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A Beautiful, Terrible Thing: A Memoir Of Marriage And Betrayal



Synopsis

What do you do when you discover that the person you've built your life around never existed? When "it could never happen to me" does happen to you? These are the questions facing Jen Waite when she begins to realize that her loving husband - the father of her infant daughter, her best friend, the love of her life - fits the textbook definition of psychopath. In a raw, first-person account, Waite recounts each heartbreaking discovery, every life-destroying lie, and reveals what happens once the dust finally settles on her demolished marriage. After a disturbing email sparks Waite's suspicion that her husband is having an affair, she tries to uncover the truth and rebuild trust in her marriage. Instead she finds more lies, infidelity, and betrayal than she could have imagined. Waite obsessively analyzes her relationship, trying to find a single moment from the last five years that isn't part of the long con of lies and manipulation. With a dual time line narrative structure, we see Waite's romance bud, bloom, and wither simultaneously, making the heartbreak and disbelief even more affecting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

3 1/2 stars. Jen Waite movingly writes of every woman's worst nightmare: She discovers just after the birth of her child that her husband is having an affair. The book is split into "Before" and "After" (before she discovers this and after). The "Before" is filled with the courtship of she and her restaurant coworker, soon to be boyfriend, and then eventually husband, Marco. The "After" the journey she takes after discovering her husband's affair with another of his coworkers (the man doesn't seem to cast his net wide), their split, her research into psychopathy (she is convinced her

husband has anti-social personality disorder), and emotional recovery. The "After" portions are chillingly delineated, and this reader felt her heart skipping beats and her blood boiling along with Jen's as the author begins to put together the pieces of her husband's affair with a 22-year-old Russian who likes to take selfies (that in and of itself is enough to make one puke) and to unmask his unending lies and manipulations. I took off a half-star, however, for the "Before" portions, which describe the progression of a relationship that seems, on the surface, to be fine. I kept waiting for the "red flags" that normally appear when one engages with a psychopath (they are always there, and usually follow a distinct pattern), however, all I was finding was an attentive, loving man and what seemed an average courtship. Chapters are devoted to Jen getting to know her Marco's son from a previous marriage, Marco's birthday party, etc. The chapters do nothing to serve the story. Yes, no doubt there were long stretches where Marco seemed like a normal guy - otherwise Jen likely wouldn't have married him - however, if your memoir is billed as one that analyzes a relationship with a psychopath, then the "Before" portions should have done this as well. Instead, it is not until close to the end of the book that Jen doubles back and reveals there were plenty of glaring red flags along the way - the most glaring being that she and Marco started their relationship before he broke up with his long-term girlfriend. So, from the beginning, Jen knew he was capable of cheating. I got the feeling she buried this information so that the reader wouldn't lose sympathy and abandon the story early on. There are other classic red flags too - Marco is a love bomber who buries her in flatteries, he's a law breaker (an illegal alien), has sad, pitying tales he tells her of his former relationships and childhood, and has a tumultuous work history and never has any money. Unfortunately we don't learn all of this until the last quarter of the book as the "After" Jen begins to take stock of her marriage. For me, those signs should have been delineated in the "Before" sections, even if Jen didn't realize they were "signs" at the time. It's tempting here (as some have done in the comments) to dismiss Marco as a "garden variety jerk and cheater," but as someone who has studied psychopathy intensively, this goes beyond that. This is a man who was cheating from the get-go, and who pushed the sorts of boundaries that even garden variety cheaters normally don't (such as calling his mistress on the day his wife gave birth). In fact, at one point Marco does something that even psychopaths don't normally do - he flat-out tells his wife he has "no feelings." And he does this over and over, and portraying it as some kind of physical ailment. For me, the idealize, devalue and discard pattern of the Cluster B personality type is quite clear. The idealize lasted while Marco needed his green card and money for the restaurant he started (which Jen basically funds) and the devalue as soon as he had those things and Jen's attention turned to their newborn. The man also admits that he was plotting to kill a waitress he'd

had an affair with. Hardly garden variety! One thing that also confused me was that at the end of the book, Jen strongly hints that she decided to take revenge on her philandering husband, and even says that if you're tired of women getting the short end of the stick while waiting for karma to run its course "this next section is for you" - but then no revenge is coming. Unless Jen deciding to become a therapist is some sort of twisted revenge. Jen Waite is a strong, sympathetic character, her writing is solid if not lyrical, and the book should help anyone in these types of relationships feel they are not alone (though there are hundreds of websites for that too). It was good to see her so quickly grasp the crux of her sad situation and use it to look inward to herself and how to improve what made her vulnerable to a person like this. P.S. The husband is easy to find online.

IÃfÂçÃ â ÑÃ â„çd thought from JenÃfÂçÃ â ÑÃ â„çs descriptions, he would be very attractive. Well, you know what they say, love is blind.

I first heard about this book through one of the Moms group. I couldn't wait for it to be released and bought it the day it was. Unfortunately, I was in the middle of moving and didn't have the chance to read it right away. Last week however, when things settle down for me I began reading Jen's book. And my oh my! I could not put it down!!! I haven't been able to actually finish a book in a long time yet I read this book in 4 days (but i could totally have read it in one day if life didn't come in the way). Reading this book was like "dessert time" each night. I couldn't wait to go to bed to read it. The author did an amazing job in writing this book in a manner that you feel as if your best friend is telling you about her life and what happened. I say read it with an open mind and refrain from judging the author when it comes to her experience and decisions she made or when she made them. As you read along and get further on the book you will realize that it was all a matter of time and circumstances in order for her to feel "ready" and "safe" enough to move forward. We are all different and we all move forward in different ways. And that is perfectly ok. I totally recommend this book. Well written, extremely engaging, very touching and powerful. By the end of the book you'll feel like you know Jen for a long time. If you're debating getting this book, debate NO MORE. Get it!! It's like dessert!!

I got so tired of the protagonist's tears in the first half of the novel and kept wondering when the heck she would wake up to her jerk husband and leave him. The book didn't get interesting until she actually left her husband which occurred in the latter half of the book. There were some extremely insightful psychological passages once she accepted ownership in having married this creep. I couldn't help thinking that many other women could benefit from this part of the book especially if

they find themselves divorcing the loves of their lives.

I purchased this book for a friend who was experiencing similar heartbreak. She read it quickly, even having very little personal time available, and recommends it for her entire family - to help them understand what she has gone through, too. Books that can make us feel less alone, and teach others about our traumas and triumphs, are books that should be on every shelf.

Absolutely loved this book. I read it in two days and just couldn't stop reading it. It kept me on the edge of my seat and completely immersed in Jen's story. I love the way she told her story, almost like a movie. Now all I hope is to find another read equally interesting.

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Just finished Jen Waite's book A Beautiful Terrible Thing. What a great read. I haven't read a single book since I was pregnant with my 2.5 year old-I couldn't put this one down! What an incredible story of emerging from such an unbelievably difficult circumstance and coming out on top. Inspirational. Highly recommend!!!

From the first line to the last my eyes and heart truly opened up to Jen's memoir. She has truly helped me understand more than I expected. Her writing is so crisp with simplicity to understand her emotions and thoughts.

Really great book.

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