



Cheer Up Love: Adventures in depression with the Crab of Hate

Susan Calman

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'HEARTBREAKING AND HEART-WARMING: UNMISSABLE' Damian Barr, *Metro*

'DEEPLY HONEST, SURPRISINGLY HILARIOUS AND UPLIFTING' *The Pool*

Susan Calman is a well known comedian and writer who has appeared on countless radio and television programmes. Her solo stand up show, *Susan Calman is Convicted*, was broadcast on BBC Radio 4 and dealt with subjects like the death penalty, appearance and depression.

The reaction to the show she wrote about mental health was so positive that she wanted to expand on the show and write a more detailed account of surviving when you're the world's most negative person.

The Crab of Hate is the personification of Calman's depression and her version of the notorious Black Dog.

A constant companion in her life, the Crab has provided her with the best, and very worst of times. This is a very personal memoir of how, after many years and with a lot of help and talking, she has embraced her dark side and realised that she can be the most joyous sad person you'll ever meet.

CHEER UP LOVE IS FUNNY, POIGNANT AND (HOPEFULLY) INFORMATIVE.

IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO TALK.

Cheer Up Love: Adventures in depression with the Crab of Hate Details

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From Reader Review Cheer Up Love: Adventures in depression with the Crab of Hate for online ebook

Sunshine says

Nice one Susan! Tricky topic shared with strangers-not an easy thing to do. Big love to you!

Victoria says

I just love Susan's honesty and way with words. Serious with enough humour to get you through it.

Frannie Pan says

Nice and interesting audiobook to listen to!

I must say, it didn't make "laugh", which someone might have been expecting, since Susan Calman is a stand up comedian.

What it did was making me feel understood because I could see myself in what she was describing, when she spoke of anxiety and low self-esteem and depression.

I've been through all of that. And I'm better now. And listening to her words and her experiences and "solutions" was comforting in a way.

Besides the middle part (which I found slightly "boring" because it didn't really deal with the main theme of the book), I'd definitely recommend it if you've suffered or still suffering from what I've mentioned above. And I'd listen to it especially if you're fond of the Scottish accent!

In a nutshell, the message is: if you're not okay, if you feel depressed.. talk to someone. And keep talking.

Leanne says

I do have rather mixed feelings about this book. #SusanIsAwesome and the humorous side of this is ace, I read the whole thing in her voice which made me smile.

But I think I might have had too high expectations of it, as my friend who just read it raved about it. He thrust it into my hands saying 'you must read this, it really helped me understand you'. So I think I had this vision of Poor Susan telling the story of my life rather than hers, and I was disappointed that in fact, she hadn't.

I like reading books about other experience of depression, it does help to not feel so alone. Self-pity certainly likes company. But I think this book IS better for people who don't have it, but are trying to understand it, especially on behalf of someone they care about.

This isn't so depressing that it takes everyone down with it, but as such, it doesn't give gruesome details of the monster in your head.

To be fair, my 3 star review is probably more a reflection on what I want people to know about my depression, than how well Susan wrote about hers.

So... I I think you should read it.

Niamh says

I've seen Susan Calman occasionally on Mock The Week and various other comedy panel shows in the UK, which is surprising because they all seem to have some kind of aversion to female comedians, but there were go. I didn't know a huge amount about her, but I am always interested to read memoirs about depression and how others have coped with it. Depression is such an individualistic thing, from experience to therapy to recovery to coping mechanisms, so I wanted to know how she viewed it.

This memoir is hilarious. I suspect this is something Calman and I have in common- we both like to use comedy to try and cope with our depression and anxiety. Also, she personifies her depression. Hers is called 'the crab of hate'. Mine is just some angry old lady called Sharon who calls me a bitch seven thousand times a day. But each to their own. Calman discusses how her mental health has affected everything from childhood to her relationships and sexuality, to changing careers halfway through her adult life.

I was physically smiling and laughing out loud because of some of these chapters. There were moments of acute sadness and brilliant light. There's something in her writing that brings hope to the person reading. To know that despite what is happening in your head, things will happen to you, you will move onwards and upwards, you can do what you want to do.

