



We are Never Meeting in Real Life.

Samantha Irby

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We are Never Meeting in Real Life. Samantha Irby

A New York Times Bestseller

Sometimes you just have to laugh, even when life is a dumpster fire.

With *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life.*, “bitches gotta eat” blogger and comedian Samantha Irby turns the serio-comic essay into an art form. Whether talking about how her difficult childhood has led to a problem in making “adult” budgets, explaining why she should be the new Bachelorette—she's "35-ish, but could easily pass for 60-something"—detailing a disastrous pilgrimage-slash-romantic-vacation to Nashville to scatter her estranged father's ashes, sharing awkward sexual encounters, or dispensing advice on how to navigate friendships with former drinking buddies who are now suburban moms—hang in there for the Costco loot—she’s as deft at poking fun at the ghosts of her past self as she is at capturing powerful emotional truths.

We are Never Meeting in Real Life. Details

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From Reader Review We are Never Meeting in Real Life. for online ebook

Thomas says

Vulnerable and real, this book made other people laugh but had me amused at best. I just do not know if I have the capacity to find books funny? Like, I do not think I have ever given a "humor" book five stars. Still, I appreciate what Samantha Irby does with *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life*: she uses her unique voice to talk about issues like fatphobia, mental health among black women, messy relationships, and more. Overall, recommended to people who want a humorous read that may prioritize potential for laughs over depth of insight.

Also, I did chuckle at the line when she asks her partner "has anyone in the patriarchy oppressed you lately?" before having sex with her. Because I would totally do that, too.

Hannah says

Wonderful, honest, hilarious, brilliant, raw, and did I mention hilarious?

I am a big fan of memoirs, especially those written by women funnier than me, and this is one of the best I have read so far. I adore the way Samantha Irby's language flows, with her perfectly placed expletives; there is just a poetry to it that I can't quite describe (the best kinds of voices are like that, I find). More than that, her essays are perfectly structured in a way that isn't obvious from the beginning and once I settled into the rhythm of her writing I found it absolutely hypnotizing.

Samantha Irby's writing worked best for me when her topics were deeply personal ones - such as her childhood but also her unsuccessful relationships. I loved reading about her finally finding a partner for life and it just shines through her whole writing how beyond in love she is and how much she adores her wife. I like that - I like that there is positivity offsetting some of the negativity but that she still remains fundamentally the same person. I like when relationships do that to people.

She made me snort, she made me laugh and she made me tear up. She made me think about things I haven't thought about, she made me agree with her so much (and sometimes not so much), she made me admit to myself things I haven't before (yes, I also need so much time for myself that I sometimes even like being in a long distance relationship). In short: I loved this a lot.

I received an arc of this book curtesy of NetGalley and Knopf Doubleday Publishing in exchange for an honest review. Thanks for that!

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Let's just get things out of the way and address the pink elephant in the room. The title of this one alone

almost gave me an out of body experience and **most definitely** had me saying

Then she added in a homeless-as-fuck looking kitten for the cover art as a bonus and I was sold.

(Have no fear, Samantha Irby, I am far too lazy to actually leave the comfort of my couch in order to stalk you properly. It shall strictly be via the intertubes.)

Several years ago I had a bit of what you might call an addiction to the blogosphere. It started with The Bloggess and other “mommy blogs” like People I Want To Punch In The Throat and several more I can’t remember the name of now and also Hyperbole and a Half and I Can Has Cheezburger (because **DUH**) and Shit My Dad Says and Damn You Autocorrect and Texts From Last Night and Texts from Bennett and Parents Shouldn’t Text and one about what a dog’s texts would say and on and on and on.

Now I know this might seem insane to you guys, but I’m actually pretty fucking good at what I do for a living. And if you think I read fast? Well, you should see how quickly I can draft and file a pleading or create a closing binder. Like a boss, yo. Long story long, with an entire universe of fellow weirdos right at my fingertips and zero desire to interact with actual, real-life humans - like EVER – the rabbit hole became harder and harder to pull myself out of once I got in and I knew I could end up getting fired if I let myself go there at work. Then Jenny Lawson wrote a seriously disappointing second book that made me realize our pretend friendship probably wouldn’t work out so well after all and the entire imaginary bubble burst so I quit blogs pretty much cold turkey (and began to focus on memes and gifs – lucky you). All this is being disclosed to let you know I had never heard of Samantha Irby before seeing this title so I can provide zero insight as to whether this is fresh material or simply “upcycled” content from Bitches Gotta Eat that has been repackaged with a mangy cat on the front.

