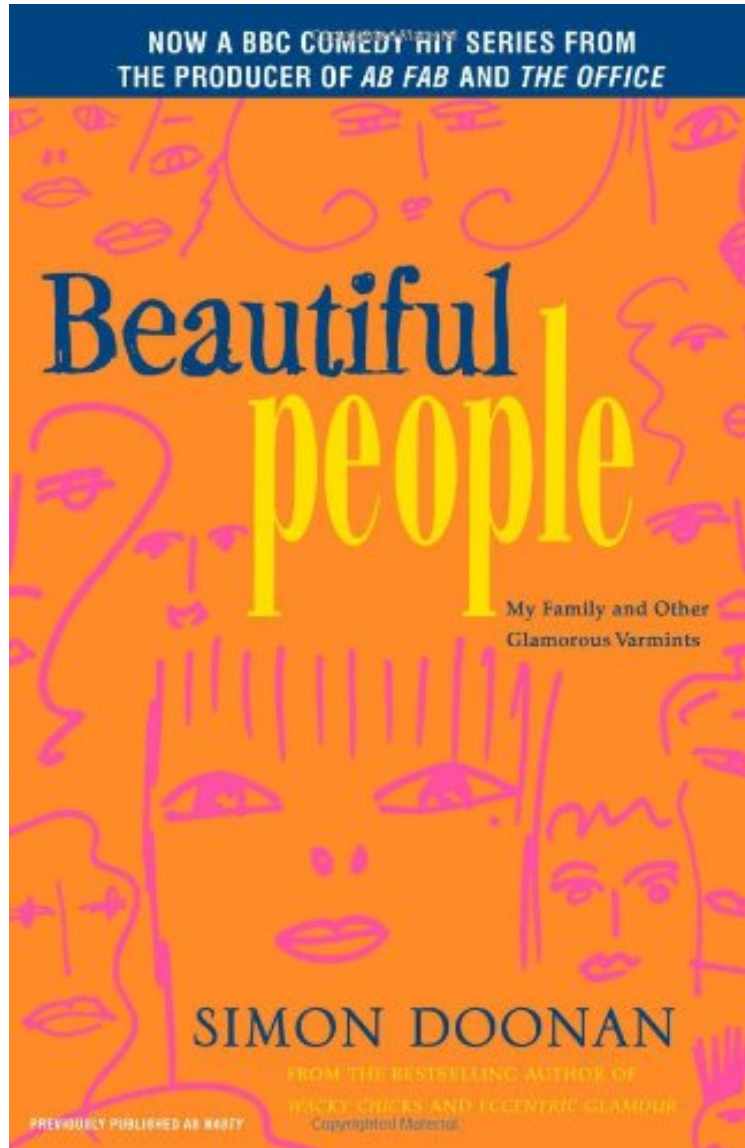


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## Beautiful People: My Family and Other Glamorous Varmints

*Simon Doonan*

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**Simon Doonan : Beautiful People: My Family and Other Glamorous Varmints** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beautiful People: My Family and Other Glamorous Varmints:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. How I got my humor By Richard A. Thousand Fresh and funny- even for us on the other side of the pond! Great to read about real human experiences that the rest of us can relate to. I read it through and couldn't stop laughing. I have since bought the videos of the sitcom, which though not meant to mirror

exactly Doonan's life, does a wonderful job of bringing to life some of the funnier moments. The actors in the sitcom are amazing and the writing is exquisite and precise- I bought a special VCR so I could watch them in the states. Well worth the expense. P.S. expect to google some terms 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed the book tremendously. By Susan Boychuk I enjoyed the book tremendously, as I have all of Simon Doonan's books that I've read. Before I had even finished reading it, I ordered my next Doonan book. Simon is fun, honest, and very readable. He always makes my day. Even though Simon is openly gay, he sincerely loves and cares for everyone. I wish I could claim him as my brother. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great wit and heart. By Ralph I am a devotee of the television series, and very much enjoyed reading the source material. This charming memoir is very entertaining. The loving portrait of each character and event makes you love the author's family as much as he does. There's much to be learned from the way Simon Doonan looks at his own extended family.

