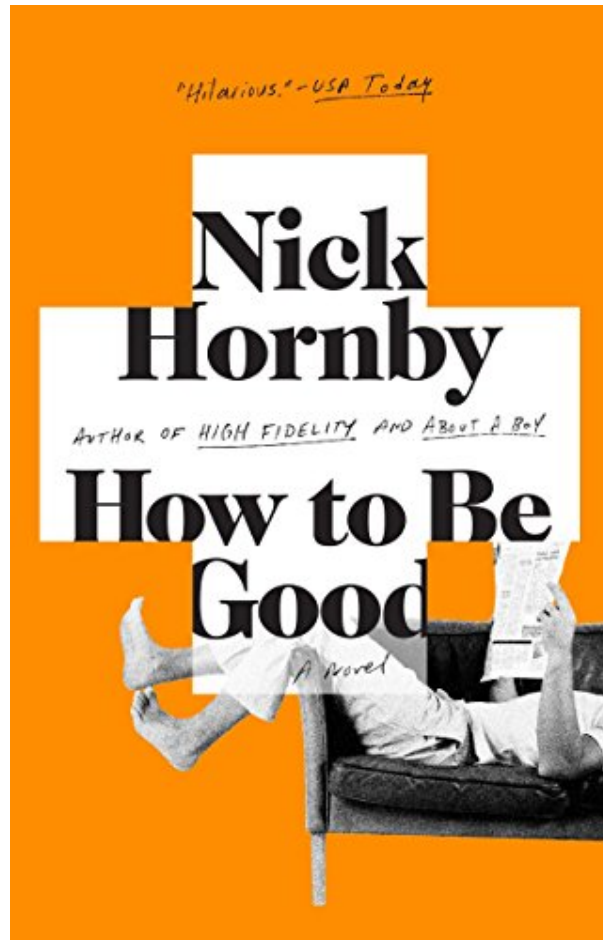


HOW TO BE GOOD BY NICK HORNBY



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"Hilarious." - USA Today

**Nick
Hornby**

AUTHOR OF HIGH FIDELITY AND ABOUT A BOY

**How to Be
Good**

A Novel

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Amazon.com Review

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HOW TO BE GOOD BY NICK HORNBY PDF

A wise and hilarious novel from the bestselling author of *Funny Girl*, *High Fidelity*, and *About a Boy*.

A brutally truthful, compassionate novel about the heart, mind, and soul of a woman who, confronted by her husband's sudden and extreme spiritual conversion, is forced to learn "how to be good"—whatever that means, and for better or worse...

Katie Carr is a good person...sort of. For years her husband's been selfish, sarcastic, and underemployed.

But now David's changed. He's become a good person, too—really good. He's found a spiritual leader. He has become kind, soft-spoken, and earnest. Katie isn't sure if this is deeply felt conversion, a brain tumor—or David's most brilliantly vicious manipulation yet. Because she's finding it more and more difficult to live with David—and with herself.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Good as it gets, unfortunately

By jovan hsu

Was this "darkly funny", "marvelous", or even "more than a little surprising" to me? No. "A hoot" ? Now, that's hilarious... It was "a zip to read" though, as I readily identified with the middle-aged narrator who is unsettled in her marriage, and just wants to find out and judge for herself what the author has to say about How to Be Good. Though the language flows easily and fluently, I found the sarcastic tone of conversations between the characters to be sadly commonplace. I heard same old voice we often do in screen dramas, internet forums, blogs and other places (like home) where people are only too happy to unleash their anger and unhappiness onto each other. Awaiting the "daringly different" to emerge with the arrival of mystical healer GoodNews, I was again disappointed with a plot that was not fantastical (yes, I was looking for escape) but almost familiar enough to me to seem painfully unoriginal.

In the end, I think it's the failure to achieve the big mission of spreading good as much as it's the failure to live up to personal ideals of being good which allows the characters some saving grace; that is, to recognize that we are Only human/Born to make mistakes. And it's only through our struggles that we can evolve, for better or worse-- because nothing stays the same.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

How We Try to be Good

By RBradbury451

How to be Good (HTBG) was my first Nick Hornby novel, a strange choice considering its mixed reviews compared to About a Boy and High Fidelity. Here's a sample of critics' promotional hyperbole on the cover- "darkly funny," "breezily hilarious," "a hoot." Other critics called it: surprising, worrisome, and thorny. It is not surprising then that this novel got mixed reviews.

So what is it? A hilarious hoot? Nah- more likely it is a rigorous spiritual analysis of contemporary western society. Dr. Kathy Carr, wife, mother, professional person, takes a lover. She has become disaffected from her stay-at-home husband, a cross between Homer Simpson and Rush Limbaugh, with none of their charm or humor. On the surface, their family seems solid enough, but there is something missing. HTBG depicts their attempts to find out just what is missing and to learn to deal with it.

I used the term "spiritual" to describe Hornby's work because, in every sense, the crises his characters face are produced by society's relative excess and individuals' relative narcissism. The combination of the two produces the loss of meaning and the inevitable depression that Viktor Frankl predicted in Man's Search for Meaning. Hornby tries to show some of the comic elements of the struggle, elements that anyone over forty can appreciate, albeit, at times, painfully. Enter the faith healer, GoodNews, a homeless person who received revelation and supernatural powers after dropping Ecstasy at a party. Thirty-two years old and from obscure origins, GoodNews, whose self-chosen name derives from the meaning of the word Gospel, is kind of a Christ-on-Ecstasy-figure. GoodNews sees how sadness pollutes us, making us sick. He has a supernatural ability to remove this sadness, converting the believer into a new, better person. His hope is to multiply that effect in order to create better families and communities. Not everyone buys his message of generosity and selflessness. As a consequence, with his magic comes division--within families and the larger community. This division can be internalized with in the individual (in the form of guilt), as the still imperfect individual struggles with the challenge of being good in an imperfect world. Moreover, the individual can puff up goodness and selflessness in order punish those with whom he is annoyed, making it a form of vanity.

In this version of the gospel story, Christ/GoodNews is not God Incarnate. He is very, very human, sometimes laughably so. His assembly of believers falls short of the promises for which they hoped, just as has Christendom, which it lightly parallels. Today's church, the community of mainstream believers--in this case, the Church of England--is presented as a fossilized institution, not a particularly attractive alternative to the charismatic charm and power of GoodNews and his disciples, however flawed the latter is. The C of E's adherents, even its leaders, have very little hope of anything and attend out of a sense of duty, a hope of being validated without being challenged.

GoodNews' characters' Road to Damascus epiphany experience, falls a little short. They are not born again, nor do they become completely new people, despite the attractiveness that a clean slate offers. They still seek answers from themselves and from other humans. The answers they get are frequently lack the voltage to get them through the lonely, sad, and empty lives they face. It's as if they are asking for data when what they need is power.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

It's like pulling teeth.

By Schina

I am going to have to stop listening to recommendations from friends.

I purchased this book ONLY because my good friend raved about it.

Well I am also raving about it. Raving mad.

What a load of I tried to get into this story, and just could not get over the hump that someone would

want to live with someone like that.

That goes for both characters.

I kept plowing away at it, cause MY FRIEND SAID SHE LOVED IT.....and you know what, the premise is so non believable, that I finally got to the 8th chapter and gave up.

I was surprised that I gave it that much.

First time I've read anything by this author, and I do not think I will read him again.

There are just too many good books out there.

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