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The Bell Jar (Modern Classics)



Synopsis

The Bell Jar chronicles the crack-up of Esther Greenwood: brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under -- maybe for the last time. Sylvia Plath masterfully draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that Esther's insanity becomes completely real and even rational, as probable and accessible an experience as going to the movies. Such deep penetration into the dark and harrowing corners of the psyche is an extraordinary accomplishment and has made The Bell Jar a haunting American classic. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like millions of other young women, I'm sure, I came across "The Bell Jar" in college, and I felt an immediate attachment to the book: it uplifted me, angered me, scared me, and made me feel deeply protective, all at the same time. "The Bell Jar" tells the story of Esther Greenwood, an intelligent college student, as she slowly feels the "bell jar" of detachment and madness overtake her. As Esther goes from a prestigious internship in New York City to a summer at home with her mother in the Boston suburbs, her attachment to reality becomes more and more tenuous, until thoughts of suicide overtake her. It is no secret that the story has at least a partial basis in reality, and that Sylvia Plath is writing from her own experience is perhaps what makes Esther so deeply real. I recently wrote a review of "Bridget Jones' Diary," and although "The Bell Jar" is undoubtedly a better book, there is a certain similarity between the protagonists: like Bridget, Esther is a character who is

almost universally relatable. It does not matter if the reader is psychologically healthy or not: Esther awakens what she is feeling in all of us. My emotional response to "The Bell Jar" was on par with my emotional response to certain real-life events. I was uplifted to find a shared experience; angered at Esther's responses--and at the fact that they seemed reasonable to me; scared at the uncertainty I felt about myself and my own psychological state by the end of the book; and deeply protective--of Esther, of Sylvia Plath, and of every other reader who shared my experience. I recognize that specifically speaking of the female experience when reading "The Bell Jar" could be considered rather narrow-minded of me.

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