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I Am Not Myself These Days: A Memoir

By Josh Kilmer-Purcell



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I Am Not Myself These Days follows a glittering journey through Manhattan's dark underbelly—a shocking and surreal world where alter egos reign and subsist (barely) on dark wit and chemicals...a tragic romantic comedy where one begins by rooting for the survival of the relationship and ends by hoping someone simply survives. Kilmer-Purcell is a terrifically gifted new literary voice who straddles the divide between absurdity and normalcy, and stitches them together with surprising humor and lonely poignancy. As Booklist raved, I Am Not Myself These Days is "as tart and funny as a Noël Coward play, for Kilmer-Purcell is especially good at dialogue, and, as in Coward's best plays, under the comedy lies the sad truth that even at our best, we are all weak, fallible fools. Again and again in this rich, adventure-filled book, Kilmer-Purcell illustrates the truth of Blake's proverb, 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.'"



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I Am Not Myself These Days: A Memoir By Josh Kilmer-Purcell Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

I Am Not Myself These Days is Josh Kilmer-Purcell's outrageously intimate memoir of a young man living a double life in the heady days and nights of mid-'90s New York City. As we follow Kilmer-Purcell through alcohol-fueled nights and a love affair with Jack, a crack-addicted male escort, he offers up an alternative universe where normal is "a Normal Rockwell painting that, if you leaned in close, would discover is made up entirely of misfits."

By day, Josh drudges off to a Soho-based advertising firm where he creates ad campaigns for corporate clients. At night, he dons live goldfish to complete the look of Aqua, a 7-foot-tall award-winning drag queen who trolls gay clubs in search of her next drink/one night stand. In between, he spends his time trying to build a stable, loving relationship with someone whose beeping pager is a constant reminder of the pair's almost inevitable fate. Yet even as Josh's escapades get increasingly absurd, Kilmer-Purcell is always there to remind us that the story we're reading is real, and that fundamental human emotions and desires are essentially universal. In the end, everyone just wants to be loved and to fit in somewhere. And while the lesson may seem hokey at times, Kilmer-Purcell's sharp wit rescues the memoir from becoming an exaggerated sob story:

The night before any major holiday is always a blockbuster night at gay clubs. Thousands... across the city fortifying themselves for long trips home where they'll be met with awkward silences, stilted conversations and cousins with whom they'd experimented with decades ago.

From start to finish, *I Am Not Myself These Days* is an extraordinary journey into an amazing life. To be a fly on the wall is an adventure that should not be missed. --Gisele Toueg

From Publishers Weekly

In the go-go '90s, Kilmer-Purcell spent his days as an advertising grunt and his nights hopping around Manhattan's gay clubs as "Aquadisiac," over seven feet tall in a wig and heels with goldfish swimming in transparent bubbles covering "her" breasts. (Not that Kilmer-Purcell wanted to actually become a woman; as he explains to his mother, a drag queen is "a celebrity trapped in a normal person's body.") He meets a cute guy, and soon he's moved into Jack's penthouse apartment—which he pays for by working as a male escort. Kilmer-Purcell gives much of his story a *Sex and the City*-ish spin, finding comedy in the contrast between his and Jack's sweet, cuddly relationship and the sexual demimonde of drag queens, hookers and masochists they count among their friends. But there's always a dark undercurrent: before the two get serious, Kilmer-Purcell's alcohol-impaired judgment frequently puts him in dangerous situations, but things get worse when Jack starts smoking crack during sex parties and becomes addicted. The exact, un pitying detail with which Kilmer-Purcell depicts his downward spiral makes it impossible to look away, especially since it's not until the final scenes that he allows himself to succumb to sentimentality. (Feb.)

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From [Booklist](#)

To say Kilmer-Purcell lived a double life is an understatement. If his memoir can be believed--and even if it can't be, it's a very entertaining read--he lived double lives *within* double lives. A talented advertising copywriter by day and a popular drag queen by night, he was also a major alcohol and cocaine abuser and the inamorato/a of a professional male escort. Over the course of six months or so, his complicated life spun out of control as fussy clients, impatient coworkers, clingy drag groupies, love problems, and multiple chemical

dependencies got the best of him, not to mention his lover. Parts of his autobiography are as tart and funny as a Noel Coward play, for Kilmer-Purcell is especially good at dialogue, and as in Coward's best plays, under the comedy lies the sad truth that even at our best, we are all weak, fallible fools. Again and again in this rich, adventure-filled book, Kilmer-Purcell illustrates the truth of Blake's proverb, "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." *Jack Helbig*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Babara Lopez:

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