As soon as I saw this thing (somewhere at some time ‘cause y’all know my momma must have dropped me on my head a time or twelve since I cannot remember **shit**), I ran straight to NetGalley in order to get a copy. Then I noticed the publication date had already passed and ~~foreed~~ politely requested the porny library order a copy. Which they did (probably because they’re scared of me by now, but whatever it takes, right?). Oh and NetGalley? You can go ahead and decline me. You know you want to and since I managed to land a copy already there’s no need to keep pretending you’re not going to

Good news is, since this **wasn’t** an ARC I’m allowed to quote it. And quote it I must because you need to know if your big girl panties are actually large enough to handle what Ms. Irby is about to throw at you – a/k/a I’m pretty sure you probably need to be at least 72% asshole to truly find her relatable. Lucky for me I’m 97.4% asshole so she was my lobster.

Shall we start with the sewer rat looking mah fah with the yellow backdrop? That’s Helen Keller. Irby was forced to take her in as a roommate when a co-worker brought her crusty eyeballed self in to the animal clinic for saving and they couldn’t force her on anyone else with a clear conscience

“Could you imagine if Helen was your boyfriend? You’d wake up at five thirty in the morning for work, tiptoe around so you don’t wake up His Highness, stub your toe in the dark multiple times while hastily dressing in clothes that you won’t realize don’t go together until you’re out in daylight waiting for the bus, and spend twelve hours slaving under a brutish dictator, only to come home and find that your companion is lying in the exact spot in which you left him. Except now that the sun is up, you see that his stinky body is curled around that sweater so new you haven’t even had a chance to take the tags off yet. And then

what does he do? Get up to greet you with a kiss and a shoulder rub? No, that animal yawns in your face before taking a shit with the door open and asking how soon you can get dinner ready.”

And then she wrote **literally** an experience I have at least weekly with someone I work with . . .

*“Joanna . . . asked me the other day to give her the name of a good book I’d read recently, and . . . I stood in front of her for, like, three real minutes cycling through every book I’ve rated on Goodreads in the last three months trying to determine which one would be the most impressive. I just stood there with my ears on fire wondering if I should just say *A Little Life* because no one would think you were dumb if you made it all the way through a seven-hundred-plus-page book. And I didn’t; I did not make it through that book, because a quarter of the way in, this other book about teenagers in love that I wanted to read came out, so I abandoned the smart shit to spend an afternoon sobbing over a story about children.”*

Not to mention how she once had to pay twenty-seven dollars **IN ONE DAY** to the swear jar her boss put on her desk (please boss, don’t ever do this, I can’t afford it), or how she spent her formative years waiting for the moment Drake would get up out of that wheelchair on Degrassi and come for her, or that she’d rather be dead than hot in the summer, or that she knows not only all of the cast members of *The Real Housewives of Atlanta* (past and present), but also all of their children, pets and significant others by name, or when buying a garment for the pool she’d like to request to “*see your most opaque turtleneckini and your finest ankle-length swim bloomers,*” and admits to having things called “outside pajamas”

And then she told a diarrhea on the side of the road story

That was the moment my husband and manchild “shushed” me because I was making it hard for them to concentrate on the ever-so-important MLB draft because apparently we’re getting a cut out of the signing bonuses this year or something?????

Maybe the most amazing thing of all is how Irby was able to mix in some real talk and serious subject matter and still keep it light (excluding one thing which I am **TOTALLY** going to spoil below so you don’t go in unprepared like me). She didn’t shy away from sharing about her abusive upbringing and a run-in with a pervy weirdo, her sexuality, medical problems, etc., but never in a “please pity me” way. She even offered some real truth big gals need to hear right now in case they think they aren’t allowed to have any self-worth just because they’re fat. Simply put, Samantha Irby wrote something amazing. I’ll definitely be picking up her first book *Meaty* sometime.

Now for the spoilsies. The goddamn cat died

If you’re a fan, this is probably old news, but it wasn’t to me and even though Irby tried to keep it light, I still ended up looking like this at bedtime

None of y’all need to go through that.

