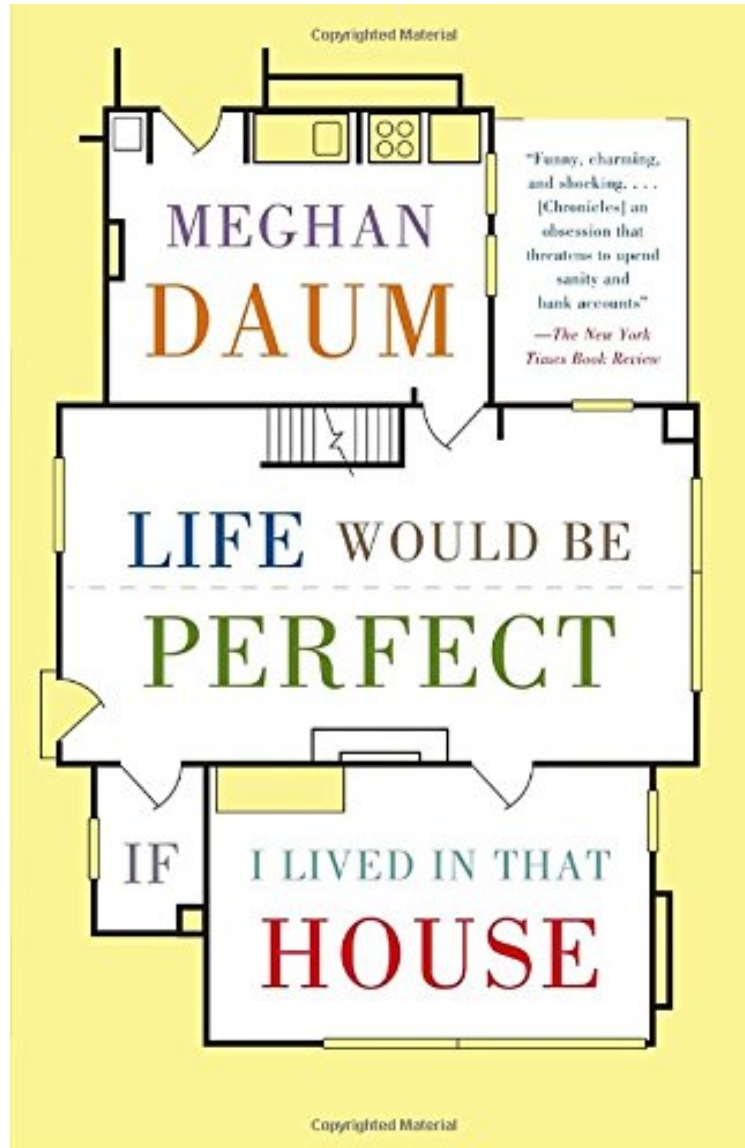


(Read now) Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House

Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House

Meghan Daum

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Meghan Daum : Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I could not put it down!By Judy CohnIt was a diagnosis for me...I am forever on reator.com. I am now in a 1938 renovated farmhouse on almost an acre and it has swallowed me whole. When people ask me about his unique and potentially really wonderful house (and huge land)..I often reply..."Be Careful what you wish for). I love it and I have to remind myself...this is what I wanted. But, it is an unfinished

symphony..at least a work in progress. And I can barely find the rest of my life in here because it deserves and demand so much.I like books and I like reading books. I enjoyed the swift moving prose, the colorful and intimate details...the discovery of a porcelain tile in the bathroom, the color changed in the walls, the times of just wanting to be home and on the bed. This could have been such a boring book. It wasn't boring at all. Entertaining and it made me pause snit in my plans for possibly moving again.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. THIS BOOK IS SO VERY FUNNY I LOVED IT. ALOT.By VALERIE TOWNSEND I LOVED THIS BOOK SHE IS SO FUNNY FOR THE PERSON WHO CALLED IT DARK HUMOE I DIDN'T KNOW THAT HUMOR HAS A COLOR. I FOUND IT DELIGHTFUL HILARIOUS BUT NOT DARK AT ALL A BIT SAD TOWARD THE END BUT MOSTLY FUNNY. ASO FOR ALL THE TASTELESS READERS WHO CAN'T EVER FIND ANYTHING TO SAY. ABOUT ANY GOOD HUMOROUS BOOKS THAT YOU READ HERES A TIP STOP READING BOOKS ALL TOGETHER, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY TO WRITE A BOOK. ITS HARD WORK, SO SHUT UP AND TRY TO BE NICE I LOVED THIS HILARIOUS WARM BOOK AND I REALLY AM GLAD I FINALLY READ IT. ITS TRULY FUNNY AND FUN TO READ.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A life you can relate to--even if you don't want to admit itBy Anne BeckMy search is always for the perfect next book--and this was one of them. Meghan Daum connects to the reader below the surface. In this world of form over substance, this book is like a Facebook page with pictures of a successful life but with an honest, introspective, often humorous note attached to each that says, "Now let me tell you the real story behind this one."After reading each of her books (I've already preordered her next), I come away feeling a bit saner and hopefully a bit more compassionate toward that hidden side to us all.

