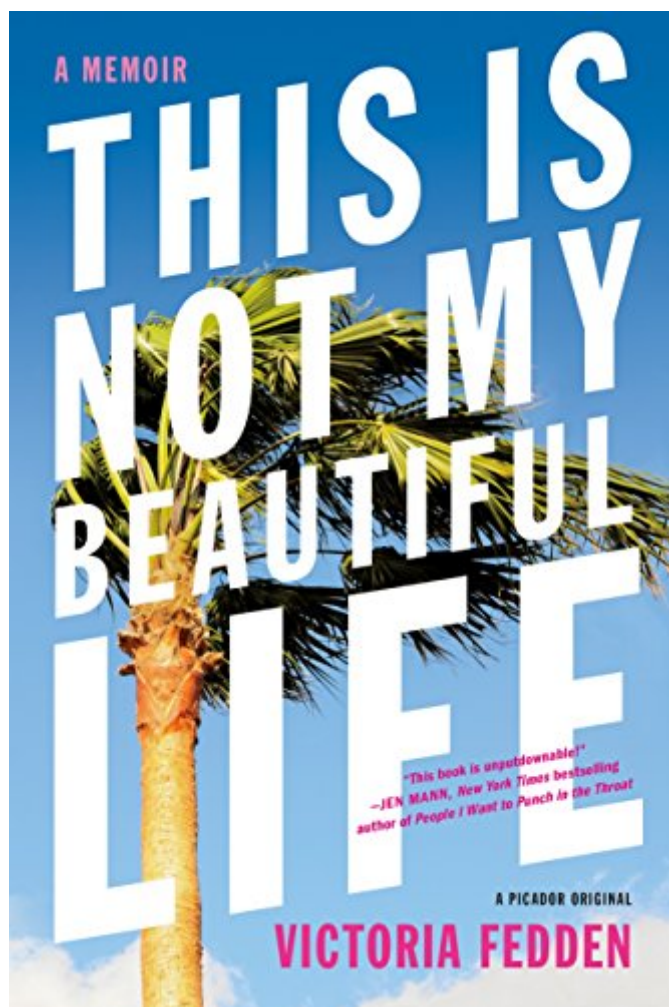


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This Is Not My Beautiful Life: A Memoir



Synopsis

ONE OF PUBLISHERS WEEKLY'S TEN MOST ANTICIPATED MEMOIRS OF THE SEASON IF YOU THINK IT SUCKS TO LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS WHEN YOU'RE THIRTY-SIX AND NINE MONTHS PREGNANT, JUST WAIT TILL THE DEA COMES KNOCKING (WITH THE IRS IN TOW): WELCOME TO VICTORIA FEDDEN'S LIFE. When a squad of federal agents burst through her parents' front door, Victoria Fedden felt ill-prepared to meet them: She was weeks away from her due date and her T-shirt wasn't long enough to hide her maternity undies. As for the question of how to raise a child when you've just discovered that your mother and stepfather have allegedly masterminded a pump-and-dump scheme? She was pretty sure that wasn't covered in *What to Expect When You're Expecting*--and she really hoped that Bradford Cohen, the noted criminal defense attorney who famously waived his exemption on *The Apprentice*, would prove them innocent. *This Is Not My Beautiful Life* is the story of how Victoria lost her parents to prison and nearly lost her mind. No one ever said motherhood would be easy, but as she struggles to change diapers, install car seats, and find the right drop-off line at pre-school--no easy task, when each one is named for a stage in the lifecycle of a f*cking butterfly--she's also forced to ask herself whether a jump-suit might actually complement her mom's platinum-blond extensions and fend off the cast of shady, stranger-than-fiction characters (like the recovering addict who scored a reality show when he started an escort service for women) who populated her parents' world. A real-life *Arrested Development* that could only unfold in southern Florida, *This Is Not My Beautiful Life* is a hilariously funny and unexpectedly moving memoir of a just-functional family you'll never forget.

Book Information

File Size: 1328 KB

Print Length: 334 pages

Publisher: Picador (June 7, 2016)

Publication Date: June 7, 2016

Sold by: Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0140Q31L4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #30,459 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #26 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Parenting & Families #70 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Parenting & Families #353 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs

Customer Reviews

Calling your parents who have been through a Federal Trial, found guilty of multiple charges, and sentenced to ten and six years of prison eccentric, seems to me to be more than denial. However, this memoir written by Victoria Fedden, has a life of its own, and I will give her that. This memoir starts off with a bang, and then we have the rest of the story. Victoria had a difficult childhood, parents divorced, father seemingly did not want her, mother off on her own, and Victoria was brought up by her paternal grandmother. Her mother tried to visit regularly, and when she hit the big time by marrying Joel, Victoria went to live with them. The family had some tough years, but then Joel became involved in one thing or another and money started rolling in. Anything you wanted was yours. Cecily, the mom, got to build her dream home, Casa dei Sogni, in South Florida. Their friends, acquaintances, and 'colleagues' from New Jersey came south for the holidays. And, then, the day arrived when Federal Agents arrived to arrest mom and dad. Victoria was in her last month of pregnancy, she and her husband were staying at her parent's home until their house was finished. The next year was a blur, the baby, Emmeline Alice arrived, the love of their lives. Victoria tried to take stock of her life, and become acquainted with her half siblings. All the while her parents were awaiting trial, and life was not what Victoria expected. It is in this time that Victoria comes to realizations about her life, and this is what this memoir is all about. The writing is superlative, from the first paragraph, we follow along, not the least bit surprised by what is around the corner, but very glad when we reach it.

As noted frequently during reviews, the memoir genre is special to me. Everyone has a story, and everyone's story deserves to be told; some stories, certainly, are more intriguing than others, and some writers articulate more effectively. However, if the narrative is honest and authentic, the style of the writing must not be allowed to negate the validity of the sharing. "This Is Not My Beautiful Life" by Victoria Fedden combines gritty honesty with occasionally crude language and vivid descriptions of lifestyle choices that are far from appealing, but she also includes a great deal of humor and some extremely thoughtful insights. One of those insights involves the issue of the

differences between the handling of white-collar financial crime by the Federal Government and the way in which individuals — especially people of color — are treated for violations of non-violent drug offenses. Fedden begins her narrative with the description of the raid in which her parents were first caught up in the stock fraud issue. From there to the eventual sentencing to terms of less than 10 years each in the — country-club prisons — of the Federal system, there elapsed over two years, during which time they were able to continue their obscenely lavish although totally bizarre lifestyle. Comparing this with the all-too-familiar process by which people without financial resources are arrested, held without bail in overcrowded and extremely violent county lock-ups, and then sentenced to incredibly long terms of incarceration in state prisons for minimal offenses, one can't help but abhor the imbalance represented. Of course, it is a truism that misery is misery, despair is despair, and each one of us has to deal with life experiences that are — for us — utterly devastating.

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