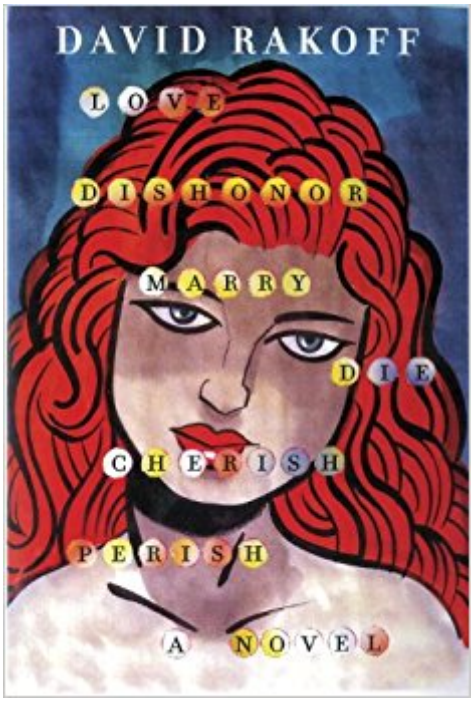
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# Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die, Cherish, Perish: A Novel




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## Synopsis

From the incomparable David Rakoff, a poignant, beautiful, witty, and wise novel in verse whose scope spans the twentieth centuryThrough his books and his radio essays for NPR's This American Life, David Rakoff has built a deserved reputation as one of the finest and funniest essayists of our time. Written with humor, sympathy, and tenderness, this intricately woven novel proves him to be the master of an altogether different art form.LOVE, DISHONOR, MARRY, DIE, CHERISH, PERISH leaps cities and decades as Rakoff sings the song of an America whose freedoms can be intoxicating, or brutal.Ã Â The characters' lives are linked to each other by acts of generosity or cruelty. A daughter of Irish slaughterhouse workers in early-twentieth-century Chicago faces a desperate choice; a hobo offers an unexpected refuge on the rails during the Great Depression; a vivacious aunt provides her clever nephew a path out of the crushed dream of postwar Southern California; an office girl endures the casually vicious sexism of 1950s Manhattan; the young man from Southern California revels in the electrifying sexual and artistic openness of 1960s San Francisco, then later tends to dying friends and lovers as the AIDS pandemic devastates the community he cherishes; a love triangle reveals the empty materialism of the Reagan years; a marriage crumbles under the distinction between self-actualization and humanity; as the new century opens, a man who has lost his way finds a measure of peace in a photograph he discovers in an old boxÃ¢â ¬â •an image of pure and simple joy that unites the themes of this brilliantly conceived work.Rakoff's insistence on beauty and the necessity of kindness in a selfish world raises the novel far above mere satire.Ã Â A critic once called Rakoff "magnificent," a word that perfectly describes this wonderful novel in verse.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Rakoff, the best-selling author of Half Empty (2010), brings his thoughtful and tender perspective on life to this wonderfully funny yet heartbreakingly sad novel-in-verse. Throughout this rhyming novel, he crosses decades, telling the great American story through memorable characters loosely linked by acts of kindness or callousness. For example, a young runaway unfairly banished from her home finds unlikely comfort with a vagabond. Each chapter serves up a slice of lifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s victories, discoveries, cruelties, and casualties, such as when a young man discovers sexual freedom in 1960s San Francisco only to later tend to friends ravaged by AIDS. This novel begs to be read aloud in the mode of RakoffÃ¢â ¬â„¢s frequent and popular radio appearances on NPRÃ¢â ¬â„¢s This American Life. Although, sadly, we wonÃ¢â ¬â„¢t be hearing new works from Rakoff, who died in August 2012, fans of the award-winning author will embrace with particular appreciation this final lesson on how to accept lifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s blessings and blows. --Annie Suhy

"An extraordinarily and deliriously entertaining work....hearfelt, charmingly profound....[a] giddy, wistful triumph"--Paul Rudnick, The New York Times Book ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“Suffused with joyful invention. Readers may come to the book to pay their respects, but they will leave rejuvenated by the splendor of the warmth and wordplay. Composed a hand-spanÃ¢â ¬â„¢s distance from death, it feels death-defyingÃ¢â ¬Â¦irrepressibly funny, and even strangely uplifting, in jubilant verseÃ¢â ¬Â¦If this book must serve as his memorial, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s at least as life-affirming as any that a writer has left behindÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Wall Street Journal"Sly, bravura....a marvel of gamesmanship, Mr. Rakoff describes hardship, illness, death and depravity, knowing how ingeniously his bookÃ¢â ¬â„¢s style and substance would fight each other....gift for balancing truth telling and humor....future readers can turn to this book to remember why he was so widely appreciated and is sorely missed"--Janet Maslin, The New York TimesÃ  Â Ã¢â ¬Å“The literary rhythm captures the steady momentum of American progressÃ¢â ¬Â¦poignantÃ¢â ¬Â¦beautiful and melancholyÃ¢â ¬Â¦with a final image that made my eyes well upÃ¢â ¬Â¦funny and heartbreaking and, like Rakoff himself, not easy to forgetÃ¢â ¬Â•--Entertainment Weekly, AÃ  Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Ingenius, delicately hauntingÃ¢â ¬Â¦probing, poignant, and wickedly funnyÃ¢â ¬Â¦illuminate[s] the many stages of lifeÃ¢â ¬Â•--O MagazineÃ¢â ¬Å“ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s terrific: a sweeping narrative of the 20th century that encompasses personal tragedy, family secrets

