



Only When I Laugh: My Autobiography

Paul Merton

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Known for his intelligent and often surreal humour, Paul Merton's weekly appearances on BBC1's *Have I Got News For You* – as well as Radio 4's *Just A Minute* and his travel documentaries – have seen him become an artfully rebellious fixture in our lives for over 25 years.

He also has a real story to tell. In **ONLY WHEN I LAUGH**, his rich and beautifully-observed autobiography, Paul takes us on an evocative journey from his working-class Fulham childhood to the present day.

Whether writing about school days, his run-ins with the nuns and other pupils; his disastrous first confession; his meatpacking job; taking acid; leaving home to live in bedsit; his early brushes with the opposite sex – and not forgetting his repeated attempts to break into the world of comedy – Paul's writing is always funny, poignant and revealing. And when his star finally ascends in the atmospherically drawn 1980s alternative cabaret scene there is a sense of excitement, energy, camaraderie, momentum and dramatic impending success...

...And then **CRASH!** In an unflinching and brilliantly written section that defines the book, we experience the disorienting and terrifying sustained manic episode that he suffered which landed him in a psychiatric hospital. These, and other tougher moments, are written about candidly and with sensitivity and honesty.

Yet throughout **ONLY WHEN I LAUGH**, Paul Merton succeeds in telling his life story entertainingly, with warmth, humour and a big bucket load of wit. Ultimately uplifting, it is the story of a fascinating life, brilliantly told – and one of the best memoirs of the year.

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