

[PDF] Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?

Jeanette Winterson - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Bookforum In her new memoir, *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*, Winterson returns to the source, her grim girlhood in a sooty English industrial town in the 1960s, to tell her story more forthrightly than she has before. Aiming for narrative tidiness tends to dilute this memoir's delightfully unorthodox quality. But for the most part, this bullet of a book is charged with risk, dark mirth, and hard-won self-knowledge. —Parul Sehgal --This text refers to an out of print or

unavailable edition of this title.

Review "*Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* is raucous. It hums with a dark refulgence from its first pages. . . . Singular and electric . . . [Winterson's] life with her adoptive parents was often appalling, but it made her the writer she is." □*The New York Times*

"She's one of the most daring and inventive writers of our time—searingly honest yet effortlessly lithe as she slides between forms, exuberant and unerring, demanding emotional and intellectual expansion of herself and of us. . . . She explores not only the structure of storytelling but the interplay of past, present, and future, blending science fiction, realism, and a deep love of literature and history. . . . In *Why Be Happy*, [Winterson's] emotional life is laid bare. [Her] struggle to first accept and then love herself yields a bravely frank narrative of truly coming undone. For someone in love with disguises, Winterson's openness is all the more moving; there's nothing left to hide, and nothing left to hide behind." □A.M. Homes, *Elle*

"To read Jeanette Winterson is to love her. . . . The fierce, curious, brilliant British writer is winningly candid in *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* . . . [Winterson has] such a joy for life and love and language that she quickly becomes her very own one-woman band—one that, luckily for us, keeps playing on." □*O, the Oprah Magazine*

"Magnificent . . . What begins as a tragicomic tale of triumph over a soul-destroying childhood becomes something rougher and richer in the later passages. . . . Winterson writes with heartrending precision. . . . Ferociously funny and unfathomably generous, Winterson's exorcism-in-writing is an unforgettable quest for belonging, a tour de force of literature and love." □*Vogue*

"A memoir as unconventional and winning as [*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*], the rollicking bildungsroman . . . that instantly established [Winterson's] distinctive voice. . . . It's a testament to Winterson's innate generosity, as well as her talent, that she can showcase the outsize humor her mother's equally capacious craziness provides even as she reveals cruelties Mrs. Winterson imposed on her. . . . To confront Mrs. Winterson head on, in life, in nonfiction, demands courage; to survive requires imagination. . . . But put your money on Jeanette Winterson. Seventeen books ago, she proved she had what she needed. Heroines are defined not by their wounds, but by their triumphs." □*New York Times Book Review*

"Jeanette Winterson's sentences become lodged in the brain for years, like song lyrics. . . . Beautiful . . . Powerful . . . Shockingly revealing . . . Raw and undigested . . . Never has anyone so outsized and exceptional struggled through such remembered pain to discover how intensely ordinary she was meant to be." □*Slate*

"Bold . . . One of the most entertaining and moving memoirs in recent memory . . . A coming-of-age story, a coming-out story, and a celebration of the act of reading . . . A marvelous gift of consolation and wisdom." □*The Boston Globe*

"Unflinching . . . That Winterson should have survived such a terrible early immersion in darkness at all is a kind of miracle. That she should have emerged, if not unscathed then still a functioning human being and a creative artist, is an even greater accomplishment." □*San Francisco Chronicle*

"With raw honesty and wit, Winterson reveals how she fought her way to adulthood, finding success, love—and ultimately forgiveness." □*People* (4 stars)

"There's always been something Byronic about Winterson—a stormily passionate soul bitterly

indicting the society that excludes her while feeding on the Romantic drama of that exclusion. . . . *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?* restores Winterson to her full power. . . . This is a book that will inspire much underlining." □ *Salon*

"[Winterson's] novels □ mongrels of autobiography, myth, fantasy, and formal experimentation □ evince a colossal stamina for self-scrutiny. . . . [A] proud and vivid portrait of working-class life . . . This bullet of a book is charged with risk, dark mirth, hard-won self-knowledge. . . . You're in the hands of a master builder who has remixed the memoir into a work of terror and beauty." □ *Bookforum*

"Riveting . . . Beautifully open . . . *Why Be Happy* is a meditation on loss, stories, and silences." □ *Newsday*

"Riveting . . . There's a lot of flinty humor here, a lot of insight into the emotional legacy of adoption □ and a generally refreshing admission that understanding life is as hard as living it." □ *Entertainment Weekly* (A-)

"Arresting and suspenseful . . . Offers literary surprises and flashes of magnificent generosity and humor." □ *The Washington Post Book World*

