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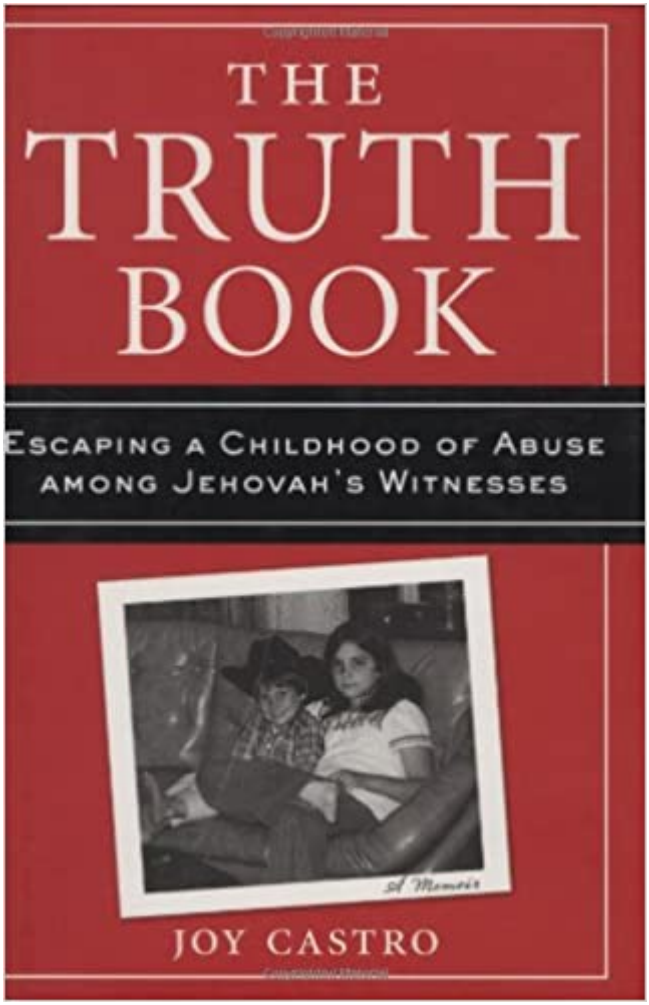
The Truth Book: Escaping A Childhood Of Abuse Among Jehovah's Witnesses



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Synopsis

-You must always, always tell the truth, no matter the consequences, for you must model yourself on Jehovah, and Jehovah does not lie. This is the most crucial rule of all,+ Joy Castro is told as a young girl in a Jehovah+s Witness family. Joy is 12 years old when her divorced mother marries a brother in the church. He is highly respected in the community, having displayed the ultimate sign of spiritual devotion: he served at Bethel, the Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn. At home, however, he is a despicable brute. For the two years her mother is married to him, Joy does not grow at all; in fact, she loses 16 pounds, an eloquent testimony to the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse she suffers at his hands. Her battered mother does nothing to protect her, nor does her church. She is sustained by a consuming fascination for horses and books and her protective love for her younger brother. Their daring escape from this unspeakable cruelty, to discover a nurturing home with their father, is the key to their survival and salvation.

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Customer Reviews

Jehovah’s Witnesses have something they call "the truth book," Castro says, which lays the groundwork proving theirs is the one, true religion. As a precocious preteen, and though wholly indoctrinated by her fundamentalist family, Castro began asking simple questions regarding the book’s claims. Her mother’s response, her father’s ambivalence, the unapproachable church elders, and ultimately her stepfather’s vicious enforcement of the book’s truth constitute the framework for her startling memoir of not just an abhorrently dysfunctional family but also a misfiring religious

organization. Castro portrays Jehovah's Witnesses as a religion that recognizes all people as equals yet disenfranchises a member for smoking, and as a passionately proselytizing organization that can turn a blind eye to grossly abusive parenting. Her story is, more than merely engaging, downright embracing. The unfolding fates of Castro and her brother as they endure abuse at the hands of those entrusted with their care, even though we know they emerged whole and sane, prove utterly gripping. Donna ChavezCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

