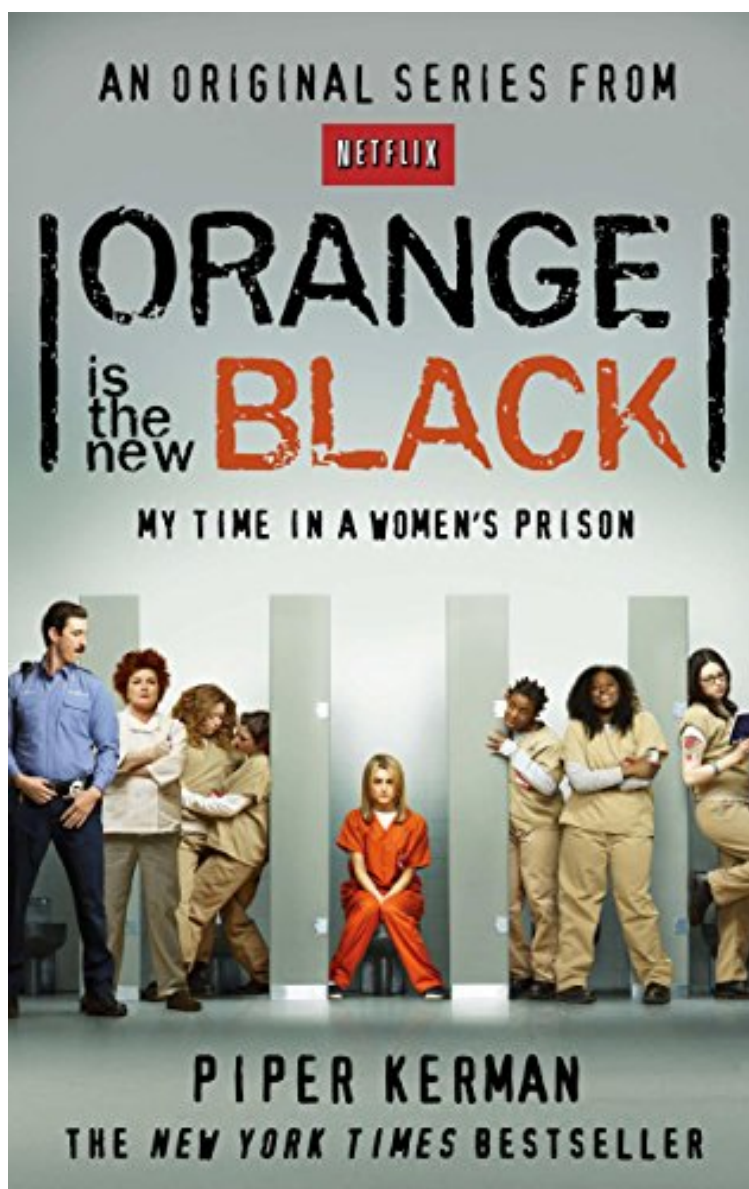


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Orange Is the New Black: My Time in a Women's Prison (English Edition)



Par Piper Kerman
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWith her career, live-in boyfriend and loving family, Piper Kerman barely resembles the rebellious young woman who got mixed up with drug runners and delivered a suitcase of drug money to Europe over a decade ago. But when she least expects it, her reckless past catches up with her; convicted and sentenced to fifteen months at an infamous women's prison in Connecticut, Piper becomes inmate #11187-424. From her first strip search to her final release, she learns to navigate this strange world with its arbitrary

rules and codes, its unpredictable, even dangerous relationships. She meets women from all walks of life, who surprise her with tokens of generosity, hard truths and simple acts of acceptance. Now an original comedy-drama series from Netflix, Piper's story is a fascinating, heartbreaking and often hilarious insight into life on the inside. Extrait Chapter One Are You Gonna Go My Way? International baggage claim in the Brussels airport was large and airy, with multiple carousels circling endlessly. I scurried from one to another, desperately trying to find my black suitcase. Because it was stuffed with drug money, I was more concerned than one might normally be about lost luggage. I was twenty-three in 1993 and probably looked like just another anxious young professional woman. My Doc Martens had been jettisoned in favor of beautiful handmade black suede heels. I wore black silk pants and a beige jacket, a typical jeune fille, not a bit counterculture, unless you spotted the tattoo on my neck. I had done exactly as I had been instructed, checking my bag in Chicago through Paris, where I had to switch planes to take a short flight to Brussels. When I arrived in Belgium, I looked for my black rollie at the baggage claim. It was nowhere to be seen. Fighting a rushing tide of panic, I asked in my mangled high school French what had become of my suitcase. Bags don't make it onto the right flight sometimes, said the big lug working in baggage handling.

