

[PDF] Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice On Love And Life From Someone Who's Been There

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Description:

Review “A fascinating blend of memoir and self-help. Strayed is an eloquent storyteller, and her clear-eyed prose offers a bracing empathy absent from most self-help blather.” —Nora Krug, *The Washington Post*

“Strayed’s worldview—her empathy, her nonjudgment, her belief in the fundamental logic of people’s emotions and experiences despite occasional evidence to the contrary—begins to seep into readers’ consciousness in such a way that they can apply her generosity of spirit to their own and, for a few hours at least, become better people. . . . The book’s disclosures—on the part of both the

writer and her correspondents—is ultimately courageous and engaging stuff.” —Anna Holmes, *New York Times Book Review*

“Wise and compassionate.” —Gregory Cowles, *New York Times Book Review* “Inside the List”

“Penning an advice column for the literary website The Rumpus, [Strayed] worked anonymously, using the pen name Sugar, replying to letters from readings suffering everything from loveless marriages to abusive, drug-addicted brothers to disfiguring illnesses. The result: intimate, in-depth essays that not only took the letter writer’s life into account but also Strayed’s. Collected in a book, they make for riveting, emotionally charged reading (translation: be prepared to bawl) that leaves you significantly wiser for the experience. . . . Moving. . . . compassionate.” —Leigh Newman, *Oprah.com*

“It seems inadequate to call ‘Dear Sugar’ an advice column, because it exists in a category all its own . . . Part memoir, part essay collection, the aptly titled *Tiny Beautiful Things* gathers together stunningly written pieces on everything from sex to love to the agonies of bereavement. Strayed offers insights as exquisitely phrased as they are powerful, confronting some of the biggest and most painful of life’s questions. . . . In her responses, Strayed shines a torch of insight and comfort into the darkness of these people’s lives, cutting to the heart of what it means to love, to grieve and to suffer.” —Ilana Teitelbaum, *Shelf Awareness*

“What makes a great advice columnist? . . . Strayed has proved during her tenure at the website the Rumpus, where she has helmed the Dear Sugar column since 2010, that the only requirement is that you give great advice—tender, frank, uplifting and unrelenting. Strayed’s columns, now collected as *Tiny Beautiful Things*, advise people on such diverse struggles as miscarriage, infidelity, poverty and addiction, and it's really hard to think of anyone better at the job. Strayed has succeeded largely because she shares personal, often heartbreaking stories from her own life in answering readers' questions. Her experiences are qualifications, in a sense, as Strayed has taken the wisdom she gained from personal tragedies, including her mother's early death and the breakup of her first marriage, and generously applied it to all manner of issues. . . . What runs through all the columns, which range from a few hundred to a few thousand words in length, is Strayed’s gift at panning out from the problem in question. Often, the fuller picture that Strayed gives us illustrates what needs to happen for the letter-writers to change, to pull themselves out of their current predicament, to see things in a different way, to act. . . . Here is Strayed’s breathtaking ability to get to the core of her own failures and triumphs, which she often does through surprising and sharp imagery. . . . Strayed has covered much ground in these transformative pieces. In the end, *Tiny Beautiful Things* serves as a guide for anyone who is lost, and those who only think they might be.” —Liz Colville, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“As Sugar, Strayed addresses questions about love, family, addition, grief, abuse, afflictions, fears, friends, gossip, among other topics—and in each of her answers, without fail, she meets the letter writers with a kind of startling compassion; what Steve Almond termed ‘radical empathy.’ Dear Sugar is an advice column like no other.” —Nika Knight, *Full Stop*

“It is very rarely that I am a ridiculous fangirl about anything. It’s so emotionally taxing, so inherently undignified, that I try not to fall into the trap. So it took me by surprise when, upon discovering Dear Sugar at the Rumpus, I gradually fell down the rabbit hole into ridiculous fangirliness for the first time in years. [Strayed took me to] the edge of the dark wood, staring into the place where the most wrenching and lovely truths reside. A place to lose your heart and find it again. If there is a common thread that unites the columns, it’s work. Sugar doesn’t tolerate laziness: doing the work to reach one’s full potential, to write that novel, to exorcise ghosts, to let go

of resentments and jealousy and commit instead to generosity and love—all of these are sacred, lifelong tasks for which there are no shortcuts. The columns are a gift, and so too is the book. As Sugar herself bids in her column of the same name, I've written this now on the eve of her book's publication with one intent: to say thank you." —Ilana Teitelbaum, *The Huffington Post*

