



It's Okay to Laugh (Crying Is Cool, Too)

Nora McInerny Purmort

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Joining the ranks of *Let's Pretend This Never Happened* and *Carry On, Warrior*, a fierce, hysterically funny memoir that reminds us that comedy equals tragedy plus time.

Twentysomething Nora McInerney Purmort bounced from boyfriend to boyfriend and job to job. Then she met Aaron, a charismatic art director and her kindred spirit. They made mix tapes (and pancakes) into the wee hours of the morning. They finished each other's sentences. They just *knew*. When Aaron was diagnosed with a rare brain cancer, they refused to let it limit their love. They got engaged on Aaron's hospital bed and married after his first surgery. They had a baby when he was on chemo. They shared an amazing summer filled with happiness and laughter. A few months later, Aaron died in Nora's arms in another hospital bed. His wildly creative obituary, which they wrote together, touched the world.

Now, Nora shares hysterical, moving, and painfully honest stories about her journey with Aaron. *It's OK to Laugh* explores universal themes of love, marriage, work, (single) motherhood, and depression through her refreshingly frank viewpoint. A love letter to life, in all of its messy glory, and what it's like to still be kickin', *It's OK to Laugh* is like a long chat with a close friend over a cup of coffee (or chardonnay).

It's Okay to Laugh (Crying Is Cool, Too) Details

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From Reader Review It's Okay to Laugh (Crying Is Cool, Too) for online ebook

Kristina says

I have a friend who just had a double mastectomy and when I expressed to her, "My heart hurts for you." Her response back was, "It's okay. I have learned in my life that if we were all to take our problems out and put on the table for all to see, we would gladly keep our own." This book expresses just that idea. Her losses are greater than mine. However, how she felt feels the same. I was glad I read this book. It was good timing for me. She kept it real. And it had a nice balance of funny and sad.

Woody Swear scale-woody probs wouldn't like the swearing. It's not over he top tho. And in many cases those are the only words to express what she went through.

Sara Mutchler says

I started reading this book on a Tuesday morning, with my coffee. By the time I got halfway through I decided I needed something stronger and so I finished the book on a Friday night, with a glass (or 2) of white wine.

If you don't know the premise of the book, here it is in a nutshell: Nora experienced the loss of her unborn baby, her father, and her husband, all within weeks of each other. This book reads like a series of essays that jumps around a bit but all fits together perfectly in the end. I will say, however, when I read that last page I shouted "NOOO!" because I wasn't ready to let go of the book.

One of my favorite parts came near the end:

"The world will keep spinning, and your life will get a little bit better every time you give up on the shit that is taking you away from your one wild and precious life."

Because THIS is what the book was about. Sure, it's about grief and loss and pain but also love and hope and family and friendship. And not letting the little things drag us down. To remember that quitting is OK. In fact, quitting oftentimes IS the answer.

Read this book. You won't regret it. And if you're not liking it once you start? Just quit, because that's ok, too.

Elizabeth Jackson says

AUGH, everyone else loved this...I did not. I just wanted her to calm down and tell her story and all the jumping around and grand pronouncements out of nowhere and the glib life lessons inserted at the end of every chapter drove me nuts. I couldn't connect emotionally with it even though I really wanted to. Probably I'm just a robot who is dead inside.

Gianina Bellamy says

There is no wrong place to read this book. Unless you're uncomfortable crying or laughing uncontrollably in public. Then you might want to stay home for this one. The feelings hit early and often, and don't let up until your faith in humanity has been restored.

Nora's writing is honest, hilarious and full of life. You won't want to put it down, but if you do, it's only because you don't want the book to end.

Paul says

This is a deeply felt and not especially well-written memoir. The author deals with the miscarriage of her second child and the death of her husband and father, all within weeks of each other.

While no one would gainsay the words of any person who has survived such crippling tragedies, I was struck by her gallows humor. Her father, on his deathbed, asked her to come closer so he could tell her something, and when she gets near, he tells her she was adopted. Evidently his idea of a great dying joke.

