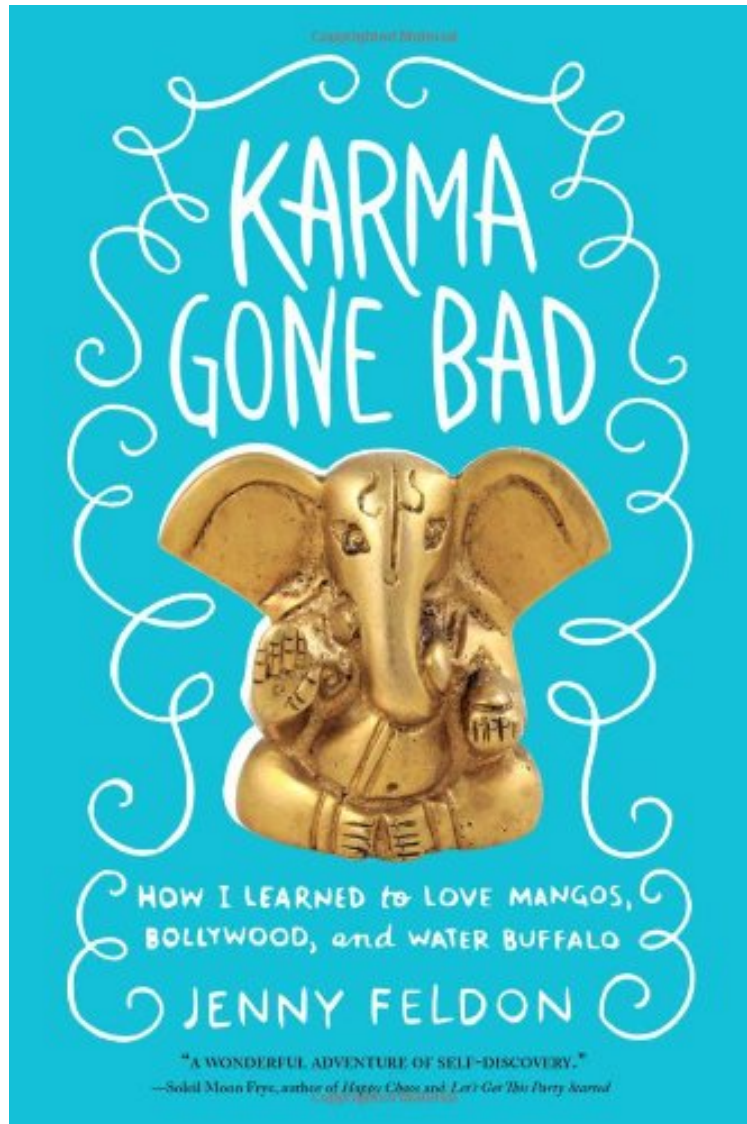


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Karma Gone Bad: How I Learned to Love Mangos, Bollywood and Water Buffalo

Jenny Feldon

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Jenny Feldon : Karma Gone Bad: How I Learned to Love Mangos, Bollywood and Water Buffalo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Karma Gone Bad: How I Learned to Love Mangos, Bollywood and Water Buffalo:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Full of rants and whiningsBy AbdanAuthor spent almost 2 years in India and all she did was to compile 200 pages of rants and whinings.Whinings continue almost to 90% of the

book.Nothing really interesting about the book1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The info on India is interestingBy JeanajoanThe author sounds very young and not too bright. She would be, I suspect, as shocked by the poverty in the rural American South as she is by what she found in India. She weaves a silly "journey of discovery" to hold the facts she compiled during an extended stay in Hyderabad. Those facts earned the book two stars.20 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Beach bookBy Kindle CustomerA prolonged whine from someone who made no attempt to adjust to things not from "home".For me, it was almost painful to read. No respect for the culture, people, and customs of India.

In the tradition of *Holy Cow* and *Undress Me in the Temple of Heaven*, a fascinating travel memoir of finding yourself in the India of rickshaws and rainy seasons. Jenny was miserable, and it was all India's fault...until she realized it wasn't. When Jenny's husband gets transferred to India for work, she looks forward to a new life filled with glamorous expat friends and exciting adventures. What she doesn't expect is endless bouts of food poisoning, buffalo in the streets, and crippling loneliness in one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Ten thousand miles away from home, Jenny struggles to fight off depression and anger as her sense of self and her marriage begin to unravel. But after months of bitterness and takeout pizza, Jenny realizes what the universe has been trying to tell her all along: India doesn't need to change. She does. Equal parts frustration, absurdity, and revelation, this is the true story of a Starbucks-loving city girl finding beauty in the chaos and making her way in the land of karma.