and broad social movements while going down as easy as a bite of crÃƒÂ¨me brÃƒÂ»leÃƒÂ©Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Gregory Cowles, The New York Times Book Review Ã¢â ¬Å“Reading the new novel in verse by David Rakoff, you can hear his voice again, wordy, so witty, a little worried, and always wiseÃ¢â ¬Â¦.His mordant humor, his compassionate vision, his moral questioning, his sharp honesty, theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re all intimately wedded to the meter and the zestful diction of the bookÃ¢â ¬Â¦.But the new direction he takes in Ã¢â ¬Å“Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die, Cherish, PerishÃ¢â ¬Â• brings out the best in him, too, as he fits his voice into a tighter form without ever becoming a slave to that form. He is as vital, as blackly comic, as bursting forth with detail, as vernacular, and as poignant in metered verse as he is in his effortlessly long prose sentences. Each couplet here equally serves the structural rules, the story, and RakoffÃ¢â ¬â„¢s matchless sensibilityÃ¢â ¬Â¦.The narrative is ambitious and has sweepÃ¢â ¬Â¦Agile, vivid, and entertainingÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Boston GlobeÃ¢â ¬Å“Even at six vivid verbs, the title doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t do justice to the breadth of this short, acrid, elusive, entrancing book.Ã¢â ¬Â• --Bloomberg"Inspired...accessible, delightful....powerful....Ã Â alluringly designed by Chip Kidd and illustrated by the cartoonist Seth, is filled with the sly, sharp social commentary that made Rakoff such a favorite....What shines through in this novel, even more than in his nonfiction, is a piercing, wistful appreciation for life, love and art....deserves to become a classic.....a rare bird: moving, amusing, lilting, crushing."--Heller McAlpin, NPRÃ¢â ¬Å“I just marveled at his wordsÃ¢â ¬Â¦.What heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s created in this book is SeussianÃ¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Ira Glass, in an interview with O MagazineÃ¢â ¬Å“Beautiful and heartbreaking....delightful.... hilarious and lewd and shot through with a longing for lifeÃ¢â ¬Â•--New York Times Ã¢â ¬Å“A novel in rhyming couplets narrated in iambic tetrameter? Why not?... Along the way, you can have a lot of fun, no matter how serious the subject Ã¢â ¬â • family, sometimes alienating, sometimes consoling Ã¢â ¬â • because of the rhymes. Rakoff makes such pairings as virago and Chicago, ceases and paresis, skittish and Yiddish, antelope and envelope, horas and Torahs, Alzheimer's and climbers, for 100 cleverly rendered and entertaining pages.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Alan Cheuse, NPR.org"[A] tour de force novel-in-verse....It is hard not to feel celebratory over its heart-singing smarts, its existence as a fist raised against a life ending. What melancholia is there is confined to its characters Ã¢â ¬â • itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a triumphant, moving work of true craft and wit."--Austin American-Statesman"Truly singular....There is so much bound up in the novel's singsong verse: stories about AIDS and Alzheimer's, altruism, art, lives linked together by buried incidents that spring up again to bear unexpected fruit."--Ira Glass, The AtlanticÃ¢â ¬Å“Rakoff marries deft, humane observation with jauntily tripping verse structure Ã¢â ¬â • in places, you'll find yourself thinking of Dr. Seuss Ã¢â ¬â •

to create a series of jewel-toned interlocking miniatures.Ã¢â ¬Â•--NPR.orgÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“[A] marvelously barbed novel in verse.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â œElissa Schappell, Vanity FairÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ã¢â ¬Å“Hot TypeÃ¢â ¬Â•Ã Â "Mesmerizing....Combines his wit and his gravity....Astounding"--Publishers Weekly"A fitting memorial to a humorist whose embrace of life encompassed its dark side....[the book] retains a spirit of sweetness and light, even as mortality and inhumanity provide a subtext.....Strong work. It deepens the impact that this was the last book completed by the author."--Kirkus Reviews

I picked up Love, Dishonor, Marry, Die....after seeing it on the NY Times Notable Books of 2013 list. It most definitely is notable but i can’t say I found it to be the most enjoyable book I have ever read and as a result I can’t highly recommend it. The book is written as a poem which I found to be pretty distracting--always having this sing-song rhyme in my head. I enjoyed the characters Rakoff described in the book. For such a short book there were several heated moments and several tear-jerkers as well. Perhaps the description of the man dying of AIDS was the most poignant set of pages in the work. The secretary being harassed in times where people didn’t even think twice about harassing women was tough to take as well. Rakoff is certainly a good author and has made his mark on NPR. I have enjoyed listening to him over the years. But there were times that I just couldn’t get the rhyming out of my head and as a result didn’t enjoy the book as much as I probably would have otherwise.

