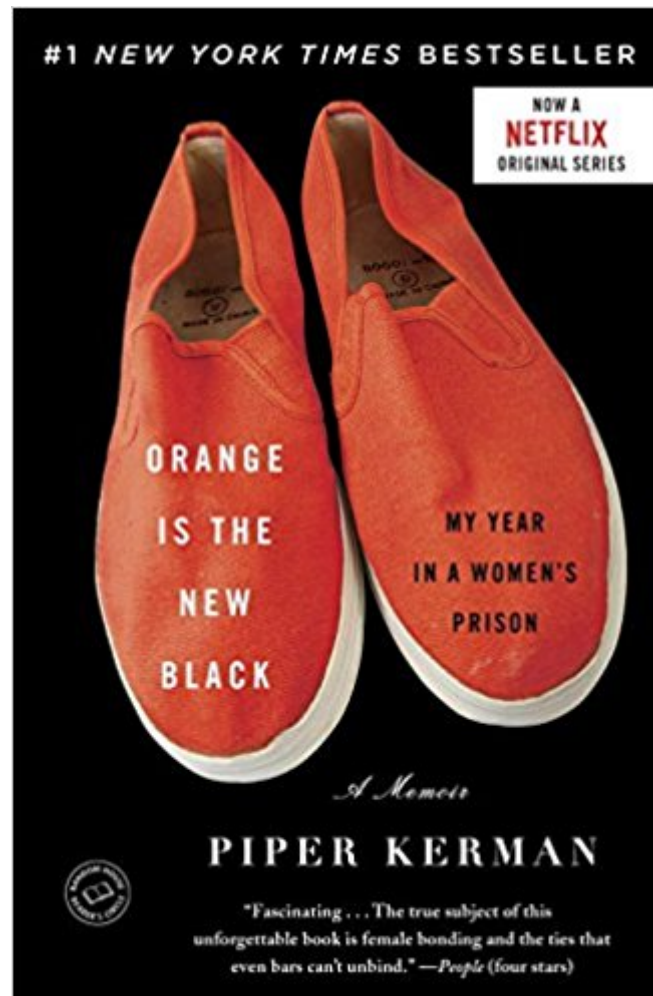




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# Orange Is The New Black: My Year In A Women's Prison



## Synopsis

NOW A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES **#1** A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

With a career, a boyfriend, and a loving family, Piper Kerman barely resembles the reckless young woman who delivered a suitcase of drug money ten years before. But that past has caught up with her. Convicted and sentenced to fifteen months at the infamous federal correctional facility in Danbury, Connecticut, the well-heeled Smith College alumna is now inmate

#11187 one of the millions of people who disappear “down the rabbit hole” of the American penal system. From her first strip search to her final release, Kerman learns to navigate this strange world with its strictly enforced codes of behavior and arbitrary rules. She meets women from all walks of life, who surprise her with small tokens of generosity, hard words of wisdom, and simple acts of acceptance. Heartbreaking, hilarious, and at times enraging, Kerman’s story offers a rare look into the lives of women in prison why it is we lock so many away and what happens to them when they’re there. **Praise for Orange Is the New Black** “Fascinating . . . The true subject of this unforgettable book is female bonding and the ties that even bars can’t unbind.” **People** (four stars) “I loved this book. It’s a story rich with humor, pathos, and redemption. What I did not expect from this memoir was the affection, compassion, and even reverence that Piper Kerman demonstrates for all the women she encountered while she was locked away in jail. I will never forget it.” **Elizabeth Gilbert**, author of *Eat, Pray, Love* “This book is impossible to put down because [Kerman] could be you. Or your best friend. Or your daughter.” **Los Angeles Times** “Moving . . . transcends the memoir genre’s usual self-centeredness to explore how human beings can always surprise you.” **USA Today** “It’s a compelling awakening, and a harrowing one both for the reader and for Kerman.” **Newsweek.com** **Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader’s Circle for author chats and more.**

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Relying on the kindness of strangers during her year's stint at the minimum security correctional facility in Danbury, Conn., Kerman, now a nonprofit communications executive, found that federal prison wasn't all that bad. In fact, she made good friends doing her time among the other women, many street-hardened drug users with little education and facing much longer sentences than Kerman's original 15 months. Convicted of drug smuggling and money laundering in 2003 for a scheme she got tangled up in 10 years earlier when she had just graduated from Smith College, Kerman, at 34, was a self-surrender at the prison: quickly she had to learn the endless rules, like frequent humiliating strip searches and head counts; navigate relationships with the other campers and unnerving guards; and concoct ways to fill the endless days by working as an electrician and running on the track. She was not a typical prisoner, as she was white, blue-eyed, and blonde (nicknamed the All-American Girl), well educated, and the lucky recipient of literature daily from her fiancé, Larry, and family and friends. Kerman's account radiates warmly from her skillful depiction of the personalities she befriended in prison, such as the Russian gangster's wife who ruled the kitchen; Pop, the Spanish mami; lovelorn lesbians like Crazy Eyes; and the aged pacifist, Sister Platte. Kerman's ordeal indeed proved life altering. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Just graduated from Smith College, Kerman made the mistake of getting involved with the wrong woman and agreeing to deliver a large cash payment for an international drug ring. Years later, the consequences catch up with her in the form of an indictment on conspiracy drug-smuggling and money-laundering charges. Kerman pleads guilty and is sentenced to 15 months in a federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut. Entering prison in 2004—more than 10 years after her crime—Kerman finds herself submerged in the unique and sometimes overwhelming culture of prison, where kindness can come in the form of sharing toiletries, and an insult in the cafeteria can lead to an enduring enmity. Kerman quickly learns the rules—asking about the length of

one's prison stay is expected, but never ask about the crime that led to it—and carves a niche for herself even as she witnesses the way the prison system fails those who are condemned to it, many of them nonviolent drug offenders. An absorbing, meditative look at life behind bars. --Kristine Huntley

