



The (not so) Little Book of Surprises

Deirdre Hade

William Arntz

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This exquisitely crafted inspirational work has the potential to change minds and lift spirits.

The (not so) Little Book of Surprises leads the curious on a thought-provoking journey through realms of the spiritual, the profound, and the mystical.

Poet, writer, and mystic Deirdre Hade and her husband Will Arntz collaborated on this glossy, sumptuously illustrated coffee-table book that explores human consciousness while marrying text and images in delightful and startling ways.

The volume consists of a series of quotes, observations, and insights that some might associate with New Age thinking. Text is paired with pictures, so that an image of strawberries in vivid close-up comes with a passage about how meditation must be balanced with life's sweetness to achieve personal freedom.

Much of the book skews toward the aphoristic, with a smattering of longer parables and allegories. The end result is a road map of sorts, intended to lead toward greater awareness.

The text could be enjoyed in a single sitting, but is accessibly broken up into easy doses that can be taken one or two at a time. One page might contain a poem, while the next presents a pithy reflection on time or happiness.

Gems of wisdom are presented—about the soul, self-mastery, grace, God's light, and personal development. Poems are skillfully crafted. While the book's mysticism may not appeal to everyone, declarations like "We're from the future, but our bodies, our brains, our minds are not fully developed yet" stand to resonate deeply.

The book's advice is often incisive, but in some moments comes across as quite opaque, as with "don't be a leaky puddle" or "be aware of those moments of light and, like a string of pearls, the moments of light will see you through." A conversational tone is maintained throughout, though the text is at times heavy on jargon, and clichés are an occasional distraction.

Strikingly designed, the volume stuns with its well-magnified pictures of tulips, hummingbirds, water droplets, and light-dappled forests, all of which make for a visual feast. The judiciously chosen photos grab the eye and perfectly illuminate the points being made, lending greater depth to the text and heightening its inspirational quality.

The (not so) Little Book of Surprises is appealing and inspirational with its blend of mysticism, spiritual development, and focus on the expansion of the consciousness. Exquisitely crafted, it has the potential to change perspectives and lift spirits.

JOSEPH S. PETE (March 24, 2017)

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