Wait for the next shuttle from Paris it's probably on that plane. Had my bag been detected? I knew that carrying more than \$10,000 undeclared was illegal, let alone carrying it for a West African drug lord. Were the authorities closing in on me? Maybe I should try to get through customs and run? Or perhaps the bag really was just delayed, and I would be abandoning a large sum of money that belonged to someone who could probably have me killed with a simple phone call. I decided that the latter choice was slightly more terrifying. So I waited. The next flight from Paris finally arrived. I sidled over to my new friend in baggage handling, who was sorting things out. It is hard to flirt when you're frightened. I spotted the suitcase. Mon bag! I exclaimed in ecstasy, seizing the Tumi. I thanked him effusively, waving with giddy affection as I sailed through one of the unmanned doors into the terminal, where I spotted my friend Billy waiting for me.

I had inadvertently skipped customs. I was worried. What happened? Billy asked. Get me into a cab! I hissed. I didn't breathe until we had pulled away from the airport and were halfway across Brussels. My graduation procession at Smith College the year before was on a perfect New England spring day. In the sun-dappled quad, bagpipes whined and Texas governor Ann Richards exhorted my classmates and me to get out there and show the world what kind of women we were. My family was proud and beaming as I took my degree. My freshly separated parents were on their best behavior, my stately southern grandparents pleased to see their oldest grandchild wearing a mortarboard and surrounded by WASPs and ivy, my little brother bored out of his mind. My more organized and goal-oriented classmates set off for their graduate school programs or entry-level jobs at nonprofits, or they moved back home not uncommon during the depths of the first Bush recession. I, on the other hand, stayed on in Northampton, Massachusetts. I had majored in theater, much to the skepticism of my father and grandfather. I came from a family that prized education. We were a clan of doctors and lawyers and teachers, with the odd nurse, poet, or judge thrown into the mix.

After four years of study I still felt like a dilettante, underqualified and unmotivated for a life in the theater, but neither did I have an alternate plan, for academic studies, a meaningful career, or the great default law school. I wasn't lazy. I had always worked hard through my college jobs in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, winning the affection of my bosses and coworkers via sweat, humor, and a willingness to work doubles. Those jobs and those people were more my speed than many of the people I had met at college. I was glad that I had chosen Smith, a college full of smart and dynamic women. But I was finished with what was required of me by birth and background. I had chafed within the safe confines of Smith, graduating by a narrow margin, and I longed to experience, experiment, investigate. It was time for me to live my own life. I was a well-educated young lady from Boston with a thirst for bohemian counterculture and no clear plan.

But I had no idea what to do with all my pent-up longing for adventure, or how to make my eagerness to take risks productive. No scientific or analytical bent was evident in my thinking what I valued was artistry and effort and emotion. I got an apartment with a fellow theater grad and her nutty artist girlfriend, and a job waiting tables at a microbrewery. I bonded with fellow waitrons, bartenders, and musicians, all equally nubile and constantly clad in black. We worked, we threw parties, we went skinny-dipping or sledding, we fucked, sometimes we fell in love. We got tattoos. I enjoyed everything Northampton and the surrounding Pioneer Valley had to offer. I ran for miles and miles on country lanes, learned how to carry a dozen pints of beer up steep stairs, indulged in numerous romantic peccadilloes with appetizing girls and boys, and journeyed to Provincetown for midweek beach excursions on my days off throughout the summer and fall. When winter set in, I began to grow uneasy. My friends from school told me about their jobs and their

lives in New York, Washington, and San Francisco, and I wondered what the hell I was doing. I knew I wasn't going back to Boston. I loved my family, but the fallout of my parents' divorce was something I wanted to avoid completely. In retrospect a EuroRail ticket or volunteering in Bangladesh would have been brilliant choices, but I stayed stuck in the Valley. Among our loose social circle was a clique of impossibly stylish and cool lesbians in their mid-thirties. These worldly and sophisticated older women made me feel uncharacteristically shy, but when several of them moved in next door to my apartment, we became friends.

Among them was a raspy-voiced midwesterner named Nora Jansen who had a mop of curly sandy-brown hair. Nora was short and looked a bit like a French bulldog, or maybe a white Eartha Kitt. Everything about her was droll, her drawling, wisecracking husky voice, the way she cocked her head to look at you with bright brown eyes from under her mop, even the way she held her ever-present cigarette, wrist flexed and ready for gesture. She had a playful, watchful way of drawing a person out, and when she paid you attention, it felt as if she were about to let you in on a private joke. Nora was the only one of that group of older women who paid any attention to me. It wasn't exactly love at first sight, but in Northampton, to a twenty-two-year-old

looking for adventure, she was a figure of intrigue. And then, in the fall of 1992, she was gone. She reappeared after Christmas. Now she rented a big apartment of her own, furnished with brand-new Arts and Crafts style furniture and a killer stereo. Everyone else I knew was sitting on thrift store couches with their roommates, while she was throwing money around in a way that got attention. Nora asked me out for a drink,

just the two of us, which was a first. Was it a date? Perhaps it was, because she took me to the bar of the Hotel Northampton, the closest local approximation to a swank hotel lounge, painted pale green with white trelliswork everywhere. I nervously ordered a margarita with salt, at which Nora arched a brow. Sort of chilly for a marg? she commented, as she asked for a scotch. It was true, the January winds were making western Massachusetts uninviting. I should have ordered something dark in a smaller glass; my frosty margarita now seemed ridiculously juvenile. What's that? she asked, indicating the little metal box I had placed on the

