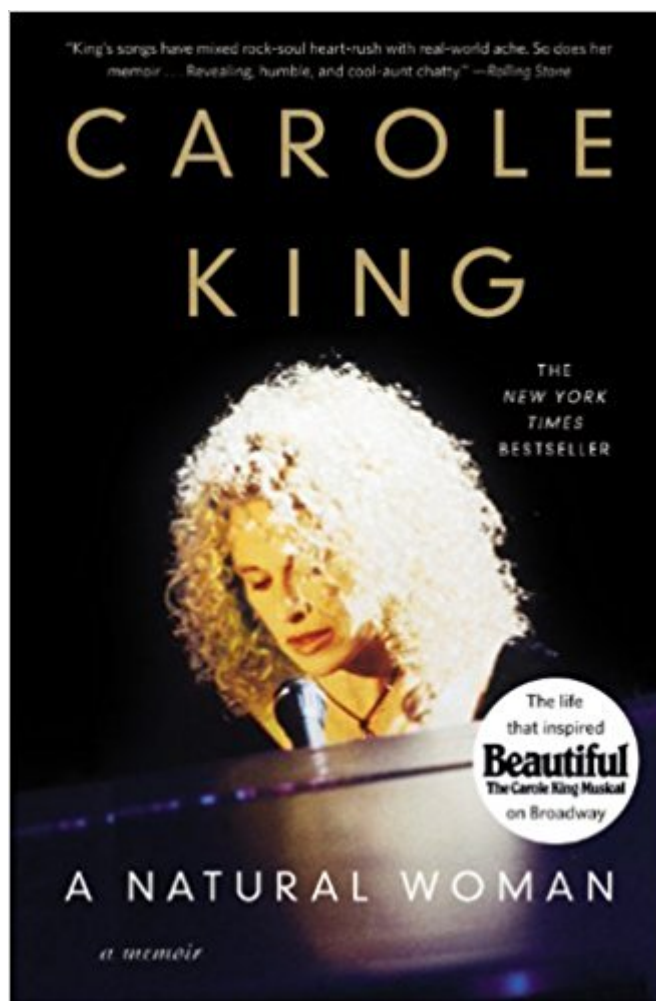


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A Natural Woman: A Memoir



Synopsis

The life that inspired Beautiful: The Carole King Musical on Broadway. Carole King takes us from her early beginnings in Brooklyn, to her remarkable success as one of the world's most acclaimed songwriting and performing talents of all time. A NATURAL WOMAN chronicles King's extraordinary life, drawing readers into her musical world, including her phenomenally successful #1 album Tapestry, and into her journey as a performer, mother, wife and present-day activist. Deeply personal, King's long-awaited memoir offers readers a front-row seat to the woman behind the legend. The book includes dozens of photos from King's childhood, her own family, and behind-the-scenes images from her performances.

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Customer Reviews

Weaving a tapestry of rich and royal hue, King's affecting memoir eases readers through her life, from the girlhood in Brooklyn where she was already jotting down lyrics and her teenage years that culminated musically with the hit "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?"

Carole King had her first No. 1 hit in 1961, at age 18, with "Will You Love Me Tomorrow".

Collaborating with former husband Gerry Goffin, the team went on to write more than two dozen chart-toppers, including "One Fine Day", "The Loco-Motion", "Will You Love Me Tomorrow", and "(You Me Me Feel Like A) Natural Woman." Her 1971 solo-album, Tapestry, won 4 Grammys, and earned her the record for longest time an album by a female artist has remained on the Billboard Charts (6 years), as well as the longest time holding the #1 position (15 consecutive weeks). King, in

addition to writing more than 100 top-selling songs has recorded 25 solo albums. In 2007 she and longtime collaborator James Taylor reunited and recorded *Live at the Troubadour*. Released in 2010 the album debuted at number 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 and The Troubadour Reunion Tour became the second highest grossing Tour of that year. She has won numerous lifetime achievement honors and has been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame, "Hit Parade" Hall of Fame, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Carole King continues to entertain audiences the world over. She released her most recent album in December, 2011, *Carole King: A Holiday Carole*, to rave reviews.

Carole, thank you for that piece of art. So personal that I wish you lived next door. There were so many things about this book I liked that it's hard to know where to begin... Twelve years in the making and I can see why. Carole has always strove to create quality in anything she did. She exemplifies the power of the human spirit in the face of adversity. But in this book, I came to count on the fact that she would somehow always land on two feet. As if she were writing songs, each chapter had a flow, a build, tension, and resolution. WHAT a page turner! I'm not a fast reader but I peeled through nearly 500 pages in two days (well, I was up to 2am last night to finish...). It was such a beautiful, personal account of her life. Fully vulnerable, fully open. Watching Carole develop from humble (yet precocious) beginnings into a full on legend was a wild and deeply satisfying ride. She was candid about her insecurities as a young girl, small in stature, younger than her peers, always wanting to be part of in crowd, always striving to please her parents. I found her modesty to be most appealing and admirable, especially in the face of her brilliant combination of musical talent and spot on emotional expressiveness. She just said it like she felt it. Clearly her early habitual musical exposure (banging on D above middle C without end!) allowed her to make the piano an utterly natural extension of her mind. This is something an adult musician can't buy with all the money in the world. Carole is the confluence of so many positive qualities and influences that her eventual legendary status was almost to be expected. Her musical genius emerged over the years despite a turbulent personal life. She ultimately discovered her power as an independent woman, transcending 4 partners of varying degrees of dysfunction and merit. I was left to wonder of her partners along the way, "how could you NOT want to be with this amazing, beautiful, passionate woman forever!?", and yet I suppose her demanding career was doubtless tough competition! Still...! Though the intense demands of her career did pull her so often from her children, I found her unswerving dedication to her 4 (and her grandchildren) to be heartwarming. And look how they turned out; there is no better testament to her job as mother than this. I commend her for that. Carole

