



Stepdog

A Memoir

MIREYA NAVARRO

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Stepdog is the hilarious and heartwarming tale of a woman who has finally met the man of her dreams—and the dog of her nightmares.

Winner of the June 2015 Elle Readers Prize

Lots of dogs eat shoes, bite people, destroy furniture . . . but Eddie tried to destroy a marriage.

After more than three decades of happy single womanhood, Mia Navarro wasn't really looking to change her relationship status. The idea of being a step-anything to anyone was foreign to her, something she never thought about. . . . Until she fell in love with Jim and agreed to marry him. As it turns out, the marriage is pretty wonderful, the stepkids were, well, typical pre-teens, the weather in Los Angeles perfect. But life is not spotless. The spots belong to Jim's mutt, Eddie. Possessive and jealous, Eddie behaves like Jim's mistress—if a mistress could bark and compete for space on his beloved's lap. As time goes on, a full-on war ensues. Mia slams the door in Eddie's face, cordons off the house into dog- and wife-territories, and leaves the back door open . . . by, er, accident, of course. She even tries to leave Eddie behind in California when she and Jim abruptly relocate to New York. But in the end, it's clear that not even a wife can come between man and dog. As Eddie ages, Mia softens, and as with any new family struggling to blend, the two must make peace with each other. Ultimately, *Stepdog* is a triumphant story about finding love at an unexpected stage in life and the many unforeseen obstacles—not only of the four-legged variety—that can get in the way on the road to happily ever after.

Stepdog Details

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From Reader Review Stepdog for online ebook

Addison Public Library says

Who is the boss? This memoir, written by New York Times journalist Mireya Navarro, is quirky & heartwarming story about a blended family and the author's adventure with her husband's dog Eddie. Mireya has two great stepsons and a 'stepdog' who wants her husband to himself. She quickly finds herself at war with this pet. But as time goes by, she reassesses her role as stepmom, and comes to care about Eddie. This book is about just another challenge that blended families face. It's a charming, funny memoir about love, family life and compassion.

Check out this book today!

MJ 2/2018

Johnny Diaz says

In the Sterngold/Navarro household, who is top dog? Two married successful journalists? Or a quirky spotted dog named Eddie?

That's the theme in the memoir "Stepdog" where New York Times reporter Mireya Navarro recounts her adventures (more like misadventures) with her husband's dog Eddie, a passive-aggressive pooch with the grey markings of an Australian cattle dog.

As Mireya tries to blend in with her dreamboat's family as a stepmom (or madastra) to two children, she finds a nemesis in Eddie who does his best to push her out and keep Jim Sterngold for himself. Mireya tells her story in a light, breezy way. The writing flows and keeps the reader on a loose leash so you stick around for the ride.

The story starts off quickly in introducing us to Eddie who pees outside their bedroom door. But then the book begins to drag like an English bulldog on a sidewalk during a hot summer day as she explains how she met Jim, moved to LA and began to adapt (or fight) with the dog.

But despite the title, I don't think the book is so much about the dog. It's more about stepping into a new family situation and finding your place. In Mireya's case, it's about balancing the roles of wife and stepmom and how she fit into those designations after being single, independent and living alone for so long.

From reading her experiences with the dog, Eddie didn't sound that bad. (Food is always the best way to a dog's heart which she learns toward the end.) Or perhaps the author left out the really really bad stuff. But could the dog have been picking up on Mireya's uneasiness in the new household and projected that back to her? I always believed that the energy you put out comes back to you.

Although I enjoyed reading the book and I appreciated learning about the author's Puerto Rican background and her rise in the NYT newsroom, I cringed (slightly growled) while reading some moments of meanness toward Eddie.

In one scene, she refers to him as "Edweirdo." When the couple consider moving back to New York from Los Angeles and thinks the dog won't be able to adapt to the city, she says "I saw my chance to get rid of Eddie. I needed to just plant the idea."

Once they finally move to New York and split their time between Montclair, New Jersey where Eddie stayed, she recounts how "I felt like a mistress" every time Jim left her New York City early on the weekends to walk and feed Eddie back in Jersey. I applaud the author for being so honest but scenes like this made me want to root for Jim and Eddie more. (Sorry chica.)

