

[PDF] House Rules: A Memoir

Rachel Sontag - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Sontag, a doctor's daughter, grew up in a family that seemed every bit the normal, suburban ideal. She and her sister were raised to value book smarts as well as worldly experience. What those outside of the family didn't know was that the reason Sontag was so accomplished and committed to her extracurricular activities was that she would've done anything to get away from her father, Stephen. By enforcing a peculiar system of rules and consequences, he micromanaged every moment of her life, tape-recording her conversations, measuring the length of her fingernails and locking all the phones in a safe when he left the house. When Sontag broke the rules, regardless of circumstance, he would verbally abuse her for hours, dictating letters of apology from her to him (I am a selfish, rotten, worthless brat, etc.). Sontag's mother, Ellen, reneged on

plans to divorce him for years, perhaps partly because Stephen prescribed her into complacency with lithium. In adulthood, Sontag found herself caught in self-defeating patterns that smacked of her father's thrall. Struggling to break free, she even resorted to homelessness before finally severing her relationship with Stephen. Sontag's is a brave account, not only of what it's like to take the brunt of an abusive parent's wrath, but of what it means to have the courage to leave. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From School Library Journal Adult/High School—Viewed from the outside, Sontag's Illinois childhood was stereotypically American upper middle class—a physician father, social-worker mother, two girls, a house with a yard and a dog. Behind that facade, Sontag says, was a dysfunctional family ruled by a man who consistently berated, humiliated, and bullied his children and his wife. Particularly onerous were the "middle of the night" sessions, wherein Rachel was summoned downstairs for yet another recitation of her failings that ended only when she admitted to being a selfish, negligent rule-breaker. She rails against her father's obsessive and "sick" conduct, yet seems especially angry with her mother, whose weakness she finds repellent. Only by physically removing herself from the household could she begin to achieve independence, repair her self-image, and, eventually, come to terms with parents she could neither live with nor change. Some may find her self-pitying and will question her precise quotation of conversations that occurred years ago. Yet her book is a memoir; it does not pretend to be anything other than what it is: one daughter's perspective of life under a man who, in her eyes, chose to play the role of despot rather than that of loving and forgiving husband and father. Readers in similar circumstances may gain comfort from seeing the author's eventual independence.—*Dori DeSpain, Fairfax County Public Library, VA*

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