



Happiness for Beginners: A Novel

By Katherine Center

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A year after getting divorced, Helen Carpenter, thirty-two, lets her annoying, ten years younger brother talk her into signing up for a wilderness survival course. It's supposed to be a chance for her to pull herself together again, but when she discovers that her brother's even-more-annoying best friend is also coming on the trip, she can't imagine how it will be anything other than a disaster. Thus begins the strangest adventure of Helen's well-behaved life: three weeks in the remotest wilderness of a mountain range in Wyoming where she will survive mosquito infestations, a surprise summer blizzard, and a group of sorority girls.

Yet, despite everything, the vast wilderness has a way of making Helen's own little life seem bigger, too. And, somehow the people who annoy her the most start teaching her the very things she needs to learn. Like how to stand up for herself. And how being scared can make you brave. And how sometimes you just have to get really, really lost before you can even have a hope of being found.

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Editorial Review

Review

"HAPPINESS FOR BEGINNERS does what a story should do--introduces characters we want to know and then takes us on their unexpected journey to a new and braver life. Helen Carpenter is doing what needs to be done, and along the way she shows us how to be brave . . . when we need to be and when we want to be. When life doesn't give Helen what she believes she wants, she journeys into the wilderness to find what she needs, and we are with her every step of the way. Center's witty, honest and compassionate storytelling opens us to new ways of feeling and trusting, just as her character is doing the same." -Patti Callahan Henry, "New York Times" bestselling author of "The Stories We Tell"

"Such a charming, heartfelt novel about a woman who needs to escape from her life in order to rebuild it. I read it all in one delicious gulp." --Sarah Pekkanen, author of "The Opposite of Me"

"Adding Happiness for Beginners to my all-time favorites list. Fun, moving, and honest, it's a gem of a novel about finding out just what you're made of." --Melissa Senate, author of "The Love Goddess' Cooking School"

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"Katherine Center has a unique talent for finding humor in the most unlikely scenarios. . . In the wholly refreshing Happiness for Beginners, she explores life's messy moments with comic precision and proves that it is possible to make a fresh start--and find true love--in the midst of emotional disaster. Trust me; you'll feel this satisfying novel deep in your bones." --Jillian Medoff, bestselling author of "I Couldn't Love You More"

"Happiness for Beginners is my favorite Katherine Center novel yet. I folded down pages to go back to--and that's a sign of a great book: when I see something so true or profound that I know I need mark it. It's wonderful. Could not put it down."

--Jenny Lawson, "New York Times" bestselling author of "Let's Pretend This Never

Happened

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About the Author

KATHERINE CENTER is the author of four novels about love and family: "The Bright Side of Disaster,

Everyone Is Beautiful, "Get Lucky," and "The Lost Husband." Her books and essays have appeared in "Redbook," "People," "USA Today," "Vanity Fair," and "Real Simple"--as well as the anthologies "Because I Love Her," "CRUSH," and "My Parents Were Awesome." Katherine is a graduate of Vassar College and the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program. She lives in Houston with her husband and two sweet children.

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Kathleen Elder:

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