Toward the end of the book after two health scares (one with Jim, the other with the dog), Mireya finally caves in and accepts Eddie because "Eddie was an extension of the husband. So were the children. I surrendered," she writes. "But I couldn't help loving him for loving Eddie...there he was, smitten with this strange creature."

The book was my end-of-the-day literary snack before bedtime and Mireya's new attitude toward Eddie was welcomed and sweet like a doggie treat. So were the pictures of Eddie at the beginning of each chapter and the ones with Eddie and Mireya together. How could she not love that spotted face?

Emily says

This book was OK. Initially it bothered me that Mia disliked Eddie so much. He was the scapegoat in her marriage to Jim. I felt like the beginning of the memoir dragged on. I only picked up this book because I am a dog-lover and I felt like it took a long time to reach the parts about the dog. I'm glad Mia loved him by the end.

Jonathan says

Disappointing at best. I came across this author because she wrote a very poignant, personal, lyrical and arresting piece about the devastation in Puerto Rico;

Titles: "In Puerto Rico, waiting for power, for tourists, for the flowers."

<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/05/07...>

I liked the piece so much, I noticed her byline and wanted to read her book. The book felt like a chore to get through at times. The best parts, interestingly, were the parts she writes about her family in Puerto Rico (perhaps she should write about that); the whole device of the stepdog didn't work for me- she winds up coming across as uptight and a bit of a dog hater.

I can understand why the dog wasn't warming up to her based on this book. That said, there is a recipe for porcini mushroom pasta in the back that I'd like to try.

Phyllis Barlow says

I like this book; I can relate on the step-mother issues. But two things bothered me about this book. First that she was so intent on getting rid of Eddie and the fact that her husband was oblivious to the problems with her and Eddie. My opinion is, if the pet is there when the relationship starts, then the newcomer has to adjust (and she did try) but the pet owner should be sensitive to problems and do his part to correct them.

She tried to train him (Eddie) to overcome some of the challenges, but Jim wouldn't work with her to accomplish the goals. Sort of like dealing with step-children with no back-up. Having said all this, I did enjoy reading this book that I won in a Goodreads give-away and I thank Goodreads for picking me as one of the winners.

Beverly says

After three decades of single womanhood, Mia Navarro wasn't looking to change her relationship status until she fell in love with Jim and married him. The marriage is wonderful and the stepkids are typical pre-teens. But Jim's mutt, Eddie, is possessive and jealous. As time goes on, a full-on war ensues. But in the end, it's clear that not even a wife can come between man and dog. A charming book that keeps you chuckling as their adventures ensue.

Lisa says

This was quite possibly the worst book I've read in a long time. But then I'm a dog lover. The writing was mediocre at best and I struggled to stay interested even as my anger at the attitude of the author grew. I kept feeling that eventually she would lighten up and learn to appreciate the dog for what he was but alas that was not to be. To the end, she appeared jealous and resentful of any time her husband spends attending to the dog (instead of her). If you don't like animals, you'll love this book and applaud the fact that now that dog is too old to get around as much, the author can get her way and kick him out whenever she feels like it - a sentiment she appears to savor at the end of the book. If you do like animals, choose a different book, as this one isn't worth the time to read.

Summation: "I'm always suspicious of people who don't like dogs. But I always trust a dog when it doesn't like a person." Eddie is clearly a very, very smart dog.

Phyllis Krall says

This Memoir, written by journalist Mireya Navarro, tells of her experience living in a blended family. She falls in love with Jim and becomes a Stepmom to his two children and dog Eddie. The dog is very jealous of Mireya (Mia) and does everything he can to aggravate her. Life becomes a battle as Mia tries to discipline Eddie, while she gradually learns to accept and care about him.

I found this book to be entertaining, funny and heartwarming. Eddie's escapades are hilarious as he tries to outsmart Mia and keep Jim all to himself.

I highly recommend this book to both dog lovers and those who could never picture themselves owning a

dog.

