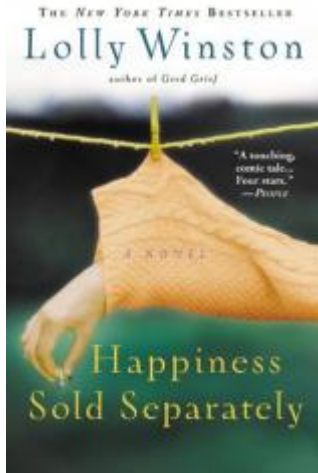


## Happiness Sold Separately

by Lolly Winston

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### 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

Lolly Winston, born and raised in the glamorous insurance capital of Hartford, Conn., Lolly Winston holds an MFA in creative writing from Sarah Lawrence College, where she studied with Alan Gurganus, and wrote a collection of short stories as her thesis.

In the early eighties she went to Hawaii for eight days and stayed for eight years, boogie boarding and working as a corporate copy writer and public affairs officer at a local trauma hospital.

She moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in the early nineties, where she continued to work as a public relations professional. Her first foray into freelance journalism was as a stringer for *Automotive News*. After falling off the corporate ladder she began working from home as a freelance writer for high-tech companies, and the *San Jose Mercury News*. Since then her work has appeared in the magazines *Redbook*, *Family Circle*, *Working Mother*, *New Woman*, *Sunset*, *Lifetime* and others. She has published short fiction in *The Sun*. She has also taught classes in freelance writing.

She lives with her husband in Northern California.

#### Favorite Authors:

My favorite authors, in no particular order, include: Flannery O'Connor, Vladimir Nabokov, Nick Hornby, Walker Percy, Mary Karr, George Saunders, Michael Cunningham, Aimee Bender, Melissa Bank, Jane Austen, Dave Barry, David Sedaris, Andre Dubus III, Sylvia Plath, Raymond Carver, Ethan Canin, Christie Hodgen, Ellen Sussman, J.D. Salinger, Tobias Wolff, Donald Barthelme. It's hard to stop naming them. I'm a groupie at heart. My all-time favorite novels are probably, THE BELL JAR, LOLITA, ABOUT A BOY, ANNA KARENINA, THE HOURS, and THE MOVIEGOER.

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#### **Happiness Sold Separately**

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