A wickedly funny memoir with echoes of David Sedaris and Augusten Burroughs, *Beautiful People* (originally published in hardcover as *Nasty*) is now a BBC comedy hit series from the producer of *Ab Fab* and *The Office*. Proclaimed "the most brilliant, brash thing in type" by Liz Smith, Simon Doonan's saucy prose has established him as an emerging star among literary humorists. In this break-through memoir, reminiscent of both Sedaris and Burroughs, he revisits the landscape of his youth, and displays the irresistible charm that earned him his dedicated audience. Long before he became a celebrity in his own right--as the author of best-selling books, as the style arbiter of VH1 and *America's Top Model*, and the marketing genius behind *Barney's New York*--Simon Doonan was a "scabby knee'd troll" in Reading, England. In *Beautiful People*, Doonan returns to the working-class neighborhood of his youth, and chronicles the misadventures of the Doonan clan in all their wacky glory. Readers meet his mother Betty, whose gravity-defying, peroxide hairdo signified her natural glamour; his father Terry, an amateur vintner who turned parsnips into the legendary Chateau Doonan; his grandfather D.C., a hard-drinking betting man who plotted to win his fortune by turning Simon into a jockey; and his demented grandma Narg and schizophrenic Uncle Ken, both of whom lived upstairs. Fearing he would fall victim to the insanity that runs in his family, or, worse, the banality of suburban life, Doonan decamps with his flamboyant best-friend Biddie to London, where they hope to find the Beautiful People, that elusive clan who luxuriate on floor pillows and amuse each other with bon mots. Throughout the memoir--in essays about family holidays, the tart who lived next door, his first job--Doonan continues his bumbling pursuit of the fabulous life, only to learn, in the end, that perhaps the Beautiful People were the ones he left behind.

"Fabulously entertaining .... Visionary fashion director of Barney's department store, Doonan (*Wacky Chicks*, " 2003, etc.) is known for taking the ordinary and spinning it into the fantastic ... Doonan recalls the challenges of his childhood with love and respect and, where that isn't possible, bemusement ... A kick, a hoot, a truly wonderful read, with loads of down-and-dirty details about characters who are way more interesting than those dull Beautiful People Doonan was so all afire to find." "--Kirkus s""*Nasty*" is wickedly funny. Simon Doonan has an ear and an eye for sublimely bizarre details that will make readers laugh out loud." -- Candace Bushnell "Beneath the hilarious camp writing in Simon Doonan's memoir, *Nasty*, " I was touched by his wistful yearning for the life of glamour, glitz, and *Beautiful People*, which he ultimately achieved." -- Dominick Dunne "That Simon Doonan is a writer with a flair for the clever aphorism and a trenchant wit is no surprise. But that he is also capable of telling a tremendously moving tale is something of a revelation. It's all here: the inexorable bonds of family; Swinging London in all its Rita Tushingham glory; the calamities of AIDS..."*Nasty*" is a book for anyone who has ever yearned to transcend their own beginnings. In other words, if you were ever younger than you are now, you must read this book." -- David Rakoff, author of "Fraud""At last: a childhood memoir that's about coming to terms with fabulousness rather than incest or binge drinking. Who knew that Simon -- or anyone -- could write about growing up in a gray corner of England with as much wit, charm, and dead-on smarts as he brings to his chronicles of the luxe life in Manhattan?" -- Graydon Carter

About the Author Simon Doonan is the bestselling author of *Wacky Chicks* and *Confessions of a Window Dresser*. In addition to his role as creative director of Barney's New York, Simon writes the "Simon Says" column for *The New York Observer*. He frequently contributes observations and opinions to myriad other publications and television shows. He is a regular commentator on VH1, the Trio network, and *Full Frontal Fashion*. He lives in New York City with his partner, Jonathan Adler, and his Norwich terrier, Liberace. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