Tory says

So I don't know if Irby and I just have totally different senses of humor, or if it's just that she thinks she's about 500x funnier than she actually is. At least in MY reading of her book of collected essays, she came across less as self-deprecating and way more as an anxious, washed-up character stepped in bathos, who simply makes me relish my inconsequential, NORMAL life. I'm not wondering what people think of me when I take a bathroom key, so apparently I'm more of a functional human being than she is?

I did laugh outright at her depiction of steaming diarrhea on the side of the road, hanging out from a college bro-dude's car -- and beyond that, I had to force myself to finish the book. There's only so much whining about wanting to watch trash TV that really can be conveyed as clever or insightful -- after a certain point, you just sound like a spoiled child with trash tastes.

jv poore says

After reading this, I would very much like to meet Ms. Irby in real life.

Mariah says

Blah... I have read so many books like this and yet I seem to keep picking them up and not being impressed. The author shared random moments and stories from her life and she was funny enough to entertain me, but not good enough for me to recommend her book...

"Sometimes you just have to laugh, even when life is a dumpster fire. With *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life.*, "bitches gotta eat" blogger and comedian Samantha Irby turns the serio-comic essay into an art form. Whether talking about how her difficult childhood has led to a problem in making "adult" budgets, explaining why she should be the new Bachelorette--she's "35-ish, but could easily pass for 60-something"--detailing a disastrous pilgrimage-slash-romantic-vacation to Nashville to scatter her estranged father's ashes, sharing awkward sexual encounters, or dispensing advice on how to navigate friendships with former drinking buddies who are now suburban moms--hang in there for the Costco loot--she's as deft at poking fun at the ghosts of her past self as she is at capturing powerful emotional truths."

David Yoon says

So yeah, Samantha Irby is hella funny and her latest book has some legit bona fides with blurbs from Roxanne Gay and the New York Times Book Review. And I get how this could be the perfect literary diversion, but it reads like the Platonic ideal of a hilarious blogger who writes a book. Each chapter is like a long form blogpost, perfect in it's ability to invoke a wry chuckle, reading it over your morning coffee while avoiding work in the early hours of the day. I can imagine the appropriate gif to append to an appreciative, post-blog comment. And just as quickly it's gone, the browser tab shut down as you return your focus to the work you're supposed to be doing. The book feels like a collection of these posts and are just as forgettable. Wonderful distractions in the moment but ultimately nothing stuck with me a week later.

karen says

oooh, goodreads choice awards semifinalist for best humor book! what will happen?

i read this book because it was free, blurbed by jenny lawson, and it had a cat on the cover, thus combining three of my favorite things.

i am not blog-savvy, so i'd never heard of the author before, but i needed a nonfiction title to read for this month, and i really really needed something funny, so this seemed to be the perfect choice, and finding another funny lady-writer for the future would just be icing on the cake.

i think if i had read her first book or followed her blog, i would have gotten into this one more easily; that inevitable carry-over appreciation/indulgence would have been in the background as i read this. she has certain writerly idiosyncrasies, like invoking imaginary people in the second person, "your aunt Karen," "your grandma's favorite adhesive bandages," "your recently retired fifth-grade teacher" that threw me for a loop at first, but i think the bigger problem is that our funny bones just don't align.

the first essay is her filled-out application for the television show *The Bachelorette*, which she loves. i'm 90% sure this was just for her own use and she never actually submitted it, which is too bad, because i think it would have been a more interesting essay if she had gone through the interview process after filling out the forms with these honest/humorous responses.

Name: Samantha McKiver Irby

Age: 35ish (but I could pass for forty-seven to fifty-two, easily; sixtysomething if I stay up all night)

Gender: passably female

etc etc etc down to the longer responses

Have you ever had a temporary restraining order issued against someone or had one issued against you? If so, please give details and dates:

No, but when I was nineteen, I used to stalk this dude I went to high school with. I would close up the bread shop where I worked, take one of the loaves that was intended for donation to the soup kitchen, then drive my car to his parent's house and park close enough to see inside, but far enough away to be inconspicuous. Then I would sit there with the engine running, tearing off chunks of apple-cinnamon bread and listening to De La Soul while imagining our life together.

I am a deeply troubled person.

Are you genuinely looking to get married, and why?

