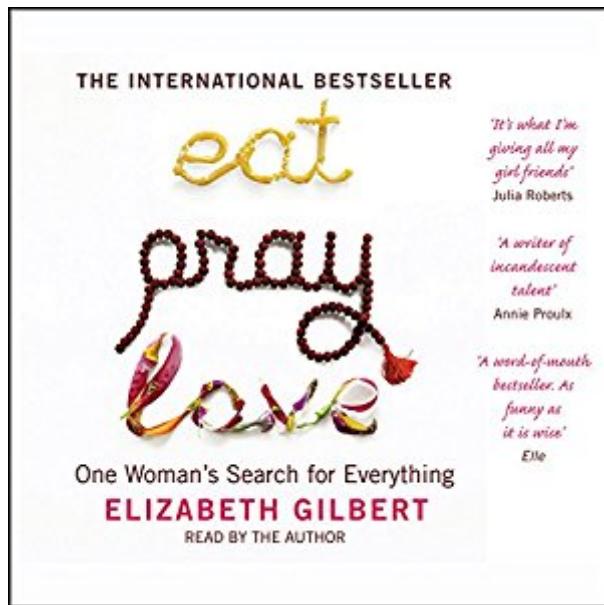


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# Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search For Everything



## **Synopsis**

It's 3 a.m. and Elizabeth Gilbert is sobbing on the bathroom floor. She's in her 30s, she has a husband, a house, they're trying for a baby - and she doesn't want any of it. A bitter divorce and a turbulent love affair later, she emerges battered and bewildered and realises it is time to pursue her own journey in search of three things she has been missing: pleasure, devotion and balance. So she travels to Rome, where she learns Italian from handsome, brown-eyed identical twins and gains 25 pounds, an ashram in India, where she finds that enlightenment entails getting up in the middle of the night to scrub the temple floor, and Bali where a toothless medicine man of indeterminate age offers her a new path to peace: simply sit still and smile. And slowly happiness begins to creep up on her.

## **Book Information**

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 7 hours and 39 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Abridged

Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Audible.com Release Date: November 17, 2008

Language: English

ASIN: B0057GRGT0

Best Sellers Rank: #232 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Nonfiction > Travel #622 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical & Political Figures #1006 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > New Age & Occult

## **Customer Reviews**

I find it so surprising--reading the angry, negative reviews--that the people who hated the book hated it for exactly the reasons why some steer clear away from the spiritual-journey-memoir genre. Yes, the author is self-absorbed, yes, she seems to think of only trite stuff, yes, she seems self-indulgent with her problems. And yes, she's allowed. It is after all a book that is positioned to address these things in the author's self; who otherwise would not be searching for something more: more meaning and more appreciation in/of her life. Here is a woman who shows all the possibly-perceived-as-lacking-substance thoughts of hers and we are throwing tomatoes at her. One thing, she obviously wasn't afraid of that. She wasn't aiming to be coming off as some deeply wise woman but a fumbling girl-woman trying to break out of what she felt was imminent disaster

(had she had the baby and delayed her need to find out what she truly wants from her life she might have left not only her husband, but their child, or most probably ending up not leaving out of guilt and becoming crazy instead: exposing her family to that for years; not an uncommon reality). She is not one for anti-depressants, remember. This memoir falls in the same category as the TV show Sex and the City (of which it was compared to in a review here). Both get trampled for being supposedly superficial, covering the silly plights of city girls who don't know what they want and yet have everything. But this book--as the TV show--actually are part of a wider story that is illiciting reactions from the public because it reflects the transition in which women in the modern world are experiencing: now that we have equality with men professionally, now that we are liberated from all the limitations being a woman dictated two generations ago, how does that affect us? From a distance, in a glance, it seems that women have all the cards to play with now. But this book and many other works by women and/or about women of this generation show that having all those cards does not mean Happiness. There are still things in society--in regards to a woman's role--that grates. And then there are things within our Modernised, Westernized, Individualized, Ambitious selves, that are lacking. This is what Miss Gilbert's search is about, and what she represents. On a collective level, much of the modern world is in search of God, Spirituality (one just needs to walk through bookstores in the US and see the plethora of soul searching self help books on the shelves). This is what needs to be observed and understood as a phenomena in the West; the small voices, small cries, here and there by those who come up with the balls to share their journeys and thoughts with us--no matter how trite-sounding, how shallow-seeming--are part of a collective howl for the meaning of life. Elizabeth Gilbert's voice is just one of many that calls for recognition as part of a chorus for something that firstly, many women are hollering about, and secondly, humanity in general--humanity in the first world--are crying for: some kind of guidance, indication, that the collective paths we fought for and chose (the best education, career ambitions realised, a certain amount of money needed to live that certain kind of magazine-lifestyle life--which is what Liz Gilbert's life is a reflection of, remember--love in the form of marriage and what society dictates) are truly the things that give us peace and happiness in the infinite sense. Eat, Pray, Love might not be that deep, wise voice representing the deep, wise journey into the deep, wise self. But this book's packaging and tone, hell, its WORDS, never did say it was. It is a fumbling--almost child-like in its guilelessness--show of the ego's awareness and needs, and its attempt at searching for what many people from all walks of life only wish they could go out and find: THEMSELVES. SELF, being the keyword here. And in this memoir, ultimately, God, being in each of our selves. To the people who were disappointed that the author didn't seem to give a hoot about India's poverty, they must have

