



Dorothy Parker: In Her Own Words

Dorothy Parker , Barry Day (Editor)

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Despite her prolific output, ageless writer and wit Dorothy Parker (1893-1967) never penned an autobiography (although if she had, she said that it would have been titled *Mongrel*). Combing through her stories, poems, articles, reviews, correspondence, and even her rare journalism and song lyrics, editor Barry Day has selected and arranged passages that describe her life and its preoccupations-urban living, the theater and cinema, the battle of the sexes, and death by dissipation. Best known for her scathing pieces for the *New Yorker* and her membership in the Algonquin Round Table ("The greatest collection of unsaleable wit in America."), Parker filled her work with a unique mix of fearlessness, melancholy, savvy, and hope. In Dorothy Parker, the irrepressible writer addresses: her early career writing for magazines; her championing of social causes such as integration; and the obsession with suicide that became another drama ("Scratch an actor...and you'll find an actress."), literature ("This is not a novel to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force.") and much more.

Dorothy Parker: In Her Own Words Details

Date : Published March 31st 2004 by Taylor Trade Publishing

ISBN : 9781589790711

Author : Dorothy Parker , Barry Day (Editor)

Format : Hardcover 203 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, History, Poetry

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From Reader Review Dorothy Parker: In Her Own Words for online ebook

Anthony Caruso says

If you love Dorothy Parker you will love this book. It provides a fascinating insight into the person she was. If you don't know who Dorothy Parker is, read this book and get acquainted with one of the brightest women who ever walked on this earth.

Lynelle says

She gets tiresome...

Belinda says

I loved this book. Granted, I am a sucker for anything Dorothy Parker but I thought the author did a really nice job of incorporating Dorothy's own words within the context of her life. As there was never a true autobiography of Ms. Parker it's definitely up to readers to piece together what was known and what she herself wrote---I find this a really interesting way of getting to know a person's life. And what a life! I particularly loved the sections discussing her eye opening visit to Spain and her coming to be socially aware of deeper things. I feel such a kinship with her in so many ways ...(minus the talent of course, lol..) but I understand the sharp tongue keeping people from knowing the vulnerable side and the being a sucker for love despite vicious and vile lessons taught from many exes. With her reputation for cynical and barbed comments it's terribly charming to read her quote about being "a great little hopper"....I tend to think of myself that way--despite my cynicism, I still keep hoping as she did. A great book about a great writer. I don't want to give it back to the librarybut I will.

Theresa says

A biography told through quotations. I was looking more for a traditional biography. It was, however, interesting.

james says

I'm an avid DP fan.

Book started off kind of slow. I found myself quickly skipping any sentence that wasn't in quotation marks. But in the later chapters, I found more appreciation for the editor's writings and details. Perhaps because DP's later life was well more documented, or more interesting, I don't know. I also found myself wishing she hadn't died and were still alive.

She was a brilliant woman, and if you have read her poetry and short stories, this book will give you some background to buttress some of those works.

Ellen says

This is one of the better books I've read about Dorothy Parker and her life and work. The chapters are well-organize and cover Parker's life from her childhood through her death. For a change this book doesn't focus so much on Parker's suicidal thinking or her drinking, but concentrates more on her writing, her friends from the Algonquin Roundtable, and her experiences in the world.

This is a great book for anyone who hasn't read much of Parker's work or about her life and world. It's a quick read and I learned quite a bit that I'd not read in the other books I chose for my self-created Dorothy Parker project.

Lainey says

I wish I had been just a tiny speck on the wall of her life. She's my TRUE heroine!

fleegan says

So this editor guy has a series of "In Their Own Words" bios where he writes about authors and using their writings to write his bios. Get it?

This was a short biography of Dorothy Parker, but I liked it because it quoted a lot of her work in it. It was an interesting idea to take her works and psychoanalyze them a bit to come up with a biography. Although it would be hard to tell how close to accurate the author was. Ms. Parker never wrote an autobiography and not much is written about her, and it seems that when people would ask her personal questions she never answered them the same way twice... so there you go. She certainly didn't make it easy for someone to write a bio in the first place.

Still, the book seemed to lack actual substance, but I think it's a good start if you were interested in Dorothy Parker. Start with this book and let it whet your appetite for more.

Ed Erwin says

A short biography of Dorothy Parker, told largely through quotations. That is a style that would not work for most celebrities, but works very well for DP since she is most remembered for her often caustic quips. Barry Day is listed as "Editor" rather than author on the title page. That seems unfair. He did more than just gather interesting quotes. He obviously did research and tells the story of her life, just with fewer of the boring details included in most bios and more direct quotes. (This style would probably work well for Oscar Wilde as well, and lo and behold, Barry Day did one of these on him as well.)

She said so many memorable, funny, wise, and just plain mean, things that I am tempted to fill this review with them, but I leave you to find them on your own.

She was a master "insult comic", like Don Rickles, Joan Rivers, Bianca Del Rio, Triumph the Insult Comic Dog, But she didn't seem to have an off switch. She was always "on stage". Which would make it hell to live with her, love her, employ her, rent to her, or be her.

Through this book I did learn a little about her real life, which largely feels sad. But there were some nice parts. I hadn't known before of her involvement with the Spanish Civil War, which, among other things, got her in trouble with the House Un-American Activities Committee. She survived that committee without going to jail, but she was blacklisted for "premature anti-Fascism". (Now there's a concept! Remember, kids, if you're going to be anti-Fascist, wait until it is fashionable!)

One puzzling omission: although the book talks about her writing her will, it doesn't mention that she left her estate to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the NAACP.

David Loftus says

The editor put together a bunch of Dorothy Parker's own biographical notes from a variety of sources -- essays, reviews, letters, etc. -- to fashion a sort-of autobiography. It's lean, uneven, and not terribly complete, but you'll find more lovely, acid Parker-isms along the way, and that can't be bad. Of course, there's plenty that's funny, but my favorite new bit from the great woman sounds more like, oh, I don't know . . . let's say Kafka (if you've read his journals): "It's life, I suppose. Poor little things, we dress, and we plan, and we hope—and for what? What is life, anyway? A death sentence. The longest distance between two points. The bunch of hay that's tied to the nose of a tired mule."
