



Autobiography

Morrissey

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Autobiography covers Morrissey's life from his birth until the present day.

Steven Patrick Morrissey was born in Manchester on May 22nd 1959. Singer-songwriter and co-founder of the Smiths (1982-1987), Morrissey has been a solo artist for twenty-six years, during which time he has had three number 1 albums in England in three different decades.

Achieving eleven Top 10 albums (plus nine with the Smiths), his songs have been recorded by David Bowie, Nancy Sinatra, Marianne Faithfull, Chrissie Hynde, Thelma Houston, My Chemical Romance, and Christy Moore, amongst others.

An animal protectionist, in 2006 Morrissey was voted the second greatest living British icon by viewers of the BBC, losing out to Sir David Attenborough. In 2007 Morrissey was voted the greatest northern male, past or present, in a nationwide newspaper poll. In 2012, Morrissey was awarded the Keys to the City of Tel-Aviv.

It has been said '*Most pop stars have to be dead before they reach the iconic status that Morrissey has reached in his lifetime.*'

"Practically every paragraph has a line or two that demands to be read aloud to the mirror, tattooed on foreheads, carved on tombstones." - *Rolling Stone*

"Morrissey is a pop star of unusual writing talent." - *The New York Times*

Autobiography Details

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Author : Morrissey

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From Reader Review Autobiography for online ebook

Julio Genao says

oh, moz.

lol:

"Morrissey, though, didn't have to attain the chip of being needily undervalued; he was born with it. He tells us he ditched "Steve", his given name, to be known by his portentous unimoniker because — deep reverential breath here — great classical composers only have one name. Mussorgsky, Mozart, Morrissey.

His most pooterishly embarrassing piece of intellectual social climbing is having this autobiography published by Penguin Classics. Not Modern Classics, you understand, where the authors can still do book signings, but the classic Classics, where they're dead and some of them only have one name. Molière, Machiavelli, Morrissey.

He has made up for being alive by having a photograph of himself pretending to be dead on the cover."

<http://www.theomnivore.com/a-a-gill-o...>

Sean says

I probably would've given this five stars had it not been for the absurdly long section on the Smiths trial. While I understand Moz's need to set the record straight from his POV, I would've still seen his points in a fraction of the word count and with a lot less repetition. Reading it was akin to watching a wounded animal strike out at its tormentors. The bitterness bled through what seemed like freshly sutured lacerations, despite the passing of so much time. That section notwithstanding, though, this book was a true pleasure to read, and offers an engaging portrait of a man who, despite his often controversial public persona, very much remains an enigma.

Michaela says

STOP PRESS: MORRISSEY IS A CANTANKEROUS OLD GRUMP SHOCKER!

This is not news to anyone. Neither is the fact that he is hilarious, likes (liked?) poetry, or holds a grudge longer than anyone on earth. Yet, from reviews I've read of Autobiography, this appears to be a revelation. Let's face it. You know what you're getting with Morrissey. Of course it's narcissistic (plus it's a flippin' autobiography - who's it going to be about???). The surprise is that the book isn't cohesive. It's a book of two halves. The first part - up to the Smiths court case - is so beautifully written that I went back several times to

re-read certain sentences. It frequently made me laugh out loud and took me back to the days when I couldn't get through the day without listening to some old Smiths song or other. Then it all goes a bit haywire. He goes over and over the Smiths court case. You think he's done with it and then a few pages on, up pop the same old words, just in a different order (did he refuse an Editor?). From then on he goes all (even more) bitter on us and there's a never-ending section just listing US tour dates and constantly reminding us how much they LOVE him in the States (not like dull, drab old England). It reads like he got to a point in writing it that he ran out of things to say but it wasn't a weighty enough tome so he diarised a year or so and wrote about each day as it came and went (but nothing actually happened). The upshot is that I felt sad and more than a bit bored at the end of it and I REALLY wanted to love this book. Sad that someone so talented and so loved could be so bitter and full of vitriol seemingly throughout his whole life. It could have been a real classic but is ultimately a disappointment.

Jaidee says

3 "oh dear Morrissey" stars

2015 Review I had the most fun writing!!

As you read my review, have a listen to one of our most misunderstood geniuses:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhdOQ...>

Here is a trivia question:

Which are facts about Morrissey?

- a) Morrissey is a musical wonder.
- b) Morrissey should have been born nobility but instead was born to a poor Manchester family
- c) Morrissey is a whiny drama queen that needs to get over himself.
- d) Morrissey is disappointed in everybody that he meets.
- e) Jaidee was in love with Morrissey at the age of 15
- f) Morrissey is a voguish depressive with a thorn in his side.
- g) Morrissey is a staunch supporter of animal rights and has shown immense kindness to our fellow creatures
- h) Jaidee snogged with a girl just because she claimed to have hugged Morrissey at one of his Smiths shows in California
- i) All of the above are mostly true.

This book starts out brilliantly, eloquently and poignantly as he speaks of a very painful and deprived childhood. Your heart goes out to little Morrissey and you want to hold him close and give him all the love and sensitivity his deprived little soul desires. He speaks of assaults by classmates, teachers and a chaotic impoverished home life. His sensitive soul is not meant for harsh and cruel thuggish Manchester.

He escapes into television and music and finds his raison d'etre.

The rest of the book begins to go downhill from here as his childhood has completely scarred him and leaves him isolated, suspicious, naïve and starving for love. He is confused sexually and does not appear to be able to maintain any real friendships and relationships. He writes:

" Nothing fortified me, and simple loneliness all but destroyed me, yet I felt swamped by the belief that life must mean something-otherwise why was it there?" or this

" There come the point where the suicidalist must shut it down if only in order to save face, otherwise you accidentally become a nightclub act minus the actual nightclub".