The best parts of this book are in the essay in which the author lists the completely inappropriate and just stupid comments that people make to the newly bereaved, such as, "I felt the same way when my dog died." Or, "You just have to buck up and fight your way through it." These are well-meaning but blockheaded comments that people make because there really is nothing to say to a wife at her husband's funeral. But it doesn't mean you have to say something stupid.

Aside from that excellent chapter, the author makes macabre jokes about the tragic things going on. Her husband tells her he's having a tumor in his brain looked at through an MRI. He says, "The doctor told me it was small." And she quips back, "Your brain or the tumor?" She seems to have inherited her father's sense of humor. After her miscarriage, she asks the question: If you lose a baby, and nobody knew about it in the first place, does it make a sound?

There are continuous references made to Facebook and situation comedies on TV that perfectly capture how she feels in a certain moment. Given that I have all but abandoned Facebook and have seen perhaps one of the dozen or so of the sitcoms/TV dramas that she cites, I was in the dark on this. She seems saturated with popular culture. It might be a generational thing, but I didn't watch TV much even as a child.

She also has some nicely poetic lines, such as "Grief strips you skinless," and a great observation about how children think that all grandparents are born at 75.

A final quibble, and this may just be the professor and copy editor in me talking: She has no idea of the principal parts of the verbs "to lie" and "to lay." She's always laying on the floor or laying in bed.

The best thing about the book is she knows how to describe the hell she's been through, even though it's often with a wise-guy humor.

Julio Ojeda-Zapata says

Ralph the Toddler and I crossed paths for the first (and, so far, only) time at a Minneapolis backyard party last summer.

The little dude was impossible to miss: He nonchalantly picked up a garden hose, engaged the trigger, and proceeded to spray the adult attendees for several seconds until someone intervened.

It was awesome.

Now think about an entire book filled with such awesomeness. Such a book exists ... by the Mother of Ralph herself, Nora McInerny Purmort.

That book has been much anticipated hereabouts, partly because it's a follow-up to the local author's well-known blog, *My Husband's Tumor*.

That blog chronicled Nora's love affair with one Aaron Joseph Purmort amid his horrific and ultimately fatal battle with brain cancer.

Wacky fun, eh?

In Nora's upcoming memoir, "It's Okay to Laugh (Crying is Cool Too)," it surprisingly, definitely is.

Oh, it's sad, too. Very, very sad. So are other events in the author's life, such as the death of her father, and a miscarriage that robbed her of a second kid as her partner succumbed to his illness.

The book's title says it all. At times, you'll want to cry (and, if you are lucky enough to run into the statuesque writer, give her a hug).

But the book is often hilarious. Several times during my stop-everything, in-less-than-a-day devourment of this priceless volume, I threw my head back and guffawed.

Gallows humor: It's my fave.

Nora, a novice author, has a nice, light touch that reminds me of Elizabeth Gilbert (and I am referring more to her charming memoir "Committed: A Love Story" than to its prequel, the wildly overhyped "Eat, Pray, Love").

The book covers a lot of ground. It is about Nora as a wife, as a mother, as a daughter, as a sibling (including to a sister, the amazing Meghan McInerny Wilker), and as an inconsolable but sometimes-horny widow.

I hesitate to say more about Nora's book because I do not want to ruin it for you. Just read it. You won't regret it, even though it is often a total bummer.

And, no, Ralph's hose attack is not in this book ... but maybe it will be in the sequel to what is sure to be a

nonfiction hit of the year, Nora?

Book Riot Community says

I picked up this collection of essays after listening to the first episode of a new podcast from American Public Media, “Terrible, Thanks for Asking.” A couple years ago, McNerny Purmort had a miscarriage, lost her father to cancer, and lost her husband to cancer within just a few months. This book, written after that time, is about grief, family, and survival in the face of really awful life experiences that I found weirdly uplifting and comforting to read during my own season of loss.

