



"A wickedly funny and dirty treasure trove of modern-day oddballs. The darker and more unparing Sara Barron gets, the more her essays transform into a warped love letter to life's most unusual citizens."
—Sloane Crosley, author of *I Was Told There'd Be Cake*

SARA BARRON

* Even Me

People Are Unappealing: Even Me

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People Are Unappealing: Even Me Sara Barron

Born the child of a homo and a hypochondriac (Okay, okay. Her dad's not really a homosexual. He just acts like it. Her mom, however, really is a hypochondriac), Sara Barron never stood a chance of being normal. At age eleven, she starts writing porn ("He humped me wildly with his wiener"). At twelve, she gets mistaken for a trannie. The pre-op sort, no less. By seventeen, she's featured on the Jerry Springer Show. And that's all before she hits New York.

People Are Unappealing tells the strange, funny, and sometimes filthy stories of Sara Barron's twisted suburban upbringing and deranged attempt at taking the Big Apple by storm—first as an actor (then a waiter), then a dancer (then a waiter), then a comic (then a waiter). It's there that she meets the ex-boyfriend turned street clown. The silk pajama-clad poet. The OCD Xanax addict who refuses to have sex wearing any fewer than three condoms.

Barron has a knack for attracting the unattractive. *People Are Unappealing* is her wickedly funny look at the dark side of humanity.

People Are Unappealing: Even Me Details

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karen says

now we are cooking with gas... this is what i thought that sloane crosley book would be like. and that's a fine book, i just felt that there was a tendency she had to hold back a little - to be cautious and careful and remain dignified. and no one wants to read that. don't pretend to splatter your embarrassing secrets in a humor-memoir and still try to look pretty. it ends up being like a wb version of david sedaris. this book however, is a very funny, unselfconscious book. i don't know that if i found porn i had written when i was twelve, if i would want to publish it for the world's amusement. and that's why she is so much cooler than i am. and to anyone who thinks a lady can't be funny while engaging in frank discussions of bodily functions and needs - here is a book to disprove it. also glad to see the word FUPA in print - my friend from high school named her dog FUPA, and it was nice to see it again. (the word, not the concept, the concept i am quite familiar with) also i learned that michael stipe is an asshole which maybe isn't too surprising when you think about it, but is deeply disappointing. like when i learned that padma lakshmi doesn't tip for food deliveries. sorry, padma, you are freakishly hot, but now we can't make out. cry yourself to sleep over that one.

Malbadeen says

I enjoyed every essay in this book, laughed at many moments but kind of felt a little "oh brother-ish" when she was, once again, being self deprecating. I'm not sure why it got to me. Usually I'm all in favor of deprecation, possibly it was sour grapes (someone that can deprecate better than me?!) but I found it a bit tiresome. at points and I had to question her negative assertions of herself when she would in the next paragraph take on the suggestion that she should sleep with her friends friend (sight unseen). And he did it! Her friend said, "you should sleep with my friend when he gets into town" and she basically said, "Okay" and then THEY DID!!! After one night of drinks and goofing off they were in the sack together.

If someone said to me, "you should sleep with my friend when he gets into town" my automatic reaction would be, "ha! As if he's going to want to"* and any subsequent attempts on my part would most likely end up with me being so nervous over the prospect of sleeping with a stranger that I would send off an I'm-as-frigid-as-last-years-East-Coast-snow-storm-vibe that would result in polite conversation and a very early, very solitary, bedtime. Not her! she not only accomplished her mission but they ended up dating for several months after.

And then the time that she fell in the street and the guy that helped her up asked her on a date and they too dated (and had sex) for months! Okay, yes, both guys were losers but still - who just gets asked out on the street? not me! I want a loser to ask me out on the street! All my losers have known me before they've asked me out - not fair.

See what I mean - sour grapes.

Still I'd recommend the book. It's funny and she really is laughably goofy (like when she tries to come up with a pick up line and end sup with pretty much the worst possibility ever). I'd love to hear her live (actually got confused and thought she was going to be at Wordstock -was wrong, dang it all anyway) because I think she would be especially amusing in that context.

*note to family members that may come across this, what I really mean is that I would say, "most certainly not! I will not even consider sleeping with your friend until I unless and until I had an engagement ring from him and even then it would only be a consideration because I would OF COURSE then wait until the wedding night"

Susie Delaney says

This was a fun read. I found myself laughing out loud at parts so much I snorted. Treat yourself and get it.

Sherry says

I started reading this book on a train full of people with huge luggage heading to JFK the day before Thanksgiving. I laughed maniacally during the second chapter, in which I learned the author had written a porn movie -- appropriately titled "The Porn" -- when she was twelve years old and shared it with her family when she was home for Thanksgiving years later. Fellow straphangers kept looking in my direction every time I guffawed, especially at young Sara misspelling "penis" as "pienus" and thinking erections prevented sex rather than were necessary (in the traditional sense).

That's not to say the book is all laughs; the chapter on trichotillomania hit close to home because I had a bald spot in grade school from pulling out my hair (it has since grown back), and I still struggle with hair pulling and cuticle chewing. It makes me wish I had a friend like Maggie to yell at me every time I did it for negative reinforcement.

The collection ends on a high note with fantastic stories of waitressing (who knew fish tasted fishy?) and several nicknames for celebrities to shield their identities (Twat Waffle and Madrid Days Inn).

Her second book is next in line for reading, and I'm looking forward to it.