He struggles with the Smiths, his management, the media, his family, his few lovers, other celebrities, the legal system and mostly himself. He writes:

"It is a fact that even warming moments overwhelm me with despair, and this is why I am I"

He wears his misanthropy like a cloak and the remainder of the book is full of mockery of others, self-effacement and a self-centeredness that seems to take over. He states:

"Much later, Tim confided to me that the title of the song (You're the one for me Fatty) was undisclosed to the girl who played the part of "fatty" and I thought this very uncivil of Tim even if quite funny"

He says of Princess Sarah:

"Diet shows, Oprah, business ventures, commercial ventures, Sarah Ferguson chases the limelight until it will kill her- or you. It is the unfortunate drive of the overly untalented."

The last 75 percent of the book is mostly complaints about others. Mockery and quiet anger pervade and the brilliant insights he had about his childhood are lost.

He speaks of longing to sleep with men but then claims asexuality. He has two short romantic relationships (one with a man and another with a woman) and says next to nothing about these relationships but we have pages upon pages about his anger towards civil courts that have wronged him, friends that have wronged him, media that have wronged him etc. etc. etc.

He does not speak about any his wonderful music and songs with any depth but only to complain why they didn't chart higher on the charts or the ineptitude of those around him in the music business.

He writes of a concert crowd: "Why are they looking at me when all I ever read about myself is one of intolerable egocentricity and dramatized depression?" Hmmmm....I'm not touching that one.

One quote I really did like says "Finally aware of ourselves as forever being in opposition, the solution to all predicaments is the goodness of privacy in a warm room with books".

Morrissey evades us in this autobiography. He gives only his laments and does not share his inner life with us. He confuses the love of his fans with romantic love. Morrissey feels extraordinarily special and when that is not reflected back to him he descends into suicidal despair. He is an empty shell. A self-effacing narcissist.

He says after a conversation with Buster Poindexter:

"Such meetings reveal that which we all darkly suspect about those whose art we have loved: that they are unlikely to be whatever it is we imagine them to be"

I have complete agreement with this.

Morrissey thank goodness for your music and yes I still do love you Sweetheart.

Let's end with one of my favorite songs of all time. I must have heard this song at least three thousand times (no joke)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9EjE...>

MJ Nicholls says

A late-bloomer Smiths fan, more obsessed with heirs Belle & Sebastian, still teenage enough for the songs to resonate, mature enough for them not to mean the whole world. And then a later-blooming solo-Moz fan, immature enough for the songs to resonate, mature enough to recognise a fading in artistry. The autobio is another stellar achievement in which scores are settled, scabs are picked and re-swabbed, revenge and forgiveness are dispensed where appropriate, the Smiths court case is depicted as a dark and depressing charade of Dickensian proportions, Moz laments his frequent and never-ending butchering in the British press, and stands in awe at his worldwide legion of devoted and obsessive fans in his recent renaissance, all delivered in a witty and elegantly readable prose style, conveying his softly-spoken voice. Recent album *World Peace is None of Your Business* is another slap in the world's chops, and I am looking forward to his upcoming appearance in Glasgow.

Andrew Schirmer says

Oh, it was a good read, good read
It was a good read, good read
It was a good read, good read
Oh-oh,
It was a good read, good read
It was a good read, good read
Oh, it was a good read, good read
Oh oh oh oh o
Oh, it was a good read
It was a good read
Oh, a good read
Oh, it was a good read
Good read, good read
Oh
It was a good read...

Mariel says

From nowhere comes the California cobra chords of *Run run run* by Jo Jo Gunne and *Heaven must have sent you* by the Elgins- wide variables on an open pitch, all adapting to different listeners- the well and the ill. All of this starts me, and I cannot stop. If I can barely speak (which is true), then I shall surely sing.

The fields run to the edges of the pages, gilded leaves tucked as a mark between to say, to someone (anyone?) this is still happening. Haircuts bob up and down in television seas. They are breathed on colors of don't do that. They still say, somewhere. The 1960s Manchester is wide open mouth in front of television baby. Heart in it and breath holding. The poets live in your heart and they say, they say. Everyone is on, tonight. They will have their say. I was moved. Morrissey could speak to me about families inside of tv with tucked in faces, cared about. Where streets hold in that someday they won't be able to say but right now, and right now is forever, his sister is tormented by a gaping chorus of the big bad teachers from Pink Floyd's The Wall. When he writes of the shatters of A.E. Housman, the heart shards not picked up but shadows casted. You could live this way, another. This was the Morrissey book of my dreams when he sings this way. He writes of the price of everything happening this way forever. The feeling I had most of all:

The written word is an attempt at completeness when there is no one impatiently awaiting you in a dimly lit bedroom- awaiting your tales of the day, as the healing hands of someone who *knew* turn to you and touch you, and you lose yourself so completely in another that you are momentarily delivered from yourself. Whispering across the pillow comes a kind voice that might tell you how to get out of difficulties, from someone who might mercifully detach you from your complications. When there is no matching of lives, and we live on a strict diet of the self, the most intimate bond can be with the words that we write.

He asks if you can live this way and live. Can you have it both ways? asked not as a question but something to come back to every day. I think you can, if you continue to ask.

