



Please Don't Get Murdered at School Today

Kimberly Harrington

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An emotionally honest, arresting, and funny collection of essays about motherhood and adulthood in the vein of *Operating Instructions* from a rising literary star.

“Being a mother is a gift.”

Where's my receipt?

Welcome to essayist Kimberly Harrington's poetic, hysterically funny (and occasionally just hysterical) world of motherhood, womanhood, and humanhood, not necessarily in that order. It's a place of loud parenting, fierce loving, too much ice cream, too much social media, and occasional inner monologues in which light is shed on topics such as Pro/Con: Caving to PTO Bake Sale Pressure (“PRO: Skim the crappiest brownies for myself. CON: They're really crappy.”) With accessibility and wit, she captures the emotions around parenthood in artful and earnest ways, highlighting this time in the middle—midlife, the middle years of childhood, how women are stuck in the middle of so much. It's a place of elation, exhaustion, and time whipping past at warp speed. Finally, it's a quiet space to consider the girl you were, the mother you are, and the older woman you will one day be.

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From Reader Review Please Don't Get Murdered at School Today for online ebook

Susanne Mills says

Absolutely hilarious, fantastic bunch of poems. I am not a poetry reader at all but this appealed to me. I have not laughed so much at a book for ages, it's a completely honest and funny book. It details life from baby to teenagers, from family trips to marriage and death. Brilliant reading :)

Molly says

I'm not a mother myself, but you don't have to be to enjoy this book. Kimberly's commentary on womanhood, motherhood, and adulthood (an especially the marriage of all three) will ring true to any woman who picks up this book. It's relatable, funny, and at times will push your emotional buttons, bringing up feelings of nostalgia for your own childhood (if you don't have kids) or your kids' childhood (if you do). Kimberly says the things we've all thought or felt but haven't said, either because we felt like we shouldn't or we couldn't find the words. Reading this book is like having a long, open-ended conversation with one of your best girlfriends - kind you can get totally real with and talk about "taboo" topics like money, not being happy when society tells you that you should be overjoyed, and above all, mistakes.

I received a free copy of this book from a Goodreads giveaway. But you should buy it or get it from your local library because it is great!

Kayle Barnes says

Would highly recommend it to future mothers, people who know or knew mothers, or anyone interested in an in-depth perspective about the potential realities of motherhood from an outspoken, flawed woman.

Kimberly says

I wrote this book.
I am def gonna give it 5 stars.
What am I, an idiot?
Not looking for an actual answer.

Emily says

I laughed, cried, and most importantly I feel so much less alone when trying to pretend I have things in common with other parents, feel invisible as a woman over 40, or try to balance conflicting feelings of fierce

love for my kids with disillusionment about motherhood.

Jen says

Outstanding!! This book made me laugh, cry, and laugh until I cried and almost hyperventilated. When I picked it up, I expected it to be funny; I didn't expect it to be so touching. Hands down the best perspective on motherhood that I've read.

Sarahbeth Jones says

Not a usual book I gravitate toward, and I'm not sure why I felt compelled to pick up this one, but it was just not my cup of tea. Harrington comes off as crass, self-absorbed, narcissistic, and the roll your eyes kind of feminist that complains a lot but does very little. Hard pass.

David says

wildly uneven personal essay collection. Some funny/observant [e.g., extended take on getting interrupted while working at home as a freelancer with small kids], some devastating [her miscarriage], some touching [a really kind appreciation of her husband, who otherwise I imagine might have some trouble reading parts of this book about their fragile relationship, and some other Dads in their circle who take the kids camping each summer].....

.....mixed in with a good deal of bitterness and almost high school humor magazine level stuff. I particularly thought the mock quiz expressing her disdain for being asked to contribute to "meal trains" [not familiar with that term, but i guess the arrangements where people sign up to bring meals to someone who had surgery or what have you] was over the top -- just say no if that's much of an imposition.

