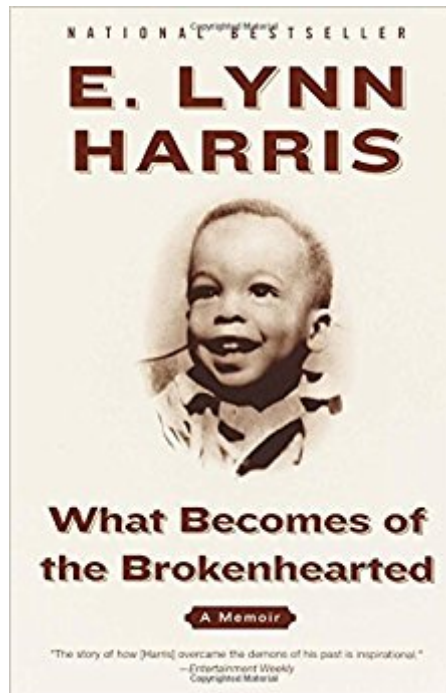




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What Becomes Of The Brokenhearted: A Memoir



Synopsis

"In many ways writing saved my life. It's my hope that sharing my experience will give hope to others who are learning to deal with their difference. I want them to know they don't have to live their lives in a permanent 'don't ask, don't tell' existence. Truth is a powerful tool. But my hope for this book doesn't stop there. I think there is a message here for anyone who has ever suffered from a lack of self-esteem, felt the pain of loneliness, or sought love in all the wrong places. The lessons I have learned are not limited to race, gender, or sexual orientation. Anyone can learn from my journey. Anyone can overcome a broken heart."--E. Lynn Harris

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Customer Reviews

With his bestselling novels (*And This Too Shall Pass*; *Abide with Me*; etc.) Harris has carved out a niche as a writer of jaunty books with melodramatic plots, usually centering on gay or bisexual black men with riches and rippling biceps. In stark contrast, Harris's memoir is free of the fancy trappings his characters enjoy, starting with the author's suicide attempt in 1990, before he decided to become a writer. From this beginning, Harris goes back to his birth in 1955 and proceeds chronologically, detailing abuse by his stepfather, the awakenings of sexual desire for other men and the discovery of his biological father. Some passages ache for more detail, as when Harris offhandedly mentions working in a brothel at age 13. More often, though, the pace is fitting, giving the book a sense of forward motion as strong as the thoughts of young Harris, dreaming of escape

from his native Arkansas. Although he suffers traumas and frustrations as a child, Harris's love life is most heartbreaking. His struggle to find love as an African-American Southern man led to a series of disappointing relationships that taxed Harris's tenderhearted, affectionate nature. He tells this part of his story with such simplicity and straightforwardness, it seems distilled, stripped down to its barest elements until only the clearest emotions remain. Readers of Harris's novels should be surprised at how far from charmed his life was, compared to the troubled but ultimately blissful lives of his fictional characters. Yet they should appreciate the deep honesty with which he describes each stumble and fall. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"I set out to write a story for me . . . that would capture the pain and joy of being black and gay. I wanted it to be a love story," Harris says in explanation of his first novel, *Invisible Life* (1991), which he wrote after years of alcoholism, joblessness, and depression, and after losing friends and a successful lifestyle that once included driving a Mercedes (later repossessed). Raised just a step above welfare in Arkansas and repeatedly and brutally beaten by his stepfather, Ben, Harris for decades carried deep-seated feelings of inferiority and anxiety about being born out of wedlock, about being poor, and about being "different," which he later learned consisted of being gay. His young manhood was a series of drunken flings punctuated by occasional, ill-fated romances that left him ever lonelier and more tearful in his quest for love. When the deaths of friends spurred him to write, the creative act helped him mature into the confident, best-selling author he is now. His fans will embrace his fast-paced memoir eagerly, and then be caught up in this engaging writer's engagingly told life story. Whitney Scott Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I bought this book for two reasons: to digest a really good memoir I could relate to and because I'm a devout fan of E. Lynn Harris' novels. Unlike his novels, this is HIS story....and, without ruining ANYthing, all I will say to its reader/buyer is that Mr. Harris NEVER, EVER disappoints as a writer!

