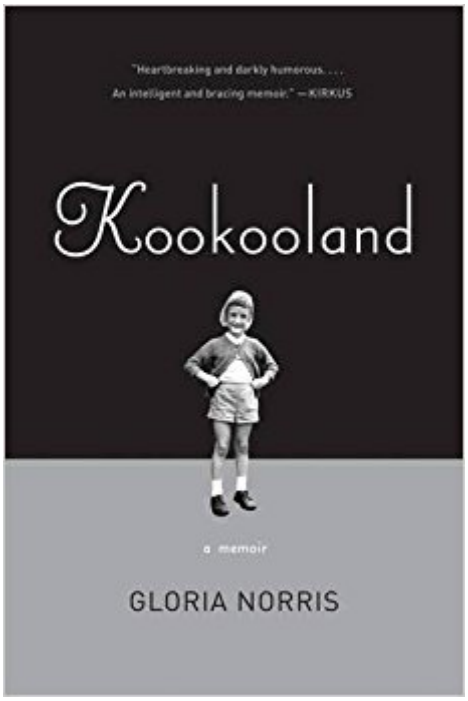
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KooKooLand



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Synopsis

Gloria NorrisÃ¢â ¬â„¢s KooKooLand is aÃ Â memoir written on the edge of aÃ Â knife blade. Chilling, intensely moving,Ã Â and darkly funny, it cuts to the heartÃ Â and soul of a troubled American family,Ã Â and announces the arrival of a startlinglyÃ Â original voice.Gloria Norris grew up in the projects ofÃ Â Manchester, New Hampshire with her parents,Ã Â her sister, Virginia, and her cat, Sylvester. AÃ Â snapshot might show a happy, young family,Ã Â but only a dummkopf would buy that.Ã Â Nine-year-old Gloria is gutsy and wisecracking.Ã Â Her father, Jimmy, all dazzle andÃ Â danger, is often on the far side of the law andÃ Â makes his own rulesÃ¢â ¬â •which everyone elseÃ Â better follow. GloriaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s mom, Shirley, triesÃ Â not to rock the boat, Virginia unwisely defiesÃ Â Jimmy, and Gloria fashions herself into hisÃ Â sidekickÃ¢â ¬â •the son he never had. Jimmy takes Gloria everywhere. Hunting,Ã Â to the racetrack, to slasher movies, andÃ Â to his parentsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ dingy barÃ¢â ¬â •a hole in the wallÃ Â with pickled eggs and pickled alkies. But itÃ Â is at Hank PiasecnyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s gun shop that GloriaÃ Â meets the person who will change her life.Ã Â While Hank and Jimmy trade good-humoredÃ Â insults, Gloria comes under the spell ofÃ Â HankÃ¢â ¬â„¢s college-age daughter,Ã Â Susan. Brilliant, pretty,Ã Â kind, and ambitious,Ã Â Susan is everythingÃ Â Gloria longs to Ã Â beÃ¢â ¬â •and can be, provided she dreams big andÃ Â aces third grade like Susan tells her to.Ã Â But, one night, a brutal act changes theÃ Â course of all their lives. The story that unfoldsÃ Â is a profound portrait of how violence echoesÃ Â through a family, and through a community.Ã Â From the tragedy, Gloria finds a way to carveÃ Â out a future on her own terms and ends upÃ Â just where she wants to be. Gripping andÃ Â unforgettable, KooKooLand is a triumph.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

NPR's Great Reads of 2016"Dad's a petty criminal whose insults land like punches to the psyche. Mom's an enabler who endures her husband's shenanigans with the help of highballs. Yet their daughter GloriaÃ¢â ¬â •blessed with Huck Finn's rough-hewn decency and Scout Finch's sassy aplombÃ¢â ¬â •survives, triumps, and, inÃ Â Kookooland, bears witness to an amazing if challenging childhood. Norris's memoir made me laugh, made me cringe, broke my heart, and reaffirmed my optimism. I loved this book!" Ã¢â ¬â •Wally Lamb,Ã Â New York TimesÃ Â bestselling author of She's Come Undone"Kookooland is a truly original memoir, dealing with some pretty horrific things with deft humor and a big heart. Gloria Norris has a terrific voice, telling her story from the point of view of the smart, brave kid she must have been. With cinematic urgency, Norris conveys the strange truth that love, fear and hate for a father can live side by side, and thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s why violence can endure in families. I raced through this book, heart thumping and breaking simultaneously." Ã¢â ¬â •Julie Salamon, author ofÃ Â The Devil's CandyÃ Â andÃ Â Wendy and the Lost Boys"By turns heartbreaking and darkly humorous, the book not only offers a compelling yet comic portrayal of a fraught father-daughter relationship. Norris also reveals the way violence can become a self-replicating cancer within families. An intelligent and bracing memoir." Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus Reviews"For anyone who might suppose that a New Hampshire childhood was about tapping maple trees and picking apples, here comes the dark side. I could not have dreamed up a family like the one Gloria Norris brings to life on these pages : crazy, funny, terrifyingÃ¢â ¬â •or a childhood more filled with confusing contradiction. The brilliance of her story is that she somehow survived the violence that might have destroyed her to give us this dazzling, funhouse ride of a memoir. When you emerge, you may want to run away fast. Or buy another ticket and go back inside." Ã¢â ¬â •Joyce Maynard, author ofÃ Â Labor DayÃ Â andÃ Â Under the Influence"Although many vibrant characters populate this chilling memoir, NorrisÃ¢â ¬â„¢ re-creation of her early 1960s nine-year-old self is a spot-on treat and a terror. A tumble through a tumultuous time, in which the heroine inexplicably, beautifully lands on her feet." Ã¢â ¬â •Booklist"An electrifying coming-of-age memoir about madness, murder, and a born storyteller's wild ride from a terrorized girlhood in nowheresville New Hampshire to life as a Hollywood producer and screenwriter." Ã¢â ¬â •O, The Oprah Magazine

