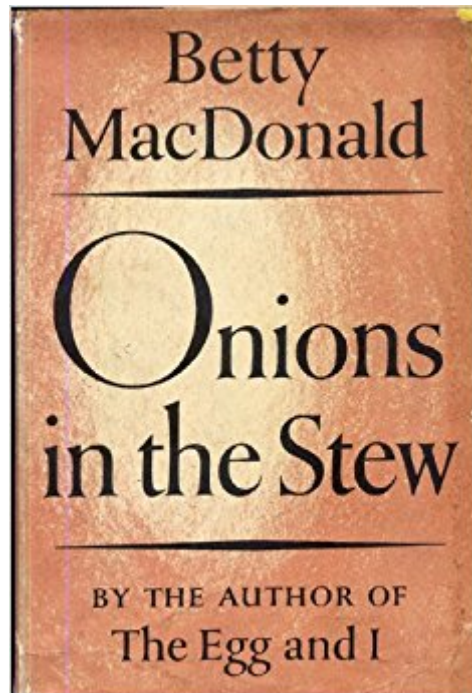




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Onions In The Stew



Synopsis

Reading Betty MacDonald's books has taught me much in the way of tolerance and friendship even as an adult in my late 20's . Instead of being annoyed with someone and just disliking them because they are different I try to sit back and view it as entreating is instead of annoying. If we were all the same it would be a boring world.

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: J. B. Lippincott Co. (1955)

Language: English

ASIN: B0000CJ3M0

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 5.8 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (53 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #906,175 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #100 inÂ Books > Humor &

Entertainment > Humor > Rural Life

Customer Reviews

Most readers remember Betty MacDonald for her most famous title, "The Egg and I", or her charming children's series, the Mrs. Piggle-wiggle books. I had never heard of her when I read "Onions In the Stew" 25 years ago, and now that's it's coming back into print, it deserves re-discovery. I defy anyone to get through the first chapter without laughing out loud. I'm loathe to describe Mac Donald as "in the Erma Bombeck mold"-as Betty is MUCH wittier-and also warmer. "Onions In the Stew" is thirty-something Betty's account of life during WW2 with one husband, two adolescent daughters, and many, many assorted pets, neighbors, unwanted guests,et al on an island in Washington's Puget Sound. No sentimentality, loads of wry observation, and some touching, quite beautiful descriptions of what was then wild island life. You'll finish the book wanting to visit Vashon Island, and feeling like Betty's the best friend you've never met.

Betty's greatest talent was for describing situations that are quite banal, even rather troublesome, in a totally hilarious fashion. The situations are all the funnier for the reader's realisation that, in other hands, they could have been described as a tale of woe - where, in Betty's hands, they are delightful. Financial crunches, months of futile searching for a residence, the adjustment of Betty and her children to a life with a new husband and stepfather (whose attitudes are quite different from

those of a carefree Bard), living on an island where there are too many visitors and far too little accessibility for daily work and school, a beautiful neighbour's having her eyes on one's husband - these could have been the stuff of whining or dreary "self-help" attitudes. Betty is far from sentimental, totally honest, yet approaches all from a highly positive attitude that nearly makes one envious. This book is also a fine reminder to today's concerned parents that having adolescent children was no joy ride, even 60 years ago. My only criticism of Betty's writing is that, in her descriptions, she did not know when to stop. For example, her description of Vashon Island is engaging for the first two paragraphs, but rather excessive when it runs to several pages. This is easily one of the funniest, and most honest, books I have ever read - and read I do, again and again, always finding it a refreshing treat.

Betty MacDonald's books are all funny, witty and wise. But *Onions in the Stew* is the favorite book of the Betty Fans worldwide. Why? She described family life on Vashon Island with husband Don and daughters Anne and Joan in an unique way. You can read it over and over again and you'll enjoy the everyday life of this wonderful family. There are several snakes in Betty's paradise, snowstorms, adolescence, a beautiful neighbor, who is very interested in Betty's husband and many, many guests and so much more but it's such a delight to read these stories and you can laugh out loud. No wonder that there is a Betty MacDonald Society and a Fan Club with so many fans world wide. Her books are classics - never dated at all.

"The Egg and I." As I said in my review of the earlier book, although I found parts of "Egg" charming, the chapter on Indians made my part-Cherokee blood boil, and that other parts seemed rather mean-spirited as well. There is none of the mean-spiritedness in "Onions", probably because, in spite of the various toils and tribulations of life on the island, Betty was basically happy there, as opposed to "Egg" where she was mostly miserable. I loved the part about the small woman who loved to curl up on soft, comfy places like sofas, armchairs, and other women's husbands' laps. I wondered, though, why Betty didn't just ask her to step out into the garden and then drop-kick her across the straight to Seattle? I'm sure she could have gotten some of the other women in their circle of friends to help. Many of the events she tells of show us that teenage girls have always been a handful, whatever they say. However, in spite of all the complaining and whining, the girls were willing to pitch in; how many girls their age nowadays would have something like stuffed pork chops waiting when their parents came home from work? While "Egg" left me wondering why anyone in their right mind would want to run a chicken farm in the middle of a howling wilderness, "Onions"

made me wonder if living on an island might not be fun.

I just happened to look this book up for the heck of it, as it was the first non-fiction book I remember reading years ago as a child. Imagine my surprise to see it was being re-issued! "Onions In The Stew" is just a delightful book about a great family living on Puget Sound during the war. I read it over and over and over until my copy just fell apart. I have often wondered over the years just what the island those people lived on looks like today, it sounded like a beach-y heaven to me. Today I suppose it's paradise paved over with million dollar condos, pricey strip malls, and Starbucks. I recommend this book, it is a warm and witty slice of life that is no more. (Also read the author's other books, they are all good!)

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