Honestly? I don't know, homie. Marriage seems so *hard*. I mean, even the ones on television look like they just take so much goddamned *work*. I'm lazy. Plus, getting out of one seems

ridiculously expensive. And then when you get divorced, after all of the crying and draining of mutual bank accounts before your partner gets a chance to, you have to cut the children in half, which is probably very bloody and messy. You know, what I really need is someone who remembers to rotate this meaty pre-corpse toward the sun every couple of days and tries to get me to stop spending my money like a goddamn NBA lottery pick.

it's about ten pages of that. and it just doesn't speak to my personal sense of humor. it was trying too hard, feels too contrived overall, and as an introduction to her as a writer, it was not promising. it's hard to articulate what i do find funny; it's hard for anyone, i reckon. it's a purely visceral response, but what i like about jenny lawson, for example is how ... unexpected she is. i laugh almost as a startled response to something i hadn't seen coming, in love with the way her mind makes connections.

i didn't hate the essay - in fact, this response tickled my high-five response, if not my laughter-mechanism:

Please describe your ideal mate in terms of physical attraction and in terms of personality attraction.

Physical attraction? Not a real thing. If, at thirty-six years old, I'm sitting over here talking about chiseled abs and perfect teeth, then I am undeserving of genuine romantic love. I have slept with a handful of conventionally attractive humans, the prettiest of whom was this dude who worked at Best Buy and kind of resembled "So Anxious"-era Ginuwine. He was boring and lazy and totally caught off guard when I pointed those facts out to him. No one ever tells attractive children how much they suck, and then the rest of us get stuck with insufferable, narcissistic adults who can barely tie their shoes because someone else is busy either doing it for them or congratulating them on their effort. I do not have the energy to be in a relationship with someone exceptionally good-looking.

the rest of the book is better than that opening essay, but it's not really a collection of humor pieces, just broadly biographical essays about the men she dated, the woman she married, betrayals of the body that led to her pooping in the snow on the side of a traffic-jammed road or having an anxiety attack in a subway parking lot. they all have humorous bits in them, but also a lot of failed relationships, a suicide attempt, racism, homophobia, abuse, chronic health conditions, and death. the piece entitled "happy birthday" is the blackest of ironies. her humor is deployed as a kind of shield, joking about the deaths of her parents and about the man who came to fix the toilet when she was thirteen and presented his penis to her:

"You wanna touch it?" he offered hopefully.

"Oh, no, thank you!" I replied with a forced cheerfulness, like I was at a friend's house turning down his mom's offer of a second helping of peas. (JUST GET TO THE DESSERT, DIANE.)

"No? Really?!" he asked in disbelief. "Not even a chubby girl like you?"

What does that even mean? It's not like he was standing there holding a warm loaf of banana bread - I might have taken him up on that. But it was just an old, semi-flaccid pervert penis: What the fuck did my chubby have to do with his chubby?!

so, yeah, there's humor, but it's not always ha-ha humor; there's a squirm to it. and i was in no way emotionally prepared to read the penultimate essay, in which she euthanized her cat helen keller, with whom she'd had an antagonistic relationship throughout the book, and even though i understand joking through pain and the difference between what you present to your audience and what you feel in your heart, it was less than a month after my most beloved maggie was herself euthanized, and even though there was a touching farewell moment in the essay, there was also some wisecracking and humor-armor, and i was absolutely not in the right headspace to handle dying-cat humor.

for the most part, i enjoyed this book, even though it wasn't the hilarious jaunt i'd been expecting to take my mind off of stuff and things. it's voicey as fuck, which i appreciate, and we share a lot of the same ideas about the glory of junk food (*Weight Watchers is for quitters who are in denial about how good ribs taste*), the pleasures of solitude, the horrors of exercise, the tyranny of summer (*Wouldn't you rather be dead than hot?*), the way that jobs involving politeness to the public at large are soul-grinding, and even though we are never meeting in real life, i think we'd share a lot of common ground and have some laughs together, regardless of what she says on the matter.

but if we ever DID meet in real life, the first thing i would say to her would be "WHAT'S NUMBER TWO??" because in the essay *a total attack of the heart*, you will find the following:

Two things happened that forced me to finally have the "sometimes I have a disproportionately rage-filled response to otherwise harmless shit" talk with my doctor. (1) I was at work and the worst person in the world came in to buy dog food.

and the anecdote goes on from there and then broadens into generalities without ever getting back to (2). it's like waiting for the other shoe to drop - FOREVER.

but she made up for it by stating the truest truth of them all:

...Easter has the best candy, so of course it was my favorite. To this day, I weep like a child when those purple bags of Cadbury Mini Eggs show up in the Walgreens seasonal aisle at the first dawn of spring.

so, a positive three-stars from me, with the expectation that you (and your aunt judy) will like it even more...

come to my blog!