not read the book through: Miss Gilbert never ventured out of her ashram and the little village it is located in, after making a decision to further develop her meditation skills and thus skipping the rest of India. She also ignored Italy's corruption with her indulging in good food and focus on learning and enjoying the Italian language. Again, the critics missed the point of this memoir. It's a book about a writer, a New Yorker, a recently-divorced-woman-in-her-early-thirties' journey to heal and find spiritual strength through various means: pleasure first to recover (Italy), spiritual examination and purging (India), combining the two for balance (Bali), which would result hopefully in the kind of substance and depth and balance that so many critics mentioned she lacks. One doesn't pick this book up to: 1. Be exposed to India's poverty and expect the author to discuss that in depth. 2. Be exposed to Italy's corruption and expect the author to discuss that in depth. 3. Be exposed to Balinese wiles and expect the author to discuss that in depth. (which she actually did in the account of the Balinese woman she raised money for to buy the land the woman needed to build a home). Next time you pick a book up at the bookstore, call up your powers of perception before purchasing it. A book IS pretty much its cover. Did everyone really expect a book titled "Eat, Pray, Love" A Woman's Search for Everything, to be an experience of religious fervor, one that would reveal the secrets of the universe? It's a story about a girl who thought everything she thought she wanted, would bring her happiness. It didn't. It didn't for her, and possibly not for many other women. If it took this one woman to go to Italy, India, and Indonesia, to get away after a difficult and painful divorce to heal and get perspective--instead of festering and turning into a pile of flesh in depression--then by all means. Yes, she financed her travels through her book advance--after giving away the suburban home and NYC apartment to her ex-husband. And if she wrote this book for us, it's really for us to appreciate and enjoy the ride with her. Anybody else who got so upset needed only to put the book down and pick another one to their taste. If anything, that's this book's lesson: Do what makes you smile and thankful for life.

'Eat, Pray, Love...' was a book I liked and disliked at the same time. On the one hand, it was fresh, witty and fun, and on the other hand it would devolve into obsessive ruminations about Liz Gilbert's failed marriage, her attempt to find God and her sadness and perceived "misery". It was at once clever and boring, hot and cold, cathartic and self-indulgent. It's not a horrible read (closer to 3-1/2 stars), it's just that over the course of the book, the incessant whining takes its toll. The book begins with Liz Gilbert questioning her marriage. She ultimately leaves her husband, finds a boyfriend, gets rid of him too and thus starts the quest for God and the meaning of "her" life. She does this by eating her way through Italy, praying and meditating in India, and hanging out and making whoopee

in Bali. Initially I loved her insight and wit. I found myself actually laughing out loud at her intuitive commentary; but then I found myself getting bored (and frankly irritated) at her droning on and on about being so sad and devastated, and the pain she was in, and the heartache, and sorrow and misery, ad nauseam. I was waiting for her to describe something truly miserable, heart-breaking or tragic that had happened in her life, but all I found was a woman who went through a couple of failed relationships and acts like she's the only one in the world who's been through it. I kept thinking, good grief, get over yourself girl! I mean, really, the majority of women who go through divorces (or worse) pick themselves up and move on without self-indulgent self-reflection for a week, nonetheless a whole year! Most of the women I know have no time for self-pity, and Liz Gilbert was "The Queen" of self-pity (at least in this book). It started out funny, witty and insightful in Italy, crescendoing to a full-bore whine in India, and ending with her usual self-absorbed persona in Bali. She goes through life as a Drama Queen, and she seems to see every misstep or unpleasant experience as totally devastating. I think a person who grew up in an intact, two-parent home, married once to a husband who loved and provided for her (and who has been able to promptly find replacements for him), in addition to always seeming to be able to get what she needs when she needs it, whether it's food, travel, love, or money, is not someone who needs to be writing a book about her perceived sorrow and misery. She needs to give many, many thanks, stop obsessing, and MOVE ON!

I've read several of the reviews posted here and though I couldn't finish this book, it seems to me that what's wrong with it is not so much the author's hollow-souled narcissism but her lack of intellectual seriousness. Someone gave me this book as a birthday present. That it has received a lot of attention is no surprise. Look at the drivel America reads. Light, shallow laughs, sex, food, not much real thought. That's the sum of this book. Feel-good rubbish that inspires not one iota of serious thought. Gilbert's slapphappily universe is one in which everything can be solved with pizza and fresh mozzarella. Every paragraph contains at least one stock one-liner. This isn't literature. It's stand-up comedy of the worst kind. We've read it all before. She claims she can make friends with anyone. It's precisely that lack of discernment and depth that makes this story forgettable. The prose is laced with one cliche, one trite and cutesy obvservation after another. Some reviewer here said this book is not a book but a magazine article. Exactly right. I finally closed the book when I read that while in India she wanted to "valet park" a destitute family into a new life. It isn't just that the phrase is a silly toss-off modernism but that there's no true emotion in it. You'll never know how this woman really feels. Don't waste your money on it.

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