

[PDF] Devil In The Details: Scenes From An Obsessive Girlhood

Jennifer Traig - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Jennifer Traig
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly In this 1970s memoir, Traig describes how, from the age of 12 until her freshman year at Brandeis, she suffered from various forms of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), including anorexia and a rarer, "hyper-religious form" of OCD called scrupulosity, in which sanctified rituals such as hand washing and daily prayer are repeated in endless loops. The daughter of a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, Traig becomes obsessed with Jewish ritual, inventing her own

prayers since her Jewish education is limited. Initially, Traig's family is amused; eventually, they try to help. Still, this memoir is less about suffering than it is about punch lines. When Traig swathes herself in head-to-toe flannel on hot summer days, her mother points to a scantily clad teenager on a talk show entitled *My Teen Dresses Too Sexy* and suggests Traig cool off like the adolescent "in the red vinyl number with the cut-outs over the chest and fanny." Traig spoofs Jewish rituals, cracking up at elaborate bar mitzvahs produced like Las Vegas floor shows and the meticulous analysis that goes into deeming a food item kosher. The author's behavior makes her seem like a character on *Seinfeld* or *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and her book is a funny though sometimes cursory look at mental illness.

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From By turns hilarious and harrowing, this spiritual-psychological autobiography poses a classification conundrum: it fits as comfortably alongside titles by David Sedaris (especially *Naked*, with its similarly themed essay "A Plague of Tics") as it does next to those by Oliver Sacks. When she was an adolescent, Traig's loose collection of neuroses coalesced into a hyperreligious form of obsessive-compulsive disorder known as scrupulosity. The condition finds the once spiritually indifferent teenager purifying her school binders, using separate bathrooms for milk and meat, and perplexing and vexing her mixed-faith family. Traig guides readers through her baffling, lonely world with frequent stops to deliver ba-da-boom zingers ("Today the condition is common enough that there's a Scrupulous Anonymous. I've never joined, so I can't tell you if they subscribe to all twelve steps or just repeat one over and over"). Though uproariously funny, this is perhaps best for intermittent sampling. Considering the deliberate--one might even say obsessive--manner in which Traig wrings humor out of her tribulations, one can't escape the sense that she has unwittingly reproduced her childhood affliction in book form. *Jennifer Mattson*
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