— Kim Ukura

from The Best Books We Read In December 2016: <http://bookriot.com/2017/01/03/riot-r...>

Laura.125Pages says

This review was originally posted on www.125pages.com *It's Okay to Laugh: (Crying Is Cool Too)* by Nora McNerny Purmort is a poignant look at young love tempered by the ever present shadow of death. Nora loses a pregnancy, her father and her husband within a six week time frame. What should be an emotional juggernaut is instead a celebration of love, family and strength. Nora and Aaron marry soon after his diagnosis with a rare form of brain cancer and conceive while he is undergoing chemo. Their love burned bright and what was left behind was a widow and mother with the ability to cry and laugh and rise above her pain.

The writing of Nora McNerny Purmort was raw and honest and gave you a true glimpse into her world. *It's Okay to Laugh: (Crying Is Cool Too)* explores what is left behind after the passing of someone much too young. The heartache and pain but also the joy in his life that was well lived until the end. Nora really reached inside herself to offer up a string of essays on what life looks like before, during and after the death of a spouse from a ravaging disease.

While I found myself more on the cry side than the laughter side with this memoir, I still enjoyed the read. Nora McNerny Purmort was open and honest about some very difficult things. Her tone was steady the whole way through *It's Okay to Laugh: (Crying Is Cool Too)* and I was truly immersed in her world. Not an easy read, this was still a read with true heart and a view on hope that definitely resonated with me.

Favorite lines - Grief strips you skinless. Skin is important not just for looks, but because without it, you are just a walking pile of exposed nerve endings. That's really the only way to describe our family right now, a bunch of skinless freaks brushing up against our memories just to feel the pain. This sucks because we used to be a lot of fun.

Have you read *It's Okay to Laugh: (Crying Is Cool Too)*, or added it to your TBR? This book was most likely received free from the publisher/author in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

Amanda Oleson says

This book should be on a required reading list for all living humans. It's a beautifully written account of what happens when shit really hits the fan. It will have you laughing on one page, then weeping on the next. Nora's style of writing is utterly human and easy to relate to - it's like you're sitting and having coffee with your best friend, even if you don't know Nora. (If you don't know Nora, consider knowing her. She's amazing.) Her story is one of epic loss and grief, while clearly demonstrating her utter resilience in her ability to continue to exist as a beautiful human being, and to go on to do amazing things after such a series of awful tragedy. Her advice is spot-on, and she does an amazing job of showing the world that real, big love stories can exist - they just don't always turn out how you expect. Do yourself a favor, and read this book.

Chelsey says

Imagine losing your husband, father and unborn child all in the span of a year when you are 31 years old. Now imagine writing a book about it not long after and still managing to be funny and open about it all. Nora McInerny Purmort is an unapologetic, sassy woman, who went through hell and still made me snort-laugh while reading. She's got a ton of opinions, not all of which I agree with, but I had a hard time putting this down. I really enjoyed this!

megan weisenberger says

This is a beautiful motherfucker of a book that will make you laugh as much as it makes you cry, and will make you want to fiercely hug every single one of your humans to tell them you're so very glad they're in your life.

Ten thousand gold stars to Nora for being vulnerable and open and giving their big love the gloriously-written tribute it deserves.

<3 <3 <3

Lindsi Gish says

In typical Nora fashion, this lovely collection of essays will have you crying with laughter, then of sadness, then of questioning everything, then from sheer gratitude and light. Over and over again. I will read this 100 times over if it keeps me mindful about love and life, and appreciating and accepting each other while we're here. Because none of us, not one, is here for long.

Rebecca Foster says

(3.5) “Being an adult is doing everything before you are ready.” Purmort was hit by a triple whammy of loss: within a matter of weeks of miscarrying her second child, both her father and her husband were dead of cancer. She and Aaron knew what they were up against: after a seizure revealed his Stage IV brain cancer, they got engaged on his hospital bed and went through fertility treatment to have their son, Ralphie. All in all they got three years together, after which the Minneapolis-based author founded what she calls the “Hot Widows Club.” She’s only about my age but, as she puts it, has “been through some shit” and managed to keep going, albeit gracelessly at times.

