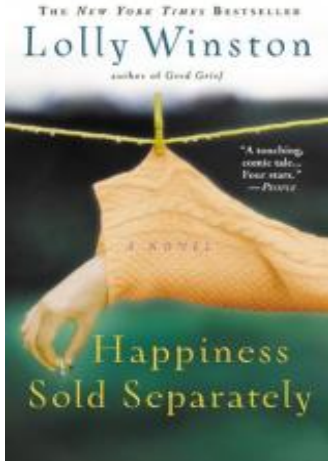


Happiness Sold Separately

by Lolly Winston



About the Book

Elinor Mackey has always done the right things in the right order --- college, law school, career, marriage --- but now everything's going wrong. After two painful years of trying, Elinor has learned that she can't have children. All the doctors can tell her is that it's probably because of her age. As she turns forty, she withdraws into an interior world of heartbreak.

Elinor's loving husband, Ted, a successful podiatrist, has always done the right thing, too. Then he meets the wrong woman at the wrong time, and does the wrong thing. Ted's lover, Gina --- a beautiful and kindhearted nutritionist --- always eats the right thing, but is unlucky in love and always falls for the wrong men. Soon Ted has to fight to make everything right again.

Can Elinor and Ted's marriage be saved? The answer is alarmingly fresh and unexpected as *New York Times* bestselling author Lolly Winston introduces us to characters as memorable as those of Anne Tyler and Nick Hornby, but who are indelibly all her own.

Discussion Guide

1. The story is told from multiple points of view. Did you find that reading each character's point of view allowed you to understand their "side" of the story better? Once you got inside a new character's head, were there things you learned about them that made them more sympathetic to you?

2. At one point, Ted seems to be in love with two women at the same time. Do you think this is possible for some people? Do you think he is *in* love with Elinor, or does he just *love* her? Can we go from one to the other and then back again?

3. While Elinor didn't put off getting pregnant, she spent many years of her life focusing on her career, and perhaps that's why she married later in life. Do you think that women who make personal sacrifices for corporate America tend to regret it more so than men?
4. How does Toby complicate the story for each of the characters? What does Ted get from his relationship with Toby and Gina that he doesn't seem to feel he gets from his marriage?
5. If Elinor hadn't miscarried, do you think she and Ted definitely would have stayed together forever?
6. Is it possible to have an amicable divorce? If so, do you think Ted and Elinor would have had one?
7. Is it ever forgivable to have an extramarital affair? If so, do you think Ted's affair was, or ever would be forgivable to Elinor? Was it understandable to you, as a reader?
8. Which of the characters did you find most sympathetic at the beginning of the novel? At the end?
9. What do you think happens after the last page of the novel? What would you do, if you were Elinor? What if you were Gina?
10. What is the significance of the tree in the yard? Does it have symbolic value?

Author Bio

Born and raised in Hartford CT, Lolly Winston holds an MFA in creative writing from Sarah Lawrence College, where she wrote a collection of short stories as her thesis. She is the author of *New York Times* bestselling novels GOOD GRIEF and HAPPINESS SOLD SEPARATELY, which is being developed as a film. Her short stories have appeared in *The Sun*, *The Southeast Review*, *The Third Berkshire Anthology*, *Girls? Night Out* and others. She's contributed essays to the anthologies KISS TOMORROW HELLO and BAD GIRLS.

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