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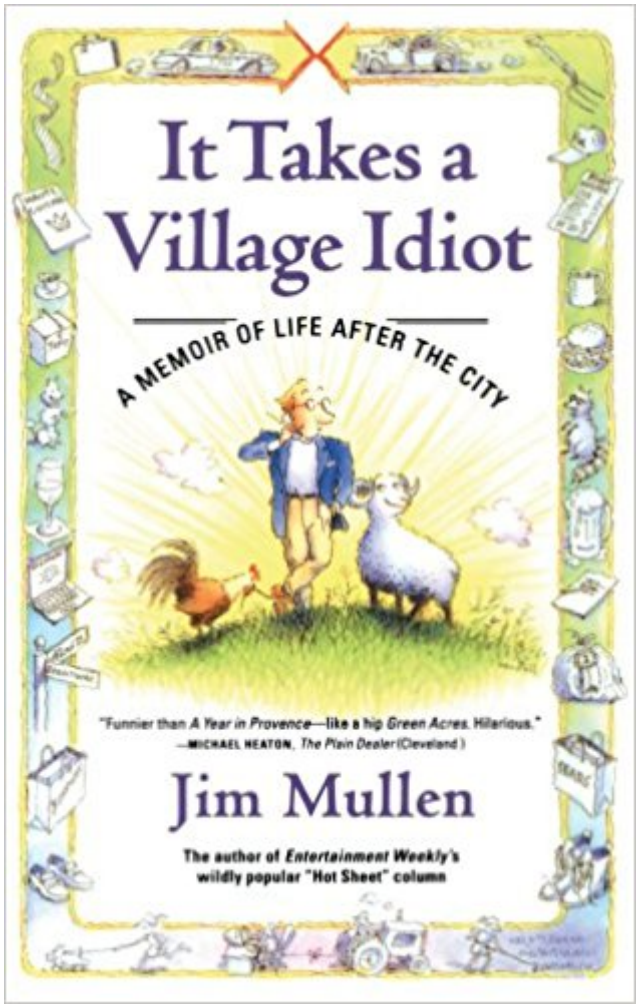
It Takes A Village Idiot: A Memoir Of Life After The City



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Synopsis

Finalist for the 2001 Thurber Prize for American Humor a Rocky Mountain News (Denver) Best Book of the Year Millions of people dream of abandoning the city routine for a simple country life. Jim Mullen was not one of them. He loved his Manhattan existence: parties, openings, movie screenings. He could walk to hundreds of restaurants, waste entire afternoons at the Film Forum, people-watch from his window. Then, one day, calamity. His wife quits smoking and buys a weekend house in the Catskill Mountains of upstate New York -- in a tiny town diametrically opposed to Manhattan in every way. Slowly, however, the man who once boasted, "Life is just a cab away," begins to warm to the place -- manure and compost and strangers who wave and all -- and to embrace the kind of life that once gave him the shakes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Dallas Morning News Whether you spend your summer sipping lemonade on a porch swing or gripping a cuppa Joe on the subway, take this book along....Lighthearted and poignant.Scott C. Yates Rocky Mountain News (Denver) A terrific blend of self-deprecating humor and trenchant observations about the funny side of life on both sides of the great urban-rural divide. Fans of Steve Martin or Dave Barry will love it.Jonathan Yardley The Washington Post Book World Mullen is even funnier here [than in his Entertainment Weekly column].

Jim Mullen writes the "Hot Sheet" column for Entertainment Weekly and has also written for The

New York Times, New York magazine, and The Village Voice.

After the brief period of time it took to read this tale, I'm not surprised it found its way into my hands. This is not only a story I "get," (couple flees city for a life in the country) it's full of a self-deprecating and sarcastic wit I welcome when reading memoirs.Jim Mullen, a humor columnist best known for his "Hot Sheet" in Entertainment Weekly, portrays Manhattan life as addiction. Addiction, for example, to non-stop action, Broadway plays, gallery openings, ethnic restaurants and The New York Times. The symptoms include immunity to noise and smells, and they lead to chain-smoking and excessive spending at The Sharper Image. He's hooked. It's his wife, Sue, who takes the lead and buys a farm three hours northwest of the city in the Catskills, and drags him along for what turn out to be rehabilitative weekends. As the weekends grow from two days to five and then finally full time, he gives up smoking, takes up bicycling and then learns about everything from growing giant pumpkins to the inner workings of a septic system. One realizes he has come full circle when he describes a dewy spider web as the prettiest thing he's ever seen and recognizes a "flatlander" in the garden store. While observing this newer version of the village idiot, he rolls his eyes and wonders if that's how he was when he first entered (the fictional town of) Walleye.The writing is original and funny, informal without being glib, irreverent without being vulgar. For anyone who enjoys well-written memoirs--particularly those of the city-mouse, country mouse variety--put this on your list. Also recommend: "Fifty Acres and a Poodle."Michele Cozzens, Author of A Line Between Friends and The Things I Wish I'd Said.

I really enjoyed this book. An easy read, Mr Mullen had me laughing out loud as he described some of his "house guests" from the city.It was also interesting to read the changes in his way of thinking as he becomes less "city" and more "country".The banter between him and his wife is quite amusing andhis wit is was really makes this book fun...I recommend this book.

Short, very funny read

Too funny and too true for anyone who has moved to a rural area!

It Takes a Village Idiot: A Memoir of Life after the City, is a humorous twist on live in Manhattan and the country... the Catskill area on NY state. Worth the read and certainly the chuckle.

In the beginning, it was slow moving.

The book is hyperbole but mighty funny to upstaters and transplants. Gave several as gifts. We live right where he wrote about.

This book is very funny and a quick read. The humor is based on Jim Mullen's experience moving from New York City to a rural area and his adjustment in doing so. He flounders along trying to fit in and not doing such a great job at it. He pokes fun easily at himself.Mullen's knack of writing great dialogue drew me closer to the story and made every character real. I really connected with the challenges he faced of bouncing back and forth between two opposite cultures. It is a lighthearted book and well written.My book collection includes the hardcover and the softcover versions of this book. I like the cover design of the softcover, which is shown here, over the hardcover.

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