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# A Perfect Union Of Contrary Things



## Synopsis

(Book). New York Times Bestseller A Perfect Union of Contrary Things is the authorized biography of musician and vintner Maynard James Keenan. Co-author Sarah Jensen's 30-year friendship with Keenan gives her unique insight into his history and career trajectory. The book traces Keenan's journey from his Midwest childhood to his years in the Army to his time in art school, from his stint at a Boston pet shop to his place in the international spotlight and his influence on contemporary music and regional winemaking. A comprehensive portrayal of a versatile and dedicated artist, A Perfect Union of Contrary Things pays homage to the people and places that shaped the man and his art. Until now, Maynard's fans have had access to only an abridged version of his story. A Perfect Union of Contrary Things presents the outtakes, the scenes of disappointment and triumph, and the events that led him to take one step after the next, to change direction, to explore sometimes surprising opportunities. Included are sidebars in his own words, often humorous anecdotes that illuminate the narrative, as well as commentary by his family members, friends, instructors, and industry colleagues. The book also features a foreword by Alex Grey, an American visionary artist and longtime friend of Keenan. Accompanying the text are photos of Keenan from childhood to the present. Maynard's story is a metaphor for the reader's own evolution and an encouragement to follow one's dreams, hold fast to individual integrity, and work ceaselessly to fulfill our creative potential.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Backbeat Books (October 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1495024423

ISBN-13: 978-1495024429

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 220 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #15,671 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Rock #274 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature #1224 in Books > Humor & Entertainment

## Customer Reviews

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Contrary Things presents the outtakes, the scenes of disappointment and triumph, and the events that led Maynard James Keenan to take one step after the next, to change direction, to explore sometimes surprising opportunities. Co-author Sarah Jensen's 30-year friendship with Keenan gives her unique insight into his history and career trajectory.

Accompanying the text are photos of Keenan from childhood to the present

Sarah Llaguno and Maynard during their time at USMAPS      Maynard onstage with Tool. Tom Morello is in the front row      A Perfect Circle on display by Maynard      Maynard reprising his Green JelliÃÆ'Ã ª;Three Little Pigs; role

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Keenan, the lead singer and songwriter for the Grammy-winning alternative metal group Tool, labels himself a world class multitasker in his e-mail signature, and first-time author Jensen details all of Keenan's various enterprises leader of musical side projects A Perfect Circle and Puscifer; owner and winemaker of the Caduceus Cellars winery; aspiring actor and comedian in this entertaining biography, which also serves as a glimpse into one of the more important and influential bands of the 1990s. Sure to please Tool's many fans, Jensen's look at Keenan's development as an individual and an artist is comprehensive, covering Keenan's Midwestern youth and his time serving in the Army (which supported his subsequent time in art school), his life in Boston working in a pet store, and his move to Los Angeles in the late 1980s, where, along with bands such as Rage Against the Machine, Tool helped redefine the sound of metal ( The primal scream was the key to making it sound sincere ) and carefully developed a radical stage show. Jensen is excellent at describing how Keenan used a lyricist's talent for conflating the visual and the aural to create a provocative synesthesia. And she gets Keenan to step out from behind his carefully crafted persona to look back on his life and career and admit that most of it was dumb luck and trust. You step over the edge into darkness. The bliss finds you. (Nov.) --Publishers Weekly[Starred review] Keenan, best known as the singer for the band Tool, is an artist in every sense of the word. Born in the Midwest, he was raised to work hard and loved to sketch and sing. He chose to enter the U.S. Army after high school so he could get money to pay for art school. Several years and a move to Los Angeles later, he met many musicians and, because of his friendship with Tom Morello, almost became the frontman for Rage Against the Machine. Instead, Keenan formed Tool and obtained a record deal after playing only seven live shows. The journey from abject poverty to rock star is not