I read a lot, but I’m not a regular reader of fiction so it was a little outside my comfort zone. I was pleased that this book isn’t very long and read it in 1 evening. I was very impressed with the author’s ability to rhyme throughout the novel and enjoyed his creative descriptions. There were several words I needed to look up which doesn’t happen to me often. I enjoyed the creative way in which the author created connections between the characters and I may not have noticed that had I not read the book in 1 sitting. I also enjoyed multiple references to "the painting" which you will understand upon reading this book.That said, there are reasons why I did not give the book 4-5 stars. I felt some of the characters were stereotyped. Maybe that is what the author wanted, but it left me feeling like the characters could have been more nuanced or sophisticated. I also noticed that, although the author was very creative with descriptive terms, that he used the word "boneless" on several occasions to describe the characters. I’m not saying this was accidental or laziness on the part of the author, but since it was used multiple times I’m not sure what I’m supposed to take away from this. A final suggestion to the author is that although I enjoyed several references to "the

painting", I wish there had not been an image of it included in the book because I found it to be a letdown to what I had in my imagination.I guess a good book is one that encourages people to think about it and discuss it. Since this is the first time I've ever written a review I guess I'll say it has accomplished its objective.

I was charmed, enchanted and delighted by the rhymes, rhythm and deep humanity of this epic poem. The characters come alive because if the anapestic meter.

I am a poor and slow reader so this review may only have some value for others like me. I usually do better with audio books because that is my speed. For this book I thought the Kendal was great. I have most of Ted Kooser's books of poetry which I also cherish.Just hearing the words in my head was absolutely captivating as they slowly painted pictures for me. It even seemed that, when I lost the sense of their rhythm, much of the meaning/feeling was lost but was recovered when I went back and recovered the rhythm. What fun! Kind of like the joy in sight reading new music. I was lucky to be reading it on a train where I had no interruptions. The first "Novel" I have read all the way through essentially non-stop! The Kendal was ideal to help me with difficult words with little slow-down.Rereading the book on my return trip was even more fun. The characters became more alive as I could sing the book to myself much better the second time through.

I gave this novel five stars to alert non-poetry readers that this novel is something special: a real novel, but one that was written in iambic pentameter rhyming verse. The second description is not meant to frighten off non-poetry readers. Rakoff is doing something unusual, remarkable even, like carving scrimshaw or illuminating a manuscript. His novel is 21st century; his technique is ancient. The result is stimulating, and very pleasing. There are parts of this novel that are laugh out loud funny. There are parts that make you want to cry. In this regard, the novel is an accurate reflection of the personality of David Rakoff.

I heard about this book on a radio show and fell in love with the stories, and the personal readings by the author. It is a real treasure! I now have the book in paper and the audible file. Fantastic!

Although a dedicated reader of the New Yorker, the one thing I systematically skip is the poetry. Last week, since it was Joyce Carol Oates, I tried to read it once again but couldn't get through the 5 paragraphs!This novella/poem/comic however I wizzed through with great joy. Pure pleasure on

so many levels. Both laugh out loud funny and terribly sad, Love, dishonor, etc is an epic poem all in rhyming couplets. It traces several stories of mostly intertwining lives spanning from the Depression up to the 90s. Rakoff tells stories in particular about Cliff, an artistic boy from Burbank who finds temporary heaven in San Francisco in the 70s. He also tells us about money hungry Susan and sad jilted Helen. A vision of the 80s with a sarcasm and sense of humour that just can’t be beat!! Great pictures too....

This author had the moxie, skill, and awards to pull this unique novel together. I was intrigued. Challenged, even, as I am not the literary reader. Yet I was too intrigued to not try. In the first couple of pages I felt like I might have decided to swim to Cuba (ha, been done) but I quickly became comfortable with the tight and poetic writing, the cross section of characters (many of whom will meet up later), and the dramatic style. It is just enough. And it is a short but engaging two hour read that will not disappoint you in the least.The characters really resemble all sections of life: privilege, poverty, good looks and maybe not so much, smart, life style choices and the recognition thereof, artist and not, comic and tragic. It’s all there. Someone will push your buttons, promise.

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