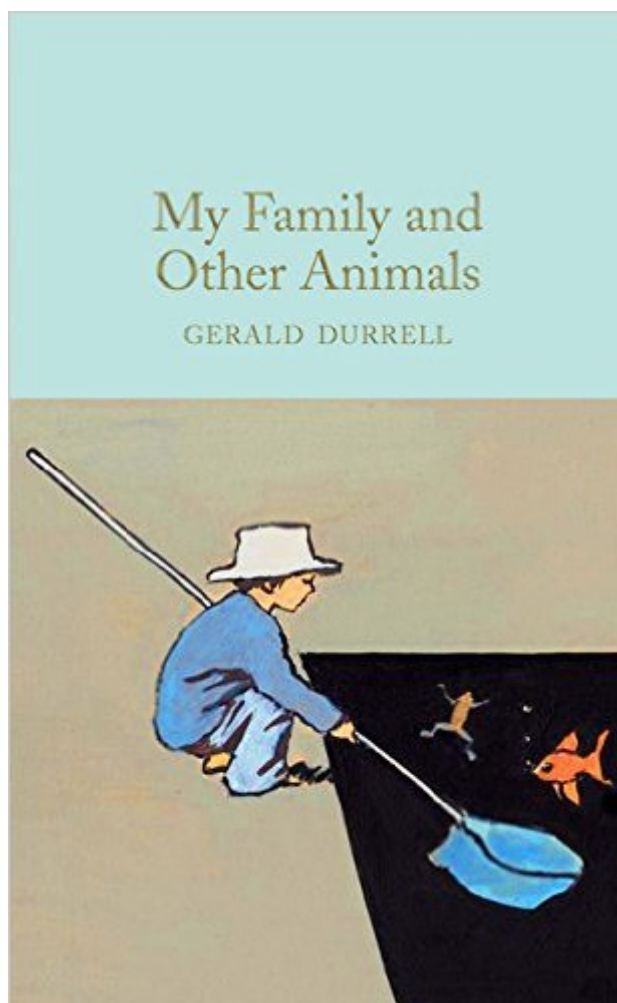


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My Family And Other Animals (Macmillan Collector's Library)



Synopsis

This book is an autobiographical account of five years in the childhood of naturalist Gerald Durrell when he lived with his family on the island of Corfu. Apart from Gerald (the youngest) and Larry (Lawrence Durrell, the novelist), the family comprised their widowed mother, the gun-mad Leslie, and diet-obsessed sister Margo together with Roger the dog. The procession of animals includes toads, tortoises, bats and butterflies, scorpions and geckos, ladybirds, glow-worms, octopuses and rose-beetles, Ulysses, the Scops owl, Quasimodo the pigeon, the puppies Widdle and Puke, and of course the magpies. The family is fiercely protected by their taxi-driver friend Spiro, and Gerald is mentored by the polymath Dr Theodore Stephanides who provides his education in natural history. With an Introduction by Peter Olney. Designed to appeal to the booklover, the Macmillan Collector's Library is a series of beautifully bound gift editions of much loved classic titles. Bound in real cloth, printed on high quality paper, and featuring ribbon markers and gilt edges, Macmillan Collector's Library are books to love and treasure.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a young boy I was forced, with some considerable reluctance, to read 'My Family and Other Animals' by one of teachers at my school in England, 'in order to improve my vocabulary'. All is forgiven, Mr Cox, for within my rather battered copy lurked, without doubt, the most hilarious account of familial eccentricity, and light-hearted feuding that I have ever come across. The book, as

Mr Durrell explains in introduction, was intended to describe the glorious flora and fauna of Corfu, a greek island where he spent some time as a child. In this goal, he has succeeded admirably, as the whole atmosphere of the island is exquisitely recreated, to an extent that even on a rainy afternoon in Sidcup, it is not difficult to be transported to a sunny morning in the Aegean watching a young Gerry discovering a nest of a trapdoor spider, or perhaps discovering something of the mating rituals of the greek tortoise. It is in the descriptions of the family, however, where this book really comes to life. As Mr Durrell describes in the introduction, the family, as in life, once they had begun to appear, muscled their way into the rest of pages as well. From tales of the rotund, pretentious Larry (Lawrence Durrell, of the Alexandria Quartet fame), the gun-mad Leslie and the 'muslin and gauze' swathed sister, Margot, to the descriptions the long-suffering mother, the family had me laughing out loud at the most inopportune moments. I cannot recommend this book highly enough. I read it regularly, and am still crying with laughter all the way through. Not only a splendid book for the evocative descriptions of the natural history, this is the most witty book I have ever read.

This book is absolutely, brilliantly funny. The wit and unique characterizations are woven with great descriptions of the animals and plants of Corfu. That Durrell can hold the attention of readers who have no interest in biology simply demonstrates what a fine work this is. Gerald's depiction of a larger-than-life expatriate family on a larger-than-life Greek island is a tremendous celebration of life. The variety of different Greek characters parading through this book rivals the variety of Corfu's flora and fauna. Absolute great read! Reviewed by David Lundberg, author of Olympic Wandering: Time Travel Through Greece

I usually only have time to read at night. I keep a book by my bedside and if I awaken in the middle of the night, instead of worrying, I read. This isn't the best book to use in this fashion. I have, on several occasions, awakened and thought, "I'll just read a few pages" only to find myself engulfed in oxygenated laughter that has kept me up for the duration of the night. I don't know when I've laughed out loud so often at a book. The mother is the mother we've all always wanted...and she was no doubt the perfect mother for this child. Who else could take in stride the unleashing from a matchbox of a small cache of scorpions during dinner. I will reread this book again and again. Such light hearted appreciation of nature is a rare find. This would be a great gift for any child or adult who loves the outdoors. Very special and very rare.

I too read this book in my childhood as a compulsory exercise in English class. Years later when I

reread it out loud to my children, and was reduced over and over, frequently on the same page, to helpless, tearful laughter, I wondered how we managed to get through it in school. The book is an autobiographical rendering of the author's boyhood experience as his family of five travels from dreary, cold England to the sunny, whimsical reality of Corfu. The pristine island and colourful inhabitants embrace the family and all its idiosyncrasies. Gerry, the little boy, lives a blissful, completely free existence as he explores the flora and fauna of the island with the occasional French lesson thrown in as a silly gesture to seriousness. The day-to-day experiences of the whole family rush with sparkling hilarity through the pages, leaving the reader gasping for air from laughing too hard. This is a completely delicious book, the kind of book you want in your library forever. I have misplaced or lost several copies, and I've just ordered my latest. I think it is just about my favorite novel of all.

After reading Gerald Durrell at school (it was probably "Menagerie Manor"), I was put off reading his books for over 10 years. One of my friends recommended this as a wonderfully cute book about how a young boy perceives the world and his eccentric family and after hearing descriptions of Larry, the (then) aspiring novelist, acne-ridden Margo and gun-obsessed Leslie, how could I resist? It is a beautifully written book of short stories chronicling Durrell's magical childhood in Corfu, with a kaleidoscope of characters ranging from the human to the animal, all drawn with great affection. The stories are often hilarious and this is definitely one you will want to read again. And for those who are put off by too many descriptions of animals, the descriptions here aren't too long (and they are described charmingly, with Durrell attributing human characteristics which are very amusing) and most of the book focuses on his family. Sequels are "Birds, Beasts and Relatives" and "Garden of the Gods".

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