"[*Why Be Happy*] very possibly [contains] the most honest writing Winterson has ever done: bone-hard, bone-naked truth that hides nothing about the discovery process of finding her biological mother, and going mad. . . . Her observations read as verses of the King James Bible: bold, beautiful, and true." □ *Los Angeles Review of Books*

"Captivating . . . A painful and poignant story of redemption, sexuality, identity, love, loss, and, ultimately, forgiveness." □ *Huffington Post*

"Raw . . . A highly unusual, scrupulously honest, and endearing memoir." □ *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Clarion, courageous, and vividly expressive, Winterson conducts a dramatic and revelatory inquiry into the forging of the self and liberating power of literature." □ *Booklist* (starred)

"[Winterson] is piercingly honest, deeply creative, and stubbornly self-confident. . . . A testimony to the power of love and the need to feel wanted." □ *The Seattle Times*

"Winterson pulls back the veil on her life as she really lived it and shows us that truth is not only stranger than fiction, but more painful and more beautiful as well. . . . Searing and candid . . . Winterson holds nothing back. . . . Written with poetic beauty." □ *Bookpage*

"Shattering, brilliant . . . There is a sense at the end of this brave, funny, heartbreaking book that Winterson has somehow reconciled herself to the past. Without her adoptive mother, she wonders what she would be □ Normal? Uneducated? Heterosexual? □ and she doesn't much fancy the prospect. . . . She might have been happy and normal, but she wouldn't have been Jeanette Winterson. Her childhood was ghastly, as bad as Dickens's stint in the blacking factory, but it was also the crucible for her incendiary talent." □ *The Sunday Times* (UK)

"Unconventional, ambitious . . . The experience of reading *Why Be Happy* is unusually visceral. Winterson confronts her actions, personality quirks, even sexuality, with a kind of violence, as if forcing herself to be honest. . . . The prose is often breathtaking: witty, biblical, chatty, and vigorous all at once." □ *Financial Times*

"An extraordinary tragic-comic literary autobiography." □ *The Guardian* (Best Book of 2011)

"Searing . . . Winterson's truth is just as compelling as any fiction." □ *Entertainment Weekly* (*The Must List*)

"Moving, honest . . . Rich in detail and the history of the northern English town of Accrington, Winterson's narrative allows readers to ponder, along with the author, the importance of feeling wanted and loved." □ *Kirkus Reviews*

"Compelling, in fact, perhaps even more so when compared to the fictionalized version written by Winterson as a twenty-five-year-old. Then, passion and anger seemed to burn off the page. . . . Now comes [an] emotional excavation as a fifty-two-year-old looking back with a cooler, more forgiving eye. . . . The specifics of [Winterson's] early abuse are vivid, violent, and no less horrifying for their familiarity. . . . If the memoir was begun as a final exorcism of the monster mother, it ends with a moving acceptance of her." □ *The Independent* (UK)

"Stunningly lovely and fearlessly reflective, *Why Be Happy* is a reminder of what the project of remembering and recording can □ and should □ be." □ *Bookreporter*

"Exquisite . . . About survival and triumph but also about deep wounds." □ *LAMDA Literary Review*

"Winterson's memoir is a brave and searingly honest account of how she reclaimed her childhood through the power of language. . . . Rich in autobiographical detail, it is as wide and bold an experiment in the memoir form as any so far written. Indeed, one of the most daring □ and riskiest □ experiments this book pulls off is a sudden fast-forward from the world of the lonely, adopted child that we think we know from *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, to the recent present where, in writing that is astonishingly naked and brave, Winterson reveals the legacy of that difficult childhood. . . . *Why Be Happy* is proudly, and sometimes painfully honest. It is also, arguably, the finest and most hopeful memoir to emerge in many years, and, as such, it really should not be missed." □ *The Times* (UK)

"As compulsively readable as *Truth and Beauty*, Ann Patchett's great memoir of friendship. . . . A tribute to the salvation of narrative." □ *Shelf Awareness*

"At last □ and essential new book by Jeanette Winterson. She is a natural memoirist. . . . Wry, urgent . . . Pressed on by the need for self-discovery, the prose doesn't miss a beat. . . . Winterson is frank about her own oddness, her fierceness. . . . If the first half of the book has been polished by retelling, the second half is raw, immediate. . . . Gone is the Nabokovian memoir in which the exquisite past is presented under glass, skewered by a pin. This is the age of instant communication, of forthright, unmediated responses. Winterson has her finger to the wind...."

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