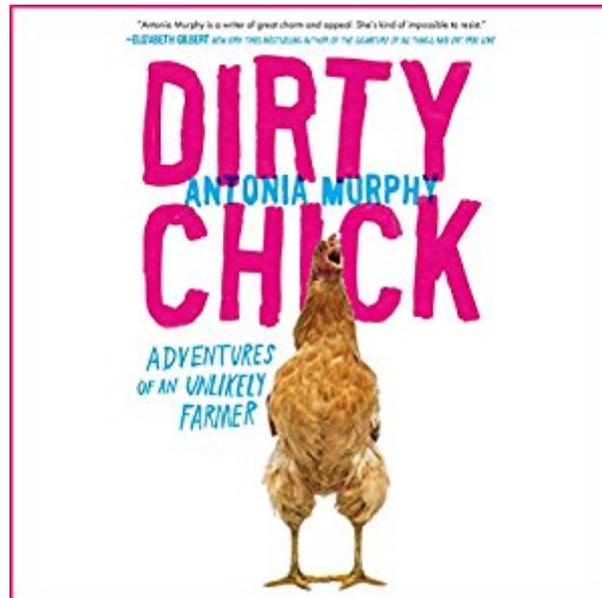


The book was found

Dirty Chick: Adventures Of An Unlikely Farmer



Synopsis

"One month into our stay, we'd managed to dispatch most of our charges. We executed the chickens. One of the cats disappeared, clearly disgusted with our urban ways. And Lucky [the cow] was escaping almost daily. It seemed we didn't have much of a talent for farming. And we still had eleven months to go." Antonia Murphy, you might say, is an unlikely farmer. Born and bred in San Francisco, she spent much of her life as a liberal urban cliché, and her interactions with the animal kingdom rarely extended past dinner. But then she became a mother. And when her eldest son was born with a rare, mysterious genetic condition, she and her husband, Peter, decided it was time to slow down and find a supportive community. So the Murphys moved to Purua, New Zealand - a rural area where most residents maintained private farms, complete with chickens, goats, and (this being New Zealand) sheep. The result was a comic disaster, and when one day their son had a medical crisis, it was also a little bit terrifying. *Dirty Chick* chronicles Antonia's first year of life as an artisan farmer. Having bought into the myth that farming is a peaceful, fulfilling endeavor that allows one to commune with nature and live the way humans were meant to live, Antonia soon realized that the reality is far dirtier and way more disgusting than she ever imagined. Among the things she learned the hard way: Cows are prone to a number of serious bowel ailments, goat mating involves an astounding amount of urine, and roosters are complete and unredeemable assholes. But for all its traumas, Antonia quickly embraced farm life, getting drunk on homemade wine (it doesn't cause hangovers!), making cheese (except for the cat hair, it's a tremendously satisfying hobby), and raising a baby lamb (which was addictively cute until it grew into a sheep).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Full review: Ok. So I've read many, many autobiographies in my time. I've read everything ranging from the serious (*Dreams of My Father*), to the outright bizarre (every autobiography for every reality TV star, ever). But I've never had a reading experience like *Dirty Chick*. Billed as the adventures of an unlikely farmer, Antonia Murphy unflinchingly and hilariously shares her first years in New Zealand, and trying to adapt her San Francisco ways to a farmer's life, goat poop, alpaca spitting and all. The book begins in San Francisco, where Murphy shares an infamous encounter with a duck, which should be more than enough to turn her off farm animals for life. However, life and political ideology intervene, leaving Murphy and her new husband to pick up and move to New Zealand for a life in Hobbit land. While Murphy is matter-of-fact about the realities of her situation, the reflections on her political ideology and the understanding that the previously bohemian San Francisco is now pricing her out will likely resonate with many readers. There's a certain sense of "Life is weird, but this is where I'm letting it take me" that will keep readers engaged, as Murphy and her husband delve into New Zealand life and begin to build their life. Over the next two hundred and forty something pages, Murphy and her family run the gauntlet of farming experiences, ranging from nomadic cows and debeaked chickens, to other adventures that I absolutely would be ruining, if I were to share them here. Though the adventures typically ranged from the bizarre to the overly bizarre, Murphy relates all of them with the warmth and bemused humor of someone who will always be game for trying new and different things.

Raised in San Francisco but never staying anywhere for long, journalist and author Antonia Murphy finally settled in New Zealand on a farm that supplies her with a veritable gold mine of all the latest dirt. In *DIRTY CHICK*, she digs in with both hands and comes out with nuggets of humor, proof of her gifts as a writer, a mom and a sort-of farmer. With a style that hits high on the laugh meter on every page, and a view of farm life that makes you almost wish you could join her just to test her hyperboles, Murphy's book begs comparison with *THE EGG AND I* by Betty MacDonald, another reluctant female farmer/author who garnered wide success with her bucolic yarns a generation ago. In the early 2000s, Murphy and her husband, Peter, became unnerved by the wartime zeal in our country. Added to this was the fact that for Peter, the ocean was a sanctuary. Hence a sailboat trip to New Zealand: after all, they would at least be able to speak the language, and Peter could always make a living in IT. Then came the children. Silas, the

firstborn, had special needs, and with an ironic frankness that many parents may appreciate, the author declares that, for her anyway, it's easier to think of Silas as a perfect little alien with different social norms. • Miranda, the younger child, was normal, meaning fully capable of making plenty of mischief. The family of four was destined, they believed, for country life: natural foods, fluffy animals, lovely sunsets, all the blessings of a dirt-based existence. Except, of course, that nothing is ever quite as imagined, and in the imagination of Murphy, nothing is safe from her well-aimed barbs of satirical humor.

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