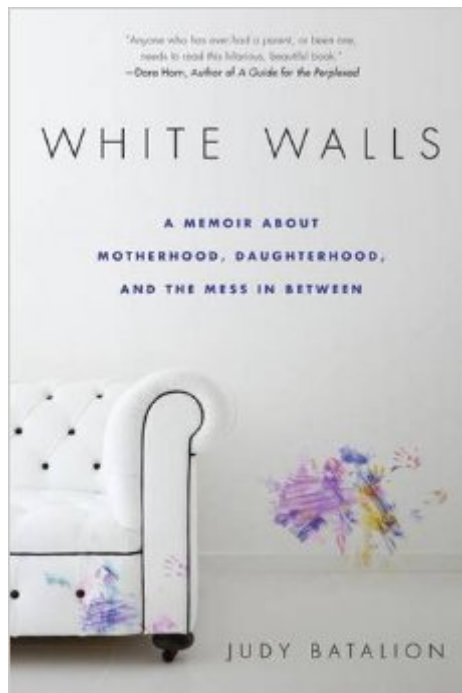


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White Walls: A Memoir About Motherhood, Daughterhood, And The Mess In Between



Synopsis

A memoir of mothers and daughters, hoarding, and healing. Judy Batalion grew up in a house filled with endless piles of junk and layers of crumbs and dust; suffocated by tuna fish cans, old papers and magazines, swivel chairs, tea bags, clocks, cameras, printers, VHS tapes, ballpoint pens obsessively gathered and stored by her hoarder mother. The first chance she had, she escaped the clutter to create a new identity "one made of order, regimen, and clean white walls. Until, one day, she found herself enmeshed in life's biggest chaos: motherhood. Confronted with the daunting task of raising a daughter after her own dysfunctional childhood, Judy reflected on not only her own upbringing but the lives of her mother and grandmother, Jewish Polish immigrants who had escaped the Holocaust. What she discovered astonished her. The women in her family, despite their differences, were even more closely connected than she ever knew "from her grandmother Zelda to her daughter of the same name. And, despite the hardships of her own mother-daughter relationship, it was that bond that was slowly healing her old wounds. Told with heartbreaking honesty and humor, this is Judy's poignant account of her trials negotiating the messiness of motherhood and the indelible marks that mothers and daughters make on each other's lives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Why do people write memoirs? In many cases it is because they're trying to figure out how the people and the events affected their lives. Maybe sitting down at a computer, shuffling through those memories and putting them to paper is easier than sitting with a psychotherapist. Judy Batalion has written an interesting memoir about growing up with a mentally ill, hoarder mother and

a passive father, who seemed to do little to address his wife's problems. Their daughter basically had to raise herself, with some input from her father and her maternal grandmother. "White Walls" is an interesting title for a book that explores what it's like to live with a hoarder, whose massive amount of possessions had threatened to make the Batalion's house unlivable. Judy's mother, daughter of Holocaust survivors, came to Canada as a young child. She married a much older doctor and had two children, Judy and a younger brother. Although she worked for many years outside the home, she also took care of her parents as they aged. And she bought things. Mostly at bargain prices and in bulk. She pushed her husband out of their bedroom by the sheer accumulation of "stuff". I don't know much about "hoarders" but I'd think living with one must be extremely difficult. Judy grew up in a house-of-chaos and felt responsibility for her mother that she was much too young to do. How do you "mother" your own mother, when you need mothering yourself? Judy's father seemed to me to exist as "background". He rarely stood up to his wife and her problems but did have a positive hand in raising the children. The bottom line - however - is how can children cope living in an unstable environment? And why are the children responsible for their mother and her mental state?

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