My name is Collette aka Coco Mojo, and I just bought this book from .I read it in a gulp; I was up half the night. It's that gripping! Having read many exposes and handbooks on the subject of cults, such as Diane Wilson's book, Awakening of a Jehovah's Witness, and Jerry Bergman's book, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Problem of Mental Illness, this book did not come as a big surprise. And yet it is much more eloquent and understated as compared to similar exposes.This is a heartbreaking story of adult insanity and cruelty, and of children's amazing ability to survive. Nearly all the adults in Joy and Tony's lives betray them horribly. They live for two years with their mother and stepfather, both Jehovah's Witnesses, the latter of high standing in the Watchtower, having served at Bethel. This stepfather is a sub-bestial, demonic man, who beats and starves the children mercilessly (he also sexually fondles the young girl). He tells them he doesn't care if they live or die -- and many times, they do come close to death (he exposes them to subzero temperatures and whirring chainsaws, as well as starvation and brutal beatings).Their mother is a cold, proud, yet passive "doormat," and the stepfather frequently beats her bloody. This mother does nothing whatsoever to stop the abuse of her children -- and when Joy tells the elders at the local Kingdom Hall about the abuse, they also turn a deaf ear (from what I've read in other exposes, this is nothing new -- the Jehovah's Witness elders, who are always male -- usually turn a deaf ear to complaints of child abuse and wife beating and even rape. Frequently, they blame the victim rather than hold the perpetrator accountable).Joy finally escapes and goes to live with her father and stepmother, and later rescues her brother Tony.There is little overt emotion in Castro's account. Rather, there is an implicit sadness that makes the story seem all the more poignant. There are hints of pathos through metaphor -- such as those forlorn baby monkeys in labs that cling to soulless mothers made of wire and cloth.This book is a moving memoir of the capacity of the human spirit to survive the unthinkable.

what I felt after reading this wonderfully written book. I too was raised as a JW and experienced

some of what Joy did growing up although nothing that can compare to the horrible treatment by her stepfather to both Joy and her brother and the neglect and indifference of her mother (although any ex JW can see right thru her mother's behavior and treatment; it is soul killing to be in that women's position in that cult).I agree completely with what many other readers have already expressed about this book; well written, heartfelt and just a complete success. Joy had a harrowing childhood and then had to deal with the suicide of her father, a complex man who never really knew himself, even at the end of his sad life....but through it all she discovered herself and somehow found the strength to convey her life experiences to others.I owned the book for several months before I could bring myself to read it...I was scared that it would bring back memories that I do not want to remember and at times I could only read a few paragraphs or pages at a time due to the powerful feelings I had reading it. That stopped mid way thru the book; at that point I could not put it down. It mirrored some of my own experiences; especially the ones about moving on and away from the cult that ultimately Jehovah's Witnesses are...although Joy does not (in my opinion) expound enough about the cultish manner of this religion; however, that was not the intent of her writing the book so in the long run, she did an excellent job of "skirting" the issue of the cult and focused mainly on simply telling her story. The last few chapters are spellbounding in their simplcity and at the same time complexity and I am so grateful that I put away my own fears to actually read it. It will now rank as one of my most treasured books and that is saying a lot. Everyone who is an ex JW should read this book; not only because of how she details how many times she tried to reach out to the elders in her congregations and how many times her family's situation was ignored by them and others but because she actually got out and did so with grace and is obviously now living her life as she deserves. As another reviewer mentioned the last few paragraphs of this book are the heart of it they deserve being quoted again by this now humbled fan of this strong and wonderful person. "It's all right that there are things you do not get over, not really. You just go on, knowing that the things you love could be stripped from you at any moment, remembering to love them now. It makes you human. You try to be decent and treat people gently, knowing that they, too, have their scars and madnesses that, like yours, do not show."Thank you, Joy. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for sharing your story with us.

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