



Unforgettable: A Son, a Mother, and the Lessons of a Lifetime

Scott Simon

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Instant *New York Times* Bestseller

"In a return to the bighearted storytelling that made him a star NPR correspondent, [Simon] pays full tribute to the ex-showgirl who...taught her only son to be honest, kind, and entertaining. Be assured, tears will fall."--People Magazine

"In his poignant, funny, intimate memoir of his last days with [his mother], Simon reflects on... the preciousness that death gives to life and the endless resonance of love."--Laura Hillenbrand, author of UNBROKEN

UNFORGETTABLE is a son's spirited, affecting, and inspiring tribute to his remarkable mother and the love between parent and child.

When NPR's Scott Simon began tweeting from his mother's hospital room in July 2013, he didn't know that his missives would soon spread well beyond his 1.2 million Twitter followers. Squeezing the magnitude of his final days with her into 140-character updates, Simon's evocative and moving meditations spread virally. Over the course of a few days, Simon chronicled his mother's death and reminisced about her life, revealing her humor and strength, and celebrating familial love.

UNFORGETTABLE expands on those famous tweets to create a memoir that is rich, deeply affecting, heart-wrenching, and exhilarating. His mother was a glamorous woman of the Mad Men-era; she worked in nightclubs, modeled, dated mobsters and movie stars, and was a brave single parent to young Scott Simon. Spending their last days together in a hospital ICU, mother and son reflect on their lifetime's worth of memories, recounting stories laced with humor and exemplifying resilience.

UNFORGETTABLE is not only one man's rich and moving tribute to his mother's colorful life and graceful death, it is also a powerful portrayal of the universal bond between mother and child.

Unforgettable: A Son, a Mother, and the Lessons of a Lifetime Details

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From Reader Review Unforgettable: A Son, a Mother, and the Lessons of a Lifetime for online ebook

Helen says

A lovely tribute to a beloved mother. Scott Simon wrote about his mother's last days and how they supported and reminisced about their special relationship. A quote from his book has touched my soul. "A mother's death also makes us realize: we're next. It resets the clock we keep on our own lives. It reminds us not to let our best loves, dreams, vows, and promises dry up and die."

John Tan says

"We don't become the people we are all at once. But if we are lucky, every love, laugh, and loss puts a wrinkle in our hearts to make us distinctive. All the wrinkles, reverses, and trials will teach us a little and give our lives purpose and meaning."

My recent readings have been full of melancholy moments. This book is no exception. Describing a son's support of his mother's last days and reflecting on a lifetime together, I can only hope that I will be as important a person in someone else's life as Patricia Lyons Simon Newman Gelbin meant to author Scott Simon.

Christine Zibas says

For anyone who has lost someone close to them or even just experienced a traumatic health scare (and accompanying hospital visit), this book will ring true. More than that, it will touch your deepest emotions. The genesis of the book actually began with NPR radio personality Scott Simon, who began tweeting his experiences as his mother lay in intensive care in a Chicago hospital.

Scott chronicles the indignities of hospital care and, conversely, the generosity of those who work with the critically ill in a hospital setting; both are true. He addresses the invisibility of the aging and the loss of personhood, as the elderly are perceived by the rest of us.

More than any of these probing topics, however, this book is a loving tribute to Simon's mother, who in his own words was never a "shrinking violet." Instead, as she lay dying, Simon and his mother revisit a lifetime of adventures and the characters who populated the lives of mother and son. The stories are good ones, they draw you along deeper and deeper into a real understanding of just what sort of woman Simon's mother Patricia was: kind, thoughtful, vivacious, personable, and so many other things worth noting.

Patricia was a person worth knowing, a person beloved by those who knew her (not only her son). This book, while an examination of one individual's life, is also a reminder to readers of those who have influenced our own lives, both the living and the dead. Make the most of life and reach out to those who mean something to you. Time is brief, as Simon will testify.

Cat Higgins says

It would be my greatest wish granted for my own son to one day love me this much.

(Lonestarlibrarian) Keddy Ann Outlaw says

What a privilege it was to share Scott Simon's last days with his mother. This is an unforgettable tribute to Patricia, his mother: to her spunk, courage, humor and sheer loveliness. I feel like I knew her. Of all things, Scott organized this book around his Tweets from his mother's hospital room, and coming from him, that works. There is considerable substance following each Tweetful inspiration....

Having lost my mother less than two years ago, I was in awe of how the stars aligned for this particular mother and son in the sense that they made their last days together deeply wonderful and loving. They shared many memories and lots of laughs. Scott slept on the floor next to his mother in the hospital. Oh what times they had. There was plenty of closure. I did not have that with my mother since stroke-related dementia pretty much took her away long before her actual death. I am humbled by the depth of this book, by its sweetness and wisdom. I almost want to declare that absolutely everyone should read *Unforgettable!* Thank you, Scott Simon, and I am sure that when I hear the familiar sound of your voice again on NPR, you'll feel even more like an old friend.

Kevin says

Scott Simon's *Unforgettable* is a heartfelt, nostalgic, funny and uplifting celebration of his mother's life. Simon, host of NPR's Weekend Edition Saturday, spent his mother's final days with her in an intensive care unit in Chicago, looking back at the life she created for him as a solo parent and working mother.

