

# [PDF] We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves

**Karen Joy Fowler - pdf download free book**

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Author: Karen Joy Fowler  
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**Description:**

**From \*Starred Review\*** As a girl in Indiana, Rosemary, Fowler's breathtakingly droll 22-year-old narrator, felt that she and Fern were not only sisters but also twins. So she was devastated when Fern disappeared. Then her older brother, Lowell, also vanished. Rosemary is now prolonging her college studies in California, unsure of what to make of her life. Enter tempestuous and sexy Harlow, a very dangerous friend who forces Rosemary to confront her past. We then learn that Rosemary's father is a psychology professor, her mother a nonpracticing scientist, and Fern a chimpanzee.

Fowler, author of the best-selling *The Jane Austen Book Club* (2004), vigorously and astutely explores the profound consequences of this unusual family configuration in sustained flashbacks. Smart and frolicsome Fern believes she is human, while Rosemary, unconsciously mirroring Fern, is instantly tagged “monkey girl” at school. Fern, Rosemary, and Lowell all end up traumatized after they are abruptly separated. As Rosemary—lonely, unmoored, and caustically funny—ponders the mutability of memories, the similarities and differences between the minds of humans and chimps, and the treatment of research animals, Fowler slowly and dramatically reveals Fern and Lowell’s heartbreaking yet instructive fates. Piquant humor, refulgent language, a canny plot rooted in real-life experiences, an irresistible narrator, threshing insights, and tender emotions—Fowler has outdone herself in this deeply inquisitive, cage-rattling novel. --Donna Seaman

### **Review Praise for WE ARE ALL COMPLETELY BESIDE OURSELVES**

“You may find yourself on a beach or by a pool or just with some surplus time . . . Use it to read this goddamn book.”—*Gawker*

“Elegantly and humorously orchestrated . . . Knitting together Rosemary’s at times poignant, at times hilarious scraps of uncovered memories, Fowler creates a fantastical tale of raw, animalistic love.”—*O, The Oprah Magazine*

“A novel so readably juicy and surreptitiously smart, it deserves all the attention it can get . . . [Its] fresh diction and madcap plot bend the tone toward comedy, but it never mislays its solemn *raison d’être*. Monkeyshines aside, this is a story of Everyfamily in which loss engraves relationships, truth is a soulful stalker and coming-of-age means facing down the mirror, recognizing the shape-shifting notion of self.”—Barbara Kingsolver, *The New York Times Book Review*

“If you think such blurring of the categories between animals and humans is sentimental bunk or worse, blasphemy, Fowler’s subversive novel dares you to think again.”—Maureen Corrigan, NPR’s “Fresh Air”

“All sorts of fascinating questions arise from her story: what is freedom, what is captivity, what is animal, and what is human. By the time you get to the last section of the novel, which is absolutely sublime, I have to tell you, you will feel as though Rosemary and Fern are your own siblings. And you, too, may be, as I was, completely beside yourself with a mixture of misery and joy.”—Alan Cheuse, *National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered”*

“A boldly exploratory evocation of a cross-species relationship . . . Fowler has thoroughly researched her fascinating subject.”—Joyce Carol Oates, *The New York Review of Books*

“Fowler knows how to make her story funny and sad and disturbing and revelatory by erecting a space in which her reader is allowed to feel all of that for herself.”—*Salon*

“[The novel] lies somewhere between psychological thriller, scientific theory and coming-of-age story, a seemingly untenable combination. But Fowler, through wit and mastery of her craft, handles the complexity effortlessly.”—*USA Today*

“Halfway through Karen Joy Fowler’s enthralling novel “We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves,” I was sort of beside myself, too, with that electric thrill of discovering a great book. I wanted to stay up all night to finish it, but I also wanted to stop and call all my book-loving friends immediately and blurt, “You have to read this book!”” —*The Cleveland Plain-Dealer*

"Readers raved about all [three] of these books, but the narrative immediacy of Fowler's won the day...by all accounts a deeply affecting read"—*ELLE*, The *ELLE* Readers' Prize, July 2013

"Fowler's interests here are in what sets humans apart from their fellow primates. Cognitive, language and memory skills all come into playful question. But the heart of the novel — and it has a big, warm, loudly beating heart throughout — is in its gradually pieced-together tale of family togetherness, disruption and reconciliation. *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* is Fowler at her best, mixing cerebral and emotional appeal together in an utterly captivating manner."—*The Seattle Times*

