

The Rainbow Comes and Goes

Harper Paperbacks

By Anderson Cooper & Gloria Vanderbilt

ISBN: 9780062454959

Introduction

A charming and intimate collection of correspondence between #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Anderson Cooper and his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, that offers timeless wisdom and a revealing glimpse into their lives.

Anderson Cooper's intensely busy career as a journalist for CNN and CBS' *60 Minutes* affords him little time to spend with his ninety-one year old mother. After she briefly fell ill, he and Gloria began a conversation through e-mail unlike any they had ever had before—a correspondence of surprising honesty and depth in which they discussed their lives, the things that matter to them, and what they still want to learn about each other.

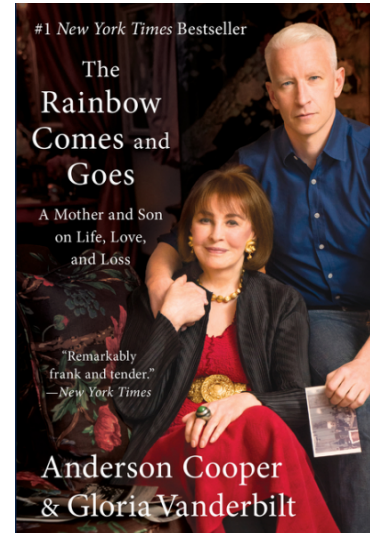
Both a son's love letter to his mother in her final years and an unconventional mother's life lessons for her grown son, *The Rainbow Comes and Goes* offers a rare window into their close relationship and fascinating lives. In these often hilarious and touching exchanges, they share their most private thoughts and the hard-earned truths they've learned along the way.

Throughout, their distinctive personalities shine through—Anderson's darker outlook on the world is a brilliant contrast to his mother's idealism and unwavering optimism.

An appealing blend of memoir and inspirational advice, *The Rainbow Comes and Goes* is a beautiful and affectionate celebration of the profound and universal bond between a parent and child, and, like *Tuesdays with Morrie*, a thoughtful reflection on life and love, reminding us of the precious knowledge and insight that remains to be shared, no matter what age we are.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think it took Anderson and Gloria so long to have this kind of discussion? Does old age provide a kind of urgency for these conversations? Have you had a similar dialogue with a parent or grandparent?
2. Gloria writes, "My first reaction upon reaching ninety-one is surprise." Have you had the same feeling upon reaching a milestone birthday? Do you think we feel frozen at a certain age? What age would that be for you?



3. Anderson writes that he assumed he wouldn't live past fifty, which is the age at which his father died. Is it hard for you to imagine living past the age at which a parent has died?
4. Great wealth can open many doors, but it can also be a burden. How does Gloria's case illustrate this? Would you want to be wealthy beyond all imagining? Like Gloria, do you think you would reject the idea of sitting on a beach somewhere, or not?
5. The novelist Mary Gordon wrote, "A fatherless girl thinks all things possible and nothing safe," a line that has resonated with Gloria throughout her life. Do you think this is true? How does it apply to Gloria's decisions about romance, career, and family?
6. Anderson and Gloria learn in the book that they had each fantasized about being left a letter by their deceased fathers. Have you ever imagined the same kind of letter from someone you loved and lost?
7. In what ways does Anderson take after his mother? What do you see as their most striking differences?
8. Do you believe that everything happens for a reason, as Gloria does, or do you reject the concept, like Anderson does? Why?
9. Do you tend to plan for the future, as Anderson does, or assume that things will work out, in his mother's style?
10. Toward the end of the book, Gloria writes a letter to her seventeen-year-old self. If you were to write a letter to yourself at seventeen, what would you say?
11. What do you think of the phrase, "The Rainbow Comes and Goes"? How does it apply to the authors' lives? Does it apply to your own life, too, and if so, how?