In this laugh-out-loud personal journey, acclaimed author Meghan Daum explores the perils and pleasures of believing that only a house can make you whole. From her teenage apartment fantasies and her mother's decorating manias to her own "hidden room" dreams and the bungalow she eventually buys on her own, *Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House* is the true story of one woman's quest for the four perfect walls to call home.

.com Questions for Meghan Daum on *Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House* Q: In *Life Would Be Perfect If I Lived in That House*, you detail your lifelong obsession with real estate and your quest for a place to call home. What does "home" mean to you? How has that meaning evolved over the years? A: Asking what "home" means is like asking what "love" means. And, as I say in the book, I have a pet peeve about people referring to houses as homes, especially if they're talking in terms of real estate or about properties as physical, purchasable entities. "I just bought a new home," someone will say. Really? What does that mean? You bought a feeling, a mélange of smells, a history? No, you bought a house! In my mind, you buy a house but you make a home. Q: In your book you say, "I wanted to live on another block, in another part of town, in New York, in Paris, on the moon." Why the constant desire to move around? A: The open houses my parents took me to as a child probably were a factor. We didn't do sports or play games or relax much on weekends, but my mother was always up for open houses and, moreover, the idea of moving to a new house. I definitely inherited my restlessness from her. I've also found that moving functions as something of a stimulant for me. During the process of moving out of an old place and getting settled in a new place I find I become more energetic, more excited about my surroundings and more motivated about my life trajectory. And being in a new place just naturally makes you more observant. It's like I can feel a set of antennas rising from my skull as I pull into a new town or neighborhood. And that's a rush; I can't deny it. Q: After several years in New York, you moved to Lincoln, Nebraska. What attracted you to such a different place? How much of a factor was the high price of real estate in New York in your decision to relocate? A: The reason I give most often for moving to Nebraska is, yes, the less expensive cost of living (it's the most easily explained.) I rented a large apartment with beautiful woodwork in Lincoln for about a sixth of what it would have cost me in Manhattan. I was in a lot of debt from student loans and various other things, so I framed my decision around my financial picture. But that belied a deeper, less tangible and infinitely more pressing reason that I went to Nebraska, which is that I felt an almost chemical urge to radically change my surroundings. As enamored as I'd been in my teens and 20s of New York City, I always nursed a constant, low-grade crush on the idea of rural life and, specifically, the aesthetics of the prairie. Some of that, I'll admit, came from having watched the *Little House on the Prairie* series on television and reading the books as a kid. I was consumed with the idea of homesteading, so much so that I made my mother sew me a sunbonnet so I could run around like Laura Ingalls. She also put an extra box spring under my bed and leaned a step ladder against it so I could climb up to it as though it were Laura and her sister's loft bed. Even as I grew older and outgrew Laura Ingalls I remained enthralled with the aura surrounding the high plains. I loved--and still love--the starkness of that geography, the huge sky, the scarcity of the trees, the drama of the weather. But because it's easier to tell yourself and others that you're uprooting your life and moving to the central plains in order to save money rather than to watch a hail storm through the window of a rattling farmhouse, I basically went with that story. Not that the money part isn't true; I desperately needed to get out of debt. But there are ways to do that that don't involve hailstorms, so clearly something else was at work. Q: When you eventually moved to L.A., you had a hard time letting go of life in Nebraska, and nearly bought a

farmhouse there as a vacation home. Why do you think you had such a hard time leaving Lincoln for good? Does the allure of a farmhouse still call to you? A: The farmhouse definitely still calls to me! When I moved to L.A. I missed Nebraska terribly, not just for the obvious reason of missing the friends I'd made there but also for (again this is intangible and a bit tricky to explain) the entire mood of the place. I could describe that mood as "laid back" but that doesn't quite get to it. It's more like I detected in Nebraska a sort of peaceful coexistence with reality. That sounds kind of sophomoric and pretentious, I know, but I guess what I'm saying is that I noticed a greater acceptance there of the messiness and absurdity of life. That acceptance can be difficult to find in places where the financial stakes are higher and people tend to be harder driving in the conventional sense and more invested in achieving some notion of perfection. As a former New Yorker, that kind of mentality was, alas, quite a novelty to me. And after soaking it up for nearly four years I landed in a canyon north of Los Angeles surrounded by a lot of wealthy people who wore their "laid backness" like designer jeans while they were in fact so anxious that their pets were on Xanax (true.) So in the midst of that I found myself craving that stark geography again. And every time I go back to Nebraska, which is at least once a year, I feel just so exhilarated when that plane touches down. Q: After taking the big real-estate plunge, you met, dated, and eventually married your now husband. Do you think there's any sort of karmic connection between the two? A: I'd like to say yes but I'd probably be lying. I was in that house for two years before I met or even really tried to meet someone (because in my mind it wasn't enough to own a house; it had to be totally fixed up.) And I wasn't even finished when I met my now-husband, since I made him shop for antique kitchen drawer pulls on our first date. I think it was mostly luck--and the fact that he called me for a second date even after I dragged him to an architectural salvage yard. Q: What is it about real estate that draws such a following? Why are so many Americans so obsessed with the size, location, and style of their home? Do you think there's a deeper meaning to this fixation? A: The essence of this book is really an examination of the emotions that inform these obsessions. Yes, it's a book about houses. But it's also about how we see ourselves in the world vis-à-vis our family, our social class, our aspirations, and our fears. The way I've always thought of it, a house is ultimate metaphor. It's more than just shelter for ourselves and for our loved ones, more than just "the biggest purchase you'll ever make." It's like a really expensive, high-maintenance, inanimate version of ourselves. It's a repository for every piece of baggage we've ever carried. Our homes protect us from the outside world, show our off taste, and accommodate our stuff. Perhaps above all, they prove to ourselves and to the world that we've truly moved out of our childhood bedrooms. You don't have to be a real estate junkie, I think, to feel this way.