Kayo says

Really enjoyed this from first page. Got a bit nervous at the end, but lovely book. Laughed a lot! Recommend this highly!

Valerity (Val) says

Written by journalist Mireya Navarro, 'Stepdog' is story about marrying a man who has not only children, but a jealous territorial dog to contend with, while learning to blend into the family. This dog, Eddie, is unusually dramatic with his antics, letting Mia know she is an unwanted intruder at nearly every turn, and the book is about her and the dog learning to co-exist and to share the husband.

VegasGal says

I've decided not to give this book a rating because although the author wrote the memoir well, the actual story parts directly related to Eddie, her husband's dog, made me feel a mix between anger, frustration and boredom. I would not recommend this book to any dog lover because for most of the author's story she whined and complained about how horrible Eddie was to her (generally not something us dog lovers like to read). I felt she was really rather ridiculous at times and wanted to slap the author, telling her to go to more yoga classes, or something, because she really needed to get a grip and relax when it came to the dog. She is clearly not a dog lover, and although she currently claims to love Eddie now, I believe it's more out of guilt since he's an elderly dog rather than her sincere feelings.

If you are expecting to read a feel good, silly book about a "crazy" stepdog, I'd avoid reading this book because the author complains unceasingly throughout the book about the dog so much that it becomes a chore to continue reading - except maybe to read about the other parts in the author's life, which were slightly more interesting than the delusional dog complaints.

Mimi Fintel says

Mireya (Mia for short) had given up on ever finding a man she loved enough to marry when she met Jim. Jim was smart, funny, kind, and divorced with two children and a dog. After Mia and Jim met it wasn't too long until they decided to marry. The children weren't too big of an obstacle but the dog was very bothersome. Eddie, the dog, only had eyes for Jim. He growled and barked at Mia and always tried to edge her out whenever Jim was around. Mia plotted ways to get rid of Eddie but, alas, he remained entrenched in the family. As time passed and Eddie grew older and more feeble, Mia reassessed her relationship with Eddie and her spot in the family. Gradually, as she tried harder, things improved until Mia almost found herself loving Eddie. At the end of the book, Eddie is still alive and kicking, but Mia and he have made peace. I very much enjoyed this enchanting book.

Kathryn says

This review has previously appeared on Amazon, the reader would like to thank Amazon Vine program for providing a free copy for consideration.

Mireya Navarro focuses on a lot of things in her memoir, "Stepdog" unfortunately, Eddie, the dog owned by her husband, Jim, doesn't particularly care for Mireya. She shares her struggles of marrying for the first time in her 40's to a slightly older man with dual custody of two children and full time custody of his bff, Eddie the dog. While Eddie is devoted to the man who rescued him from an animal rescue, he resents Mireya. I was disappointed that what was billed as a struggle for acceptance from Eddie, yet, it came across as more a gripe session about an ungrateful mutt. Billed as a humorous story of personality struggles between woman and beast this missed the mark for me. I may be an outlier as it has won an award (that I never heard of).

While I congratulate Ms. Navarro for her bravery for leaving "her country", Puerto Rico and holding out for a man that wasn't threatened by her accomplishments, financially stable and good in bed among other things... I found this feminine version of a Horatio Alger story a bit to self-congratulatory. Her romance with Jim is briefly highlighted and all will agree that he is a romantic and a great "catch". It all seems glorious particularly when he flies to P.R. to ask her elderly father for her hand. Now her challenge is to adapt to an entirely new lifestyle.

Though I emphasize with her challenge with two tweens and unhappy dog as well as a new job, she has some resentment against her husband for not enforcing her rules in their newly purchased home. Eddie as she portrays him is a real jerk. I am a dog lover and I have only had one dog that was jealous of my relationship with her owner and eventually won her over. Likewise, I recently added a rescue dog to my family and he has had issues. Patience and love make a profound difference in adjusting together. Honestly, I don't think the love for Eddie was present. Animals are quite sharp and I can understand his resentment. Frankly, her efforts to compare her experiences with those detailed in "Marley and Me" weren't at all similar in my opinion because that was funny. Additionally, though it has been hundreds of books since I read it, Marley seemed endearing while Eddie sounds like he needs to meet with Cesar Milan and work through his emotional trauma. Furthermore, this is an upper middle class family; I think they could afford to have consulted a dog trainer to resolve Eddie's issues rather than airing her life history with Eddie as a sideline.

