



Even This I Get to Experience

By Norman Lear

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“Flat out, one of the best Hollywood memoirs ever written . . . an absolute treasure.” —Booklist (starred review)

In my ninety-plus years I've lived a multitude of lives. In the course of all these lives, I had a front-row seat at the birth of television; wrote, produced, created, or developed more than a hundred shows; had nine on the air at the same time; founded the 300,000-member liberal advocacy group People For the American Way; was labeled the “no. 1 enemy of the American family” by Jerry Falwell; made it onto Richard Nixon's “Enemies List”; was presented with the National Medal of Arts by President Clinton; purchased an original copy of the Declaration of Independence and toured it for ten years in all fifty states; blew a fortune in a series of bad investments in failing businesses; and reached a point where I was informed we might even have to sell our home. Having heard that we'd fallen into such dire straits, my son-in-law phoned me and asked how I was feeling. My answer was, “Terrible, of course,” but then I added, “But I must be crazy, because despite all that's happened, I keep hearing this inner voice saying, ‘Even this I get to experience.’”

Norman Lear's work is legendary. The renowned creator of such iconic television programs as *All in the Family*; *Maude*; *Good Times*; *The Jeffersons*; and *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*, Lear remade our television culture from the ground up. At their peak, his programs were viewed by 120 million people a week, with stories that dealt with the most serious issues of the day—racism, poverty, abortion—yet still left audiences howling with laughter. In *Even This I Get to Experience*, Lear opens up with all the candor, humor, and wisdom to be expected from one of America's greatest living storytellers.

But TV and politics are only a fraction of the tale. Lear's early years were grounded in the harshness of the Great Depression and further complicated by his parents' vivid personalities. The imprisonment of Lear's father, a believer in the get-rich-quick scheme, colored his son's childhood. During this absence, Lear's mother left her son to live with relatives. Lear's comic gifts were put to good use during this hard time, as they would be decades later during World War II, when Lear produced and staged a variety show for his fellow airmen in addition to flying fifty bombing missions.

After the war, Lear tried his hand at publicity in New York before setting out for Los Angeles in 1949. A lucky break had a powerful agent in the audience the night Danny Thomas performed a nightclub routine written by Lear, and within days his career in television began. Before long, his work with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis (and later Martha Raye and George Gobel) made him the highest-paid comedy writer in the country, and he was spending his summers with the likes of Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks. Movies followed, and soon he was making films starring Frank Sinatra, Dick Van Dyke, and Jason Robards. Then came the '70s and Lear's unprecedented string of TV hits.

Married three times and the father of six children ranging in age from nineteen to sixty-eight, Lear's penetrating look at family life, parenthood, and marriage is a volume in itself. A memoir as touching, funny, and remarkable as any of Lear's countless artistic creations, *Even This I Get to Experience* is nothing less than a profound gift, endlessly readable and characteristically unforgettable.

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Editorial Review

Review

The Wall Street Journal:

“The Norman Lear who emerges from “Even This I Get to Experience” is engaging and unpompous, an amusing storyteller who pokes fun at himself and writes with brutal honesty about his life, especially his childhood. And what a story!”

Associated Press:

“An entertaining, penetrating celebration of a richly lived life.”

Los Angeles Times:

“Immensely likeable...[Lear] isn't always a mensch in "Even This I Get to Experience" (italics, characteristically, his), but at least he can write like one.... In this city, Norman Lear and his post-coaxial contemporaries built a mass medium with their bare hands. On good days — as Lear well recalls, and recalls well — they made it sing. If only more with their talent had lived so long; if only more who live so long had his talent.”

Booklist (starred):

“This is, flat out, one of the best Hollywood memoirs ever written... An absolute treasure.”

Kirkus Reviews (starred):

“A TV titan on his memorable life and storied career. **Lear, best known as the creative mind behind such classic comedies as *All in the Family*, *Maude*, *The Jeffersons* and *Good Times*, recounts his extraordinarily eventful life with his signature wit and irreverence.** The result is not just a **vividly observed and evocative portrait** of a long life, but also a **fascinating backstage look at the evolution of the American entertainment industry**... Lear writes movingly of his service in World War II, his difficult upbringing and subsequent troubled marriages, and his commitment to liberal causes, evidenced by his founding of the advocacy organization People for the American Way and his purchase of an original copy of the Declaration of Independence. That he makes these subjects as **engrossing and entertaining** as his Hollywood reminiscences speaks to Lear's mastery of storytelling and humor. **A big-hearted, richly detailed chronicle of comedy, commitment and a long life lived fully.**”

Publishers Weekly:

“[A] feisty, thoughtful autobiography... Lear pens sharply observed studies of the creative process on his many iconic productions and bares plenty of raucous, sometimes bawdy anecdotes—readers get to experience a nude and lewd Jerry Lewis... [I]n keeping with the bigoted, mouthy, complex and loveable characters he created, Lear's knack for sizing up a flawed humanity makes for an absorbing read.”

