



How to Be Good

By Nick Hornby

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How to Be Good By Nick Hornby

A wise and hilarious novel from the bestselling author of *Funny Girl*, *High Fidelity*, and *About a Boy*.

A brutally truthful, compassionate novel about the heart, mind, and soul of a woman who, confronted by her husband's sudden and extreme spiritual conversion, is forced to learn "how to be good"—whatever that means, and for better or worse...

Katie Carr is a good person...sort of. For years her husband's been selfish, sarcastic, and underemployed.

But now David's changed. He's become a good person, too—really good. He's found a spiritual leader. He has become kind, soft-spoken, and earnest. Katie isn't sure if this is deeply felt conversion, a brain tumor—or David's most brilliantly vicious manipulation yet. Because she's finding it more and more difficult to live with David—and with herself.

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How to Be Good By Nick Hornby Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In Nick Hornby's *How to Be Good*, Katie Carr is certainly *trying* to be. That's why she became a GP. That's why she cares about Third World debt and homelessness, and struggles to raise her children with a conscience. It's also why she puts up with her husband David, the self-styled Angriest Man in Holloway. But one fateful day, she finds herself in a Leeds parking lot, having just slept with another man. What Katie doesn't yet realize is that her fall from grace is just the first step on a spiritual journey more tortuous than the interstate at rush hour. Because, prompted by his wife's actions, David is about to stop being angry. He's about to become good--not politically correct, organic-food-eating good, but good in the fashion of the Gospels. And that's no easier in modern-day Holloway than it was in ancient Israel.

Hornby means us to take his title literally: How can we be good, and what does that mean? However, quite apart from demanding that his readers scrub their souls with the nearest available Brillo pad, he also mesmerizes us with that cocktail of wit and compassion that has become his trademark. The result is a multifaceted jewel of a book: a hilarious romp, a painstaking dissection of middle-class mores, and a powerfully sympathetic portrait of a marriage in its death throes. It's hard to know whether to laugh or cry as we watch David forcing his kids to give away their computers, drawing up schemes for the mass redistribution of wealth, and inviting his wife's most desolate patients round for a Sunday roast. But that's because *How to Be Good* manages to be both brutally truthful and full of hope. It won't outsell the Bible, but it's a lot funnier. --Matthew Baylis

From Publishers Weekly

"Good" characters in novels are notoriously hard to create, not because goodness is uninteresting, but because when it's uncontaminated by self-interest it isn't plausible, especially in a comedy. In Hornby's (*High Fidelity*; *About a Boy*) hilarious novel, the problem of goodness is dumped on Dr. Katie Carr. After more than 20 years of marriage and two children, Katie has had it: she's having an affair, feels intellectually dull and wishes her husband, David, would turn into a different person. Unfortunately for her, she gets her wish when David, a bitter, semi-employed intellectual who writes a column for a local newspaper subtitled "The Angriest Man in Holloway," becomes a secular saint. To spite her after an argument in which she suggests that they divorce, he goes to a dreadlocked faith-healer named DJ GoodNews. When GoodNews lays his hands on David, he suddenly becomes loving, concerned and utterly humorless. He gives money away, stops writing his column, organizes housing for the homeless (inconveniently enough, with neighbors whose houses have empty rooms) and invites GoodNews to move in. David donates the children's surplus toys to charity and asks them to adopt the uncool kids at school as their friends; their son, Tom, hates this, but his sister, Molly, develops an alarmingly patronizing friendship with a smelly little girl named Hope. Just how will Katie handle being surrounded by all of this horrible goodness? Hornby relies less than usual upon pop references which would be inappropriate for Katie's character anyway, although Homer Simpson is invoked a few times but he has created, without them, a very funny agon of liberalism. (July 9) Forecast: Despite, or perhaps because of, the declining popularity of the self-conscious hipness that made *High Fidelity* such a hit, Hornby's latest should enjoy even wider U.S. sales, bolstered by a national print ad campaign and author tour.

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From Library Journal

"I'm not a bad person. I'm a doctor," says Katie Carr, liberal 1990s North London mother of two. This is her hollow mantra, the only comfort that she can feign while her 20-year marriage to surly David falls to pieces. Just when she is about to be kicked out of the house after confessing to an affair, David returns from a visit with an ecstasy-dropping club kid-turned-faith healer named DJ GoodNews a changed a good man. For his third novel after the male-sympathetic High Fidelity and About a Boy, Hornby hasn't merely gotten in touch with his feminine side (though Katie's violent emotionalism, surgical introspection, and perverse romanticism are all on the mark); more importantly, via Katie he harrowingly portrays how ambivalence attacks the heart like a virus at mid-life. Nothing, not even her children, it seems, is completely deserving of Katie's love or her disgust. Readers will see themselves in all of Katie's flaws especially her selfishness. But fear not, old-school Hornby fans, for this departure is expertly tempered with flecks of humor and pop culture references. Essential for all contemporary fiction collections. Heather McCormack, "Library Journal" Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jose Goodell:

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Kimberly Spradlin:

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