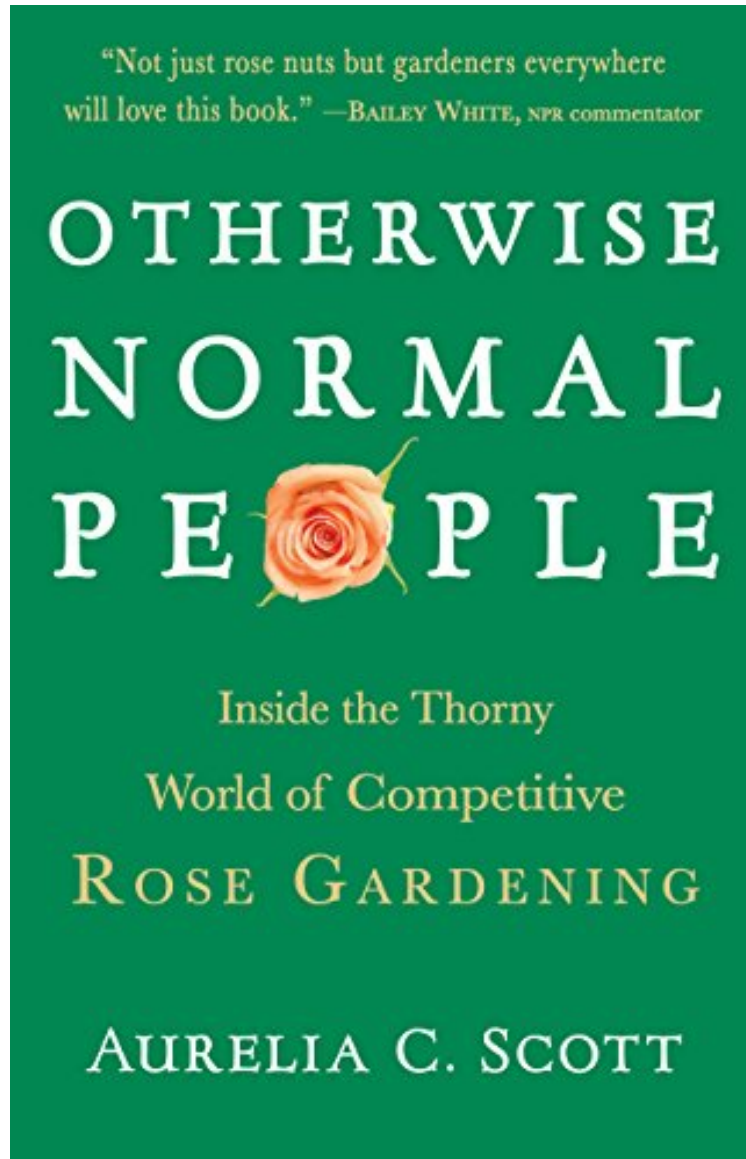


(Library ebook) Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening

Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening

Aurelia C. Scott

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Aurelia C. Scott : Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Otherwise Normal People: Inside the Thorny World of Competitive Rose Gardening:

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Twice a year America's rose lovers cut the prettiest blossoms off their best plants and travel to the national rose show, where they lovingly groom their precious blooms for hours in a frigid hall in order to contend for the highest honor: the Queen of Show. Doctors. Teachers. Sheet metal mechanics. Lawyers. Truck drivers. Men and women. These are type A gardeners, and for them this is a blood sport. They grow tender roses in the frigid North and disease prone roses in the humid South simply for the challenge. They decorate otherwise lovely yards with paper bags and panty hose to isolate their choice specimens. They traipse through overgrown fields in the worst weather to save antique roses from extinction. Aurelia Scott trails these self-professed Roseaholics as they plan, prepare, and compete, battling high winds, Japanese beetles, and the finicky demands of their precious charges. With all the appeal of Word Freak, Otherwise Normal People celebrates the singular satisfaction of cultivating beautyand, of course, the thrill of victory.

From Publishers WeeklyScott, a freelance journalist from Maine, hung out with several of the gardeners competing in the American Rose Society's 2004 spring national show. She discovered a subculture "where brain surgeons and construction workers are social equals," with a freewheeling competitive "spirit of make-do and can-do" that inspires improvisations like creating rose beds out of 40-gallon trash cans. (Two glossaries explain the classifications and other terminology for unfamiliar readers.) Scott's narrative structure a chapter with each of her topics, building up to the competition, with a brief epilogue is similar to the film Best in Show, but she doesn't poke fun, and for the most part she's caught up in their "infectious" enthusiasm for roses. Whatever weight they exert on her own passion for gardening, however, remains largely unspoken. When Scott admits that her desire to practice organic gardening is dampened by her jealousy of the blooms an interview subject achieves spraying with chemicals, the personal revelation is jarring in its unexpectedness. The backseat approach frees Scott to elaborate on the outsized personalities of the gardeners she met. If only their colorful stories were matched by photographs of the flowers they raised. (May 18) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From BooklistA rose is a rose, but don't try telling that to the hundreds of self-acknowledged "rose-aholics" who wake in the middle of the night, pack up jury-rigged coolers and containers laden with pristine blossoms, and head off down the highway to compete in local, regional, and national rose exhibitions. Scott follows the most passionate of the bunch as they prepare gardens, prune canes, protect blooms, and pinch back buds, all in the hopes of taking home crystal bowls, silver candlesticks, and, at the very least, blue ribbons proclaiming their prowess at growing some of Mother Nature's finickiest flowers. As colorful as the bouquets they propagate, Scott's rosarians represent an ecumenical cross section of the American landscape: PhDs seek advice from long-haul truckers, first-generation immigrants compete against Mayflower descendants, and long-married couples bond over blooms. With a breezy, infectious enthusiasm, Scott offers a vividly engaging account of big-time rose competition and the seemingly average individuals who take leave of their senses in this addictively sensory pursuit. Carol HaggasCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A testament to the sheer nuttiness of what happens when you cross unchecked human ambition with nature."--Seattle Times