I loved the way it comes back to life. When it meant everything, still meaning. New York Dolls a secret just for me. No, no, no. David Bowie wouldn't have been better off dead without the EMI America years on the bed-board. Oh, Morrissey. Wait, but that didn't happen. But didn't you always say? So that you never said, now, that you loved Sandie Shaw? I wouldn't be surprised if Autobiography will later be reissued as alliances fall in and out of place. For now he still likes Nancy Sinatra and Michael Stipe. There were some things I never knew (or forgot). Johnny Marr gave him the Moz nickname ("Misery Mozzery"). Once I was told it was the custom to take the first two letters of a name and pair it with the Z for an instant British nickname. At least that was the excuse of a (apparently) friend for saddling me with "Maz". Maz wants answers on that one. At the risk of ruining a carefully cultivated reputation as supremely cool person, I had a lot of "Hey, wait a minute" moments when something I thought I knew about The Smiths or Morrissey history was contradicted. It is a virtue to know a lot about Morrissey. I cry these words to sleep. It is exactly like in Trainspotting when it was (Renton said it wasn't but do we care what he thinks?) a virtue to know a lot about Sean Connery. He was friends (sorta) with the mother of one of the Hindley and Brady victims. I could've sworn pitch forks were brought to door over misunderstandings of their track "Suffer little children". My

third eye doesn't see eye to eye with the mother or Morrissey on Hindley's completely illegal extended stay in prison roving sense of justice. The UK "got lucky" that she died when she did. Does anyone want to leave that ugly door open that the infamy of a criminal could keep them in prison indefinitely, if people remember to be mad forever? It terrifies me if the end of sentence could be ignored. They may not have admired Lord Longford for fighting to uphold the law but I sure as hell did. For all that, I loved the Morrissey view on his home. I had the feeling more than anything that he still lived there. It comes up as a voice he wants to listen to because he keeps hearing it that he cannot love who he will, be who he is. Because if you were that way you did not belong. I had the feeling that it never happened because he did it and he lived anyway. It is a curious book that way. I wonder if he could care that much that if you were gay back then you did not belong there.

This is getting away from me. Flash back to waiting for the shows where people could be happy to come on. Some other place to live. I don't know if I ever related to Morrissey more than when it happened again. Telling it when he already expected it to happen is exactly how it feels even more than the first time. He could just stand somewhere and it is go ahead and do it and time stops and at the same time you want to throw yourself away or throw them away. My parents say you are a bad influence. We can't be friends anymore. What are you going to do? It is choose your own adventure of wounds. Yeah, they are right about me. They used to run the streets, young. Somewhere to live as a home. Something happened with his friend's older brother. He wanted something. Morrissey had a nannie who was used up and she had had this final wish. It didn't come true. I loved this when it was still happening. The history wrote itself of music biz stuff didn't send me much anywhere. I don't feel much of anything about if anyone ever had a number one record. Some time ago it became a bit of a tradition when listening to his song "I Like You" (from You are the Quarry) for my sister and I to belt out "Magistraaaaaates who spend their liiiiiives hiding their mistakes! They look at you and I....and envy makes them crrrrrrrrrry" with a "What the hell does that have to do with anything?" of our own (and, of course, the earlier "lonely high court judges" lyric). I didn't mind it too much because I was expecting there to be a lot of bitching about the court cases brought to Morrissey by former The Smiths band mates. If you love Morrissey too then this won't come off as a backhanded compliment (I hope) to say that Autobiography is every bit the book I was expecting it to be. The hilarious bitchy Morrissey from interviews is Mozzer as much as the voice turned inside your heart and his. Eyes shut and open. If you could live this way by always asking and its falling down every day. All of the kings of hearts put it back together again. Something like that. I can be so happy listening to "Sister I'm a Poet".

*Others sang your life
But now is a chance to shine
And have the pleasure of
Saying what you mean
Have the pleasure of
Meaning what you sing
Oh, make no mistake my friend
All of this will end
So sing it now (sing your life)
All the things you loathe
Oh, sing your life
The things that you love
And the things you loathe (sing your life)
Oh, sing oh...
Oh, sing oh...*

Who am I kidding? Morrissey could sing on The Smiths tune "Wonderful Woman" that "I do not walk I run"

(any pairing of words meant will do) and I know that he could make me believe anything. This means the world to me this voice that means it. I have had in the back of my mind from other Morrissey books that he was making connections. Some thing about the big scary magistrates who he holds responsible for the end of Oscar Wilde. One time I had this feeling that he didn't hold on to his friends as a wish fulfillment of the cold circle around Wilde. I am not all that curious about his life, really, but in the moment of happening forever. The voice in front of your eyes is the details. My feeling was that he doesn't really have one. (I'm not too sure how I feel about that. Sad, I guess, that he sits in front of windows just like I do.) I related to the connections he made in fear of what happens next. When you float home on the musical purchase (I remember everything about days of buying some of those old Cure albums) and there follows a magic of staying up at three in the morning to hear the same song that you just know you will never get enough of. I can be so happy playing "Hairdresser on Fire" and driving on deserted streets of night. Nothing has to come after that because there is held within you someone else. They are happening too. I don't know how to describe that feeling, really. But I love it. I had that feeling of Morrissey that he had that and that was my favorite part of Autobiography. I hoped and hoped for that and the dream came true. (I also loved his youthful trips to the USA to stay with relative Mary. The swampy walkway of frogs. It could have been a moat you had to cross to get to a princess castle only it was a frog covered walkway to murder and horror. Still, seemed a fairy tale even as I'm sure it rather horrible.) (Was Morrissey born a vegetarian? Of course he makes it appear this way.) I loved this book even though a lot of it was boring. Yeah, a lot of it was damned boring. That hardly matters. Even when he was annoying he made me laugh. He probably lied a lot or talked about stuff that didn't matter but does that matter if the voice speaks to you? I wish he wrote novels. I would read his book if he wrote about Manchester. I'd listen to him forever.

