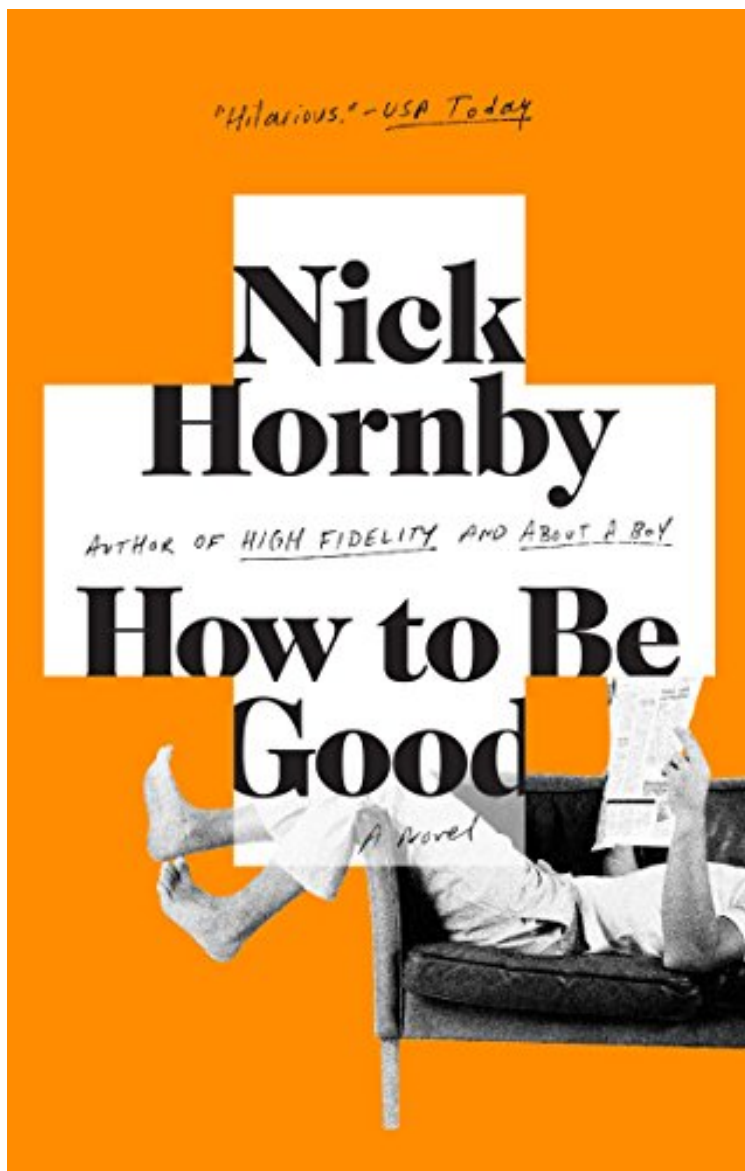


(Library ebook) How to Be Good

## How to Be Good

Nick Hornby

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**Nick Hornby : How to Be Good** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Be Good:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly Enjoyed this BookBy Find Me a DealI almost didn't buy this book because of the reviews. However, I know Nick Hornby is a good writer, so I decided to go with my instincts. I thought the book was funny and spot on with Katie's feelings and observations about marriage, life and how she

really felt about other people (like admitting she didn't like some of her patients). The characterization of the other major characters (like David GoodNews, the kids, etc.) was also done well. The ending was, indeed, a little weak but overall I really enjoyed the book. For reference, I tend to like literary novels more so than purely plot driven, under-developed character novels. To me, *How to be Good* seems to fall in the middle of that spectrum. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. How We Try to be Good By RBradbury451 *How to be Good* (HTBG) was my first Nick Hornby novel, a strange choice considering its mixed reviews compared to *About a Boy* and *High Fidelity*. Here's a sample of critics' promotional hyperbole on the cover—"darkly funny," "breezily hilarious," "a hoot." Other critics called it: surprising, worrisome, and thorny. It is not surprising then that this novel got mixed reviews. So what is it? A hilarious hoot? Nah—more likely it is a rigorous spiritual analysis of contemporary western society. Dr. Kathy Carr, wife, mother, professional person, takes a lover. She has become disaffected from her stay-at-home husband, a cross between Homer Simpson and Rush Limbaugh, with none of their charm or humor. On the surface, their family seems solid enough, but there is something missing. HTBG depicts their attempts to find out just what is missing and to learn to deal with it. I used the term "spiritual" to describe Hornby's work because, in every sense, the crises his characters face are produced by society's relative excess and individuals' relative narcissism. The combination of the two produces the loss of meaning and the inevitable depression that Viktor Frankl predicted in *Man's Search for Meaning*. Hornby tries to show some of the comic elements of the struggle, elements that anyone over forty can appreciate, albeit, at times, painfully. Enter the faith healer, GoodNews, a homeless person who received revelation and supernatural powers after dropping Ecstasy at a party. Thirty-two years old and from obscure origins, GoodNews, whose self-chosen name derives from the meaning of the word Gospel, is kind of a Christ-on-Ecstasy-figure. GoodNews sees how sadness pollutes us, making us sick. He has a supernatural ability to remove this sadness, converting the believer into a new, better person. His hope is to multiply that effect in order to create better families and communities. Not everyone buys his message of generosity and selflessness. As a consequence, with his magic comes division—within families and the larger community. This division can be internalized within the individual (in the form of guilt), as the still imperfect individual struggles with the challenge of being good in an imperfect world. Moreover, the individual can puff up goodness and selflessness in order to punish those with whom he is annoyed, making it a form of vanity. In this version of the gospel story, Christ/GoodNews is not God Incarnate. He is very, very human, sometimes laughably so. His assembly of believers falls short of the promises for which they hoped, just as has Christendom, which it lightly parallels. Today's church, the community of mainstream believers—in this case, the Church of England—is presented as a fossilized institution, not a particularly attractive alternative to the charismatic charm and power of GoodNews and his disciples, however flawed the latter is. The C of E's adherents, even its leaders, have very little hope of anything and attend out of a sense of duty, a hope of being validated without being challenged. GoodNews' characters' Road to Damascus epiphany experience, falls a little short. They are not born again, nor do they become completely new people, despite the attractiveness that a clean slate offers. They still seek answers from themselves and from other humans. The answers they get are frequently lack the voltage to get them through the lonely, sad, and empty lives they face. It's as if they are asking for data when what they need is power. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Meh By Alyse I can't give a book less than 3 stars if I enjoyed reading it, and I guess this one fits the bill. But honestly... it's like the author kinda fell asleep halfway through. I won't be reading this one again.