*Beautiful People* INTRODUCTION My mother was a beautiful person. When I was six years old, she sneezed and her dentures flew out. They hit the kitchen door with a sharp clack! and then rattled sideways across the linoleum floor like a fleeing crustacean. I have absolutely no recollection of graduation day or my twenty-first birthday or what I did last Christmas, but as long as I live, I will never forget the sight of glam Betty Doonan in her tight skirt and white stilettos chasing her fugitive dentures. Am I strange? Quite possibly. I was born in 1952, the same year that Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne. In 2002, fifty years later, Queen Elizabeth and I both celebrated our jubilees. Naturally, we both took strolls down our respective memory lanes. While hers was doubtless strewn with ermine capes, bejeweled accessories, sparkling crystal toasting goblets, and well-fed corgis, mine was not. As I wandered through the windmills and filing cabinets of my mind, I was taken aback by what I found, and did not find.

Yes, there were flying dentures, but where was the more picturesque stuff—the Hawaiian sunsets, the Easter bunnies, and the fluffy kittens? Where were those dreamy summer afternoons spent chasing butterflies through fields of daisies while riding a white Victorian bicycle? Was I too sloshed to recall them? Did they ever exist? And where, most important of all, were the Beautiful People? As a fashion-obsessed, nelly teen growing up in Reading, it was inevitable that I should develop a deranged fixation with the phenomenon known as the Beautiful People. In the 1960s, the Beautiful People, or B.P.s as we devotees called them, were big news. Every fashion magazine was crammed with fascinating drivel about these self-indulgent glamour pusses. No detail of their lives was too trivial for my consideration: I simply had to know everything about their hairdressers, their palazzos, their caftans (the Beautiful People always seemed to be photographed wearing caftans), their eating habits, or lack thereof, and the unguents they slapped on their gorgeous faces. Where did they live? It wasn't Reading, for sure. The Beautiful People were totally Euro-fabulous: it was all about Rome and Gstaad and Saint-Tropez. They had never seen, or smelled, the Huntley Palmers biscuit factory. What were the qualifications needed to join the B.P.s? Were there any membership dues? Nobody seemed to know. It was all very mysterious. There were certain common denominators: most Beautiful People seemed to have loads of spare cash, ramparts of thick hair, and fake lashes. Having a closet full of Valentino couture seemed like it might speed up the approval process. The fact that I was several hundred miles away from the nearest Roman palazzo living in a rooming house with a bunch of batty relatives and miscellaneous lodgers only served to fuel my ardor. I daydreamed of escaping the grotty milieu in which fate had seen fit to place me and running off to the fashionable excitement of the big (Emerald) city, where the Beautiful People were waiting to welcome me into their bracelet-encrusted arms. So where were they now? Why, when I took that stroll down memory lane on my fiftieth birthday, could I find no trace of them? Though devoid of B.P.s, my memory banks were, I hasten to add, by no means empty. *Au contraire!* As I began to write this memoir, I found that they were teeming with vivid recollections. I found half a century of jarring occurrences, freakish individuals, fashion follies, deranged unsavory types, varmints, and vermin. There were hernias and food poisonings, cringe-making encounters with law enforcement, and stomach-churning regrets. There was no shortage of heartwarming material. Woven through this tapestry of recollections, like a gaudy strand of hot-pink silk, was my family, immediate and extended, in all its raw majesty: my mother, the feisty 1940s broad; my troubled and anarchic grandmother Narg; my blind aunt Phyllis; my bra-burning sister, Shelagh; and Biddie, my showbiz-crazed childhood best friend. Revisiting my temps perdu proved both cathartic and entertaining. Sometimes I wept, but more often I chuckled. As you may have already predicted, it was not long before I had my Oz epiphany and figured out that there was indeed “no place like home.” What happened to the Beautiful People? Like Dorothy's mates, they were there all along. I had simply failed to recognize them. This memoir is intended to set the record straight and pay a bit of long-overdue homage to the real Beautiful People, my Beautiful People. It's a toast not just to my family and the glamorous varmints I have known but to all the tarts and trolls and twinkies and trouts who have thrown on an elegant chapeau, or a ratty wig, and gone in search of glamour and fun. Here's to us! Long live the Beautiful People!