I saw the first season of the show on Netflix when it first came out and loved it. The creator (or director?) came from the show *Weeds* (another favorite of mine) and this show has the same vibe to it. Well after I binged watched to first season I felt the cravings to find out more to be too great. I couldn't wait a whole year for the next season, so I found the book. It is an amazing story, a page turner for sure. But I do have to warn that if you are expecting all of the almost ridiculous antics from the show to be in written form, you are sadly mistaken. They obviously sensationalize for ratings. You will find all of the characters from the show, you will find similar stories. But this is the REAL LIFE story, not as over the top but still a great story and a great read. I was actually pleasantly surprised to read about an acquaintance of mine in the book. I had to call him right away and say "HEY!" I don't know Kerman at all, never met her or anything, just turned out to be a 7 separations from Kevin Bacon type thing. I love the book, it raises a bunch of issues and discussions that need to be spoken about more openly in the US when it comes to our criminal justice and prison systems, but also shows you pieces of the real people who wind up locked up. If you don't already know you will begin to understand that there are many ways that someone can wind up in prison, and not all of those convicted are scary thugs. They are people, women, or even, you.

I started reading this book with much anticipation. I was sorely disappointed. In reading many reviews it seems as though many readers are upset with Piper Kerman because she comes across as someone who thought she was "better than others" and "blonde, pretty and educated." That was not my gripe at all. What irritated me is that more than once she felt the need to give stats and write paragraphs about how the "feds" put drug dealers in prison and do not address the drug problem. I really saw nowhere that she addressed her role in BEING A PART OF the drug problem nor did she show much remorse for it! Instead she acts like a victim of "the system" instead of acting like a part of the problem! You'd think a little time in prison would make her a bit more introspective. With all that said I found the book boring, annoying and not at all entertaining.

I very much enjoyed reading purely from Piper's perspective. The writing is vivid, she reserves judgment of most of those she's incarcerated with, and she gives the reader clear insight into how

her prison experience changed her in so many ways for the rest of her life. I suppose I took away one star only because I've been such a fan of the series, which is so packed with action and filled with both nasty and lovable characters that I kept expecting the story to "light up" like the screen. On the other hand, I found that Piper and Larry's relationship was genuine, one which provided Piper some measure of stability the character lacks, unlike her on again, off again relationship with Alex in the series.

This is a fast read and while it gives a glimpse of daily life in a minimum security facility, I didn't like this book. Lightweight, nothing new about the prison system, and in the end don't care about the main character. She is a self-indulged spoiled brat who drags her family and love ones through the life she created by poor decisions and selfish acts - and doesn't even tell an engaging tale. She does not appear to have the smarts of the Mayflower Madame, and her prison experience is not a compelling story (compare to Jean Harris, Head Mistress of the Madeira School who went to prison for killing the Scarsdale Diet Doctor). Plus she wasn't even in prison for a full year!

My hubby has been bugging me to watch the tv series ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK. I'm so glad that I read it first. I really enjoyed Piper's objective and honest retelling of her life behind bars. It is shocking how many women are locked up for petty crimes with no education or reform opportunities. Our prison system is severely lacking based on Piper's recollections. Why spend all that money to lock non violent criminals away if we're not going to do anything to help them improve their situations when they get out? I am now looking forward to watching the series with some insight into the real characters.

Like most people, I was first introduced to this story from the show on Netflix. While waiting for the new season to come out it prompted me to buy the book and see how similar it was to Hollywood's spin on things. The book is MUCH different than the show. And better. The book, while it is a memoir written by Piper, makes her out to be a much better person than the Piper on the TV show. Now, if you haven't read the book or seen the TV show and you have plans to, I suggest you stop reading because there are SPOILERS ahead....The real Piper, whose last name is Kerman and not Chapman, didn't seem as conniving or crazy as the TV show Piper. She didn't take part in a dirty panties operation, didn't do her time with Alex Voss (only a few short weeks when they were testifying in Chicago), and never got starved by the head kitchen worker. As an avid reader, I get it - the book is always different than when Hollywood takes over and makes dramatic effect on it. The

book was very informative - it displayed women bonding in a situation that is less than desirable for most of the human population. While most women, when put together with other women in cramped up places usually proves as challenging and scary, Piper Kerman talked about the positives when it came to serving time together. She included many details that the show leaves out - it was nice to actually get in her head and feel the emotions of doing time. I'm giving it 4 stars because it took me a little longer to finish than other books. While not a bad book, there were parts where I had a hard time focusing because it felt repetitive and unnecessary. If you were into the TV show, check this out. While there are shades of similarities, the book is extremely different than what Netflix has shared with us.

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