



[Happens Every Day: An All-Too-True Story](#)

By [Isabel Gillies](#)

[3.0 out of 5 stars](#) [Some good/Some bad](#)

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It may be tough for a reader (especially a female) to admit, but Gillies' voice was grating, at times, and her writing style, below average. The memoir was insipid in parts. However, her voice and the writing got better as the book progressed. So, if you only read the beginning, you might give up. She has a tendency to "talk" to the reader, digress, and tell us, more or less, "Oops, I'm off track. Back to my story," which reminded me of interruptive narrators in 18th C. fiction. But this improved, and she stopped doing it, or her editor decided to start cutting those parts later in the book.

If she puts her life out there so explicitly, then readers are entitled to comment on it. Just because some might not like it, doesn't mean the author is a 'bad person' (that's silly), and certainly her story has elicited positive responses. But, this is not a GREAT book, as some readers have posted. A GREAT book would be Anna Karenina. I agree with others that it certainly takes a lot of chutzpah to write a memoir like this (if she, in fact, did write it, by which I mean it sounds like 'talk' that was transcribed and edited by a savvy editor, which happens quite often with celebrities--and others--who have a story to tell, who are well-connected, wealthy, East Coast, have the "right" politics, and when money is to be made). Although she claims not to be wealthy, this just doesn't ring true. Throughout her memoir, she describes nothing but a wealthy background. She grew up in an apartment with a view of Central Park, and summered in a house in Maine. Come on! She also always points out how the mothers in Oberlin didn't have any 'help' or nannies, as if it's unusual not to have help. If you are not a Super-Mom with lots of kids, or even worse, you don't have any kids at all, then the book might make you grind your teeth. To her credit, the memoir is centered around her concern for her boys, so it makes sense that she would focus on "good mothers" and parenting.

Her descriptions of the academic life; in particular, the job hunt, are limited to those who apply for jobs (like her husband) with a sense of entitlement who have an exclusive background, and apply to prestigious institutions. It doesn't work this way for most applicants, as not everyone went to Ivy League or Big-10 graduate schools, so they don't have the luxury of even dreaming about a top-notch liberal arts college in (God forbid!) the Midwest. I find it ironic that "lefties," as she would call herself, supposedly tolerant and open, come off, at times, as narrow-minded snobs in her book. Her take on academia is on the mark in some cases; for instance, when she describes how Harvard already knew what "guy they want[ed]" to hire, and also the preference for hiring any minority (race, gender, ethnicity), and those who attended an Ivy League school so it looks good on their faculty list (22). Her comment, "When I was at college, if I'd had any idea how hard my teachers had to work to get the job, I would have done more of my reading" (22) was endearing. She tends to generalize all of academia from one experience, which only perpetuates erroneous notions of that life, and drives yet another stake into the heart of academia. Our culture's wariness of and even distaste for intellectuals probably fueled the revenge theme for some readers. After all, the cheating intellectual doesn't have a big seller but she does. (His

book would only be read by a handful of people anyway, according to her take on academic books.) So, I guess she somehow evened the score. It's interesting that Didion's memoir *Year of Magical Thinking* was also criticized by some readers because of references Didion made that hinted at or pointed to a privileged life. Just like Gillies, she went through a painful, tough time (and why we can relate to the material), but the difference is that Didion is a bonafide writer, and a fantastic one at that. Gillies' book is poignant at times, and her descriptions of trying to cope and find some pleasure (even if just in her pancakes) in the midst of pain, could be helpful to those who have been in a similar situation, but overall it's really just another 'celebrity-style' memoir, which is okay if you like that type of book.