As someone who suffers pretty damn hard, this was a wonderful thing to read, to realise that I'm not the only one thinking certain things or experiencing bad things. It feels like solidarity with someone else. So, I now call myself a proud member of DWB. Depressives Without Borders.

(You'll have to read the book to get that).

Hannah says

As instructed by the author I am leaving my feedback under the hashtag #susanisawesome

I have been a huge fan of Susan Calman for a number of years now, mainly from her work on the radio and her excellent radio sitcom "Sisters". I have always thought she was an extremely talented writer and comedian and I found (and still do) her inspirational. Someone that wasn't afraid to be her own unique self in an age of vapid social media identi-twits.

Reading this book was a brilliant insight into a personal journey through depression, a condition which I have experienced myself, and I found it illuminating to find her describing the same thoughts that sometimes go through my head, the same crippling anxieties and insecurities and this was coming from one of my favourite intelligent and most put together role models. A mirror through which I can see reflected back some of the problems I struggle to cope with on a day to day basis and her own journey and how she copes.

I would strongly recommend this to anyone struggling with depression or any mental health problems, while she doesn't claim to have the answers and a magic wand to cure you, she will guide you through her own story and offer signposts for you to seek help.

The best thing to come out of reading this book is the universal truth is this "No matter how low and bad things get, you are not alone." I love the concept one reviewer used which is that it is like you are getting a "Calman Hug" while reading this book. We all struggle with darkness, everyone without exception, whether they have depression or not, and this book is one of the many beacons of light to help you while you are there.

Well done, Susan. You are awesome, and so are we :)

Elizabeth says

This is a very personal account of the author and comedian Susan Calman's life long struggle to cope with crippling depression and anxiety.

It's a good mix of accounts of episodes of depression combined with the many and varied attempts at treatment, some more successful than others.

I think it's a very brave honest book and an important one to add to any library of self help depression memoirs.

Frances says

I loved this book. I enjoy Susan Calman's work anyway but this was so funny, so thoughtful and so unapologetic. I've read a few books that mix mental health with comedy and 'Cheer up Love' is one of the greats.

From what happened to her Wham! Scarf to the sewers of Paris to the dark clouds that she's fought her way out from under, Cheer Up Love is part autobiography, a tiny bit self help, all delightful.

I listened to the audiobook of this and loved hearing the funny anecdotes, honest retellings and actually useful advice being read in Susan's Glasgow tones.

The only downside to this book is how much I'm going to annoy everyone I know by 'helpfully suggesting' that they read it immediately.

Kathleen says

This curious volume is Susan Calman's combination memoir and self-help book, detailing her experiences learning to live with chronic depression--or, to use her metaphor, the Crab of Hate, a highly critical crustacean with its pincers firmly attached to her ears, in order to better fill them with negative self-talk.

For those of you who don't recognize her, Calman is a stand-up comedian and frequent BBC Radio4 contributor. Of course, I believe even those unfamiliar with her other work would still feel comfortable--even welcomed--reading *Cheer Up, Love: Adventures in Depression with the Crab of Hate*; e.g. take the

introduction's first paragraph:

"Hello. Welcome to this book. If you've bought it because you know who I am, welcome. If you've bought it because you liked the title, you have excellent taste. If you've been given it as a present, then please immediately thank whoever gave it to you because **they** have excellent taste. If you have no idea why you're reading this, then you're an impulse buyer and you should embrace that side of your personality. I too have bought things on whim. It's why I'm writing this while wearing a fully functioning Batman costume."

While I read this in hardback (cleverly purchased from an online UK vendor to avoid waiting until October's USA publication), I plan on listening to the audiobook, read by the author herself, once it's more easily attainable here in the states.

Now, as to the book itself: although #SusanIsAwesome, I must admit some personal impatience with some of the how-to's/advice/recommendations/etc. Still, in spite of this, Susan's frank but wry narrative, detailing her daily struggles to make definite if gradual progress toward feeling something more-like-comfort in her own skin (without needing to apologize for it) is definitely engaging, and in spite of my aforementioned impatience with such segments, some of her advice offered a new way of looking at old, all-too-familiar problems for those of us plagued by our own Crabs of Hate (speaking of which, the crab illustrations and their subtle variations were delightful!).

