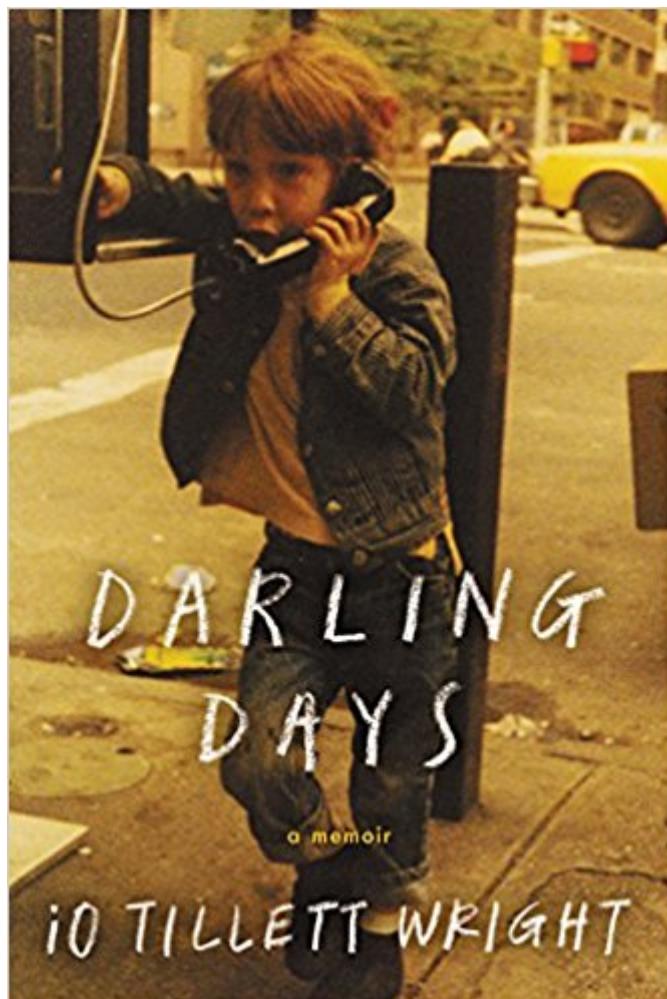


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# Darling Days: A Memoir



## Synopsis

Born into the beautiful bedlam of downtown New York in the eighties, iO Tillett Wright came of age at the intersection of punk, poverty, heroin, and art. This was a world of self-invented characters, glamorous superstars, and strung-out sufferers, ground zero of drag and performance art. Still, no personality was more vibrant and formidable than iO's mother. Rhonna, a showgirl and young widow, was a mercurial, erratic gl. She was iO's fiercest defender and only authority in a world with few boundaries and even fewer indicators of normal life. At the center of *Darling Days* is the remarkable relationship between a fiery kid and a domineering mom—a bond defined by freedom and control, excess and sacrifice; by heartbreak, deprivation, agonizing rupture, and, ultimately, forgiveness. *Darling Days* is also a provocative examination of culture and identity, of the instincts that shape us and the norms that deform us, and of the courage and resilience it takes to listen closely to your deepest self. When a group of boys refuse to let six-year-old, female-born iO play ball, iO instantly adopts a new persona, becoming a boy named Ricky—a choice iO's parents support and celebrate. It is the start of a profound exploration of gender and identity through the tenderest years, and the beginning of a life invented and reinvented at every step. Alternating between the harrowing and the hilarious, *Darling Days* is the candid, tough, and stirring memoir of a young person in search of an authentic self as family and home life devolve into chaos.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An earnest and heartfelt memoir cloaked under a battle-toughened exterior.