the only focus of this book, however, as Keenan's success as a vintner and comedian are also examined. His longtime friend Jensen writes a chronological and fascinating look into his life. Sidebars include longer quotes from the musician and provide a further insight into specific events of his life. **VERDICT** This book is for not only followers of Keenan's bands (Tool, A Perfect Circle, Puscifer) but also fans of the 1990s music scene, Lollapalooza, artistic endeavors of all kinds, and those wanting to follow one's own path in life. - *Library Journal* As the leader of Tool, A Perfect Circle and Puscifer, Maynard James Keenan has fostered a huge global fanbase over the past two and a half decades. But the press-shy Keenan has rarely opened up about himself to the media. In turn, *A Perfect Union* is a surprising look into the one-of-a-kind frontman by author Sarah Jensen, who had full cooperation from Keenan himself. - *Downtown Magazine* Life is as much about the decisions we make as those we don't. The unauthorized biography of Tool lead singer-songwriter Maynard James Keenan ("A Perfect Union of Contrary Things") is a story of hard work and good luck, passion and friendships, music and wine beautifully told by author Sarah Jensen. Even those with little knowledge of Tool or A Perfect Circle will want to read this volume cover to cover. --*Desert Star*  
*A Perfect Union of Contrary Things* definitely isn't the typical music biography. At its heart, it's basically the story of a guy with remarkable focus who was willing to work his ass off in order to achieve his goals. In that respect, he's almost an Everyman sort of character who's much easier to relate to than I ever would have expected. The book humanizes him without resorting to salacious details, and that alone makes it well worth picking up. - *Indy Metal Shows*  
Member of Tool (as well as Perfect Circle and Puscifer), winemaker, comedian, artist, soldier, former pet store employee, martial artists, and much more is such the life for Maynard James Keenan. And really, who wouldn't want to read about that. Assisted by the author (and her 30 year friendship with the frontman), readers gain an insight of the real MJK as opposed to a persona. While following the life path and homage to the people and places that made the man, it's also (secretly) a lesson of life's full potential. - *Revolver Magazine* *A Perfect Union of Contrary Things* definitely isn't the typical music biography. At its heart, it's basically the story of a guy with remarkable focus who was willing to work his ass off in order to achieve his goals. In that respect, he's almost an Everyman sort of character who's much easier to relate to than I ever would have expected. The book humanizes him without resorting to salacious details, and that alone makes it well worth picking up. - *Indy Metal Shows* *[A Perfect Union of Contrary Things]* is the story of creative souls striving in mercurial landscapes, artists who contend with multiple modes of expression, multiple day-jobs, and all while inhabiting a pop culture worthy of their scorn-not to mention a political climate more than a little foreboding. Seems familiar, doesn't it? --*Forbes*

SARAH JENSEN A writer and editor, her work ranges from creative nonfiction, journalism, and poetry to strategic messaging and developmental editing. Her 30-year friendship with Keenan gives her unique insight into his philosophies, his career trajectory, his struggles and joys, and his preference in omelets. MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN (Arizona) is an internationally revered musical artist and a vintner. He is best known as the lead vocalist in the bands Tool and A Perfect Circle, and as the leader of Puscifer, a music project that is the brainchild of Keenan and of which he is the sole permanent member. Keenan is also the owner of Caduceus Cellars winery in Jerome, Arizona.