"I LOVED it. I would never, ever have the courage (or stomach) to live in India for two years, and now I don't have to because I lived vicariously through Jenny in the pages of her book. I couldn't put it down for days, completely addicted to the experience of her lifetime. Plus? No malaria pills for me!" - Jill Smokler, New York Times bestselling author of *Confessions of a Scary Mommy*"A wonderful adventure of self-discovery. I could not put this book down. It is a delight and awakens your senses while sweeping you away. I could almost taste the chai and smell the spices of India." - Soleil Moon Frye, author of *Happy Chaos* and *Let's Get This Party Started*"Warm, funny, evocative, endowed with a winning voice and a moving conclusion." - Vivian Gornick, critic, essayist and author of *The End of the Novel of Love*, *Fierce Attachments: A Memoir* and *The Men in My Life*"I'm incredibly tempted to put Jenny on a plane to another exotic locale just so I can read another compelling, hilarious take on the city gal gone native. *Karma Gone Bad* is just that good." - April Peveteaux, author of *Gluten is My Bitch: Rants, Recipes and Ridiculousness for the Gluten-Free*"Jenny Feldon's generously told and absolutely addictive memoir is about learning to embrace the unexpected, not just in our environment, but within ourselves. This well-crafted story is a perfect reminder that we often emerge from life's biggest challenges with gratitude that they arose in the first place." - Claire Bidwell Smith, author of *The Rules of Inheritance* "Heartfelt, frequently very funny and always extremely well written ... a great read for anyone who loves India, a good adventure or simply a well-crafted story" - *Travelati Magazine*"A joy ... Once I began reading Feldon's book, I couldn't put it down" - *Babyzone.com*About the AuthorAuthor of the popular blog *Karma* (continued...), Jenny Feldon was named one of *BlogHer's* Voices of the Year in 2012. Her writing has appeared on *Parenting.com*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Mom.me*. A Massachusetts native, she lives in Los Angeles where she balances writing, motherhood, and giant cups of coffee...mostly all at once.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Prologue "I just need another minute." The cab driver grunted and spit out the window. I stood on Ninth Avenue in the pouring rain, huddled over the taxi's trunk. Inside was a mountain of rainbow-colored fabric, designer dresses I'd spent years coveting, collecting, and paying off on my MasterCard. Once, they'd hung proudly in the closet of our Upper West Side one bedroom. Now they were crushed in a sad, wrinkled heap next to an ancient bottle of window washer fluid, a case of Yoo-hoo, and half a dozen water-logged emergency flares. And they, like me, were about to be shipped off to the third world. Double parked next to us, unfazed by the angry slur of horns whizzing by, was another cab. My husband Jay sat in the back, his foot propping the door open just enough to communicate but not enough to let the rain soak his Armani suit. He was on his way to work. I was on my way to brunch at Pastis. We'd met halfway so he could confiscate my entire dress collection, which I'd planned to pack in my carry-on luggage. "Pick ONE," Jay said, gritting his teeth. "One for the party. That's it." "But..." "It'll be fine, Jen. I promise. You'll have them back in a couple of days." He picked up his BlackBerry and scrolled through his messages, the technological equivalent of an exasperated eye roll. In forty-eight hours, we were moving to India. India, the country. Jay had decided, at half-past the eleventh hour, that we were bringing too much stuff on the airplane. By "we," of course, he meant me. Our apartment was already packed into a shipping container the size of an eighteen-wheeler. The apartment looked desolate and empty now, inexplicably smaller without our four-year collection of belongings cluttering its hardwood floors. The *Moving Guide for Expatriates* Jay's company sent in the mail recommended taking our essentials as carry-on luggage to safeguard against accidental losses. He and I had different definitions for "essentials." For Jay, that meant his laptop, his BlackBerry, and his red fleece sleeping hat. For me, that meant four pairs of designer shoes, two hundred manuscript pages of my novel-in-progress, the dog's teddy bear, and an assortment of cocktail dresses. Plus the dog himself, a small white Maltese named Tucker. Preparing for Tucker's move had been even more complicated than preparing for ours. First, there was the stockpiling. Two years' worth of training pads,