(Kirkus) “It’s already a rare and wonderful thing to have a great story—but a unique and compelling voice to tell it with is even rarer. With *Darling Days*, iO Tillett Wright takes us right to where great storytelling lives. A terrific, terrific book.” (Anthony Bourdain) “Reading *Darling Days* I’m reminded of what I liked best in Patti Smith’s *Just Kids*. In brutally honest and passionate prose, iO presents the blossoming of an artist, this time in the eighties, on New York’s Lower East Side.” (Mitchell Kaplan, Books & Books) “iO Tillett Wright is nothing short of a force of nature—an artist, an activist, and a survivor. iO has packed a lot into few years and in this extraordinary memoir has created something brave and true, as devastating as it is inspiring.” (Jill Soloway, Emmy-award winning creator of *Transparent*) “Gender-defying iO Tillett Wright mixes such a high-octane cocktail of radiant ink, wild anecdotes, bad behavior, and gritty truths—topped off with an unexpected tonic of transcendence—it could stagger Charles Dickens, electrify Maxim Gorky, and cause Jane Austen to walk around in army boots.” (Tom Robbins)

Born into the beautiful bedlam of downtown New York in the eighties, iO Tillett Wright came of age at the intersection of punk, poverty, heroin, and art. This was a world of self-invented characters, glamorous superstars, and strung-out sufferers, ground zero of drag and performance art. Still, no personality was more vibrant and formidable than iO’s mother. Rhonna, a showgirl and young widow, was a mercurial, erratic gal. She was iO’s fiercest defender and only authority in a world with few boundaries and even fewer indicators of normal life. At the center of *Darling Days* is the remarkable relationship between a fiery kid and a domineering mama—a bond defined by freedom and control, excess and sacrifice; by heartbreak, deprivation, agonizing rupture, and, ultimately, forgiveness. *Darling Days* is also a provocative examination of culture and identity, of the instincts that shape us and the norms that deform us, and of the courage and resilience it takes to listen closely to your deepest self. When a group of boys refuse to let six-year-old, female-born iO play ball, iO instantly adopts a new persona, becoming a boy named Ricky—a choice iO’s parents support and celebrate. It is the start of a profound exploration of gender and identity through the tenderest years, and the beginning of a life invented and reinvented at every step. Alternating between the harrowing and the hilarious, *Darling Days* is the candid, tough, and stirring memoir of a young person in search of an authentic self as family and home life devolve into chaos.

A good read. Some poetic passages. Also some grievous, purple passion over-writing. BUT ALSO...

Spot-on descriptions of a harrowing childhood with two creative parents, addicts of smack and speed. A valuable insight into gender confusion, gender identification, and trans-gendering. (I hate the term gender dysmorphia) Aside from Io's punishing young life and finally identifying his gender-preference, the book is a fascinating study of Rhonna, the mother, a woman who seems bi-polar? split-personality? schizophrenic? even without her speed. It is the mother who most fascinated me. But nowhere does the author describe mother's beginnings. Where did she come from? What is her background? Who were her parents? We know about the father's quasi-genteel Upper East Side background, but nothing about the mother's background, except that she had a sister. This lack of info puzzles me to the very end. When you have such an troubled, fiery, indelible character as the mother, Rhonna, an author is obligated to fill in her blanks. Otherwise, readers feel cheated. For this reason I only give it four stars.

Okay read, at the end became boring.

From the first page it is a roller coaster ride. I hope iO writes more and soon! I definitely recommend this book.

was a gift. she loved it

Gift for granddaughter. She said it was very good.

This book describes life in the East Village, during iO's childhood, perfectly. Amazing, brave, account of a life that could have easily succumbed to the mean streets. Hard way to grow up, however, this tough kid's street education is worth more than a Phd., as evidenced by who he has become. I loved the descriptions of certain things like fire escapes in the rain that resembled licorice and paint chips from ageing woodwork that looked like old tree rings, when sawed in half. If you grew up in an urban environment, you can really relate this book, if not, be prepared for a wild ride. Kudos iO, you put out it all out there.

Loved this book. A very personal, touching and poignant story of iO's life. Because her descriptions are so forthright and vivid, you can see everything that she describes in her writing. And she doesn't spare the "niceties" of her life. Loved how everything was so vibrant and came alive due to her writing. Would definitely recommend Darling Days!

Darling Days was a difficult book to read... the words weren't hard but the story broke my heart. Yes, it was a different time in 1980s New York, but the the way the child grew up, the hit or miss parenting, the sexual ambiguity, the misguided home life, the drugs and mistreatment, the lack of so many things and yet she survives and ultimately forgives. An amazing story, sadly true. Read it if you can.

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