Finally, the acknowledgements suggest that she had lots of editorial help professional and otherwise, so I find it hard to believe that nobody forcefully advised deleting some of the extremely dated chain-email level stuff. It's 2018 -- you can't possibly think that (a) participation trophies are BS and insulate kids from how the cruel competitive world really works or (b) one of those "job descriptions" for a new parent [your boss is an irrational tyrant, the work is 24/7 with no pay or vacations.....] represents a fresh perspective readers will not have encountered before.

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

Full disclosure, I received an advanced reader's copy of this from the Goodreads Giveaways - my first win in years! - so I'm really excited about that. Hard copy ARCs are so fun.

This ended up becoming a #StealthRead because I have the flu, and my eyes were hurting so much I couldn't look at a computer screen, so I took a nap and then I read *physical copies in bed* instead of ebooks (which is how you know I'm feeling truly wretched, because I read mostly ebooks at home). I also wanted to read this book for International Women's Day, because I think moms are so important, and do not get the respect they deserve.

I'm not a mom, but I'm at the age when a lot of my friends are starting to become moms. I recently went to my first baby shower, and nothing says "congratulations! you're officially an adult!" like going to a baby shower (except maybe a wedding, or a 4th of July Barbecue where you're actually expected to bring something). I have so much respect for people who want to become parents, and especially women who want to become moms, because it really is a sacrifice - a physical, financial, emotional sacrifice; nothing is more selfless than raising this small person, nurturing them, and then launching them into the world.

I recently read this great book called TOO FAT, TOO SLUTTY, TOO LOUD, which was basically a series of essays about the unfair double-standards society places on women, using celebrities as examples. One that really stayed with me was the one about Kim Kardashian, and how pregnancy for her was such a miserable, awful experience, and she was totally lambasted about it in the media, who seemed to be doing their best to take unflattering photos of her and make her seem like an unfit parent. I don't know Kim, but I do think that a lot of those stereotypes about motherhood have permeated the lens through which society views mothers, and how they believe mothers should *act*.

One thing I liked about AMATEUR HOUR is that it's not one of those transcendent memoirs that makes motherhood seem like this Pinterest-perfect thing that happens to you, that *transforms* you from an ordinary person to Hestia, goddess of domesticity. Instead, it's a pretty straightforward memoir of someone who happened to become a mother and loves her kids, even if she secretly- or not-so-secretly- has second thoughts about it sometimes. There are a lot of great topics in here, like miscarriage, abortion, gender roles, unfair expectations, child-rearing, bereavement, birth, and even growing up and growing old, and the very fine line that separates the two.

The only part where she lost me was when she went on a tirade about "participation trophies." It had an unpleasant whiff of the "entitled millennials" tirade that's so popular right now. There's a fine line between rewarding kids for mediocre or even poor work and what she was upset about, which was the fact that her school had changed the play of the Lion King to add more roles so that all of the kids would have equal parts. My school did that, and let me tell you that as a shy kid, I was often shunted to the side by louder, more aggressive kids who wanted that spotlight and didn't need to be coaxed into it. Competition is important, but sometimes there are shy or anxious kids who need that extra boost. And I wasn't at all

surprised when this rant segued into "entitled new hires who think they deserve to be promoted after only a year - here, have a cookie" BS. Millennials have it pretty hard right now: shitty economy, a dearth of jobs that lead to viable career paths, opinion post after opinion post about how millennials are ruining the world with avocado lattes and \$50 eyeliner. And OK, I get it, I've met some entitled millennials, but I've also met some entitled Baby Boomers, too.

Apart from that, I enjoyed this book. It isn't PC and I'm sure she'll offend as many people as she entertains, but it was an honest, straightforward look about life that didn't feel like it was trying to sell something or portray motherhood and adulthood as the Holy Grail. I appreciated that.

Also, FWIW, my mom is the most important person in my life and I love her a lot, and reading this book kind of helped me get a better look at what raising me was probably like from her perspective, and how frustrating I probably made her life at times (spoiler: as a kid, I could be an unapologetic little shit). Despite all the grief I must have put her through, she was always unequivocally in my corner, and did whatever she could to make me happy - or failing that, keep me safe (to a kid, happy and safe are not always mutually inclusive: for example 90% of things involving trampolines).