"Rosemary's voice is achingly memorable, and Fowler's intelligent discourse on science vs. compassion reshapes the traditional family novel into something more universally relevant. The Cookes are unlike other families and like them at the same time, and through Rosemary's unique perspective Fowler forces us to confront some tough truths. This brave, bold, shattering novel reminds us what it means to be human, in the best and worst sense."—*The Miami Herald*

"Beneath the basic plotline lies a story as fantastic, terrible and beautiful as any Grimms' fairy tale.... Throughout the book, Fowler's brilliant wordcraft intertwines tragedy and levity in a masterful crazy quilt of innocence, loss, renewal and bittersweet hope."—*Santa Cruz Sentinel*

"Rosemary's voice—vulnerable, angry, shockingly honest—is so compelling and the cast of characters, including Fern, irresistible. A fantastic novel: technically and intellectually complex, while emotionally gripping."—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Piquant humor, refulgent language, a canny plot rooted in real-life experiences, an irresistible narrator, threshing insights, and tender emotions—Fowler has outdone herself in this deeply inquisitive, cage-rattling novel."—*Booklist* (starred review)

"A strong, unsettling novel . . . Fowler explores the depths of human emotions and delivers a tragic love story that captures our hearts."—*Library Journal* (starred review)

"Rosemary's experience [is] a fascinating basis for insight into memory, the mind, and human development . . . Fowler's great accomplishment is not just that she takes the standard story of a family and makes it larger, but that the new space she's created demands exploration."—*Publishers Weekly*

"In this curious, wonderfully intelligent novel, Karen Joy Fowler brings to life a most unusual family. Wonderful Fern, wonderful Rosemary! Through them we feel what it means to be a human animal."—Andrea Barrett, author of *Servants of the Map* and *Ship Fever*

"Karen Joy Fowler has written the book she's always had in her to write. With all the quiet strangeness of her amazing *Sarah Canary*, and all the breezy wit and skill of her beloved *Jane Austen Book Club*, and a new, urgent gravity, she has told the story of an American family. An unusual family—but aren't all families unusual? A very American, an only-in-America family—and yet an everywhere family, whose children, parents, siblings, love one another very much, and damage one another badly. Does the love survive the damage? Will human beings survive the damage they do to the world they love so much? This is a strong, deep, sweet novel."—Ursula K. Le Guin, author of *Lavinia*, *The Unreal and the Real*, and the *Earthsea Cycle*

"*We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* is a dark cautionary tale hanging out, incognito-style, in what at first seems a traditional family narrative. It is anything but. This novel is deliciously jaunty in

tone and disturbing in material. Karen Joy Fowler tells the story of how one animal—the animal of man—can simultaneously destroy and expand our notion of what is possible.”—Alice Sebold, *New York Times*-bestselling author of *The Lovely Bones* and *The Almost Moon*

“You know how people say something is incredible or unbelievable when they mean it's excellent? Well, Karen Joy Fowler's new book is *excellent*: utterly believable and completely credible - a funny, moving, entertaining novel that is also an important and unblinking review of a shameful chapter in the history of science.”—Dr. Mary Doria Russell, biological anthropologist and author of *The Sparrow* and *Doc*

“It's been years since I've felt so passionate about a book. When I finished at 3 a.m., I wept, then I woke up the next morning, reread the ending, and cried all over again.” —Ruth Ozeki, author of *My Year of Meats* and *A Tale for the Time Being*

"This unforgettable novel is a dark and beautiful journey into the heart of a family, an exploration of the meanings of memory, a study of what it means to be 'human.' In the end the book doesn't just break your heart; it takes your heart and won't give it back."—Dan Chaon, author of *Await Your Reply* and *Stay Awake*

“It really is impossible to do justice here in a blurb. This is a funny, stingingly smart, and heartbreaking book. Among other things, it's about love, family, loss, and secrets; the acquisition and the loss of language. It's also about two sisters, Rosemary and Fern, who are unlike any other sisters you've ever met before.”—Kelly Link, author of *Stranger Things Happen* and *Pretty Monsters*

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