The book is in the form of short essays, a lot like blog entries, with the trio of losses reverberating again and again. I might have preferred a bit more of a narrative – I wearied of open letters and lists – but individually the pieces are well written, treading the fine line between heartbreak and humor. Chapters 26 and 29 are the two stand-outs, I think. The book is best where she eases up on self-deprecating jokes and pop culture references and just tells her story, so much of which resonates with my sister’s experience of losing her own husband to brain cancer. As soon as I finished the book, I ordered her a copy.

Sydney says

This was an incredibly intimate and vulnerable book so it is hard to write a negative review of it without it seeming like a personal attack on Nora. This one star feels like kicking someone who is already down but I am not going to change my honest review because of potential hurt feelings. Nora admits to reading comment sections about herself and taking them personally. So, Nora, if you are reading this, I’m really sorry that you lost your husband and father and had a miscarriage. Death fucking sucks. It really, really does and my heart goes out to you. Me hating your book has nothing to do with disliking you personally. Hell, I don’t know you as a person, I am only judging this book on its literary merits. (And I am not even saying I have good taste.)

The pace and tone of the book drove me nuts. It skipped all over the place. It was repetitive. It was whiny. It was judgmental. "My husband died of CANCER. I wore my retainer when I was hungover. I am tall. My dad died 6 weeks before my husband died of CANCER. My mother drives me nuts. I am a widow who wears a retainer. I watched Real Housewives while wearing my retainer while my husband died of CANCER and we were too tall for the hospital bed. My dad died. I lost my baby, but not to CANCER. You should laugh because I wore my retainer even when my baby died and mothers, am I right? " Imagine that for about 40 chapters and you don't really need to read the book.

I would say that problem with the book, including why it is written in such a disjointed and rehashed style, stems from the stage of grief Nora was in when she wrote it. When your life is shipwrecked by loss you're skinned alive and drowning but people are there with wine, hugs, and bereavement leave. There is an understanding to both reach out and give you a wide berth. However, as the weeks turn to months the world keeps moving and people expect you to start forging your way forward too. This hurts. This is the worst. Everything is still so raw but the casseroles have stopped coming and the bills need to be paid. You are still consumed with your pain and it seems impossible to care about meetings and showers and groceries when it all seems so trite in comparison. There is nothing else to do, you have to pull yourself out of your pain and go on. This whole book is an exercise in digging one's heels in and refusing to take that next step. It's self-indulgent. It felt like a long begging for attention; a plea to have people stay with her in sadness and stop the world. There wasn't enough time for growth and perspective and there was too much time for an honest rawness of emotion. The book came out emotionally crippled, using really unfunny jokes as a form of self defense as she went over, and over, and over the same things.

At one point in the novel, Nora says that several months after Aaron died she began telling her friends that she had signed up for Match.com. She hadn't, she just told people that to see their reaction saying something like, "I don't know why I said that. It wasn't funny. Maybe I just wanted to see their reactions." This entire novel feels like that.

Rissa says

Never gonna be a Nora key chain, I understand completely (someone find a carissa anything i dare you). This novel was hilarious and made my life seem well not like a cake walk but less shitty then it actually is. Her father, dead. Her husband, dead. Her soon to be born child, dead. Now i know i just said this book is hilarious and then said her life is screwed up and everyone important in her life died but they way she writes her story made me love this story. Death, love, friendship and all.

I listened to this book and i am very glad that i did because listening to memoirs really give you what and how the author wanted you to hear the story.

Chapter 26.... LOVE

Chapter 29... ?

Chapter 30... ? ? ??

Chapter 32... very motivating

Chapter 47... ??

Highly recommend this book!?

Favorite quotes (basically the whole book)

"Evicting all the squirrels"

"The bank is being really picky about me not having a job"

"Hot young widows club"

"Reach out to a dead man for a job"

"Get in the car, drive west, maybe go to culvers"

"California is in a drought, why do people live here?!"

"If God does show up i cant really stop him"

"There is not even an emoji to represent me emotions right now"

"Im to selfish to care about their grief"

"No, Dr Mic Dreamy is hot, but dont go for him im not dead yet"

Go read this book right now! It will make you laugh, aww and rethink all the crap in your life.
