

[PDF] The Center Of The Universe: A Memoir (Vintage)

Nancy Bachrach - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Piquant and ribald, Bachrach's debut memoir about her dotty mother from Providence, R.I., revolves around the accidental gassing accident aboard her parents' boat in 1983 that left her father dead of exhaust asphyxiation and her mother with severe brain damage. The author was then a 33-year-old advertising executive working in Paris on a new (ultimately doomed) campaign to introduce antiperspirant to the French, when she rushed back to the U.S. at

the behest of her two professional siblings, expecting a double funeral but finding her tenacious, irrepressible 56-year-old mother, Lola, emerging from a coma. Widowed, confused and mis-medicated, Lola was not expected to recover from her carbon-monoxide poisoning, but her long-suffering children knew better, having endured a long history of Lola's erratic, flamboyant, bipolar yo-yoing requiring years of psychiatry, shock treatment and hospitalization. Over time her aphasia, echolalia, catatonia and incontinence amazingly do turn around, but Lola is ever a force to be reckoned with, the granddaughter of a prominent Rhode Island rabbi, molested in her youth, lustily married to so-called Mr. Fix It (also the name of the boat, which he incorrectly rewired, causing the release of gas vapors that killed him) and gamely re-marriageable (Men are like buses, she maintained, lining up another husband: Miss one, hop on another). Bachrach's prose is wry, risky, and feels like she has found her moment at last. (*May*)

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From Bachrach's account of her childhood with a bipolar mother has a freshness and loopy humor as she describes Lola, her red-haired mom who believed that proper connection with the Fibonacci numerical sequence would lead to God. Equally palpable are Bachrach's memories of her and her siblings' confusion during torrential emotional scenes, which were sometimes followed by openly, wildly sexual reconciliations between her parents. Hypersexual Lola's medical history includes the usual 1950s shock treatments, so that "whole chunks of Lola were scorched earth." Returning to Providence when a boating accident kills Dad and renders Mom comatose, the three adult siblings gather at Mort's surreally funny funeral, and at Lola's bedside, where the patient's "serenity makes her unrecognizable, as though someone pressed the mute button on her personality." What follows Lola's "rising from metaphorical ashes" as Bachrach cares for her recovering mom are funny-sad revelations of family secrets and identities, well-placed flashbacks, and a scary chronicle of Lola's subsequent breakdown. All is infused with humanizing pathos, and readers may well tear through this compelling read in a single sitting. --Whitney Scott --This text refers to the edition.

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