Also, throughout the book, Susan stresses the importance of communication, of finding someone to talk to, and actually talking about what your depression feels like with that person; and, it must be recognized, that with the publication of her rather terrific and brave book, she has certainly established precisely such a dialogue, and invited others to join in the conversation.

I'll conclude by saying that, as your friend with excellent taste, I would certainly recommend reading (or perhaps listening to) Calman's book.

Amy Jane Smith says

4.5 stars. Loved listening to this. One of the funniest books I've read and I would definitely recommend the audio over the book for this reason - Susan is a brilliant comedian (though not one I've been lucky enough to see live yet, this was my first experience with her) and this really shows through in both the writing and her reading of it. For this to be so, while also being predominantly about depression is quite a feat - and the insight into the illness is powerful and helpful. A really uplifting listen, without sugarcoating anything.

Iqra Choudhry says

A frank and funny book about living with depression. Whilst staying light-hearted, it's a book that handles difficult conversations about mental health. A must-read.

Inge says

3.5 stars

Marfita says

This is a review of the audiobook read by the author.

Sounds just like her. Heh.

Calman reveals (almost) all - about her life with depression and learning to cope. She does this with the same humor we would recognize from her stand-up. Her Crab of Hate tells her all the bad things about her, pinching her ears and bringing her down and down and down. Fortunately, she has a wife who is sympathetic (but not all the time - there are limits) and for whom she decided to find a *good* therapist and get some help. She has two things going against her: she's a dour Scot and she's British and they don't talk about it. She seems to be over the latter anyway.

I can relate to so much of this. Cats - yes, they are wonderful (although I just spent the past 15 minutes chasing Miss Barfy-toes around with the clean-up kit). Smiling - oh boy yes is it ever annoying to be told to smile. You just want to wipe that grin off the other person's face. "It takes fewer muscles to smile than to frown!" they burble. You know, what? It takes even fewer to just have a relaxed face. That it looks to you like Resting Bitch Face is *your* problem, not mine. [This was told to me frequently at Wateraerobics by someone trotting around in the shallow area while I was in the deep end working my ass off. I don't have to exercise *and* smile, thankyouverymuch.]

Calman has advice for the friends of the depressed as well as the depressed, with the caveat (her law training, no doubt) that what works for her might not work for everyone. It isn't bellylaugh funny, but funny enough to keep you from going all sad about her self-harm and suicide attempt. Besides, she has that lovely accent. If she still has trouble sleeping, I recommend listening to audiobooks (although not this one, perhaps) - reasonably upbeat familiar stories to get her mind off that downward spiral we sometimes are caught in. I personally recommend Terry Pratchett's oeuvre. First of all, there's a ton of them, and second, they are funny with deft flourishes. Nigel Planer and Stephen Briggs do great work with them.

Highly recommended for anyone coping with depression or coping with someone coping with depression.

Shelly says

I can only describe this as a Calman hug in a book.

This is a funny, honest, moving and emotional account of Susans experience with depression and her battle with her crab of hate. (The voice that drags you into the dark)

With some great advice for anyone else who suffers and those around them.

Shining a light on mental health and anxiety through emotive, funny stories of life.

I listened to the audiobook and mourned when it ended. I just want Susan to keep talking, her book helped me feel less alone. I love her openness and honesty.

All I can say is Read It!

#susanisawesome

Jonathan says

Funny and honest memoir of a life lived with depression. Some of the advice isn't stuff I'd recommend, and her aversion to medicine and counselling bothered me (particularly the drawing therapy where she blamed the therapist rather unfairly, I felt) - but she's clear that what works for her isn't what might work for others, and vice versa.

There's an early diversion in to being gay which seems like it might belong to another book - it was interesting and revealing, but stuck out a bit given that it wasn't hinted at in the title. Perhaps it sticks out because it gets a bit like you're being told off for other people's attitudes, and if it isn't what you came to the book for, you might find it jarring. Having said that, there are also diversions in to being Glaswegian, short, a comedian, and a cat owner, only the latter of which I can identify with so perhaps I'm being unfair.

It's a book that made me laugh about a subject that doesn't normally have a lot to laugh about. If your understanding of depression isn't great, it's well worth buying with the caveat that her experience is not everyone's experience - as she takes great pains to remind us.