Arhondi says

I would never think that I would rate a book written by my teenage idol, Morrissey, with just 2 stars, but it's true. He clearly does know how to write a sentence and his vocabulary is more than fancy and surely enough, can put a lot of English people digging up their dictionaries. He does know his British culture. However, his self absorbed side gets the best of him. That being said, I take it only as an aspect of his well crafted persona, that he has struggled to create since he was a young boy and is still very much maintaining. Nevertheless, there are some parts which are very moving: in describing how music saved him, the pain of losing dear friends and family. Between all the layers of self image, you can see the glimpse of the man who said the Smiths was like reading his diary in public and gave music some of its finest lyrics ever. An alternative title could be "Please, keep me in mind".

Michael says

It has been some considerable time since I have hated a book as much as this one, as is evidenced by the amount of time it took me to finish it.

It starts off promisingly enough, with a colourful description of the Manchester of Morrissey's childhood, and some accounts of the television programmes, music and poets that inspired him. That first 20% of the book was actually pretty good - it clearly was the section of the book that he spent the most time on, and it was interesting to read his influences and his passion and enthusiasm for others' work.

The next 30% of the book was taken up with his time in The Smiths. The band forms in the space of a couple of pages, and then proceeds to record each album in turn. We don't get much background about where the ideas for songs come from, and there aren't even many anecdotes about the band themselves. I'm not clear whether Morrissey thinks that his fans will have gleaned that information elsewhere, but the book dwells very little on the band themselves, and instead begins its descent into acrimony and bitterness.

Throughout the career of the Smiths we are constantly reminded of the band's failings, and Morrissey spends a not inconsiderable amount of the book listing all of the people who are to blame, and in what way. You can be left in absolutely no doubt about his feelings towards the management at Rough Trade, as almost every 2-3 pages there will be some bitter reminder about their failure to promote the band, or their latest album.

The Smiths have split up about halfway through the book, and there follows about 20% following Morrissey's solo career following the break-up. This is similarly peppered with complaints and frustration with others, and disappointment with his career trajectory. No matter how stratospheric his success is, and how many packed concerts he plays in front of, there remains no end of people to blame for things not being better.

It's a frustratingly tedious story, and Morrissey will occasionally complain about a celebrity blanking him, or walking away rather than talk to him. But, the thing is, based on this book, I'd walk away. He seems like an odious, self-absorbed, masochistic, pompous arsehole, who doesn't seem prepared to take any responsibility for anything that has gone wrong in his life. I've never read anything by someone with such an over-inflated sense of self-entitlement. I mean, don't get me wrong, I thought that Morrissey was going to be "a bit mopey" before I read this, but I had no idea that he took the concept to Olympic levels. This is an unbearable whinge writ large, and published by fucking Penguin Classics, for Christ's sake.

Anyway, we're not done. Throughout the book up to this point, we have been treated to a series of signposts to some future event, which is hinted at as representing the most terrible betrayal in the life of Morrissey. The most clunking of these being the quote;

Could things get any worse? Why, yes, little one. Be patient.

What will it be? Was he spurned by a lover? (No. It seems Morrissey is virtually sexless.) Was he haunted by a ghost while out driving on a moor? (Yes, but that isn't it.) Did he get injured by poorly secured light fittings at a gig because a roadie wanted to put him out of his misery? (Sadly not.)

No, most of the book is spent building up to the court case where the ex-drummer of the Smiths sued Morrissey for lack of earnings. A full 10% of the book is taken up with this court case and the subsequent appeal, and it is easily one of the most tedious things I've read in my life. Morrissey entirely dispenses with the florid style that he's used in the book up to this point, and begins dispensing pseudo-legal jargon. The worst examples of which are Morrissey's points rebutting the decision of the Judge at the initial court case. For example;

On page 6, Weeks refers to Arthur Young accountants being instructed to do the partnership and the company accounts and highlights a meeting in the spring of 1984 at which Mr Morrissey was 'surprised' to see Rourke and Joyce in attendance and states that Arthur Young were also Marr's representatives.

It's hardly *shoplifters of the world, unite and take over* is it?

Once we've got past the court case (and believe me, Morrissey has clearly never got past the court case), we

get the interminable final passage of the book. The final 20% of the book were apparently transcribed from a tour diary that Morrissey began writing in the couple of years before he decided to cobble together this mess of a book. It's a tedious list of tour dates and capacities that rounds off the book in a muted, pathetic fart to try to glean some attention and remain relevant.

Matt says

PENGUIN BOOKS: So Moz, can you give us an idea of what your proposed autobiography will be like?

MORRISSEY: A Manchester childhood of misery upon melancholy upon misfortune, devoid of glamor, absent any hint of human kindness or scrap of salvation save the New York Dolls and Ziggy Stardust unfit for occupations of any sort with death at every door in a society where molesting children is fit for barristers and barons but animals are abused without mercy so I stood up and left Nancy Sinatra at the table when she ordered frog's legs and finally I was introduced to Johnny Marr who played guitar like an angel when he wasn't slipping into the night for musical infidelities with the Pretenders and hand in glove stop me if you've heard this one before in a cramped Virgin records store heavy on prog music and student notice boards how soon is now when I gleefully and ignorantly signed any piece of paper that was set before me and please please please let me get what I want Top of the Pops sold-out tours records debuting at #1 so where is the money for Morrissey? hello America conspiring behind my back to replace me and strangeways here we come it was over and don't expect that I will apologize to the Queen sexless drugless joyless days and nights and Joyce asking for 25% so many years after the fact when the paper clearly said 10% and where was the 25% to come from and the original money funded the tours in the first place Michael Stipe solo records EMI Sire Records swallowed up in the rotating mass horse-hockey claptrap Oscar Wilde and fall sideways into the water like someone directed by Billy Wilder so don't expect chapters or even paragraph returns.

PENGUIN BOOKS: Right then.

Anna K?avi?a says

I'm fan of Morrissey and *The Smiths* however I'm not much into celebrity personal life and so I knew next to nothing about him or the band before reading this book.