seemed to view adversity (in retrospect) as an expanded ability to empathize -- even falling from a 60 foot cliff gave her the "ability to understand what it was like to be in off-the-chart pain". For an "encore" some years later she fell from a 15 foot stage in the dark (after performing with Bob Dylan) onto concrete! I felt so bad for her (must've have been horrid at the moment). Her passionate expressiveness I found most appealing (as a man, as a human being). That her writing was as masterful as her musical phrasing comes as no surprise. I also must say that her encounters with so many other legends was exciting to read as a fan, especially James Taylor. She let us be the "fly on the wall" and I thank her for that rare privilege. How fully cool that Carole unceasingly gave credit to every single person who contributed to her success; from the roadies, to the sound techs, to the "cats", to her children, to her parents, to her neighbors, to the people on the subway, the list goes on and on... Though far from the world of music, I thought the intentionally abbreviated account of her drawn out court battle to preserve private rights to her Idaho land was yet another indicator of her keen intellect and dogged determination in the face of adversity. I can only imagine how infuriating and frustrating that bureaucratic nightmare must've have been. But justice prevailed!! Thank you Carole! For a book on humanity, for such an intimate, authentic account of your journey into the hearts and minds of so many happy fans around the world -- and for putting your own heart so much into everything you've created (including your amazing family). Five stars, no doubt about it.

Always loved Carole King music. Her personal life, at least the early going with her breaking into song writing, is really interesting. But King's string of relationships/marriages are a sad look into a person who is a musical genius but with fame came personal trials. I simply did not like the "writing" in this book. Clearly it is King's voice, you just know you are listening to her. But the book does not jell, it is not a fine memoir or decent literature. Frankly I don't know what it is. We learn a great deal about King, we admire her honesty and definitely applaud her genius. But the book itself does not hit home. I could do without it and just stick to listening to TAPESTRY and the disc of James Taylor and Carole King returning back to the Trabador Lounge in LA to offer a reunion performance. I love you Carole. But not your memoir.

Carole has had a fascinating life and it's interesting to see how someone so talented and famous had the same insecurities as the rest of us mortals. Her songwriting ability is phenomenal and many of my memories of the 1970s are triggered by her beautiful songs. That said, I do wish she has partnered with a writer and/or editor when writing the book. The writing "almost" made a fascinating life seem dull. It only illustrates that you can't be good at everything.

I kept putting this one down a lot and not getting back to it for long periods. Early chapters concerning her childhood held my interest, but parts of her rise to stardom seemed glossed over. I found her move to rural, off-the-grid living fascinating. Her account of domestic violence is heartbreaking while not overbearing -- often celeb memoirs are completely taken over by an "issue" (domestic violence, drug addiction) so you don't get the full autobiography. On the other hand, after adequately detailing a legal battle over a land dispute in her adopted Idaho, the rest of the tome rambles and becomes less structured.

This was an interesting read. We learn about her failure at marriage and, while she purports to be a loving mother, her almost ambivalent work as a mother. I would have liked it more if she would have explained the mechanics of song writing. I kept on waiting for some more information about Carole and James Taylor, but the book just never got there.

I'm the age of her second daughter so while I wasn't old enough to buy it in it's hey-day, I grew up surrounded by Tapestry and her other hits. I bought the book because I grew up in the counter-culture, sang to a lot of her wonderful songs on the radio and thought it would be fun to read about so many iconic musicians. I didn't know how much I'd end up admiring and loving this woman while reading the book, and thankful to her for chronicling what she did. She epitomized professionally what we hope for the talents of all girls, all children -- she loves it, she develops it, she pursues it. Her focus on how and what she did to become the artist she eventually became was much appreciated. Her generosity of spirit is amazing. I read elsewhere about some of the other details left out and was surprised, but it was clear she's writing to the next generation who will wonder what happened back then, what did it feel like, what mattered, why did they do that? She writes about music, American society and the harsh changes of that era for good and not, musicians, feminism, herself as a mother but always with a great respect and sensitivity for who might be reading it. It's very respectful but she doesn't sell herself short. She's very clear about her contributions. I've never bought a Carole King album in my life, but after reading this book I went online and bought (yes Carole, as you asked bought!) the demo version of "It's Too Late" and "Natural Woman" -- oh the joy of hearing something done so well by writer trying to convey 'essence' to another artist!

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