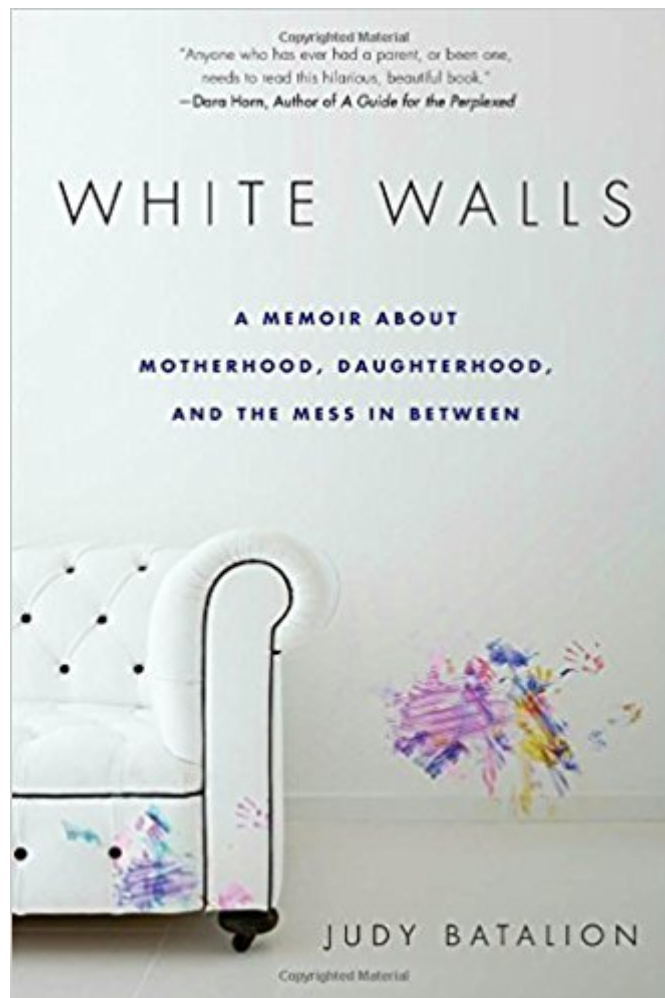




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White Walls: A Memoir About Motherhood, Daughterhood, And The Mess In Between



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

“A beautiful memoir [It] tells the story of mother-daughter relationships in a way that is fresh, honest, sad, and funny all at the same time.” —Bustle

Mom Must-Read. Parents *Batalion* is a talented writer who balances the ups and downs, shares humor and heartbreak. Her sentences are beautiful: sometimes emotional, sometimes making you laugh out loud. Mayim Bialik on GrokNation.com (inaugural book club pick) *Told in a style that is anxiously charming, Batalion's memoir asks what it means to love both our parents and to be free from their wreckage. Los Angeles Review of Books "Beautifully written White Walls is a sophisticated, daring take on the effects of the Holocaust, and Batalion represents an important voice on contemporary Jewish identity. The Jerusalem Post "A gorgeously textured, beautifully crafted book that touches the heart, tenderly, with laughter and with wonder, even as it reminds us of the strange, unyielding, often magical force of family in our lives. Jay Neugeboren, author of *Imagining Robert* and *Transforming Madness* "Honest, difficult, and perfect. Batalion's sharp wit and hard-earned wisdom provide the reader with hope that we can all somehow find it in ourselves to embrace the inevitable chaos and change that comes with living an imperfect life. Nicole Knepper, LCPC, author of *Moms Who Drink and Swear* "Sharp, quick, funny, but the kind of funny that sometimes has you feeling kicked in the stomach and teary with the delight of recognition Part Nora Ephron, part Woody Allen. Honor Moore, author of *The Bishop's Daughter* "This is a modern woman's look at how we construct who we are both through conscious, painstaking effort, as well as through acknowledging and embracing the comforting, familiar, and routine flows of our family histories. Library Journal*

Judy Batalion grew up in Montreal. She studied at Harvard before moving to London, where she worked as a curator by day and a comedian by night. She now lives with her husband and daughters in New York.

This is an incredible book--sad, but never maudlin. Funny, never glib. Smart, never smug. Batalion examines herself with as much candor as she does the people in her life, and so you trust her from the get-go. There are no (falsely) tidy resolutions here, only continued growth. And there are so many motherhood memoirs, but this one really makes the absurdity of it (she was in me, now she's in a cab; she was of me but she is not me) really palpable. There is also a lot of poetry in the telling of this story, echoes and motifs of walls and skins, interiority and exteriority, that make this book, unlike many memoirs, novelistically re-readable. I am a Batalion reader for life.

I've never been (nor contemplate being) the daughter of a hoarder, the grandchild of Holocaust survivors, a stand-up comedian, the mother of a newborn or a student of interior design. But this did what all good books do: It took me to an experience outside my own and made it convincing, sympathetic and real. Batalion has mastered the tricky art of sharing feelings -- often very painful ones -- in a straightforward way without being self-indulgent or self-important. Extra points because it made me laugh.

Some people have more on their plate to handle and overcome than others, and that was the case for Judy Batalion. This book held my interest from beginning to end. Her life was interesting to say the least, and her memoir about her life was well written.

I chose this book as I try to find some wisdom in my own mother-daughter relationship. It gave me glimpses of wisdom here and there but I really felt like I was listening in on someone else's therapy session. I'm glad the author is happy now and came to peace with her Mother, now off to find another book about Moms.

From beginning to end, Judy's memoir is a very poignant, relatable story of how true family love really works.

I'm still only a few chapters in, but I've already been sucked into this world where I see both myself and my children in some of the characters. I'm loving this book from the perspective of a parent, someone related to people who have hoarding/purging tendencies, and understanding how descending from holocaust survivors can have an impact for generations.

This memoir. Touches upon being a wife, daughter, memoirist, mother, sensitive member of society, descendent of Jewish family members and perfectionist in many areas. The only difficulty I encountered was with keeping cities, events and chronological orders in place. Chapter subtitles helped. A sad but uplifting story about mental illness of family member and its impact on others.

Beautiful portrayal of parenting, when one has to parent both our parents and our children. Touching, filled with love and eternal optimism amidst the sometimes cruel and unfair emotional battles we endure.

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