But, of course, I'd heard of Morrissey being self-centred and arrogant prick but while reading and googling a lot, I come to conclusion that's bullshit. And now, I how to say that after reading his autobiography, I've found him likeable and all kind of awesome human being. And he can write

I expected it to be bleak read and while sometimes it was, it was because he was writing about sad or hard times in his life (his years in school, deaths of loved ones...) but what I didn't expect was that Morrissey has such a great sense of humour and warmth.

And while some might be disappointed that he doesn't reveal much personal stuff and secrets in his autobiography, however if you're to look closer, than his sharings with his thoughts, opinions and musings of that and that, are more revealing than let's say Roald Dahl's autobiography.

BTW, I've never believed accusations that Morrissey is a racist (hello, listen to his songs.) One accuser of

Morrissey being a racist says "*Morrissey didn't help his case with an uneasy flirtation with gangster imagery: he took up boxing and was accompanied everywhere by a skinhead, named Jake...*" Let, me LOL because in his autobiography Morrissey leads us to understand that Jake was his partner.

Clint says

Morrissey is the most infuriating, arrogant, self-pitying drama queen you will ever come across, and he rules so hard. This book is a train wreck, it has no organization (no chapters!), the first paragraph is about ten pages long, there are tons of references to his own songs, tons of hokey alliteration, his command of Mexican-American slang is just pitiful, he suddenly, and frequently goes off on tangents totally unrelated to what he's talking about at any certain point (like, for example, he'll just in mid paragraph just launch into a review of some stage actress, or a certain tv show, or some dead relative and awful it was when she died, then go back to talking about music), etc etc etc etc. BUT, if you're like me and you think Morrissey is one of the most interesting humans around, that his wit and critical eye are unmatched, or if you'd just like to know what Morrissey thinks about Morrissey, this book is completely awesome.

Though, after like, what, 500 pages, I still don't actually know more facts than I did before, except that the Smiths trial, Joyce vs Marr/ Morrissey, really does look like a total farce. I love the shit out of Morrissey, and if it were up to me, he'd just be forced into a room to write ten more books just like this.

James says

A good chunk of this is great. Well-written, insightful, throws up some interesting historical/personal context for Morrissey's creative work, and accurately reflects his presumed personality. The fact that he continues a despairing attitude from the description of his younger years right through the lifetime of The Smiths is understandable, and the in-depth analysis of the music important to him growing up points to why he would so obsessively note down every chart position of his career.

However, the book and I part ways when it reaches the point of the infamous court case in 1996, where Morrissey and Marr are sued for Smiths royalties. I am convinced it is a legal travesty, but devoting such a large chunk of the book to it seems entirely disproportionate. It also demonstrates Morrissey's self-justification, childish pettiness, and inability to see that it is his entirely alterable attitudes that cost him much in his life (being a vegetarian - fine, healthy, laudable. Stropping off in silence if someone else is eating meat - juvenile.) It does, however, provide a useful shorthand reference for why there will never be a reunion.

Plus, this shift in emphasis completely overwhelms the personal insight in the latter half of the book, surely more interesting than settling scores. It does seem like a lack of editing, particularly when the tenses begin to muddle and the account of his latter-day touring is aimless and makes the same points repetitively. The book ends at the end of 2011, which is a shame, since accounts of his 2013 illness and tour cancellations would

have been valuable. And while it is hard to provide a conclusion to a life you are still living, a better ending is required.

I can recommend the first half of the book readily. However, if you leave the book when Marr leaves The Smiths, you can't be blamed, since from then on it is probably only fit for the fans and the masochists.

Antonomasia says

The beginning of *Autobiography* made me notice how much I'd changed in the 15 or so months between the book's release and getting round to reading the thing. In late 2013 I was still entrenched in ideas from psychology that I'd read 3-5 years earlier and was judgemental with it (albeit less so out loud). Though becoming less judgemental was also related to one branch of that, as the person-centred process gradually worked its magic. I had found Morrissey's writing at the beginning of the book eloquent but quite 'unhealthy' – didn't make a note of how, but chances are that 'narcissistic' had something to do with it. (The book was also personally difficult at that point because of at least two sets of memories it stirred up, so best left for a while.) Fast forward a year and a little bit, and it so obviously read as free indirect style. Like, duh! *Rolls eyes at all these people who can't see art beyond that 'healthy' / 'unhealthy' dichotomy which is itself pretty 'unhealthy', inflexible, closed minded and unempathic... but yeah, I was kind of one of you for a little while, even if I rarely wrote it down.*

Plenty of great quotes from *Autobiography* have been posted by others.

But a few things that struck me from the earlier, better, part of the book. Themselves autobiographical – the usual recursive loop.

- It was interesting hearing 60s and 70s TV shows talked about by someone who didn't fancy women. I'm amused by quite a lot of the currently unfashionable cult comedies of that era; conversations I've had about their merits always seem to be me and one or two straight / bi men, who either like it as retro as I do, or remember it from the time. I've read criticism of these shows from straight women who were around at the time (I find it disappointingly delineated by gender and sexuality) but no other perspectives before. Morrissey talks of light entertainment shows with a mixture of neutrality and affection... but no lust for all those dollybirds (as they were shown), which absence without anger was novel. Instead his anxiety was that in 60s/70s TV land *effeminate men are very witty, whereas macho men are duller than death...either one thing or another, but never both, and the world loves a man who can fight.*

- I was jealous of young Moz being allowed to go to gigs in his early teens. Whilst this retrospective article about violence at 1970s and 80s gig somewhat contextualises parental anxiety, it's still one of the bits of my upbringing I'm most resentful about because, whilst friendship is something that can still be enjoyed later – and better without teenage angst – and films can always be seen any time these days, live gigs only happened at particular moments in time, they were part of a scene and music sounds freshest when you're young, not just derivative of a dozen other things you heard years ago. It was no Sex Pistols at the Free Trade Hall, but at least there was one good 'un: got to be one of the first few hundred people to hear a now-iconic Blur song.