From Publishers Weekly

By turns disarming and tedious, Daum's (*The Quality of Life Report*) cautionary tale about house lust tracks her dizzying succession of moves from New York City to Lincoln, Neb., to Los Angeles. Place becomes inextricably linked with being, and fashioning an impressive shelter creates a whole life, from choosing college at Vassar because it could ultimately secure her a shabby yet elegant prewar apartment in Manhattan to a self-empowering, self-confessed hare-brained relocation at age 29—single, and now an established journalist and author—to the plains of Nebraska to achieve the perpetually elusive domestic integrity. Desiring to be that person who deserved to have the perfect living situation, Daum is seized by full-blown real-estate addiction, despite her inability to afford anything like her dream place, and she eventually migrates from the modest charms of a Lincoln farmhouse to the parched crevices of L.A., where she aims to write a screenplay. Here the locus of her memoir fixes on the purchase of a dilapidated bungalow in Echo Park in 2004: becoming a homeowner translates into being an evolved human. Alas, the outcome is sadly predictable, even the finding-the-man-to-fill-the-house with, but Daum's treading in the wake of the burst housing bubble is sweet and timely. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Funny, charming and shocking. . . . [Chronicles] an obsession that threatens to upend sanity and bank accounts. . . . Daum has a rare gift in her ability to keep readers laughing through her own tears. . . . Her spirit is generous, her writing is buoyant, and her heart is open to all the ways in which a house holds the key to happiness. Perfection has nothing to do with it."—*The New York Times Book* "Wonderful. . . . Like having a long, glorious, no-holds-barred conversation with your smartest, funniest friend about all the juicy topics: real estate, class envy, bad dates, family identity, and the discrepancies between the lives we aspire to and the lives we lead. I'm awed by Daum's honesty and talent."—Curtis Sittenfeld "A delightful dissection of the real estate obsession that's a hallmark of our age, recession or no."—*O, The Oprah Magazine* "Self-deprecatingly funny. . . . Daum uses her lifelong obsession with finding the ideal living space to probe domestic desire, a deeper restlessness than the search for quick profits."—*The Wall Street Journal* "Honest and endearing . . . richly drawn. . . . Daum captures the now-gone moment when real estate became a national obsession, chronicling the shared madness of those who could only take breaks from watching HGTV to discuss closing costs. . . . As she moves from coast to coast and in between, Daum is consistently relatable."—*Los Angeles Times Book* "Suffused with humor and desire. . . . Alternately whimsical, philosophical and psychologically probing. . . . [An] enchanting, compelling memoir on the impossibility of resisting an irresistible object of desire."—*The Miami Herald* "Daum tackles real estate—or, more pointedly, the fixation, anxiety and magical thinking that often accompany it—with wit and a gift for self-parody. . . . Her prose has smarts, style and personality, but never turns pretentious. . . . It's a pleasure to read this author as she revisits comic misadventures and wrangles with a hot-button topic."—*Time Out New York* "Vividly described. . . . Daum exposes the modern real-estate-mad female underground, where open houses (visited in rabid two-women

teams) are a seasonal blood sport, Zillow is a verb, and where remodeling a collapsing farmhouse into a writer's retreat could instantly, we imagine, transform us into the George Plimpton of the prairie."—The Atlantic Monthly "Entertaining. . . . Like a romantic comedy in which Daum always seems to rent Mr. Wrong. . . . Don't be surprised if you race through *Life Would Be Perfect* in a single night."—Richmond Times-Dispatch "Daum is the essential Generation X-er. . . . She radiates the eternal youthfulness and the fear of commitment that define her cohort. . . . *Life Would Be Perfect* is the memoir of how the wandering Ms. Daum finally put down some roots. . . . A great book."—The Philadelphia Inquirer "Timely. . . . Daum [is] a fine writer—candid, reflective, stylish, fun and a bit prickly. Throughout the book, she offers an unflinching portrayal of her anxieties and her aspirations. . . . When she finally realizes that a house is not what will make her whole, you can't help but breathe a sigh of relief."—Associated Press "In this funny, horrifying (she came this close to buying a place near a roaring interstate because she was smitten with a landing), achingly honest memoir, Daum explores the way we wrap our identities in our surroundings, at one point wondering, 'Did the house look sexy on me?' Home truths, indeed."—More