



Devil in the Details: Scenes from an Obsessive Girlhood

By Jennifer Traig

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Recalling the agony of growing up as an obsessive-compulsive religious fanatic, Traig fearlessly confesses the most peculiar behaviour - like scrubbing her hands for a full half-hour before meals, feeding her stuffed animals before herself, and washing everything she owned because she thought it was contaminated by pork fumes!

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Editorial Review

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 [Booklist](#)

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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About the Author

Jennifer Traig is the author of a series of young adult books and some humour titles. She has a PhD in Literature.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joan Henderson:

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Delaine Valencia:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Devil in the Details: Scenes from an Obsessive Girlhood, it is possible to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout people. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its identified as reading friends.

Jamila Coles:

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