- Is there something about people who are indie outsiders being good sprinters? (Like Moz.) Or am I making that up from personal experience, and a handful of interviews I've read and people I've known, conversations that stuck with me because I identified with what was said? If short distances are your forte you don't do so well as part of those packs of people who do 10ks and marathons: it doesn't fit anywhere post-school unless people are national standard, and it's a type of strength that suits individual sports more than teams. Even at

school it's a very internalised, solitary, (unless a relay) and belligerent experience because there's no time to look around and ponder and exchange glances: you just fucking *run* and it's all your mind and your legs and the ground and nothing else. Does it augment bloody-mindedness?

- In Morrissey's schooldays, kids had a higher chance of being subjected to sadistic and sexually creepy teachers than in mine (both extreme ends of the class spectrum seem to have been worst for this; at the top, in boys' public schools it was other kids as well).

I didn't enjoy a lot of my time at school, but in the last few years I've realised how lucky I actually was. The staff encouraged mediocrity, but it now seems remarkable the extent to which other kids didn't actively bother me. A quote from Anthony Powell about his school struck a chord: "would rank high in any competition for dearth of cultural enlightenment...Nothing picturesquely horrible ever happened to me there, though I should be unwilling to live five minutes of it again." People older than me, from whom I've heard a few horror stories, and my own contemporaries who battled through sink schools to escape with heroically decent A Levels had a far worse time than I did.

- I loved the style with which he wrote about Manchester and the surrounding area – but having seen a lot of these places, it's evident how much his descriptions are imbued with his own experiences and the feeling of the times. (There are places I hated as a kid that I'd be vicious about if I wrote about them, after all, whilst plenty of people like those same areas and would be flummoxed by my negativity.) The moors, for instance, he makes sound like Siberia – has he actually been anywhere further north, I felt like asking. But being the age he is, and from where he's from, it would have been impossible not to associate them with gruesome crimes.

I thought the first 30% of *Autobiography* excellently written, then, just as it's getting into the section about The Smiths, it caved.

Pasting a recent comment of mine here, from a friend's review of *List of the Lost*:

"when I'd read Mark Simpson's *Saint Morrissey*, I to all intents and purposes went 'OMG I was going out with straight Morrissey', so similar were the personality, opinions etc of that particular ex, who did wordplay in just the same style without ever copying actual content. (i.e. It wasn't like Sebastian Horsley re-using Quentin Crisp's aphorisms pretty much word for word). Except the thing with ex was that it was rather difficult to understand the meaning, every email like a puzzle. Phrases that caught the eye like gems, but whilst transfixed by their beauty I didn't know what the hell I was supposed to understand."

And nine years later, here is Moz himself producing material with exactly the same effect - it's what the Guardian review seemed to be saying, and I could see it from reading the amazon sample too. I am still a bit confounded [where's a jawdrop emoticon when you need one]: it feels both staggering and deeply predictable.

And he did talk like that... Even at 4 o'clock in the bloody morning. It was very hard work to keep up with if I wasn't at my absolute best."

... After that magic 30%, there were many lines I could imagine him writing: metaphors that sounded fantastic but didn't entirely make sense.

I'd love to hear the opinions of people who were old enough to know the early 80s UK indie scene, as to whether Morrissey's assertions about of Rough Trade's image prior to the Smiths signing is accurate. *they were not a hip label... the hysterical intellectual spinster image that the label had considered so confrontational until 'Hand in Glove' shattered their afternoons of wok rotas, poetry workshops and 'Woman's Hour'*

Rants: one of the key words in discussions of Morrissey's writing.

The obsessive rants, and their interruption of narrative flow, became embarrassing in this book. Sometimes because of self-recognition. But this isn't an off-the-cuff forum post, or a stressed email to a close friend - it's a published book, accorded the honour of a fucking Penguin Classic on its first printing. These rants needed a lot more editing and self-awareness. I don't want to be cringing when Morrissey writes about Oscar Wilde, for goodness sake. That should be a great read. And the length about which he went on about what he considers the most important album ever ... oh dear. (New York Dolls of course.)

And then the infamous rant about the court case. Phrased for all the world like he wants the reader to represent him at appeal. (Sorry hun, I'm long -term sick, I can't, though I see your point.) What I remember from the 90s – though I didn't hunt out old music press stories - basically recurred to me whilst reading his diatribe: Morrissey could have been a bit more generous and tried to settle out of court. Afterwards, he was still able to move to the street Johnny Depp lived on, *and* whilst he had no label and didn't appear to be doing anything much. However, the verdict was bizarre and I'd long thought of Joyce as an unethical opportunist. Hundreds of thousands of people are stuck with contracts which are morally unfair though legally could not be found to be so. He didn't appear to have a learning difficulty that could justify his misunderstanding, any more than thousands of teenagers getting their first job who thought they'd *receive* £6 p/h, not having realised about the tax. Nor was there any mention of circumstances that could justify the pursuit of the claim regardless, like disability in himself, children or other relatives. I don't think anyone came out of that episode well.

After that I thought the book picked up again. It's a starry touring life only a few thousand know first hand, perhaps not so appealing to the average reader, but the writing IMO improves, to 90% of the standard of what it was in the first 30%.