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I loved these essays. They were reminiscent to me of a combination of Roxane Gay and Jenny Lawson, in their ability to confront tough issues and situations head-on (in this case - poverty, disability, weight, race, sex, among many other things) with a dark humor and open honesty that most of us can never dare get to. I laughed out loud at several points and I felt furtive reading them on vacation with my very conservative mother in the same room, in the very best way.

Now I really want to check out Samantha Irby's blog, bitches gotta eat.

Thanks to Goodreads for choosing me for this giveaway!

Julie Ehlers says

A lot of essay collections by young/youngish women have been published in the past few years—it seems to be an unprecedented golden age for these books. I have wanted nothing more than to love all of them, but have been disappointed by many of them for various reasons. By the time I got around to *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life*, I was pretty much resigned to thinking that these collections were never going to live up to their potential and I should just stop trying. Then, hallelujah! The clouds parted and a ray of sunshine, in the form of Samantha Irby's funny and note-perfect writing, blazed down on me.

I definitely spent some time trying to figure out why this collection worked better for me than so many others, and I came up with two reasons. The first is that Irby hasn't spent years of her adult life either in academia or writing for, like, BuzzFeed. She has held a regular job, working in a veterinary office where she dealt daily with the real problems and vulnerabilities of both animals AND their human companions (she writes a bit about this specifically, and I would have happily read more). This work seems to have brought a level of basic maturity, wisdom, and authenticity to her writing that is sorely lacking in many essay collections, and these qualities make her easy to relate to. There's also the fact that, as a writer, Irby simply knows what she's doing. She understands how to use tone and structure, she is freaking hilarious, and she is able to move between humorous topics and sad ones very effectively. I laughed out loud a lot but was also moved by her tales of her... let's just say *unique* family situation. A lot of essayists seem to be flailing around and trying really hard to convince us they have something profound to say, but Irby never seemed to be flailing AND I was totally convinced by her.

Irby may have never attended an MFA program (in fact, she never finished undergrad) and she may never have published anywhere until she started her blog, but she's got a natural talent that can't be taught, only nurtured. Good for her that she found the time to nurture it. I'm looking forward to reading her re-released first essay collection, and I'm excited for whatever she does next.

Roxane says

Reading Samantha Irby's *We Are Never Meeting In Real Life* cracked my heart all the way open. The essays in this outstanding collection are full of her signature humor, wit, and charming self-deprecation but there is so much more to her writing. For every laugh, there is a bittersweet moment that could make you cry. From black women and mental health to the legacies created by poverty to dating while living in an all too human body, Irby lays bare the beautiful, uncompromising truths of her life. I cannot remember the last time I was so moved by a book. *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life* is as close to perfect as an essay collection can get.

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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It is a truth universally acknowledged that a cat lady in want of cat pictures is going to buy your goddamn book if you slap a cat on it. Also, Yaa Gyasi's *HOMEGOING* was kicking my butt all over the place

emotionally (yes, butts can be emotional, thanks), so I decided that my ARC of WE ARE NEVER MEETING IN REAL LIFE would be just the thing to revitalize my drained repository of feels.

I WAS WRONG.

Don't get me wrong. WE ARE NEVER MEETING IN REAL LIFE is funny. It's the crude kind of funny appropriated by YouTube celebs, but unlike most of the YouTube celebs I've read, Irby knows where to draw the line. Each expletive is delivered with deadly precision, each risqué phrase meant to drive home a singular point or idea. Samantha Irby swears like a pro, and like a pro, she does it with finesse.

What surprised me the most, however, was not the swearing, but the *gravitas* of this book. Irby talks about some very difficult subjects, like racism, dieting, body image, sex, masturbation, depression, dismal childhoods, alcoholism (specifically living with someone with alcoholism), and discrimination. I wasn't expecting something so gritty, and even though Irby delivered these topics with the same candidness and humor as she did less weighty topics, I found myself struggling to get through some of these passages - not because I didn't appreciate them, but because I *wanted* to appreciate them, and had to get myself into the proper mindset to take in everything fully, which sometimes meant taking breaks to absorb what I'd read.