Gloria Norris was raised in a tightknitÃ Â Greek family. She attended BenningtonÃ Â College and graduated from Sarah LawrenceÃ Â College. She began her career in New York asÃ Â an assistant to film directors Brian De Palma,Ã Â Martin Scorsese, and Woody Allen.
SinceÃ Â relocating to Los Angeles, she has worked asÃ Â a screenwriter, with assignments that haveÃ Â taken her from Paris to the . As anÃ Â independent producer, her films have premieredÃ Â at the Sundance, Toronto, and TribecaÃ Â Film festivals.

Loved this book! I had heard the story growing up, from my mother, but did not know all of it, it was very interesting to learn about the background information and the times growing up in Manchester, NH. It was also interesting to be able to picture the places in my mind that the author is talking about. Our Book Club Skyped with Gloria this evening: it was wonderful to get a deeper insight from the author and her perspective of this story and the times. A must read!

Haven’t read a book in 40 years. This one interested me because I had met some of characters in the book many years ago, before the tragedy befell them. I didn’t expect to learn of a somewhat parallel family who somehow survived similar issues. Some takeaways beyond the writers ability to be so open about herself and her family. All families have some level of dysfunction, it is only the degree and type and how the family members are able to deal with it. It is sad that one entire family self destructed while another was able to cope and how one wife/mother stayed in a marriage to save her children. It also amazes me how one could come out of poverty and lack of support to attend well regarded colleges and most important, build a productive, satisfying life.Gutsy to be able to write about yourself and your family in such an honest manner. Despite all the stress and mayhem, many parts had me laughing aloud.

A wonderful book that I just could not put down. This great story by Gloria Norris provides both relatable themes of coming of age but also mindboggling stories of a small town. Growing up, we all had that one person we looked up to, an older sibling, aunt, family friend. For Gloria it was smart, sassy, beautiful Susan. The admiration she has for Susan follows her around all her life but no one could prepare Susan for the person her idol will really become. I HIGHLY recommend this book for men, women, and book clubs alike.

I just finished this book. It was entertaining, frightening and familiar. Not because my life was the same experience but it was a time and place that I could relate to and visualize growing up just

north of Manchester. This book is a good read for many but for those of you who grew up in this area, especially in the 60's / 70's it's a must. And, for those of you who have any recollection of what was happening at that time. This book will certainly jog or stir a lot of memories. It certainly did for me.

This might sound a little over-the-top to some, but I swear it is not. And if so, so what? Many writers strive to create the Great American Novel, most fail. But Gloria Norris has accomplish it. "KooKooLand" is such a melding of language, story, personality and era, it's as if Damon Runyon had a granddaughter who came bouncing out of the crib pounding the colorful vernacular of her particular time and place onto a computer keyboard. Can't wait for the movie.

Kookooland is a page turner in the best sense. You are both mesmerized and horrified by nine-year-old Gloria's ability to report on her frightening childhood. Her prose is quick and precise, her dialogue perfectly describing her father, his violent criminal friends and the women (sister, mother, schoolmates) who both terrorize and educate her. The adult reader is constantly applauding her ability to successfully navigate this landscape. And, yet, this is a memoir filled with love and humor - quite a feat considering the subject matter. Kookooland is at its heart (and it has a very full heart) a story of triumph.

This was my book club's July pick and it was the rare book that we ALL loved! It's a memoir, but reads like a novel. The setting is only a short distance from my home, but the story is universal. A hardscrabble upbringing with some extremely unique and tragic peripheral events thrown in equals a compelling story, and a narrator - 9 year old Gloria - you can't help but root for. Highly recommended.

I read this book for book club and didn't expect much. Love it when I'm surprised at how much I like the book. The author did a great job of developing the characters and story line.

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KooKooLand KooKooLand: A Memoir

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