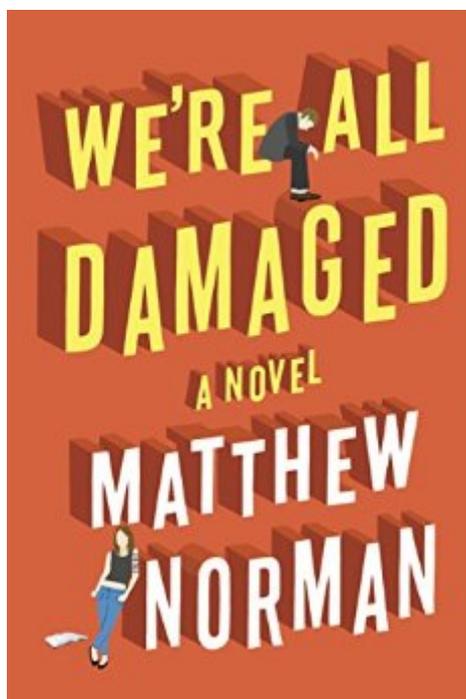


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We're All Damaged



Synopsis

Andy Carter was happy. He had a solid job. He ran 5Ks for charity. He was living a nice, safe Midwestern existence. And then his wife left him for a handsome paramedic down the street. *We're All Damaged* begins after Andy has lost his job, ruined his best friend's wedding, and moved to New York City, where he lives in a tiny apartment with an angry cat named Jeter that isn't technically his. But before long he needs to go back to Omaha to say good-bye to his dying grandfather. Back home, Andy is confronted with his past, which includes his ex, his ex's new boyfriend, his right-wing talk-radio-host mother, his parents' crumbling marriage, and his still-angry best friend. As if these old problems weren't enough, Andy encounters an entirely new complication: Daisy. She has fifteen tattoos, no job, and her own difficult past. But she claims she is the only person who can help Andy be happy again, if only she weren't hiding a huge secret that will mess things up even more. Andy Carter needs a second chance at life, and Daisy—and the person Daisy pushes Andy to become—may be his last chance to set things right.

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Customer Reviews

I selected and read this book as part of my Prime Membership perk of "select one pre-released

book a month for free" on my kindle. Its plot synopsis is one that has been written about before. That of a hapless, mild-mannered man named Andy Carter who is left by his wife for another man, escapes to NYC for a year to lick his wounds, but then returns home to a mid-western town to tend to a sick relative and in the process redeem himself and right some wrongs. The book definitely has some predictability, token characterizations and a handful nonsensical displays of machismo. Nevertheless, it gains fresh steam in the use of the current 2015/2016 climate of certain heavy handed subject matter of marriage equality, news media commentary and the notoriety of going viral by way of YouTube. There is no profound revelation, no big plot point and no major lesson is learned. Andy, as with a couple other characters is likable. Although at times, I found him to be a whiny, milquetoast of a man who has no backbone. Still, he is likable. His mother? Not so much. His married parents, both living two different lives and concurrently going through individual mid-life crisis, the high-powered older brother with the important job and perfect family, the mending of friendship with his college best friend, the somewhat adulterous, heart-crushing ex-wife, and slew of other characters all lend for a sometimes funny and a few times poignant storytelling. One character that started out promising but then fell flat, was the one of Daisy. You've seen her character in movies and read about her in other books, no doubt.

Any author who can make references to "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go", "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot", "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" and "F*** The Police" with equal grace and adeptness is alright in my book. Mr. Norman's perpetual references to many varied facets of pop culture are fun and clever; and they keep the reader on his or her toes; and every now and again, provide real insight into the characters. Wham! and NWA together? On the same page? This guy is either a lunatic or a genius. The whole novel is teeming with these little ironies. It's a simple story about a man recovering from the break-up of his marriage. The plot, quite simply, is for Andy Carter to get home to say goodbye to his grandfather before he passes away. The narrative is simple and linear. But Andy Carter is perpetually at odds - between home in New York City and home in Omaha, Nebraska; between loyalty to his conservative parents and his own sense of right and wrong; between allegiance to his straight-laced ex and feelings for a mysterious new girl. While he wrestles with these conflicts, he's learning that grandparents are people too; that he's not as big a loser as previously thought; life is full of things over which we must mourn and life is full of things over which we must laugh; and that despite appearances, no one has it all together. All of it takes place on the eve of the landmark SCOTUS decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Through it all, Andy maintains an astounding sense of humor and is quick to make keen observations about the absurdities, and pain,

of life in the 2010s - like how the Nirvana Nevermind baby is in his 20s, like how people obsess over 401(k)s, all the Tylers, and YouTube. But it's not all absurd.

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