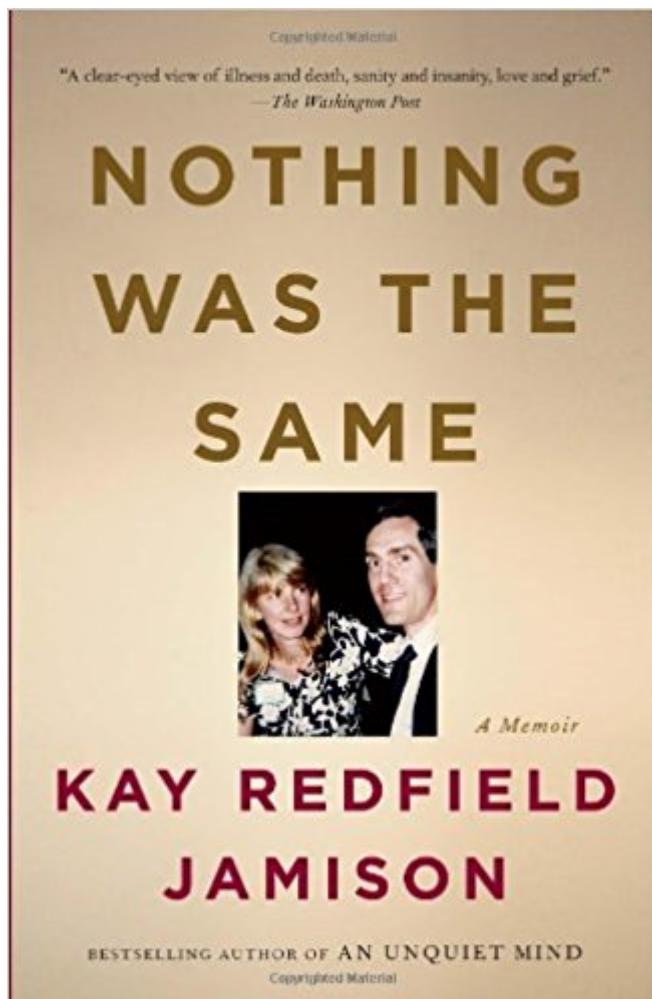


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Nothing Was The Same: A Memoir



Synopsis

Kay Redfield Jamison, award-winning professor and writer, changed the way we think about moods and madness. Now Jamison uses her characteristic honesty, wit and eloquence to look back at her relationship with her husband, Richard Wyatt, a renowned scientist who died of cancer. Nothing was the Same is a penetrating psychological study of grief viewed from deep inside the experience itself. From the eBook edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Kay Redfield Jamison's new memoir Nothing Was the Same is a love story like no other--two exceptional people, each doctors, each contending with a life-threatening illness. At age seventeen Dr. Jamison was diagnosed with manic-depressive illness. She lived through mania, paralyzing depressions, and a mercifully failed suicide attempt. In her Prologue she writes that manic depression is a kind of madness, such that she was determined to "avoid .perturbance. (such as falling in love). She believed she needed to "coddle" her brain and modify her life and thus her dreams. The renowned and charming scientist, Dr Richard Wyatt fell in love with her and she with him; they married and enjoyed nearly twenty years together until his sorrowful death from Hodgkin's disease. This brilliant scientist and beautiful human being had the added burden of dyslexia which required that he work four or five extra hours each day as he made his way through college, medical school, internship, residency, and his subsequent scientific career. This stunningly well-written memoir is about grief...grief and the beauty and complexity of their relationship...a relationship that

was doubly fraught with the common misunderstandings of two human beings due to the debilitating, threatening illnesses they each suffered. One incident in particular serves as an example. Realizing that Dr. Wyatt's medical bag was at home, Dr. Jamison had a premonition and looked through its contents, finding in the bottom of the bag; hidden in its recesses what she feared: a syringe and a vial of antipsychotic medication. She was angered that he believed this was necessary. The last thing he intended was to hurt her and his reaction to her distress was heartfelt and painful. It was a difficult moment for him.

The extended illness and death of a spouse is an experience that is both intimate and incomparable and yet so common as to have been the subject of countless memoirs. What makes "Nothing Was the Same" remarkable is that this account is told by the talented clinical psychologist Kay Redfield Jamison who went public with her own bipolar illness in her acclaimed 1995 autobiography "An Unquiet Mind." Jamison is a Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and an Honorary Professor of English at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. Her husband, Richard Wyatt, M.D., was a leading researcher on schizophrenia and became Chief of Neuropsychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health. Jamison was 38 and Wyatt 45 when they met. He died after almost 20 years of marriage to Jamison in 2002 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Jamison and Wyatt's relationship was compelling on a number of levels. Both were mental health researchers and clinicians with their own unique challenges: Jamison suffered from bipolar illness while Wyatt was afflicted with extreme dyslexia. Jamison discloses that she was something of a "project" for Wyatt who kept careful records on her illness. This is not to say, however, that husband and wife treated each other as patients. Rather, this reads as quite the love story, infused as much by warmth and devotion as by professional interests. As Jamison writes, "It is strange, I think now, that love could soothe and draw together such different souls, and provide for them such hope, such happiness." While the professional lives of this couple continue to play a role in their story, as Wyatt's illness progresses and after all the medical alternatives are exhausted, the human pathos of dying comes into the foreground.

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