



As I Am

Patricia Neal

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Throughout her triumphant career as a Tony and Academy Award-winning actress, Patricia Neal has faced a series of devastating challenges and losses, sometimes privately, sometimes before an audience of millions. Her long-awaited autobiography casts Neal in her greatest role--as the indomitable heroine of her own incredible real-life story.

As I Am Details

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Debbie says

Patricia Neal was a staple on television in the 1970's when I was growing up. She was on my mom's housewifey talk shows (Dinah Shore and Mike Douglas) she was in all of her housewifey magazines. She was portrayed as this resilient super woman and mom who overcame her stroke and became the greatest homemaker and actress.

I remember not liking her in "The Homecoming" movie or in H.U.D.

I picked this book up because I remembered her and all the acclaim that swirled around her back then. I learned that she had a great love affair with Gary Cooper and appeared in many theater and movie productions. I also learned that I didn't like her much. She definitely had a starlet's morality. She ran around and did what she pleased with no thought of how it affected other people. When her husband, the excellent writer Roald Dahl, turned the tables on her, and treated her the way she treated others, she was devastated. I'm glad she found Catholicism in her later life and that it gave her peace.

Terri says

In one word: Karma.

Lauren says

I absolutely love this book! I will be recommending it to everyone. It made me laugh, it made me cry, it made me love Patricia, it made me want to beat some people up on her behalf. She was so honest. She told every bad thing she did. She admitted her mistakes. She made reparations for her sins. She was truly a good woman. I wish I could have been her friend. I totally hate Roald Dahl and I will never encourage my family to read his books nor will I own them. The man was so horrid and I wish her family had turned out differently. She admits that she married him because she wanted babies.

I love her family and her friends. She wrote such a beautiful tribute to them and she truly loved people. What a wonderful book. She makes most lives look very dull.

Lori says

I wanted to know a bit more about Patricia Neal. This book was written about 30 years ago. She has had quite a life.. Born in Tennessee in the mid 1920s. she found she had a talent for acting. Moved to NYC acted in plays. She writes of the few years affair she had with Gary Cooper. Her marriage to Roald Dahl. She had some tragedies in her life. Her infant son had severe brain damage when his pram was hit by a taxi cab. Her first born daughter died at only seven years old. A few years later she had a three strokes in a row that left her fighting for her life and relearning how to walk talk and learn. she was never 100 percent cured. she ends her book at 61 years old and the peace she found at an Abbey in the USA. A pretty interesting memoir.

Melissa says

If a dishy Hollywood memoir sounds like your thing I would definitely recommend this book. Don't worry if you don't know who Patricia Neal is going into this- I didn't either. ?

Crystal Demsky says

As a classic film lover, I enjoyed reading Patricia Neal's autobiography. While she includes many great details, I would have liked for it to have had a bit more introspective turn to it. It was particularly interesting to read about the severity of the stroke she had and her amazing recovery. I would have enjoyed knowing more details about the specifics of her treatment and recovery; however, as I did some research, I found that there are other books about that side of her story. As a children's book lover, it was a bit disappointing to read how cold Roald Dahl, author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and many other children's classics, was so distant and hard on her. His help in her recovery was exceptional though.

Andy Hickman says

Honest and gritty first-hand account of Academy Award Winning Actress.

Deeply impacted by Patricia Neal's story. For example, reading her autobiography, 'As I Am', she tells of the abortion she obtained during an affair with a married colleague, actor Gary Cooper.

"I called in sick to the set for only two days," she writes, "and then continued my work without anyone realizing what had happened. Life went on as usual.

But for over thirty years, alone, in the night, I cried. For years and years I cried over that baby. And whenever I had too much to drink, I would remember that I had not allowed him to exist. . . . I regret it with all my heart. If I had only one thing to do over in my life, I would have that baby." Patricia Neal, 'As I Am' (London: Arrow Books, 1988), p.159.

Interesting insight into the lives of other celebrities also.

Must read for any film enthusiasts.

Andy

Sull says

Very readable autobiography with lots of big names. Neal is surprisingly honest about her life, which always makes for good reading. She made loads of mistakes, all the way from sleeping around when she shouldn't have up to marrying Roald Dahl--probably her biggest mistake, according to her, in spite of the fact that he saved her life after her stroke.

She stays human through it all, not a bad or usual thing for a Hollywood actor. She values her family & friends though fully aware of their flaws, & freely confesses her own flaws. She loved her work, loved people, dealt with body blows like the death of one child & her own stroke without self-pity, & still managed to grow old with humility & grace.

It's an inspiring book that you hate to see end--unfortunately doubly hate to see end because the end is weak.

Alice Abernathy says

Wanted to read her autobiography to learn about her stroke experience. It was very different from mine.

Graceann says

Patricia Neal had more sadness to bear and mountains to climb than most. She desperately loved a man who could not be a full partner to her; her son was in a horrific accident; her oldest daughter died; and then there was that catastrophic stroke.

What to say about her? She's brutally honest about her foolish choices and hurtful behavior (she hurt herself and others). I can't help but admire that. She married a man who was beneath contempt, a legend in his own mind and the personification of the word "jerk," but if he hadn't been there at the time of her stroke, she wouldn't have survived.

Although a trip through the golden age of theatre and Hollywood, this is more a memoir of a woman growing into herself, and learning that she, with her own talents and foibles, is enough. She is not perfect and never will be, and finally, finally discovers that being valued (and she never seemed to be) by a man is not the be-all and end-all. She is fine, as she is.

There's a lot to learn here, about what not to do as much as what TO do. Getting through the dark times with courage (and sometimes not so much) and then being honest and candid about how you screwed up is no easy thing. Patricia Neal somehow manages to do it here, though, and I'm grateful.

Beth says

This was a wonderful read for anyone that is a fan of Patricia Neal! I found this autobiography to be an emotional roller coaster full of delightful highs and debilitating lows. I don't recall if I was having a rough week when I read it, but a few times I had started to cry so hard that I needed to put the book down and get some fresh air! My interest in her and Gary Cooper's relationship was one of the initial reasons I chose to read this. I found her lifelong love for him to be heartbreaking, but was happy to discover the relationship that was built with his family years after his death. I could go on and on about Pat's fortunes and misfortunes, but I'd hate to spoil anything for fans that may not know her story, and boy does she have one! Enjoy! :)

Dar says

I loved Patricia Neal's honesty and forthrightness. She told her life story - both the good and the bad - with candor, grace, and humor and she didn't spare herself. I couldn't stand Roald Dahl and couldn't figure out why in the world she married him. I admired her faithfulness once she did marry.

Jane Moore says

Wonderful story of her fascinating and determined life with all its traumas. married to Roal Dahl the writer...had 4 children...1 died of measles and the son had a head injury. She never gave up on her acting career despite her setbacks.

Lisa Findley says

Ooh some good Hollywood gossip here, and a bit on how miserable it was to live with Roald Dahl (love the books, hate the man). It feels weird reading about all the tragedies she lived through, though.

Melissa says

Fast read despite length. Lots of name dropping. Roald Dahl was an ass.