table. The box was yellow and green and had originally held Sour Lemon pastilles. Napoleon gazed westward from its lid, identifiable by his cocked hat and gold epaulettes. The box had served as a wallet for a woman I'd known at Smith, an upperclasswoman who was the coolest person I had ever met. She had gone to art school, lived off campus, was wry and curious and kind and superhip, and one day when I had admired

the box, she gave it to me. It was the perfect size for a pack of cigarettes, a license, and a twenty. When I tried to pull money out of my treasured tin wallet to pay for the round, Nora waved it away. Where had she been for so many months? I asked, and Nora gave me an appraising once-over. She calmly explained to me that she had been brought into a drug-smuggling enterprise by a friend of her sister, who was connected, and that she had gone to Europe and been formally trained in the ways of the underworld by an American art dealer who was also connected. She had smuggled drugs into this country and been paid handsomely for her

work. I was completely floored. Why was Nora telling me this? What if I went to the police? I ordered another drink, half-certain that Nora was making the entire thing up and that this was the most harebrained seduction attempt ever. I had met Nora's younger sister once before, when she came to visit. She went by the name of Hester, was into the occult, and would leave a trail of charms and feathered trinkets made of

chicken bones. I thought she was just a Wiccan heterosexual version of her sister, but apparently she was the lover of a West African drug kingpin. Nora described how she had traveled with Hester to Benin to meet the kingpin, who went by the name Alaji and bore a striking resemblance to MC Hammer. She had stayed as a guest at his compound, witnessed and been subject to witch-doctor ministrations, and was now considered his sister-in-law. It all sounded dark, awful, scary, wild and exciting beyond belief. I couldn't believe that she,

the keeper of so many terrifying and tantalizing secrets, was taking me into her confidence. It was as if by revealing her secrets to me, Nora had bound me to her, and a secretive courtship began. No one would call Nora a classic beauty, but she had wit and charm in excess and was a master at the art of seeming

effortlessness. And as has always been true, I respond to people who come after me with clear determination. In her seduction of me, she was both persistent and patient. Over the months that followed, we grew much closer, and I learned that a number of local guys I knew were secretly working for her, which proved reassuring to me. I was entranced by the illicit adventure Nora represented. When she was in Europe or Southeast Asia for a long period of time, I all but moved into her house, caring for her beloved black cats,

Edith and Dum-Dum. She would call at odd hours of the night from the other side of the globe to see how the kitties were, and the phone line would click and hiss with the distance. I kept all this quiet even as I was dodging questions from my already-curious friends. Since business was conducted out of town, the reality of the drugs felt like a complete abstraction to me. I didn't know anyone who used heroin; and the suffering of

addiction was not something I thought about. One day in the spring Nora returned home with a brand-new white Miata convertible and a suitcase full of money. She dumped the cash on the bed and rolled around in it, naked and giggling. It was her biggest payout yet. Soon I was zipping around in that Miata, with Lenny Kravitz on the tape deck demanding to know, Are You Gonna Go My Way? Despite (or perhaps because of) the bizarre romantic situation with Nora, I knew I needed to get out of Northampton and do something. My friend Lisa B. and I had been saving our tips and decided that we would quit our jobs at the brewery and take off for San Francisco at the end of the summer. (Lisa knew nothing about Nora's secret activities.) When I told Nora, she replied that she would love to have an apartment in San Francisco and suggested that we fly out there and house-hunt. I was shocked that she felt so strongly about me. Just weeks before I was to leave Northampton, Nora learned that she had to return to Indonesia. Why don't you come with me, keep me company? she suggested. You don't have to do anything, just hang out. I had never been out of the United States. Although I was supposed to begin my new life in California, the prospect was irresistible. I wanted an adventure, and Nora had one on offer. Nothing bad had ever happened to the guys from Northampton who had gone with her to exotic places as errand boys; in fact, they returned with high-flying stories that only a select group could even hear. I rationalized that there was no harm in keeping Nora company. She gave me money to purchase a ticket from San Francisco to Paris and said there would be a ticket to Bali waiting for me at the Garuda Air counter at Charles de Gaulle. It was that simple. Nora's cover for her illegal activities was that she and her partner in crime, a goateed guy named Jack, were starting an art and literary magazine; questionable, but it lent itself to vagueness. When I explained to my friends and family that I was moving to San Francisco and would be working and traveling for the magazine, they were uniformly surprised and suspicious of my new job, but I rebuffed their questions, adopting the air of a woman of mystery. As I drove out of Northampton headed west with my buddy Lisa, I felt as if I were finally embarking on my life. I felt ready for anything. Lisa and I drove nonstop from Massachusetts to the Montana border, taking turns sleeping and driving. In the middle of the night we pulled into a rest stop to sleep, where we awoke to see the incredible golden eastern Montana dawn. I could not remember ever being so happy. After lingering in Big Sky country, we sped through Wyoming and Nevada until finally we sailed over the Bay Bridge into San Francisco. I had a plane to catch. *Revue de presse* 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