There are a lot of really decent memoirs coming out this year. WE ARE NEVER MEETING IN REAL LIFE is one of them. I'll have to see about getting my hands on some of her other work; her style may be unconventional, but it is entertaining and thought-provoking in equal measure.

Thanks to Netgalley/the publisher for the review copy!

3 to 3.5 stars

Trish says

She's funny, there's no doubt about it. However...you know how some comedians have no 'off' button, or in some cases, no understanding of 'too much'? Yeah. This book makes you ask yourself if Irby is just too much. Open to ANY page and begin reading. You're absorbed immediately. It's a book with only dirty bits left in, none of the boring or predictable bits. Who can live like this?

It's exhausting. But in small doses, it can be just the ticket.

To say Irby has a potty mouth is understating, but her instincts for what is funny are undeniable. We get inklings of what she was like as a youngster: I dare say she was an innocent once...she just wised up faster than all of us. She can write like a dream, and shines a bright light on serious topics. She pokes fun at herself,

so you can bet she's not gonna spare you. Weight, race, sexual orientation, class, part of the country...all come under her gaze, and she catches us out.

I just want to register the notion that Irby has my permission to actually relax a little, not fake-relax as in writing jokes. She doesn't have to be 'on' all the time, though it looks from these popular books that she feels an obligation to keep it up nonstop. Nah. Unnecessary. Look, no one else in the world is doing it. Because they can't. Because it may not be that healthy. I'd like to see under the mask ... now, I SAY that, but maybe I don't... really...NO!

P.S. I am tired of adding books to the 'race' shelf if a writer just touches on race in their commentary. Like Zadie Smith says in her book of essays, *Feel Free: Essays*, there was a moment in the history of American literature when the work of Philip Roth and Saul Bellow were so spectacular and spoke to so many of us that Great Jewish-American Writer was turned into Great American Writer. I want that for us again. I acknowledge race, but it's not all there is, as this woman shows us. We're all Americans. Is it time for that change? I feel I am ready, but I am usually in advance of the pack. (That's not ~~always~~ usually a good thing.)

Debbie says

4.7 stars, all a-laugh while rounding up

Wow! If I weren't reviewing this sort of officially, I would be shouting out happy expletives! But I feel like I must not go all R-rated.

Speaking of cuss words—a warning to all those who don't appreciate them: there are A LOT of 4-letter words here. In fact, there is A LOT of raunch. I'm all for raunch, but this is uber-raunch. There is one sort of long graphic sex scene that almost ruined the book for me. I don't know why she had to go there; it seemed to detract from her story rather than add to it. She made it funny, so I guess she was going for honesty and humor and a little shock effect. Considering how I didn't like the uber-raunch, imagine how much I loved the rest of the book to give it 5 stars!

Maybe my favorite line ever: "Wouldn't you rather be dead than hot?"

Definitely my favorite dedication ever: To Klonopin

Okay, so you might be wondering, what does this 60-something white heterosexual woman have in common with a 30-something black lesbian woman? A lot more than you might think. For example, since I'm an inside bunny (and yes, I'm embarrassed and ashamed of myself, but damn it, I am also proud), her list of all the bad things about the great outdoors, such as bugs, bees, and scourging heat, made my head sing in glee. And her list of all the good things about staying the hell inside made me an even happier (indoor) camper. Her harangue against sun-worshippers totally endeared her to me. I wanted to say "Oh oh oh, and don't forget to add this to the list, Samantha," my head churning with additional urgent bulleted items.

Listen to one of her observations about sun-worshippers:

"You dudes frying under the sun at the beach can't really expect the rest of us to believe that you enjoy painfully peeling your seared flesh from plastic chairs while everyone in the restaurant is staring at the armpit stubble revealed by your tank tops, can you?"

A true confession (for my dear super literary friends, I hide behind my TV in semi-embarrassment): We both like trashy TV. (Okay, and I like many movie and TV masterpieces, too, I really do.) Since she told the world, I'm feeling pumped to admit it too.

There are many other similarities but who cares (translated: I'm not as open or brave as she is to divulge stuff). But all this just made the read that much more un-put-down-able.

But hell, I wouldn't have to have a lot in common with her because her world view is so fascinating, it transcends all the demographic markers. It doesn't matter who you are, you're liable to laugh at Samantha's weird cat, Helen Keller, and their tumultuous relationship. I couldn't relate to it all, for sure (the dating scene, the angst that accompanies your 20s and 30s), but I lapped it all up because she is just so damn funny and smart.

