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Escaping The Smoke And Rain: Moving Through And Beyond The Jehovah's Witness Community



Synopsis

Breaking free from the Jehovahâ€™s Witness community would be the test that would become my testimony. There I was climbing the ice-clad rungs of a rickety old ladder, anchored in a bed of snow, hanging Christmas lights for the very first time. I was convinced no other symbol would illumine my debut as brightly or as swiftly as this. It felt exhilarating yet terrifying all at onceâ€”like standing on the edge of a precipice fearing that stepping off would either plunge me into death, or somehow, someday, teach me to fly. So begins the authorâ€™s personal journey from enslavement to freedomâ€”one that tragically captures the loss and rediscovery of identity. Shauna May provides a revelatory look into the life of a religiously divided familyâ€”her mother a fiercely zealous Jehovahâ€™s Witness, and her father a geophysicist and self-professed atheist. As the family journeys through bizarre reversals of fortune, we are taken to the rugged west coast of Ireland and back to Canada, gazing all the while into the raw existence of a childhood spiraling from riches to rags. Her fatherâ€™s death propels May into a luminous quest for truth and freedom, a quest with a price attached: to break out of the Order, she must break the ties that bind. May enlightens the process of learning, unlearning, and relearning certain basic truths while engaging in the struggle involved in walking from and into life anew. Positively written, *Escaping the Smoke and Rain* is an unforgettable testimony of the transformative power of spirituality. A portion of proceeds from this book will be donated to Free the Children.

Book Information

File Size: 1752 KB

Print Length: 175 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1486602770

Publisher: Word Alive Press (March 18, 2015)

Publication Date: March 18, 2015

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00UY0Q0UK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,395,601 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #58
in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Religion & Spirituality > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian
Denominations & Sects > Jehovah's Witness #138 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles >
Christian Denominations & Sects > Jehovah's Witness #467073 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

Shauna May has a way with words, presenting honestly her inner thoughts and ideas, describing her own life and those of her parents frankly and succinctly, taking us on a journey fraught with mental, emotional and spiritual conflict. A biography of 150 pages is a rarity. Most autobiographers are full of themselves to the extent of hundreds of pages. But in these pages May covers all we need to know without unnecessary elaboration, aimless wandering or descents into self-pity. Her introspections are grounded in rationality. Her sense of humour is palpable. Her conclusions are credible. And, thankfully, she does not get preachy. In conclusion we get the impression that seeing the rainbow provides her with enough joyful redemption without having to pursue a promissory pot of gold at its end. This book once more confirmed my suspicion that religions are human constructs. Even those who espouse a particular theology or passel of doctrines entertain individualized interpretations, many of which remain self-sequestered to avoid division in the ranks of the believers. Autocratic organizations like the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baha'i Faith, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and countless others, depend for their survival on their adherents' obedience and subservience to its own 'truth'. Shauna May has had the courage to dispel the spectres of counterfeit 'truths'. She has broken free from autocratic conformity. As I see it I think she discovered that, in order to be meaningful, religious/spiritual/contemplative 'truth' must be founded on altruistic love and forgiveness blessed by an unconditional gift of divine grace [or, as some would have it, humanistic good will]. A short but excellent book for spiritually receptive truth-seekers.

A very enjoyable and compelling read!,

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