This book wasn't as much of a disappointment as it was for many. The Smiths had always been a 4-star kind of band for me. I liked them, but, apart from a few favourite songs they weren't *part of my soul*. I'd have had a good story if they were: as a teenager my first Smiths album was a cassette from the public library, which I borrowed one birthday and took home to listen to alone. How very Morrissey. But apart from 'Rubber Ring' there was nothing to cling to in the way the music papers always said there might be. (I might have accumulated more Morrissey solo tracks among my favourites than Smiths songs. Hm. 'The Teachers Are Afraid of the Pupils' is a magnificent sound. 'Maladjusted'. The solemn sauciness of 'Alsatian Cousin'... never was there an album with so many great and so many terrible songs as *Viva Hate. Ringleaders* probably the only Moz album I'd still listen to straight through.) More than an emotional lifeline they were a gathering totem for finding people who I might get on with, who also liked other things I liked more. As a student, anyway, before that point when Smiths fandom became so ubiquitous it seemed as rare as a degree from any UK university; many of the songs have become national musical wallpaper and it takes a relative obscurity, maybe 'Oscillate Wildly', to send a shiver down the spine still.

[Review cobbled together from old notes, Oct 2015. Whilst listening to Roxy Music - Moz would not approve.]

karen says

a conversation i just had with morrissey:

k -

gak!! someone just got me this book all the way from england, and i really really really want to read it immediately, but i have so freaking many books i have already promised to read. what am i supposed to do??? when am i going to get a chance to read this?? i am super-anxious and depressed over this, moz!

m -

my love, wherever you are?
whatever you are, don't lose faith
?i know it's gonna happen?
someday, to you

please wait
?please wait
?oh wait?
don't lose faith

you say that the day just never arrives
?and it's never seemed so far away
?still, i know it's gonna happen
?someday, to you

please wait?
don't lose faith.

k -

wow, that makes sense. thanks, man. seriously, thanks.

martha says

Like a great number of people who have read this book, I am a long-time and ardent Smiths/Morrissey fan. I had been waiting for this book to be published even before I knew there would actually ever be one. With that said, there were a lot of things I liked about it, but also some which I didn't care for.

I once read an interview with Morrissey where he said that everything people needed to know about him was already in his songs, after reading "Autobiography" I truly believe it now. They are definitely autobiographical in nature, all of them. I often found myself reading and realizing that particular moments he wrote about in the book, were possibly the inspiration for certain songs. The book opens with him talking about the Manchester of his childhood and the first 160 pages or so are simply wonderful. I often felt like I was getting a peek into Morrissey's private childhood diaries.

The detail in which he describes Manchester, his family, childhood and adolescence, made me feel as though I was reading a novel because the manner in which he describes everything truly pulls you in, just like any

great novel does. I enjoyed reading about his upbringing because it gave such a great insight into why he is the person that he is today. So many of his obsessions and passions stem from his childhood, such as his fascination with James Dean (his uncle, whom he was close to, was a fan of his and like Dean, he too died young and when Morrissey was still a child). Though a lot of people have criticized his long sentences and few paragraph breaks, those were the things I enjoyed the most. It was complete stream of consciousness writing and it often reminded me of James Joyce's writing style. As I read it, I truly felt the authenticity in his words. It's written in his voice.

The manner in which he writes about the angst he felt at feeling trapped in a life he knew wasn't meant for him, truly resonated with the adolescent in me from long ago. Yet, the thing that stood out the most and perhaps the one thing many fail to see in his music as well, is his humor. He is very funny and sometimes, as he describes something in the book, either serious or sad, he manages to poke fun at himself and a particular situation. I found myself laughing out loud many times as I read. I also enjoyed learning about his deep loyalty towards those whom he loves and cares about, and it's obvious that when he loves people he is very loyal and kind. It made me understand why when he feels betrayed or hurt he goes after people with a vengeance!

While he definitely used this book to settle some old scores, I didn't enjoy reading so much of that. However, I will say that I appreciated his honesty in conveying exactly what he feels and thinks about people, men and women alike, whom he deems worthy of his animosity. He doesn't hold back and his words are daggers. When he writes about those whom he loves, his words are equally as intense but incredibly tender and loving. I would've simply have preferred less of the angry words. I also didn't always like the detail in which he wrote about certain films or television programs. I felt those things dragged the book down, and it would've been preferable for him to write in that much detail about experiences or feelings that inspired some of his songs. It would've also had been great to learn more about him and Johnny Marr as a songwriting team. He has mostly praise for Johnny when he mentions him, which is why the letter Johnny wrote to him after The Smiths split, was one of the saddest things for me to read in the book.

Towards the end, the book feels rushed and as though it was a different book from the first half. It seemed like there hadn't been as much thought put into it and the prose wasn't as eloquent as it had been in the first part of it, that was disappointing. I wish his life as an adult had been written with as much detail as his life as a child and teen, but perhaps the reason he chose not to was because "Whatever is sung is the case" (this is written in the acknowledgements page).

Although, it's fair to say that he didn't shy away from revealing the good and the bad as well as his shortcomings and the insecurities he feels. I wonder how many of us, if given the opportunity to publish our autobiography, would reveal a greater amount of the good versus the not so good. "Autobiography" is definitely worth reading but if you don't have the time nor the inclination to read nearly 500 pages, simply listen to his music. It's all there.

Daniel says

"Whatever is sung is the case."

The first hundred or so pages of *Autobiography* are poetry of a kind and Morrissey is at his captivating best when setting the scenes of his youth, or when pouring over the beauty in the art of others; they read as the

greatest of (once) unpublished reviews. Particularly affecting is his recounting of loss and death. Those who own part of his heart falling to time and chance, and his expressed pain moved me in a way unexpected of so few words (but, like a poet, isn't that his art-form?).

