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Attempting Normal

Marc Maron

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Marc Maron : Attempting Normal before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Attempting Normal:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. If You Like Maron, You'll Love It By April L. Hamilton It's amazing how someone who has so much insight---wisdom, even---about his foibles and blind spots, enough to write an entire memoir about what went wrong in the past and why, can describe himself as still struggling to overcome them on a daily basis. Based on what Maron shares about his upbringing it's not hard to understand why he's wrestled with demons or how his own choices for good and bad have allowed at least a few of them to go on living. Now sober but

still a rage-a-holic, Maron's smart, fearless and funny. I don't see him going out the way other comedy greats like Greg Giraldo and Mitch Hedberg did, and that's a great relief. He has a way of being sincerely self-effacing (sometimes this borders on self-hate) while simultaneously egotistical, yet underneath everything he comes across as a relatable guy who's dealing with a lot of the same stuff most of us are, and just trying to handle it a little better each day. I was initially a little put off by Maron's own hard-edged, fast-talking, frenetic reading of the Audible audiobook, but I got over it pretty quickly. That's just who Maron is, and he's not afraid to reveal it to anyone interested enough to listen. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. WTF fans can get even deeper into Maron's head. By Tom Ol. Bflo As a fan of the WTF podcast and Maron's comedy that came in around the 550th episode or so, this book allowed me to learn about some of the life experiences that Maron continuously alludes to in his work, ie. divorce, addiction, career trajectory, and even how he came to acquire his cats. After reading *Attempting Normal*, I found I had a better appreciation for WTF because a lot his references and points-of-view were re-framed by what I had discovered in the book. Consistently funny with a good blend of fun stories as well as key life events. Some celebrity autobiographies can drag on with "this happened, then this, then this, then this..." but not this one. By the end of it, like many of his podcast episodes, I felt like I had gotten there much too soon and wanted more. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I can relate but I'm not sure why. By Katie Sullivan I have been listening to Marc's podcast here and there for the last year. I started listening to him more on a regular basis in the last month or so because I figured his conversations were a lot more interesting than the conversations I was having at work. I became one of those "sit down at the desk, pop in the headphones and crunch through my busy work between appointments" type of people. I'm not too familiar with his standup acts but I absolutely love the way he describes his desire to connect with people. There's very little in common between Marc and me, but his intensity, emotional state, and hunger for acceptance is fascinating, hilarious and comforting. Some stories are graphic but not in a filthy way. He knows what he's done isn't admirable, but it's real and honest. I'm almost done with the book and I can't put it down. Any chance I have to sit and read, I flip this book open. His writing is so engaging that you feel like you've known him for years- and many of his fans have through his podcast. If you listen to him enough you can hear his voice while you read it. Highly recommend to anyone who's looking for a deep, dark, hopeful and funny read. Five stars!

NATIONAL BESTSELLER People make a mess. Marc Maron was a parent-scarred, angst-filled, drug-dabbling, love-starved comedian who dreamed of a simple life: a wife, a home, a sitcom to call his own. But instead he woke up one day to find himself fired from his radio job, surrounded by feral cats, and emotionally and financially annihilated by a divorce from a woman he thought he loved. He tried to heal his broken heart through whatever means he could find: minor-league hoarding, Viagra addiction, accidental racial profiling, cat fancying, flying airplanes with his mind but nothing seemed to work. It was only when he was stripped down to nothing that he found his way back. *Attempting Normal* is Marc Maron's journey through the wilderness of his own mind, a collection of explosively, painfully, addictively funny stories that add up to a moving tale of hope and hopelessness, of failing, flailing, and finding a way. From standup to television to his outrageously popular podcast, WTF with Marc Maron, Marc has always been a genuine original, a disarmingly honest, intensely smart, brutally open comic who finds wisdom in the strangest places. This is his story of the winding, potholed road from madness and obsession and failure to something like normal, the thrillingly comic journey of a sympathetic f***up who's trying really hard to do better without making a bigger mess. Most of us will relate. Praise for *Attempting Normal* I laughed so hard reading this book. David Sedaris Funny . . . surprisingly deep . . . laced with revelatory insights. Los Angeles Times Superb . . . A reason that [it] is a superior example of an overcrowded genre: the comedian memoir. Mr. Maron's hardheaded approach to his history, the wisdom of experience. The New York Times Marc Maron is a legend because he is both a great comic and a brilliant mind. *Attempting Normal* is a deep, hilarious megashot of feeling and truth as only this man can administer. Sam Lipsyte Praise for Marc Maron and WTF The stuff of comedy legend. Rolling Stone Marc Maron is a startlingly honest, compelling, and hilarious comedian-poet. Truly one of the greatest of all time. Louis C.K. I've known Marc for years and I can tell you first hand that he's passionate, fearless, honest, self-absorbed, neurotic, and screamingly funny. David Cross Revered among his peers . . . raw and unflinchingly honest. Entertainment Weekly Devastatingly funny. Los Angeles Times For a comedy nerd, this show is nirvana. Judd Apatow