dehydrated chicken breasts, and chew toys. A velvety blanket for inside his carrier so he wouldn't get cold or insecure on the plane. A travel-sized stuffed animal, because his favorite was too big to fit in my carry-on bag. His favorite stuffed animal was a brown Gund teddy bear named Bear. I'd never seen Tucker look as sad as he did the day Bear got wrapped in plastic and tossed into a cardboard box, sentenced to a journey by sea. I took one last look at the dresses in my arms and understood exactly how he'd felt. I rescued a white strapless Diane von Furstenberg as Jay leapt from his cab and snatched the rest away. "See you tonight," Jay called as he dove back into his cab and slammed the door. The cab darted back into traffic. Through the rear window, I watched him brush off his lapels, the rest of his body swallowed by a mass of chiffon and lace-edged satin. The gold-embroidered hem of the Cynthia Steffe I'd worn to our rehearsal dinner was trapped in the door jam, trailing in the muddy street. I shouted after him, but the rain was too loud and by the time I got the words out, he was already gone. "Come on, lady," my cab driver bellowed, his "meter's-running" complacency abruptly disappearing into the mid-city fog. "Get in or walk. It's like a monsoon out here. I can't wait all day." We slogged downtown. Traffic, as always, was oppressive. The day stretched before me, my swan song in the big city. First there were farewell burgers and mimosas at Pastis with my best friend Kate. Then a visit to the salon for blow-outs and manicures, and then the going-away party Kate and her husband were throwing for us tonight. I'd wear the white strapless DVF with gold stiletto sandals and drink too much champagne. Laugh at our friends' jokes about curry and call centers and holy cows. Make a speech about big dreams and big adventures, not making eye contact with anyone so the tears would stay put. Wear waterproof mascara, just in case. "Seventeen-twenty, lady," the cab driver barked. I handed him a twenty and climbed out into the rain, the yellow warmth behind Pastis's windows beckoning like a lighthouse. Before I could even close the door properly, he made a U-turn and screeched off, spraying my legs with gray water that lurched up from the overflowing gutter. Was I going to miss this? The rude taxi drivers, the claustrophobic subways, the grit and the rush and the perpetual sneer of the Big Apple? More than I could say. From the minute I had moved to Manhattan from the Boston suburb where I'd grown up, my soul felt at home in a way I'd never known before. I loved the lights and the skyscrapers, the crowded streets. The exhilarating feeling of humanity-fervent, focused-scrambling over each other with a single collective purpose: GO. I loved Central Park and hot dog vendors, walks along the Hudson River, and the bodega on the corner of Seventy-Second and Broadway where I bought my coffee every morning. I loved the underground vibrations of the subway, the collective pulsing energy of 1.6 million people trying to make their dreams come true. I thought we'd live in New York forever. I'd just finished my master's degree in creative writing; Jay worked in computer forensics at a Big Four accounting firm. First there would be my debut novel, then his partnership, then one day a red Bugaboo stroller parked in the lobby of the Upper West Side brownstone we'd rent-a two-bedroom with a tiny sliver of park view. In the meantime, there would be art museums and yoga classes and dog parks and late-night drinks with friends. There would be vacations in the Hamptons or St. Barth's. Then Jay came home one night, a night that should have been a typical Tuesday spent curled up on our worn blue couch with pad thai from Siam Inn. But instead of asking me to order extra spring rolls, Jay walked in, dropped his briefcase in the doorway, and looked around our apartment like he'd never seen it before. "BKC wants me to move to India," he said. "To start up the new practice." Berkeley, King Coolidge, BKC for short, was the global accounting firm Jay worked for. Bill Gates had been the first American to stick his corporate flag in the crumbling Hyderabadi soil, instantly transforming the barely developed Indian city into the newest stomping ground for dozens of international companies. BKC was an early adopter of the overseas model, tapping into the talent of India's rising technology stars to create a U.S.-owned, Indian-run outpost-nicknamed Region 10-that could process investigations at twice the speed and half the cost of its American counterpart. With the Region 10 office running a full nine and a half hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, BKC would be able to serve their clients' needs twenty-four hours a day. Jay had been talking about the India project for months. Now, it seemed he'd been chosen to get the entire operation up and running. I stared up at him with Tucker on my lap. It was like he'd just said something in Mandarin. Or Urdu. I couldn't wrap my mind around the words. "India?" I repeated. "India, like the country?" "For two years. They said we could think about it, but I don't know if we really have a choice. I think we have to go." *** It's karma! That's what everyone said when we broke the news. I'd been studying yoga for ages. I was the manager of a busy Upper West Side Bikram studio. What better adventure for a dedicated yogini like me than a pilgrimage to India: the birthplace of yoga, the spiritual homeland of the Far East? And for a writer, a life abroad was the holy grail. Think of Hemingway! Think of Gertrude Stein! People said these things, and I smiled and nodded and agreed. Because, just like with the move itself, I didn't really have a choice. Fate-and a multinational corporation-had chosen this path for me. Sure, OK. It was a dream come true, right? I'd visit ashrams and study with real live yoga masters. My blog, Karma in the City-formerly a journal about Manhattan living-would become a travelogue, full of photographs and anecdotes about my exotic new life. My literary dreams could still come true-I'd just have to chase them from the Far East instead of the Upper West Side. Instead of living the New York writer's life, I'd become the best Indian housewife anyone had ever seen. Jay and I would become citizens of the world. I would make an "Indian bucket list" for all the amazing things we would do, like ride elephants and visit the Taj Mahal. Maybe we'd like it so much we'd stay expats forever, roaming from one exotic country to the next. Moving to India was the opportunity of a lifetime. A gift from the universe. Karma at its very best. Except...not really. The truth was, I'd never had the urge to travel farther outside

U.S. borders than Cabo San Lucas, where we'd gone for our honeymoon. My wanderlust was satisfied with a ride on the R train to Brooklyn. Ashrams weren't really my style; I was perfectly happy practicing my asanas on Seventy-Second Street overlooking the M-13 bus stop. I loved our life. I loved New York. Everything we'd ever wanted or needed was right here in front of us-our family, our friends, our happily ever after. Jay and I were both twenty-seven years old. We'd been married less than a year. Our lives were mapped out in a way that did not include international visas or typhoid vaccinations or pamphlets on common Hindi phrases. I lived by Zagat, not Lonely Planet. Yet here I was, soaking wet in Jimmy Choo sling backs on the side of Ninth Avenue, clutching a lone cocktail dress that I'd soon realize was as useless and ill-suited to life in India as I was.