

we are all completely beside ourselves

epub

We are all completely beside ourselves epub is a captivating novel by Karen Joy Fowler that explores complex themes of family, identity, and the nature of consciousness. The story unfolds through the eyes of Rosemary Cook, a girl whose life is profoundly affected by her upbringing and the unique circumstances surrounding her family. Set against the backdrop of the 1970s and 1980s, Fowler's narrative combines humor and heartbreak in a poignant tale that delves into the limits of love and the consequences of scientific curiosity.

Overview of the Novel

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves tells the story of Rosemary, who navigates her life while dealing with the absence of her sister, Fern, and the emotional fallout from her family's unconventional past. The narrative is structured in a way that gradually reveals critical details about the Cook family, particularly the controversial decision made by her parents regarding Fern.

Plot Summary

1. **Introducing Rosemary:** The novel begins with Rosemary as a college student in California, reflecting on her childhood and the events that led to her current life. The narrative is not linear; Rosemary's memories are interspersed with her current experiences, providing a rich and layered storytelling approach.
2. **The Cook Family:** Rosemary's family is depicted as unique, consisting of her father, a psychology professor, her mother, and her siblings—Fern and her brother, Lowell. Fern, who was raised as a chimpanzee, plays a pivotal role in the story, becoming an embodiment of the themes of nature versus nurture.
3. **The Disappearance of Fern:** A significant turning point occurs when Fern is taken away from the family, leading to a profound sense of loss and confusion for Rosemary. The impact of Fern's absence casts a long shadow over the narrative, as Rosemary grapples with her feelings of abandonment and loyalty.
4. **The Search for Identity:** As Rosemary grows older, she questions her identity and the legacy of her family. Her journey of self-discovery is intertwined with the broader questions about what it means to be human and how the relationships we form shape our understanding of ourselves.

Major Themes

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves is rich with themes that resonate deeply with readers. Below are some of the most prominent:

- **Family and Relationships:** The novel intricately examines the bonds of

family and how they can be both nurturing and destructive. Rosemary's connection with her parents and siblings evolves throughout the story, highlighting the complexities of familial love.

- **The Nature of Consciousness:** Fowler raises questions about what it means to be "human" through the character of Fern. The narrative challenges readers to consider the moral implications of scientific experimentation on sentient beings and reflects on the emotional weight of such choices.

- **Loss and Absence:** The theme of loss is central to the novel. Rosemary's grief over Fern's absence is palpable, and it shapes her interactions and choices throughout her life. The exploration of absence serves as a means to understand the profound impact that loved ones have on our existence.

- **Identity and Self-Discovery:** Rosemary's journey is ultimately one of self-discovery. As she confronts her past and the repercussions of her family's decisions, she learns to navigate her identity in a world that often feels alienating.

Character Analysis

Fowler's characters are richly drawn and serve as conduits for the novel's themes. Each character brings a unique perspective to the narrative, allowing for a multifaceted exploration of the story.

Rosemary Cook

Rosemary is the protagonist, and her voice is both relatable and introspective. As she recounts her childhood, her longing for Fern becomes a lens through which she views her life. Her character development is central to the narrative, as she learns to reconcile her past with her present.

Fern Cook

Fern is a pivotal character despite her physical absence. Raised as a chimpanzee, her character embodies the intersection of humanity and animality. Fern's story prompts readers to question the ethics of animal rights and the implications of treating sentient beings as experiments.

Lowell Cook

Lowell, Rosemary's brother, represents another layer of complexity within the Cook family. His character is shaped by his own struggles and choices, providing insight into the ways in which trauma can manifest differently in individuals.

The Parents

Rosemary's parents are portrayed as well-meaning yet flawed individuals whose decisions have far-reaching impacts on their children. Their scientific pursuits and emotional detachment serve as crucial elements in understanding the family's dynamics.

Writing Style and Structure

Fowler's writing is characterized by its wit and emotional depth. The structure of the novel, which alternates between past and present, creates a sense of tension and anticipation as readers piece together Rosemary's life story.

- **Narrative Voice:** Rosemary's voice is engaging and often humorous, providing a counterbalance to the weighty themes of the story. Her candid reflections invite readers to empathize with her struggles.
- **Use of Flashbacks:** The use of flashbacks is a powerful storytelling device in this novel. They allow readers to gradually uncover the complexities of Rosemary's past, leading to a more profound understanding of her character.
- **Symbolism:** Symbolism plays a significant role in the narrative. For instance, Fern represents both innocence and the consequences of human intervention in nature. This duality adds layers of meaning to the story.

Impact and Reception

We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves has received critical acclaim for its thought-provoking themes and compelling storytelling. The novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and has been praised for its originality and emotional resonance.

- **Critical Acclaim:** Reviewers have lauded Fowler's ability to tackle complex issues with sensitivity and humor. The novel has been described as both heartbreaking and enlightening.
- **Reader Response:** Readers have found themselves deeply moved by Rosemary's journey, often reflecting on their own familial relationships and the nature of love.
- **Adaptations:** The book's popularity has led to discussions about potential adaptations, showcasing its relevance in contemporary discussions about ethics, family, and identity.

Conclusion

We are all completely beside ourselves epub stands out as an important work of contemporary literature that challenges readers to reconsider notions of family, identity, and ethics. Through Rosemary's poignant journey, Fowler invites us to reflect on what it means to be part of a family and the consequences of our choices. The novel's blend of humor and heartbreak, coupled with its thought-provoking themes, ensures its place as a significant contribution to modern literary discourse.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves' about?

The novel, written by Karen Joy Fowler, explores the complexities of family dynamics, identity, and the impact of a traumatic childhood event involving a chimpanzee raised as a child.

Who is the author of 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves'?

The book is authored by Karen Joy Fowler, an acclaimed writer known for her thought-provoking narratives and exploration of human relationships.

What themes are prevalent in 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves'?

Key themes include the nature of family, the ethics of animal rights, the search for identity, and the complexities of memory and trauma.

Is 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves' a standalone novel?

Yes, it is a standalone novel, although it shares thematic elements with Fowler's other works. It does not belong to a series.

What is the narrative style of 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves'?

The novel is written in a first-person narrative, allowing readers to experience the protagonist's thoughts, emotions, and memories directly.

Has 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves' received any awards?

Yes, the novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2014 and has won several other literary awards, gaining critical acclaim.

Where can I find an EPUB version of 'We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves'?

You can find the EPUB version on various e-book retail platforms such as Amazon, Apple Books, or through library services that offer digital borrowing.

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