Let me start off by saying that if you are a Tool fan looking for a deeper insight into the band this is not the book for you. If however you are interested in the many facets of the man who has gifted his audience throughout the years with his multiple projects, and how he has been able to leverage his creativity throughout his career this IS the book for you. I truly feel that this book is a gift to his audience. Even if you are not a die-hard fan of his music you can be inspired by this story. I have followed Maynard's many ventures including Tool, Puscifer, A Perfect Circle, Merkin Vineyards, Caduceus Cellars, etc.. I have been to his tasting room in Jerome, multiple wine tasting events, numerous concerts (Tool, APC, and Puscifer), and have been strongly inspired by Maynard. Anyone that has followed Maynard's career knows that he has never really given his audience the full story whether it be lyrics to a song, or insights into his personal life. This book is a chance for the people who have been inspired by Maynard to learn about his own inspirations and creative path. The book is written in such a way that you can relate to it very well and like all of his work it's an opportunity to leverage as a source of creativity. I hope that everyone approaches this book with an open mind and is able to have the impactful experience that it is capable of providing. If you are interested enough to check a review on this book, please do yourself a favor and READ IT. I am not writing this book as a fan of Tool or as a fan of Maynard, but I'm writing this as a fan of A Perfect Union of Contrary Things. P.S. Someone wrote a review about this book being a money grab. I checked out the other reviews this person has written to see how credible of a source she might be. This is her review of CliffsNotes on The Bible, Revised Edition: "i was hoping for a basic bible book. and it starts off about the old testament and uses words that i don't understand. was hoping it would be basic, almost 5th grade level, and it wasn't. thus i am more confused... i stopped after 10 pages. and feel bad."

I am a fan. Have been since the mid 90's. That being said, the great Canadian band, Big Wreck

once said, " I've never played the villain in the stories I've told". I find this to be a glaring side effect to this book of self praise. I enjoy biographies regardless if they're written by, assisted or ghost written. The fact that Keenan takes a back seat to his own biography as a footnote commentator I found a bit strange. And while the author writes eloquently and does extensive research in extracting quotes from friends, family and others from Keenan's past; I felt it was a fancy dressing. Expensive wordage for a dime store tale. It was that sort of humanity I found lacking. No sense of humility. Inundated with profound focus, talent and success, one may conclude that Keenan has the Midas touch. I'll reiterate that I am a fan. The man of mystery from the music that contained such a question for its listener; maybe I shouldn't have read this. I feel like I went to high school with him and I'm tired of his black skinny jeans, wallet chain, Misfits T-shirt, and a smirk that hides ideals that others aren't good enough for. This read like a resume. Success on top of success by someone that was blessed with the energy to dream it and solar clock that contains more hours in his day. I wasn't looking for the classic sex and drugs motif. Or even the tired tale of the underdog turned hero. I just was hoping for something more humanistic than a book of self praise with overly abused adjectives on how great Keenan can scream.

Awesome book. Very well written. MJK still only lets out so much information and tid bits, but the book does clarify some ongoing discussions about influences on his music and moments in his life. Sarah handled this biography extremely well and obviously her relationship with MJK allowed him to open up more than he ever has publicly. Don't buy this thinking its a biography on Tool. Its not. Though obviously it covers a lot of Tool's past, as it was/is a huge part of his life, this book (correctly) focuses on Maynard's life. There are no real nuggets of info about Tool/APC albums, but there are connections you can make to his life story that reveal themselves in his work, and can maybe give a better perspective on his lyrics. Mostly, this book will make you feel lazy because there's no way you've done even half the amount of stuff he has in his life. The guy walked from Boston to Michigan just because....

Cannot put it down. MJK is a fascination - a true union of contrary things and I pay homage to the most perfect of titles. His mind is a veritable fountain of never-ending inspiration. Calm and thoughtful, ever-pondering...straight to balls-to-the-wall. Military training wrapped up in the most rebellious of spirits. Freaking ENTHRALLED.

I am a HUGE Maynard/Tool fan and was super excited to get a glimpse inside the mind/life of who I

consider to be a genius! I was not overly thrilled with the writing style and feel that it would have been waaay better had it been an autobiography instead of a biography! Either way if your a fan I highly reccomend this book!

This is a fantastic book for MJK fans. It seemingly leaves out no details starting with his ancestors, his relationship with family as he grew up, his friendships, his adventures, his every day life as the years plodded on. It all unfolds beautifully to his first practice with a then unnamed Tool. Again, following the path of him and the bands journey and tours. It doesn't go super deep into the bands, but deep enough that you get a good feel about them all. Same with his wine venture. It feels like a very thorough book, definitely suited for Reverend Maynard's fans. It's an easy read. It doesn't matter that MJK only offered up snippets, the book is great as-is.

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