A wise and hilarious novel from the bestselling author of *Funny Girl*, *High Fidelity*, and *About a Boy*. A brutally truthful, compassionate novel about the heart, mind, and soul of a woman who, confronted by her husband's sudden and extreme spiritual conversion, is forced to learn "how to be good"—whatever that means, and for better or worse... Katie Carr is a good person... sort of. For years her husband's been selfish, sarcastic, and underemployed. But now David's changed. He's become a good person, too—really good. He's found a spiritual leader. He has become kind, soft-spoken, and earnest. Katie isn't sure if this is deeply felt conversion, a brain tumor—or David's most brilliantly vicious manipulation yet. Because she's finding it more and more difficult to live with David—and with herself.

.com In Nick Hornby's *How to Be Good*, Katie Carr is certainly trying to be. That's why she became a GP. That's why she cares about Third World debt and homelessness, and struggles to raise her children with a conscience. It's also why she puts up with her husband David, the self-styled Angriest Man in Holloway. But one fateful day, she finds herself in a Leeds parking lot, having just slept with another man. What Katie doesn't yet realize is that her fall from grace is just the first step on a spiritual journey more torturous than the interstate at rush hour. Because, prompted by his wife's actions, David is about to stop being angry. He's about to become good—not politically correct, organic-food-eating good, but good in the fashion of the Gospels. And that's no easier in modern-day Holloway than it was in ancient Israel. Hornby means us to take his title literally: How can we be good, and what does that mean? However, quite apart from demanding that his readers scrub their souls with the nearest available Brillo pad, he also mesmerizes us with that cocktail of wit and compassion that has become his trademark. The result is a multifaceted jewel of a book: a

hilarious romp, a painstaking dissection of middle-class mores, and a powerfully sympathetic portrait of a marriage in its death throes. It's hard to know whether to laugh or cry as we watch David forcing his kids to give away their computers, drawing up schemes for the mass redistribution of wealth, and inviting his wife's most desolate patients round for a Sunday roast. But that's because *How to Be Good* manages to be both brutally truthful and full of hope. It won't outsell the Bible, but it's a lot funnier. --Matthew Baylis  
From Publishers Weekly  
Kate, a doctor, wife and mother, is in the midst of a difficult decision: whether to leave or stay with her bitter, sarcastic husband David (who proudly writes a local newspaper column called "The Angriest Man in Holloway"). The long-term marriage has gone stale, but is it worth uprooting the children and the comfortable lifestyle? Then David meets a faith healer called Dr. Goodnews, and suddenly converts to an idealistic do-gooder: donating the children's computer to an orphanage, giving away the family's Sunday dinner to homeless people and inviting runaways to stay in the guest room (and convincing the neighbors to do likewise). Barber gives an outstanding performance as Kate, humorously conveying her mounting irritation at having her money and belongings donated to strangers, her guilt at not feeling more generous and her hilarious desire for revenge. Barber brilliantly portrays each eccentric character: hippie-ish Goodnews, crusading David, petulant children and, poignantly, the hesitant, halting Barmy Brian, a mentally deficient patient of Kate's who needs looking after. Barber's stellar performance turns a worthy novel into a must-listen event. Simultaneous release with Riverhead hardcover (Forecasts, June 25). Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
Frances Barber is perfect as the voice of Katie Carr, a North London doctor and mother of two in the midst of a midlife crisis. As the novel begins, Katie's marriage to her bitter and sarcastic husband, David, the author of the syndicated "Angriest Man in Holloway" column, has deteriorated to the point where she has taken a lover and asked for a divorce. Everything changes, however, after faith-healer DJ GoodNews lays his hands on David, and the "Angriest Man in Holloway" is transformed into a "sincere Do-Gooder." David invites DJ to move in, and the two embark on an ambitious campaign to change the world. Although Katie is proud of some of David's accomplishments, she struggles with the change in dynamics in their relationship as well as with some of David's more extreme acts of charity. Entertaining and substantial, Hornby's novel is recommended for all popular fiction collections. Beth Farrell, Portage Cty. Dist. Lib., OH  
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