The High Court garners fifty pages of written attention. For a moment in time which saw him on the fuzzy end of judicial verbal castigation (and in the public domain no less), and to have his future income slashed and the achievements of both he and Marr shared equally among session-like contributors must have proved particularly difficult. It's somewhat surprising he can stop at fifty pages. You wanted him to talk about The Smiths? This is what he thinks of The Smiths. Achievements now tainted. Achievements withered down into the sludge of a court case.

I liked the vitriol he employed when describing other participants in his life. Those participants who stomped upon his wrong side. It's funny. It's also cruel, true. Almost vile. But funny. I've read very few experiences of laughter by those who have read this book. I can't have been the only one. Morrissey doesn't debase himself at any time, but humility is touched upon, flirted with, if only briefly. To be more precise: if anything, there's a lack of ego, especially as pertains to his work. At best he'll note his favourite tracks and bemoan their eventual chart position, but that's about it. Why *Suffer Little Children's We will haunt you when you laugh / Yes, you could say we're a team* doesn't receive mention as the greatest and most haunting of written lyrics is beyond me.

While the book's structure is that of a chapterless beast - almost paragraphless - it does lose some pace in the final stretch. That's not to say its quality falters, but the banality of touring is only defeated by a wonderfully articulated appreciation of his position and experiences (there's a particularly beautiful moment where he describes a blind Brazilian girl being "place[d] gently" upon his stage by a Sao Paulo crowd and she passes him a note that reads: "I cannot see you, but I love you"). To end, there's a Morrissey book - or sections of a book - that I wanted. I wanted a thesis on the creation of melody. Dear reader, I am only human; I wanted the tale of his first wank. His first everything. I wanted the future. His family. His children. His health. His death. What I got, however, was everything he felt important. This suffices. I can only judge what he has presented us with. Its "Classic" status is all posture and theatre, but it is a sensational read nonetheless.

If like me you want more of his soul to fawn over then there's always the music: "This microphone is my headstone."

Amar Pai says

zzzzzzzz. skimming thru this with alacrity. it's not like I was expecting "Life" by Keith Richards but come on moz, you're gonna spend half the book moaning about how much school sucked ? I could take it in song ("Beligerent ghools / run Manchester schools") but the saving grace of the smiths was morrissey's sense of humor , which is nowhere to be found in this autobio. just page after page of dour pseudo literary posturing about Manchester, Oscar Wilde, etc. so. boring. now I know how Joan of arc felt...

Lucy Banks says

I actually read this book a while back - and decided today would be the day to leave a review.

Firstly, a disclaimer... I am a die-hard Smiths fan. So much so, that I actually have a tattoo of Morrissey's face on my left calf. So, it's probably not a surprise to see that I rate this book highly. However, just to clarify, had the book been appalling, I wouldn't have. See, I may love the great man himself, but I am also able to be objective. Ahem.

Anyway - it's a fabulously entertaining book. Morrissey proves himself to be every bit as lyrical and poetic in his prose as he is in his songwriting - with some beautifully evocative lines that almost slip into Dickensian elegance at times. The start is especially strong, and he really puts you in the heart of Manchester, immersing you in the culture of the times.

There are a few places where the book goes off the boil slightly (the lengthy court descriptions do drag a bit - though Morrissey's emotional response is clearly so raw about it all - you can't help but feel sorry for him), but overall, it's a great read.

Tosh says

A great memoir needs a strong character who writes, and Morrissey takes that role to the maximum. Overall each page has a quotable sentence or two, and the way he constructs his sentences is a beauty in form. The narrative is not important but its the way he tells the tale, and that he does very well.

A long-time fan or student of Morrissey will not learn anything new. He does get personal in his own way regarding his love life, which is vague, but one is allowed to connect the dots. There are people through out his life that is very important to him. In fact he has two sets of individuals that he cares for. The people he knows, and the people he admires, which are mostly film and music icons of sorts. Some are more famous than others, but they're interesting because his admiration for these artists are sort of a clue to what makes Morrissey tick.

Sadly there is no index of names in the book, because his reading and listening taste is very interesting. He's very much a curator of taste, his taste mind you, but I consider that one of highest talents is to both expose these artists, as well as trying to figure how they influenced him. His great admiration for New York Dolls and Sparks makes perfect sense when you hear his music. I think Morrissey learned a lot from those two bands with respect to lyric writing, and also the same for various British poets. Besides his appreciation for French pop music artists, it seems he doesn't make any comments on foreign literature - meaning non-English language books. Except perhaps Pasolini, but I am not sure if that is an appreciation for his films more than his writing.

The only drag in this book is him writing about the trial between him and the drummer of The Smiths. He goes on many pages in detail about this case, which was a major event for him. But I suspect for most readers it is just a case of money disagreement. But even that, he writes with incredible passion, almost over-the-top and its kind of amazing piece of the book in its way. I am going to have to presume that his editor at Penguin probably wanted him to cut this section out ,but I am glad that he stuck to his principal to keep it in. It tells more about his passion, and this book is about passion.

The first part of the book is Charles Dickens circa Manchester 1970's. His description of the sadistic gym teachers are right on the button - because i too suffered from these goons in the 70's (Morrissey and I are roughly around the same age), so I found it fascinating that even in America, had weird sex perverted gym teachers as well. It was an international problem! The way he paints his school years and the early

Manchester punk scene is heartfelt and picturesque. You can smell the grayness of the landscape off the pages. Also his commentary on various people are hysterical and sometimes mean - but it is like having Noel Coward tearing into someone. Morrissey has a sharp tongue that brings out even sharper words to the page.

Overall the book could have used a tighter editor, but in the end of the day (or night) this is a fantastic book that i think will please the Morrissey fans, as well as anyone wanting to read about the music scene of the era of The Smiths and solo Morrissey.