Praise for *Attempting Normal* I laughed so hard reading this book. David Sedaris Funny . . . surprisingly deep . . . laced with revelatory insights. Los Angeles Times Superb . . . A reason that [it] is a superior example of an overcrowded genre: the comedian memoir. Mr. Maron's hardheaded approach to his history, the wisdom of experience. The New York Times Marc Maron is a legend because he is both a great comic and a brilliant mind. *Attempting Normal* is a deep, hilarious megashot of feeling and truth as only this man can administer. Sam Lipsyte Praise for Marc Maron and WTF The stuff of comedy legend. Rolling Stone Marc Maron is a startlingly honest, compelling, and hilarious comedian-poet. Truly one of the greatest of all time. Louis C.K. I've known Marc for years and I can tell you first hand that he's passionate, fearless, honest, self-absorbed, neurotic, and screamingly funny. David Cross Revered among his peers . . . raw and unflinchingly honest. Entertainment Weekly Devastatingly funny. Los Angeles Times For a comedy

nerd, this show is nirvana. Judd Apatow About the Author Marc Maron is a stand-up comedian and host of the podcast WTF with Marc Maron. He has appeared in his own comedy specials on Comedy Central, HBO, and Netflix, and his sitcom, Maron, airs on IFC. He lives in Los Angeles. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1