"Typically an advice column might not be the first thing to come to mind when considering examples of fearless first-person writing. But Cheryl's Dear Sugar column is a major exception in that way. In the majority of her column entries, she boldly delves into her own life, to places where she's had to overcome obstacles similar to those her letter-writers have experienced. Her understanding and compassion are real and hard won, rooted in her own experiences. And so is her sometimes butt-kicking advice. 'If I was able to do this,' she seems to be saying, 'so can you, sweet pea. Now get off your ass and do it.' The stakes may have seemed lower when she was writing the column anonymously. But Cheryl says she always knew she'd eventually reveal herself—which she did in April. Now many of her best Dear Sugar columns have been gathered into *Tiny Beautiful Things*, a collection that goes on sale this week (and is available through The Rumpus). Her name is on it; the revelations, the fearless admissions are hers. And I'm awed." —Sari Botton, *The Rumpus*

"Sugar didn't pen a few plucky paragraphs about how to pick yourself up by your socks and move on from whatever horrors befell you—in many cases Sugar's letters were heart-rending exhumations of her own past in search of parallels to the advice-seeker's situation. She didn't shy from plumbing her own failings, flaws, and troubles. But in the end, Sugar's columns are about heart and love. Not saccharine, treacly love that comes from greeting cards, but the gritty, painful, sometimes mundane work it takes to love yourself, warts and all. *Tiny Beautiful Things* isn't really a compilation of her advice columns. More, it's a series of essays about life in all its grimy, unpleasant heartache, and a plea to rise above it to love truthfully and deeply and well, despite all our handicaps. Sugar navigates the path through the treacherous human psyche as a shining beacon before us, flickering in the dark. . . . [She] gives her best, even when she's tired. . . . I'm glad that the world is learning about all the love that Sugar has to give." —Quenby Moone, *The Nervous Breakdown*

"Strong, smart and self-assured: those qualities are in full power in [*Tiny Beautiful Things*]. Strayed doesn't just give good advice. People write in with the most wrenching personal problems, and receive generous, seriously motivating inspiration to move on and do better. . . . Dear Sugar is a rare hideout from the prevailing meanness of the Internet. She calls her readers Sweet Peas, shares stunningly intimate stories about her life, and writes with true warmth and kindness. And it's not an act. . . . Strayed aims to help not just the people whose letters she answers, but the wider audience who reads the exchanges. Her responses are direct and personal, but peppered with universal messages that cut to the heart." —Amy Goetzman, *MinnPost*

"Why do we read memoirs? Some choose autobiographies to better understand the lives and histories of important men and women. Some might hope that the experiences and insights of a personal essay might unveil a small truth about the human condition, might teach us about ourselves. Some of us might just be busybodies, looking for a socially acceptable way to peek deeply into a stranger's life. If you fit into any of these categories, you must meet Dear Sugar, the ultimate advice columnist for lovers of memoirs. *Tiny Beautiful Things* is a collection of her works, interspersed with Q&As from Sugar herself. The columns were written anonymously, but with an amount of personal detail that no advice column has ever seen before. In a gracious, sassy, poetic and maternal voice, Sugar shares her own raw personal accounts . . . She runs a highlighter over the breathtaking aspects of mundane tasks, from wedding planning to the day-to-day duties of raising small children. By the last page of the book, which will likely be a bit wrinkled with tear stains by the time you're through, you may know more about Sugar than you know about your closest friends. . . . Though many of the letters she receives contain ugliness and woe, she weaves them together into a

story that is unexpectedly beautiful and impossibly warm. There's no shortage of conversations on love a...

About the Author Cheryl Strayed is the author of *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* and the novel *Torch*. Her stories and essays have been published in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *Vogue*, *Allure*, *The Rumpus*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Sun*, *The Best American Essays*, and elsewhere. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

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