landladies bath salts to his bath water, and now with all his exertion, he's giving off a strongly feminine scent!!!

You really feel for James Herriot, but you can't help but laugh at him just the same.

I never felt that with Gillian Hick. I didn't feel sorry for her: her stories were a thin layer of humour, that by the end of the book, had peeled away to show an underlying thread of resentment. Like I said, it's understandable, just not very entertaining. I kind of came away with the idea that she didn't really like her job at all.

Obviously this is all just my personal opinion and, like all opinions, it might be completely different to yours. So by all means, give the book a try. ;-D

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### **Clare O'Beara says**

Gillian was determined to be a vet and luckily for her she had parents well enough off to allow her to sit her Leaving Cert exam three years running until she got enough points for the university course. Her sister became a doctor and they lived in comfortable Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

Ireland was not used to the concept of female vets and she experienced exactly the same as I did in my first several years as an independent tree surgeon - the client would look around and ask, "Where is the vet?" or in my case "Where are the men?"

Gillian got quite down at first because she saw too many pets that she could not save and hated putting them to sleep. Well, that's why I didn't train as a vet. She started working with larger animals including a boy's pony in the inner city and sheep on a Kiltiernan farm. Life was quite amusing at times but of course she was being dragged out at all hours and in mucky conditions.

As a vet's journal this is not that unusual, but it is worth reading to see how one of the first female vets here qualified and coped. There is a sequel called Vet Among the Pigeons.

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### **April says**

#### **Hey, Lady!**

This ain't your typical lady. She can keep up with the farmers, young or old. She can swear, swig some brew and suture a sow...all in one day! I loved reading about all of Gillian's adventures and getting a taste of rural Ireland to boot.

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### **Nancy Spalding says**

#### **Felt I was along for th ride**

These Vet books are my cup of tea. Off into the weather what ever it may be and a glimpse of Vet life in the

raw. And the farmers unique , delightful personalities.

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