Patricia Lyons was a glamorous Irish Catholic who married Ernie Simon, an alcoholic Jewish comedian. The suicide of Lyons's mother taught her self-preservation early. When her husband began drinking himself out of jobs and toward an early grave, she left him, determined not to let herself or her son be caught in that spiral.

Working in nightclubs, dress shops and doing some modeling, Lyons created a secure world not only for her son but also for her alternative family of "aunties and uncles"--her circle of tough and funny women pals and gay male friends.

While intermittently detailing the everyday indignities of dying in a hospital, Simon and his mother hopscotch through pivotal and delightfully trivial moments in their life together, remembering numerous gentlemen callers, birthday parties, marriages, jokes and life lessons. Far from depressing, Simon (*Pretty Birds*) uses precise prose and nimble portraiture to create an inspiring and unforgettable memoir that reassures readers that even the most ordinary life is extraordinary when examined.

NPR host Scott Simon's life-affirming memoir captures the humor, charm, wit and affection of a woman living her final days in the company of her loving son.

Dona says

I read an excerpt of this book in a magazine some time ago so when I saw the book I snatched it up. First of all, let me say that the relationship and love between Scott Simon and his mother was amazing. She obviously did all the right things in raising him as essentially a single mother. Her death was tragic and made me once again think about the fact that we tend to be kinder to our animals than we do to our sick and dying. I felt some outrage at the experiences he had to deal with during his mother's last stay in the hospital. Yes, there were many wonderful, caring providers but then there were others who obviously dropped the ball.

Kasa Cotugno says

At his mother's side during her final decline, Scott Simon and she remember their life together, shared family history, and unique connection. I wish there was a way I could write her a thank you note for the observations and wisdoms I learned. Yes, she led a full rich life, her passing was the normal passage of things, but her loss is immeasurable.

Michelle says

I leave every funeral resolved to be a better person. Witnessing the love and longing for the departed, hearing the stories that defined their lives, life's murky dilemmas clear up. Prioritizing become easy. What matters most are family, friends, kindness, and character. After reading *Unforgettable*, Scott Simon's entertaining and inspirational eulogy for his mother, I felt exactly the same.

From the beginning of the book, we know Scott Simon's mother is going to die. This sweet and moving story chronicles not only her last days spent with her son at her side, but also the life they shared as she raised him -- through marriages, divorces, legal scandals, laughter, tears, teenage rebellion, and her last days. I recommend the book on tape so that you can hear Simon's familiar voice (from NPR) recounting his memories and his adoration for his mother as well as singing and telling jokes with that certain timing that makes all the difference.

This book is a testament to the power of gratitude. Neither Simon nor his mother, Pat, had easy lives. They endured tragedy and heartbreak, disappointment and unmet needs both financial and emotional. This could easily have been a "poor me" book. Pat wasn't exactly the perfect mother. She did a few things wrong. But she also did a whole lot right. She taught her son that life is lovely. Look for the good in others. Find the laughter. Love art and music. Don't dwell on people's faults, encourage what is best in them. Always know a good dirty joke or two. Most of all, never skimp on a thank you. In the end, I didn't want to let her go any more than her son did.

Quinn Cummings says

An uplifting, funny and life-affirming book about dying and, to my way of thinking, the natural

accompaniment to Atul Gawande's BEING MORTAL. Both of them are talking about how to best serve the patient in those last months, weeks, days of life and both are simply terrific. Simon's love for his mother shines through but his journalistic eye keeps it from cloying. If his book about adopting his daughters was a love letter to how two wonderful girls entered his life, this book is a loving farewell to a wonderful woman leaving his life.

Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says

Well, I'm all frothy about this one. It's a quick read but I had to stop and put it aside--forever. And the reasons aren't all that clear cut. But the major one was that it was depressing the hell of me.

But let me back up a bit and sort of describe why I chose the word frothy and not some singular term that might more easily describe my emotional conflict with UNFORGETTABLE.

The book starts out great and I was interested. I didn't follow or even know about Scott's tweets, but I know of Scott Simon of course. He's a dear man and I'd recognize his voice anywhere.

So initially I was reading along, but then I began to loose my focus. Parts of the narrative just weren't that interesting to me. But at the same time I was emotionally caught up in a son's homage and literary act of love for his mother. So a bit bored and yet overwhelmed. I'm not sure how the two can co-exist but I was definitely overwhelmed. Depressed and sad and inspired and sad is just not a place I can be right now. I have older parents. I just can't follow the author right now to the place he's leading his readers.

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Well written, I came to cherish the nursing professionals yet again. And not so much doctors. This is a wonderful love story.

Jennifer Coppolo Holsing says

File this one under "Books Not to Finish in the Break room at Work."

But seriously, just lovely and human and lovely.

Julie says

Scott Simon has written a touching and heartfelt remembrance of his mother. Beautifully written, funny, sad and so worth reading. Highly recommended.

Robert says

LOVED this book - as I have, all of Scott Simon's books so far. Don't be put off by the subject - the death of his mother. It is about WAAAY more than that. It's about memory. It's about the bonds of love. It is about

forgiveness. It's about laughing as healing and survival. And, of course, it is about a mother and a son. There are moments of crying and there are moments of hilarity - and, often, they come together. If you have a close relationship with your mother - or, if you didn't - read this book for comedy, for understanding, for love - and just for the joy of reading wonderful writing of the most human and humane sort.

Ana Rînceanu says

This book brought tears in my eyes.