ADVANCE PRAISE

President William J. Clinton

“That Norman Lear can find humor in life's darkest moments is no surprise—it's the reason he's been so successful throughout his more than nine decades on earth, and why Americans have relied on his wit and wisdom for more than six. It's also why EVEN THIS I GET TO EXPERIENCE is such a great read.”

Carl Reiner

“Norman Lear could never write a more dramatic, touching, or funnier tale of his life than he’s done here in EVEN THIS I GET TO EXPERIENCE.”

Bill Moyers

“Many have known the Man behind the stories. Now all of us can know the stories behind the Man. Archie, Edith, Gloria, and Meathead couldn’t have told them better!”

Arianna Huffington

“EVEN THIS I GET TO EXPERIENCE is not just the brilliant, moving story of a man who has lived an amazing number of lives—from making it onto Richard Nixon’s ‘Enemies List’ to changing the face of television—but also a life manual on how to live a life of depth, purpose, and meaning.”

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“Norman Lear is a hero and a friend . . . he experienced so much in his life . . . sometimes I just want to sit down and ask him questions about life and his perspective . . . to do it right it would take years of interviews . . . but now that he wrote this book I can experience his journey and wisdom over and over again.”

Trey Parker

“Fantastic stories from one of the wisest, most subversive, and most beautiful human beings the comedy world has ever known. Like the man himself, this book is charming, awe-inspiring, and hilarious.”

About the Author

Norman Lear is the television producer of such groundbreaking sitcoms as *All in the Family*, *Sanford and Son*, *One Day at a Time*, *The Jeffersons*, *Good Times*, and *Maude*. He has received four Emmy awards, a Peabody, and the National Medal of Arts. As an activist, he founded People For the American Way. He lives in Los Angeles. Most recently, Mr. Lear is the subject of the PBS American Masters episode, *Norman Lear: Just Another Version of You*, premiering 10/25/16.

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WHEN I WAS A BOY I thought that if I could turn a screw in my father’s head just a sixteenth of an inch one way or the other, it might help him to tell the difference between right and wrong. I couldn’t, of course, and ultimately he—and I—had to pay a serious price for his confusion.

In late June of 1931, just out of third grade and a month away from turning nine, I was eagerly looking forward to my first experience at summer camp. A roll of cloth tape imprinted with “Norman M. Lear, Norman M. Lear, Norman M. Lear . . .” sat on the kitchen counter, waiting for my mother to cut it up and sew my name into the clothes I’d be taking with me in a few weeks.

Meanwhile, my father was about to take a plane to Tulsa. None of my friends in Chelsea, Massachusetts, knew anybody who had ever flown anywhere. It had been only four years since Charles Lindbergh flew thirty-three and a half hours in his single-engine *Spirit of St. Louis* to get from New York to Paris, and the rare plane that was spotted in the sky had us kids chasing around in the street yelling, “Lindy, Lindy!” So Dad flying to Oklahoma was a big deal.

He was traveling on some kind of business—“Monkey business!” said my mother, who sensed that the men he’d fallen in with were not to be trusted—and for my upcoming birthday he was going to bring me back a ten-gallon hat just like the one worn by my favorite film cowboy, Ken Maynard.

“Herman, I don’t like this,” she told him. “I don’t want you to see those men.” But Herman, as always, knew

better.

“Jeanette!” he screamed, the veins in his neck bulging as he stood over her with his nose all but pressing hers. “Stifle!” And off he went.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eva Dawson:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each publication has different aim or even goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their time to read a book. These are reading whatever they get because their hobby will be reading a book. How about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, person feel need book if they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will need this Even This I Get to Experience.

Priscilla McNeil:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important usually. The book Even This I Get to Experience seemed to be making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The publication Even This I Get to Experience is not only giving you far more new information but also being your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with all the book Even This I Get to Experience. You never sense lose out for everything should you read some books.

Linda Gabriel:

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Alberto Turcotte:

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book to learn? May be the book with the name Even This I Get to Experience suitable to you? Often the book was written by famous writer in this era. Typically the book untitled Even This I Get to Experience is the main of several books which everyone read now. This book was inspired many people in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new dimensions that you ever know previous to. The author explained their idea in the simple way, therefore all of people can easily to recognise the core of this book. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now.

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