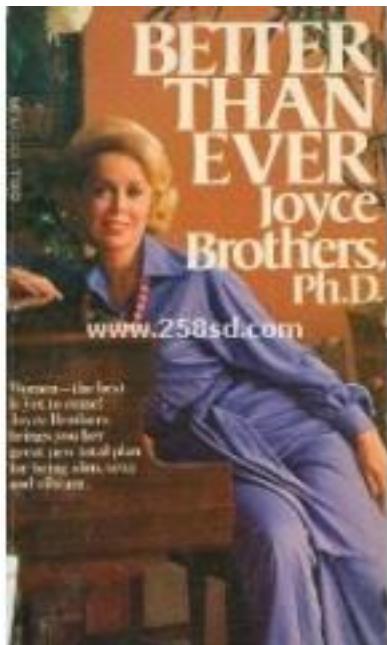


# Better Than Ever



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出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780671221737

One afternoon my daughter<sup>1/4</sup> Lisa<sup>1/4</sup> and I were going<sup><br></sup>through our collection of family snapshots. There was one<sup><br></sup>Milt had taken of me before we were married. I looked at<sup><br></sup>that long-ago girl<sup>1/4</sup> smiling at the man she loved<sup>1/4</sup> and<sup><br></sup>thought<sup>1/4</sup> "Oh<sup>1/4</sup> if I could only start all over again knowing<sup><br></sup>what I know now. If only I had a second chance . ~ ." At<sup><br></sup>that moment I was sorry I did not believe in reincarnation.<sup><br></sup>It must be very comforting to feel that one has many more<sup><br></sup>lives ahead in which to act upon the wisdom that it takes<sup><br></sup>us so long to acquire.<sup><br></sup>That picture<sup>1/4</sup> taken over a quarter of a century ago<sup>1/4</sup><sup><br></sup>reminded me of that bitter quip about youth being too<sup><br></sup>precious to waste on the young. It is right. It really is.<sup><br></sup>That evening I told Milt<sup>1/4</sup> "Don't laugh<sup>1/4</sup> but I think I<sup><br></sup>started being middle-aged today. My butterfly years are<sup><br></sup>over."<sup><br></sup>He

did laugh.<br> "Forget it!" he said. "Middle age is a thing of the past.<br> Your butterfly years are still ahead. You are just emerging<br> from your cocoon!" dear. It takes a lot of living to produce a butterfly."<br> I smiled and said, "I hope you're right." It was just Milt's way of being reassuring or so I thought and of<br>

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