



In Spite of Everything: A Memoir

Susan Gregory Thomas

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“For most of my generation—Generation X—there is only one question: ‘When did your parents split?’ Our lives have been framed by the answer. Ask us. We remember everything.”

In this powerful, poignant, and often laugh-out-loud-funny memoir, Susan Gregory Thomas reflects on that life-defining question and its answer through a lens imprinted by memory and sharpened by time.

Raised in Berkeley, Thomas grew up in a seemingly stable household. But when the family moved east when she was twelve, her father, a charming alcoholic, ran off with his secretary, and her mother collapsed. Thomas and her younger brother joined the ubiquitous flocks of 1980s latchkey kids: collateral damage in their parents’ wars, sustaining private injuries they would try to self-treat throughout adolescence and adulthood.

When Thomas became a wife and mother in her early thirties, she made a fierce promise: She would never let her own children know the scorched earth of divorce. It was a vow shared by many of her peers, who, in reaction to the divorces of the 1970s and ’80s, sought out marriages based on deeper friendships and more genuine partnerships than those of previous generations. So Thomas was stunned when, after sixteen years with the man she considered her best friend, she found her marriage coming to an end. Not only did the divorce reopen all the old wounds, but she would now have to contend with the aftershocks affecting her two young daughters.

In Spite of Everything is an astounding, bright, and brilliantly told account of a mother’s fight to protect her children’s world and to make sense of her own troubled past—and the culture of divorce in which she and Generation X were raised. Interwoven with original, hilarious insights on divorce and parenthood, Thomas’s eye-opening, gut-wrenching, ultimately optimistic story holds a mirror up to a whole generation.

From the Hardcover edition.

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