

BOOK REVIEW: Handbook for an Unpredictable Life

Written by Kam Williams

"I hated the fact that my mother was crazy. I wanted her to be normal. Even when she acted normal... I was always walking on eggshells, waiting for the insanity to hit. And when it hit, it hit hard and fast—leaving deep emotional and physical scars...

"I didn't really want to write about this story of mine... It so hard to go there... And more important, I was concerned that people would pity me, and I don't want anyone's pity. That is not the point...

The point is to get it out, to validate my feelings, to communicate how good it feels to no longer live in fear of what others may think, and to share my journey and move on. I have survived."

-- Excerpted from the Preface (pages ix-x)

Rosie Perez made a memorable screen debut in 1989 as Tina in *Do the Right Thing*. Spike Lee had cast the curvaceous Puerto Rican as his girlfriend in the picture after serendipitously spotting her shaking her protuberant derriere onstage in a big booty contest at a nightclub in L.A.

Rosie proceeded to parlay that bit of luck into an enviable career which has included an Academy Award nomination (for *Fearless*) along with over 50 other acting credits. Who would ever suspect that such an accomplished thespian had to overcome a challenging childhood en route to super stardom?

But she was born in Bushwick, Brooklyn to a schizophrenic single-mom who surrendered custody to a Catholic orphanage while the little girl was still a toddler. At that home in upstate New York, Rosie would be subjected to a host of horrors, including mental and physical abuse from the nuns charged with her care.

Eventually, she was placed in a group home back in Brooklyn, which was still a problem because it placed her in proximity to her mom. The mistreatment she suffered during visitation as a consequence led her down a self-destructive path marked by acting out, low grades, PTSD and depression.

Rosie recounts all of the above in *Handbook for an Unpredictable Life* a heartbreaking, warts-an-all autobiography. The surprisingly-frank book also chronicles her meteoric rise in showbiz, a feat seemingly all the more miraculous, given her humble roots and dysfunctional family structure.

An inspirational memoir by an admirable survivor who has fortunately finally found the peace that had so eluded her for years.

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ROSIE PEREZ HANDBOOK FOR AN UNPREDICTABLE LIFE

HOW I SURVIVED SISTER RENATA AND MY CRAZY MOTHER,
AND STILL CAME OUT SMILING (WITH GREAT HAIR)

<http://www.amazon.com/Book-of-Me-Rosie-Perez/dp/0312381928> visit%3dnosim/thslfofire-20