Easily the best and most poignant book written by author E Lynn Harris, in my opinion out of all of his books of fiction this one is easily the most dynamic and dramatic narrative written. To me, it brings in to mind the saying that goes that "sometimes reality is stranger than fiction" or in the case more insightful and more entertaining. In this book, Harris chronicles his earliest memories with an astounding clarity growing up poor in the south, dealing with the precarious rules of masculinity

through the oft times spiteful and abusive father, the highlights of his scholastic experiences in school, and then coming to terms with his budding sexuality. Throughout the narrative you can feel organic substance throughout as if you are actually living in the nuisances of living in the South of the fifties and sixties. As with all memoirs, this one is as equally if not more inspirational by the fact that we are taken through the author's struggle with alcoholism and trying to make it during the current economic situation of the eighties and nineties changing landscapes from college life in North Carolina, and his adult life in Washington DC to which he comes of age as a gay man has to content with the slings and arrows of attempted romantic situations which leads back into alcoholism. Harris deals with some very difficult situations that are in extreme contrast to the soap operatic fictions that made him a household name, which was shocking for me, that he was a palpable organic suffering "average Joe" who suffers his demons and triumphs over all. It is understandable, that when I heard of the death of E Lynn Harris that this book out of all of his other works was sold out in every bookstore in Washington DC, Virginia, and Maryland, it is the *de rigueur* E Lynn Harris work for fans of his work.

E. Lynn Harris died last year. How wonderful that before went on his journey, he left us this incredible present. I listened to the CD edition as I drove for hours on the highway to New Jersey and back home to Maryland. The time went so fast as I drank in the words of Lynn and his final story. I didn't want it to end. This man went through hell. However, rather than let circumstances crush him he rose in triumph and used the tears to create his own vision of life, a life where he could share his immense love, the love he so wanted to receive from others. His family was there for him along the way especially the strong women such as his Aunt Gi, his grandmother and his wonderful mama. In the end, after leading a double life not only sexually but also in the corporate world, he finally embraced himself and began to write. This book should be on the shelf of inspirational literature for it truly has inspired me. I shed a lot of tears and so will you if you have a shred of humanity in you. I love the voice of the man who read the book. I think that Lynn would have, too. Definitely one of the best autobiographies I have heard and read (I also have the book) in a long time.

This memoir was perhaps one of the best I've ever read if not the best! E. Lynn Harris is amazing writer who in telling his story almost makes you a part of his life and world. He shows the possibilities that come with owning your truth and following your dreams. I've been inspired tremendously by reading his memoir and I recommend it to anyone that has ever battled with

unhappiness, loneliness, depression, and looking for love in all the wrong places. This book is powerful and life changing!

Fans of the "E" Man (as I call him) are allowed into the personal life of this wonderful author and man....difficult to read at times, this is a very emotional story of the difficulties facing men, specifically Black men, who are gay in a world that offers up enough obstacles to those who are straight. I have long been a fan of E. Lynn Harris, and I will admit to some disappointment when I found that his newest work was an autobiography; ironically, he even makes reference in the book to the fact that many of his fans may be disappointed. You won't be! Follow "Lynn" from his childhood days in Arkansas, at the hands of his abusive stepfather....see the love showered on him from his family....walk with him through his college days, and be proud of his academic achievements....and cry throughout, as he struggles to find romantic love....from any sex....and struggles with the fact that he is, truly, gay. I cried many times throughout this book, but I find true solace and irony in the fact that the same man who struggled with alcoholism and depression in his quest to find love is loved by so many the world over today. God Bless you, "Lynn....."

I've always been fascinated by E. Lynn Harris' fictional work (and maybe a bit frightened since he's been writing about down-low relationships before the term was popular). What becomes of the Broken Hearted was a wonderful read. I was so engrossed in the book that I read the book in two days (I was a bit disappointed as I had nothing else to read after day 2 of my week vacation) Lynn got me emotionally involved in the book and dispelled some of my own prejudices. His writing made me realize that wanting to be loved isn't limited to a sex or sexuality. He also sends the message that facing adversity doesn't define you but is only a small part of you. I'm glad he didn't end his "journey" and allowed the love and support of friends and family to help him navigate through life.

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