Ms. Navarro's honesty is refreshing. Unfortunately, I found this book to be only slightly interesting and more than half way through I quit. I found tone bracingly whiny. I didn't really identify with Ms. Navarro's struggles though they are quite legitimate challenges. This book will appeal to those facing step-children issues and those faced with moving to another city and job for love. No question trying to have it "all" is a lot of work! Ms. Navarro is adept at writing and thus a successful journalist, but her real life account wasn't as interesting as to me as I anticipated it, nor did I find an endearing dog story. I feel bad for Eddie, enough said.

Jami says

If you are looking for a funny book about a woman who loves dogs and who bonds with a terror of a dog, this is not the book you are looking for. I was so disappointed, given the description of the book. I don't find

anything humorous about a grown-a** woman in her 40s/50s who has not yet learned that the world does not revolve around her. When she arrives on the scene, she expects husband, step kids and dog to cave in to her whims and desires.....she talks about the blended family, but I don't see much evidence of her trying to blend with them. She seems to have a lot of friends, so she can't be as mean spirited, shallow and selfish as she appears in print. She is not nice to the dog, yet expects the dog to love her. Personally, if I had been Jim, I would have sent her packing back to NYC with her Italian sofa (dog hair free, of course, as that was of utmost importance). I was just shaking my head at her childish reactions to Eddie; poor dog, I'm glad he survived the step monster! I didn't see anything terrible about Eddie - so what if he wants to lie on the furniture (get it, they call it "fur"niture for a reason), be near his family and feel like he's a part of things. When she was looking for a place to dump him, I would have gladly taken him!

On the positive side, the book was well written and the pictures of Eddie are absolutely adorable!!!!

Michelle says

I'm going to preface this review by stating the following: By page 16, I HATED Mia Navarro. That fact clearly colors my review, so take it with a grain of salt.

Ok, so why did I hate Mia? Easy! She wrote a book about a dog - her husband's dog, to be precise - and put it into the world hoping to make money or whatever she was hoping to do with it, and she is clearly not a dog lover. I mean, you don't have to be a dog lover to write a book, I get that. But when you're pimping your husband's dog out to get readers and you spend the first chapter brainstorming ways to get rid of said dog.....you tend to raise the hackles of someone that IS a dog lover. She claims to love dogs. In fact, she names all the dogs she's known throughout her life. But she also makes statements about hoping the dog disappears, expecting Jim (her husband) to get rid of it when they move, and so on. I think she *thought* this book was going to be this clever, entertaining little story about Eddie (the dog) and Mia (the author) vying for the attention of Jim (the husband/dog dad). Not really how it worked out.

This is the reality of the story: Jim had a dog. Jim met Mia. Mia is a selfish B. Mia doesn't like dogs and is incredibly jealous of Eddie. Mia is also incredibly lucky that Jim didn't send her packing after she first attempted to get rid of his dog. Eddie and Mia spend a decade fighting over Jim (but Eddie's a dog, so he's not really fighting with Mia, he just doesn't like her because she's a B and is constantly trying to get rid of him). For the last 20 pages, Mia realizes she's a selfish B and tries to change her ways.

I think what pissed me off so much (aside from all the callous remarks and the selfish disregard for Jim's feelings about this dog) is that she actually had the nerve to print this for people to read. If I had truly had a revelation that I was this ridiculous and selfish about a DOG for crissakes, I would be ashamed of myself, not publishing it like it's newsworthy. It's not her laughing at herself, it's not her being ashamed of herself. It's her, defending her position for 190-some pages. I wanted to punch her (and Jim for actually marrying her, because hello, people this selfish and insecure don't restrict their selfishness/insecurity to the topic of dogs!). Anyway, save your time. That was 4 days of my life I won't get back.