Some of her stories that completely entertained me:

-An imaginary questionnaire for Bachelorette applicants, for which she supplies hilarious answers.

-A detailed description of her life as a long-time worker at a vet's office.

-The chapter titled, "Fuck It, Bitch. Stay Fat."

-Her story about turning a boyfriend into a friend.

-Her story about acquiring a cat.

Most of my total love of this book comes from the fact that the author is a master comedian. Sure, she sometimes pokes fun at people, but mostly she's poking fun at herself. I just love how self-effacing she is—that honesty is so endearing and makes me feel like I know her (yes, I KNOW we're never meeting in real life). I can't help it, I'm a sucker for laughs, especially when cynicism and absurdity, all wrapped up in brilliant observations, take front and center, like it does here.

But it's not all fun and games. This woman has some serious health problems (Crohn's disease, big-time arthritis, depression) and she describes so well how this impacts her everyday life, her social interactions, her self-confidence, and her self-consciousness. As I got more and more attached to her, the more deeply sad I felt about all the physical and mental pain she has had to endure—and she's just in her 30s. But it's clear, by the way she writes, that she absolutely is not writing for sympathy, which makes me all the more sympathetic. Her sad childhood and her serious ailments together make her wise; her writing is punctuated with plenty of buds of wisdom.

Besides the over-the-top sex scene that I didn't like, I had two other complaints. At first, it seemed like she was trying to be too clever. But as I kept reading, I didn't notice the self-consciousness any more. I don't know whether she got more relaxed or whether I was just falling under her spell.

Also, she makes a lot of pop culture references, and 90 percent of them I didn't get, which was frustrating. I didn't want to sit there googling terms every time I ran into something I didn't know; I didn't want constant story interruptus. (Here, we do see the one problem with our age difference.) I was smug and felt cool that I

got one reference: We both watch the great new series called Queen Sugar, which I desperately hope has been renewed for next year.

The book is full of great quotes. I was so excited by her true stories, I found myself copying a bunch of good quotes and sending them off to friends.

Here's a favorite:

"During our last training session, right after I'd completed seven of the 50 sit-ups she'd asked me to do, she said, 'You're my most disappointing client.' And I interpreted that as 'This tiny human says it's okay for me to keep eating red meat and cupcakes in bed.'"

I've read a few funny memoirs by young-ish blogger women, including *Hyperbole and a Half: Unfortunate Situations, Flawed Coping Mechanisms, Mayhem, and Other Things That Happened* by Allie Brosh (an absolute favorite), *Let's Pretend This Never Happened: A Mostly True Memoir* by Jenny Lawson, and *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?* by Mindy Kaling. I liked them all, but *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life* definitely wins second place, losing only to *Hyperbole and a Half*.

Funny, it was the title that drew me in from the start. I have a good friend on Goodreads whom over a few years I've developed a great friendship with—we talk almost daily. I've told her numerous times that we are never meeting in real life. She threatens to show up on my doorstep one day, lol.

I don't like this book cover because I don't like it when cats look mean. I'm a cat lover and I like my cats looking nice or even just stoic. I really don't like looking at a pissed off cat, all fang-y and scary. I don't like looking at mean or pissed off people either, so it's not surprising I prefer to see chilled-out, cool cats.

I love it that the author put that period at the end of her title: *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life. (PERIOD)* I'm sure we're supposed to read that period out loud. Because she really really means it.

I hear you, Samantha Irby. I know we're never meeting in real life, but you threw it all out there so vividly and honestly, I feel like I HAVE met you in real life.

Thanks to NetGalley for the advance copy.

(P.S. Man, this review ended up being way too long. I understand if you decided you had to unload the dishwasher instead of reading my ramble.)

Carol (Bookaria) says

A humorous and poignant collection of essays.

Samantha Irby writes about events in her life from an honest and sharp angle. You will be introduced to her "judgmental" cat, former bad dates, sex toys how-to, and her take on the absurd situations she's been in.

I struggle to write a coherent, short book review so I appreciate the brilliant effort that takes to write an interesting, engaging, and raw collection of stories as the ones in this book.

Overall, it was ok. I am not a fan of non-fiction books but highly recommend this book to those who do enjoy it.

PS: the bait was the cat on the cover! :)