The Situation in My Head

I had a bad run-in with myself on a plane recently. I had just flown from Dublin to Chicago and hadn't slept much. I was strung out. Tired. Tweaky. I changed planes in Chicago to fly to Los Angeles. Things were vibrating and I was edgy. I was in the exhaustion zone, feeling the kind of tired you can't sleep off because you can't sleep, because your blood is pumping caffeinated dread and loathing. I was seated at the front of coach in an aisle seat, directly behind the first-class dividing wall and the flight attendant service area. It's my favorite seat on a plane. I like watching people get on the plane so I can judge them. I like judging. I didn't see any real problems among the passengers who awkwardly clumped onto the plane, but I definitely felt like I was in a better place than some of them, which helped take the edge off my mood. Judging works. We took off. The flight attendants were strapped in almost directly in front of me, facing me. I always scan their faces for fear. I rarely see it. When I do see something dark flicker across their faces, it usually seems like it has nothing to do with the job. More likely something personal that followed them onto the plane. But then again, what do I know. I project. Then I judge. The crew seemed pleasant. One woman in particular seemed genuinely nice: blond hair, about fifty, pretty in the classic California way. I always wonder when I see older flight attendants if they've been at it since the seventies, when things were crazy. Did she ever have sex in a cockpit? Did she survive a crash? Get tied up in a hijacking? Did she ever have sex in a bathroom with a passenger? With the pilot? I like to give my flight attendants a bit of backstory. I decided she was an out-of-control instigator of major in-flight mayhem back in the day. She got through it disease-free and didn't end up in rehab. She started a family, her husband had a drug problem he couldn't kick and left her, but she did all right. The husband had a lot of money, so she's good. Humble and wise. She lives in Topanga with a few big dogs. Her kids are in college. Only a few people know her from her old life and one of them is the pilot on the flight I am on. That's who I made the flight attendant up to be. Once we were up in the air I was crawling out of my skin. I couldn't sleep and had definitely had enough of flying. I needed to walk around and judge. I walked down the aisle toward the back of the plane in hopes of going to the bathroom. I didn't really have to go but sometimes it's just nice to lock yourself in the bathroom of a plane and take a few minutes to look in the mirror. I reached the door of the bathroom and the little lock indicator said Vacant, but there was a man standing in front of the door. Hanging out, I guess. He was a Middle Eastern-looking man, olive-skinned with Semitic features a dubious shade of brown. I looked at him and gave him a raised-eyebrow grunt, asking if he was waiting. He looked me right in the eye but didn't speak for a moment. Then he shook his head no. It was a simple gesture, but seemed ominous and cryptic. I couldn't understand why he was standing there. In retrospect he was probably just doing what I was doing. Stretching, moving around. But in that moment, when I looked into his eyes, fear shot through me. I was sure that this guy was up to something. He had that look in his eye. Scheming, driven, full of will and sacrifice. He was clearly Palestinian or Saudi and we were all in trouble. The worst of it was that I was sure I was the only one on the plane who knew that something truly awful was about to happen. I knew and he knew I knew. I could see it in that quick glance he shot me letting me know that he wasn't going into the bathroom. No, he was going into the cockpit. It was that kind of look. I didn't go into the bathroom. I lingered around in the rear flight attendant station thinking, watching, figuring out what had to be done. The suspicious-looking, dubious-shade-of-brown man started making his way down the aisle. I decided to follow him. I found out very quickly that it's hard to discreetly follow someone on an aircraft. I gave him about ten steps, then I started pacing behind him down the aisle toward the front of the plane. He walked right through the division between the classes, from coach into business. I stopped in the service area, afraid to cross the class line, and watched him disappear behind the curtain. I was completely panicked. I knew he was heading for the cockpit. I hadn't figured out what his plan was but I knew we were all in trouble and no else knew. I had to save us. I pulled the curtain back and focused intently on the man moving toward the front of the plane. I can only imagine what my face looked like or what kind of panic vibrations were peeling off me as I stood there trying to figure out a plan, my brain working the angles. Is everything okay, sir? It was the flight attendant, the one who'd been through some shit and come out on the other side. I turned. She looked concerned. Some part of me knew I couldn't spill everything, that she wouldn't understand if I just babbled out everything I knew. So this came out of my mouth: Uh, well, there's . . . a situation. In my head. Maybe you should sit down, sir, she said, concerned, like I was the one with a problem. Um. I think we . . . okay. Yeah, okay, I said, letting go of my horrible knowledge and the impending crisis for a moment. Ill sit down. But . . . okay. I sat down in my seat, my brain still feverishly running scenarios. I knew what was happening. I saw it in my mind. The dubious-shaded-brown man was already in the cockpit. He had on a pair of rubber gloves that had been soaked in an ancient toxin that he had achieved immunity to by exposing himself to it in small doses over the last year. He had already touched the neck of the pilot and copilot, who were in full cardiac arrest with a pinkish white foam coming out of their mouths as they gasped and writhed in their final throes. The man was moments away from taking control of the plane, plummeting us to a lower altitude, and putting us on a flight path into the target of his choice. I don't make pretty pictures. Sometimes I wish my imagination were fueled by something other than panic and dread. But I don't have control over my gift. It has control over me and I am dragged by it more often than not, away from the idyllic land of

normal and onto the jagged shores of self-destruction. Imagining the worst has always been a great comfort to me. If there is turbulence there is an imminent crash. If she doesn't pick up the phone, she is fucking someone. If there is a lump it is a tumor. By thinking like this I protect myself from disappointment. And if anything other than the worst-case scenario unfolds, what a pleasant surprise! The problem is that I am always walking around preparing for and reacting to the horrors of what my brain is making up, living as if every potential terror and every defeat were already happening because in my mind, it always is. I think if I could just create a series of characters to enact all the heinous possibilities my brain manufactures to insulate me from joy, then I would be using my creativity in a safer way. I see maybe an animated series or perhaps several epic paintings, large canvases. I'm talking the whole wall of the gallery big. I don't like animation and I'm not a painter. All I can do is imagine these horrors and share them with you. I sat in my seat powerless, waiting for the plunge. I was squinting hard and clutching the armrests when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I opened my eyes to see the entire flight crew standing over me. The one who seemed to be the leader, a hard-looking woman, asked, Are you all right, sir? Do you need medical attention? The kind flight attendant had betrayed me and now stood behind the monster in an apron who was interrogating me. I wondered how I became the problem. If they only knew what was about to happen they would be thanking me for being the one person perceptive enough to see it. I was actually hoping that we'd lurch into a sudden descent at that moment. I was hoping that they would all go flying toward the back of the plane, screaming and thumping along the ceiling. Then they'd know I was right.