



Save Your Own

by Elisabeth Brink

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AN OVEREDUCATED, ANXIETY-RIDDEN, OCCASIONALLY NARCOLEPTIC, THESIS-CHALLENGED, TWENTY-SIX-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN FINDS LOVE.

About the Book

Good things come in small packages. That's the case with the four-foot-nine heroine in Elisabeth Brink's smashing first novel, *Save Your Own* (Houghton Mifflin, June 6, 2006). *Kirkus Reviews* writes in a starred review, "Brink has created an original heroine in Gillian, a half-pint, overeducated neurotic who finds the courage to let her heart override her overworked brain."

Save Your Own is an inviting, wholly original, and accomplished book. Elisabeth Brink has done a masterly job channeling a fresh voice through the unforgettable Gillian Cormier-Brandenburg — she's lovably formal, overly analytical, and entirely sympathetic. Gillian draws us effortlessly into her world and the marvelously appealing and odd characters that inhabit it. You can't help but fall in love as you root for her at every unexpected turn.

Save Your Own is a story of self-transformation wrapped in a wickedly funny satire. Gillian Cormier-Brandenburg has to write her thesis in order to get her diploma from Harvard Divinity School. This not only doesn't come easily to her, but her topic of spiritual transformation among secular people is turning out to be nearly impossible to prove. Finding subjects is her main roadblock. Her stress mounts as the school threatens to cancel her funding if she doesn't come up with results — and fast. She has the added pressure of her parents' expectations for her to live an honorable and academic life (the only hope they hold for Gillian's future). Oh, and there's also the little matter of her virginity, which is becoming more than a distraction.

Hoping to meet people who've experienced what she calls "secular conversion," Gillian takes a job at a halfway house for addicted women. Crass, outspoken, and impulsive, they are everything she is not. As she struggles to find a way to turn herself into some kind of authority figure, the women push every limit she sets. *Save Your Own* is written with warmth, charm, and humor, as Gillian ultimately discovers her own true impulses and desires in this fabulous fish-out-of-water tale.

About the Author

Elisabeth Brink was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Boston. She graduated magna cum laude from Brown University and lived for six years in the rural Midwest, where she was an editor at the children's magazine *Cricket*. She went on to work as a technical editor, a high-tech marketing director, a product manager, and an advertising copywriter and account executive before enrolling at Brandeis to study American literature. A recipient of several fellowships, including the Fellowship for Graduate Research on Women, she published a series of articles about fairy tale heroines before receiving her Ph. D. in 1993. Since then, she has taught writing and literature at Harvard, Tufts, and Boston College. Her essays and stories have appeared in *The Gettysburg Review*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Manoa*, *The Fiddlehead*, and *Orchid*, among other publications. Her work has garnered fellowships in Prague and St. Petersburg, and her stories were nominated for a Pushcart Prize by the late Andre Dubus. She lives with her husband and two children in Newburyport, Massachusetts.