Bridget says

This was fine. I feel like in the 2008-2010 time frame, I read a bunch of these "memoirs" of 20-somethings living in NYC. They all kind of sound the same, overriding feelings of "My life is so messed up! I have a crappy job, no money, and I date losers!" Somewhere along the line (I blame Sex and the City) - it was decided that every single woman with those requirements listed above needed a memoir to tell variations of the same story. At 25, they were entertaining. At 30, much less so. I understand I am not the desired demographic and also that if I hadn't read so many others like it, I would have probably laughed more. This book was part I Was Told There'd Be Cake, part Waiter Rant: Thanks for the Tip-Confessions of a Cynical Waiter, part I Just Want My Pants Back. It was FINE, but not for me. Why did I read it? I don't really know. I saw it at the library and remembered it was on my to-read list and decided to give it a shot. Oh well.

Kayla Perry says

There's something about Sara Barron I just don't like (or at least how she portrays herself here). I read the book fairly quickly but I never really felt engaged with her and at some points I felt totally put off. For example, an essay I thought I'd love was the food service one but I actually felt annoyed with her by the end of it for being so self-righteous about the job. Of course most people don't want to be stuck in some dead-end job being treated like shit, but her triumphant moment telling her boss off just made me dislike her and seemed to expose her privilege even more than the rest of the book did.

I'm vaguely curious about her newest book, but I don't feel an overwhelming desire to rush out and get it.

Kristen says

Not even remotely funny. Finished it thinking it'd get better...no such luck.

lp says

i am so honored that the author of this hilaaaaaaaarious book is my writing teacher, SARA BARRON. its so enjoyable, and you'll want to hang out with sara immediately when you read it. although, i must warn you: she is hotter and less retarded sounding than the self-deprecating narrator would lead you to believe. please buy the book, and if you spill something on it, buy another one because i have been told sara does not have health insurance so we gotta help a sister out.

Lilly says

Sara Barron is hilarious. Which makes me sorry that I didn't know her better when we grew up in the same town; she would have made it much more bearable.

I had to take off a half point for making me relive our junior high production of Guys and Dolls, and a half point for making me relive online dating.

The voice of this collection reminded me of two authors I really loved- Chelsea Handler (because she, too, doesn't edit her stories for the squeamish and tells it like it is) and Cintra Wilson (for her satirical writing on the cult of fame). The collection is like hearing a stream of hilarious stories over drinks with that ONE friend who has all the good stories and knows just how to tell them.

Jasmine says

This book is not intelligent, it isn't horribly witty, and it doesn't make me rethink the social situation of the

world.

It is base, in your face humor, and I like that in a book. I actually think I like it more in a self aware book about how the writer is basically a complete failure as a human being and isn't even particularly funny, at least not in a way that anyone who is horribly drunk at a bachelor party would recognize.

Sara Barron congratulations you have succeeded.

Does anyone else think it's weird that on the cover it looks like the women's leg is not attached to a woman?

Karen I will return this friday.

Lindsay says

I had higher expectations for this book based from the reviews I had read of it. I thought it would be more humorous and less about the author tearing everything around her to pieces. I understand that from a book titled "People are unappealing" the humor isn't going to be light, fluffy and happy. However, it seems to me that the stories Barron tells don't show people being half as unappealing as she believes them to be. If she can find something the least bit distasteful about something or someone, she explains how it bothers her and how awful it is for a page or so before moving on. And the reader is just supposed to agree with her opinion. And perhaps laugh at her delusions that really just come across as sad.

While there were some humorous stories, they were situational and often left you wondering how Barron could be so dense and delusional as to put herself in such a place. Some of the stories feel more like revenge than being told with any sort of insight. She never learns her lesson, she never takes good advice, and as you read you want to ask: "what is the point?" Barron never give you one. It's one failing after another, one story of how much she hates everyone after another. Finishing it, after reading so much negativity with out any insight to balance it out, it feels like an energy drain. I think the one she reveals to be the most unappealing is herself.

Andrea says

This book sounds completely demented, so I had to add it.

Haley says

This was an experiment by Penguin to send as a daily digest. I like the idea, but not the book.

Karin says

Thanks to 'karen' for reminding me I had this lingering on ye olde Kindle; 'tis WAY more entertaining/noteworthy when not stoned on one's own sorrow. Also, always good to be reminded of the source of that fantastic "Twat Waffle" anecdote (which was apparently the only chapter of this memoir to

truly penetrate the haze; go figure).

Also, I think if I truly had my druthers, I'd give it 3.5 stars. Starts much stronger than it finishes, also is pretty bawdy (and no, I am not a hankie-clutching old lady, I'm just very particular about my taste in humor) (OK, maybe I am sort of an old lady).

susie says

So this is the second really awesome book i've read written by someone i went to high school with, and i'm kind of stunned that any talent emerged from my wasteland of a hometown in the first place, but there you have it: Sara is hilarious AND a good writer!

my two favorite excerpts:

1. on girls who say they're "guy's girls" (ie not friends with any girls)

"This common rumination disgusts me everytime I hear it. Disguised as some pathetic attempt at an independent streak, what someone really ought to say is, 'My ability for interpersonal connection begins and ends with my need for sexual approval!'...I prefer the title Girl's Girl. Not contingent on a penchant for fruity alcoholic drinks (though I do *love* a double amaretto on the rocks), the foundation for my claim is this: Between me and *my* close friends, flirtation and sexual tension needn't be the building blocks."

2. on Michael Stipe (insert pseudonym here) and his entourage

"Speaking through one's entourage is like wearing a toe ring: so specific and psychotic a choice, it verifies the absence of a stable mind. When I see a person in a toe ring, I know all I need to know about her. I know she's spent time in either a sorority or a hippie enclave; I know she'll use the word *sweet* to mean 'great.' Similarly, a celebrity uses his entourage to communicate, and I know all I need to know about him: Regardless of his accomplishments, regardless of his public persona as a sensitive artist, regardless of the part he played in ushering a gal through her depressive teenage slumps, he's headed to hell."

the girl is funny and awesome, what more can I say?
