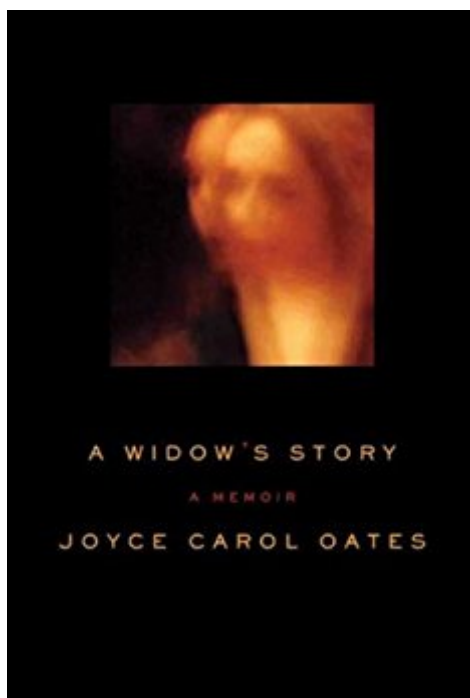


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# A Widow's Story: A Memoir



## Synopsis

Unlike anything Joyce Carol Oates has written before, *A Widow's Story* is the universally acclaimed author's poignant, intimate memoir about the unexpected death of Raymond Smith, her husband of forty-six years, and its wrenching, surprising aftermath. A recent recipient of National Book Critics Circle Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award, Oates, whose novels (*Blonde*, *The Gravedigger's Daughter*, *Little Bird of Heaven*, etc.) rank among the very finest in contemporary American fiction, offers an achingly personal story of love and loss. *A Widow's Story* is a literary memoir on a par with *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion and Calvin Trillin's *About Alice*.

## Book Information

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Women

## Customer Reviews

This is a brilliant memoir; it meant so much to me that I took notes on it because her thoughts were often like mine, as we are both widows. Oates's husband, Ray, died suddenly and this is her account of his death and the six months after it. My husband and I have many similarities with Oates and her husband. They were married 48 years, we were married 45 years, we were soul mates, and

like them I was a graduate student at UW and spent many happy hours at the student union, where Oates met her husband. Will and I met at the student union at UCB and like Ray he died suddenly too. When I read the first words in her book "My husband died, my life collapsed" I knew I would relate to her story. When Ray collapsed she drove him to the hospital, and later she would think that she unwittingly drove him to his death, since he died of an infection he caught in that hospital, "a teeming petri dish of lethal bacteria". I understood when she wrote "My discovery is each day is livable if divided into segments. More accurately each day is livable ONLY if divided into segments" (it is not possible to endure an entire day). Oates survived though she lacked three things I find precious in my life: children, friends from church and my Christian faith, and seeing a counselor. I thank the author for writing this brave look at widowhood and surviving.

I am a fan of Ms. Oates and the "sample" drew me in. I just had to read the book though I hope not to become a widow anytime soon! Now having finished it, I recommend it strongly to everyone - future widows and widowers included! Her journey through the grief process is somehow depressing and uplifting at the same time. Thank you for sharing this painful portion of your life with us. While I know my journey will be uniquely my own, I feel better prepared to face it, having had a glance into yours.

This author is a beautiful writer, and confers upon the reader the all consuming pain of loss of a spouse. The reader feels for her and recognizes the necessity of good friends at such a time. I thought, however, that some of her description of misery got redundant. Regardless, it was a heart breaking experience even to read this sad tale, knowing it could easily lie ahead for many of us.

Having my spouse die less than 6 months ago, Joyce's telling of the shock of the death of her husband after a marriage as long as ours was like my grief experience told. I have been an admirer of Joyce's skill as a gifted writer and observer of life, but this book sets a level of honesty and sharing of such a personal tragedy that I experienced her journey as one with my own. I cried often, but I can't parse if my tears were shed for what I was reading or what I am living. I am strengthened having read this book, knowing my struggle is a shared one.

As a recent widow myself, I thought that Oates's story might give me some perspective. However, I found her grief journey far different from mine and often repetitive and uninspiring. I suppose the

one good thing I got from it personally is reassurance that my journey has been made a bit less beleaguering by the proactive pre-planning that my husband and I had done before his death.

Author presented a very insightful and reflective account of her experience of the sudden, unexpected role of being widowed. Being an intellectual, she tended to overly dwell on the phenomenon almost to the point of obsession.

So many of the emotions that the author went through are just what I am going through now. Only wish I had been able to read closer to my loss. I pray she is doing well now.

Syd and I nondescript folks, met when I was 14 and he was 18. This is the coming attractions I so don't look forward to.

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