Thank you, Mom. I love you.

#internationalwomansday2018

2.5 stars

Benita says

Listen when I say there are portions of this book that I absolutely loved - I mean it. On the flip side, there are also segments/sections of this book that are forgettable. I'm still giving this book high marks because the good parts are THAT good! My favorite section of the book was the section titled "Vows" - What an emotional roller coaster! Having said that, you should be in the right mind set to read this book in order to enjoy it. The author is crass, honest and erratic in the the most wonderful way. The book lets you know you are not alone in this motherhood thing and let's talk about how its amazing and awful at the same time! Read it!

Kate Rope says

I love this book. I mean, I love, love, love it. I am a 45-year-old mother to two who writes books for a living while also writing other things that actually pay money and being a full-time mom. WHICH IS TO SAY I DO NOT READ BOOKS ANYMORE. At least not all the way through. Usually not more than a quarter of the way through. I'm lucky if I read one essay in a New Yorker. I can barely make it through NY mag's Approval Matrix anymore. I want to start a catalog club, because those I finish. My god, this Spring's Sundance Catalog in Guadalajara was a masterpiece. Discuss. BUT I DIGRESS. I read this book all the way through in a week. Hold your applause. Seriously, this book is deliciously, enjoyable, and lyrically human. It's raw and real and nostalgic and unapologetic and evocative in all the best, most believable ways. I write about motherhood and 90% of what I read I don't relate to. It's sappy pap. Or it's longwindedly sarcastic and desperately needs an editor. It's rare to find someone who can write about something as common as motherhood and make it as beautiful as poetry. And I related to almost every moment of this book. Not because my life resemble's the authors, but because she has a beautiful way of filtering the universal through her particular lens of funny, quirky, brave, low-key, middle-class, white Vermont mom life. This book is not trying to stand in for all the experiences of motherhood, it clearly represents an enviable (in the most human, natural, relaxed, i-wish-i could-go-camping-with-her kind of way) particular set of experiences. But the author brings forth from them the most universal understanding of how we are all fumbling through this thing called motherhood. Damn, without one moment of pollayannish crap she makes all the suck ass moments of motherhood so beautiful, noble even. I don't know how to say it, she just makes the hard work of mothering seem possible, and heroic and special. It's this really amazing, totally common (but completely rare) privilege of a burden. And reading this book just makes me feel lucky to experience it.

Amy Lafayette says

This book was a hilarious dose of birth control.

H says

This cracks open motherhood and spills its guts onto 300 or so extremely readable pages. Endlessly quotable.

Amanda says

I hadn't heard of this book before spotting it in the "new arrivals" section of our local library. My 3-year-old daughter helped me choose it from a few books that piqued my interest. I'm so glad she chose this one.

Within the first 60 pages, I had already both cried and laughed out loud. My favorite essay was "Let's Have the Wedding Later," which I immediately shared with my husband of a decade and texted to two close friends - one married longer than us and another engaged to be married next summer. The sequence of "I love you. Thank you. I'm sorry." will stick with me for years.

This book came to me at the perfect time. Had I read it early in my marriage, I would have scoffed and stopped reading, the perspective of family life too harsh and messy, unlike the ideals, the "what's supposed to be," of my younger years. But perspectives change, real life and loss and disappointments happen, and as someone who struggles with anxiety, life not being what she thought, the pressure of the "shoulds" of life, and the always present reality that these years as a family with kiddos at home are very, very, way too short.

This life is hard, but it's also beautiful, and we could all serve ourselves and those we love well by being more of who we are and trusting them to love us anyway. And we'll do the same for them.

Thank you, Kimberly, for being real and vulnerable. I love your book. Thank you for writing it, for helping me to feel validated and affirmed and not so alone in my views of life, love, and family.

Charissa says

Amateur Hour was an unexpected treat--gripping from the first chapter, heartfelt, gritty, full of surprises. It is a book about motherhood, but also marriage, generations of family, and the ups and downs of life itself. I could have done without a few of the chapters, but I plan to pass my copy along because I know it will bring others the same laughter and tears it brought to me.
