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# hypocrite in a poufy white dress

tales of growing up groovy and clueless

"Thank you, O Lord,  
for sending us  
Susan Gilman's tales..."  
—FRANK McCOURT



**susan jane gilman**

author of *Kiss My Tiara*

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## Hypocrite in a Poufy White Dress: Tales of Growing up Groovy and Clueless

*Susan Jane Gilman*

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# **Hypocrite in a Pouffy White Dress: Tales of Growing up Groovy and Clueless**

*Susan Jane Gilman*

**Hypocrite in a Pouffy White Dress: Tales of Growing up Groovy and Clueless** Susan Jane Gilman  
From the author of "Kiss My Tiara" comes a funny and poignant collection of true stories about women coming of age that for once isn't about finding a date.

## **Hypocrite in a Pouffy White Dress: Tales of Growing up Groovy and Clueless Details**

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Author : Susan Jane Gilman

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## **From Reader Review Hypocrite in a Poufy White Dress: Tales of Growing up Groovy and Clueless for online ebook**

### **Koren says**

A humorous coming of age memoir. I think teenagers could get the message that it is ok to laugh at yourself and not take yourself so seriously.

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### **Sally says**

Enjoyed reading this book, was introduced to me by the authors father. Any questions that I needed to ask he answered. My main question was " did you truly sit at the park bench while your daughter was being hit for a swing"? His answer was yes...and it was the hardest thing to do. He wanted his daughter to defend herself for 1 mouthing off and 2 parents won't always be around to defend kids.

I don't know if I can agree in the way the lesson was taught but I did tell him that I enjoyed the book.

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### **AJ LeBlanc says**

Gilman's writing style is amazing. Several times I had to put the book down because I was laughing so hard. She has a great take of growing up as a full on feminist, but at the same time becoming giddy with delight when Mick Jagger points out that she's got huge boobs. This is a woman who's been everywhere and done everything, and it's a brilliant read. The book starts off with her at four years old, the daughter of hippies, prancing around in a tutu and figuring out how to rule the world. Her first foray into stardom comes in the form of an independent film that has her skipping around naked with another 4 year old, trying to catch a butterfly. We end with Susan getting married and having a total meltdown in the middle of a David's Bridal when she finds a wedding dress that looks amazing on her. The plan was to be married in red or black satin, but she stands on the pedestal in the middle of the store for \*four hours\*, trying to come to terms with the fact that she loves this poufy white dress, even though it represents everything she hates. In between she writes for a Jewish newspaper, which leads to her accompanying a group of Jewish teens on a trip through the concentration camps in Poland. She's accidentally labeled "that lesbian Jewish writer" and suddenly receives call after call from unhappy Jewish moms who just want their gay daughters to meet someone nice, and is she doing anything this Saturday? Her parents get divorced and suddenly develop personalities, she jets off to work for a congresswoman in D.C., and later moves to Geneva.

Her life seems improbable, but the way she writes it makes it sound just like everyone else's upbringing, just with different type of parental interactions, series of crappy jobs, and dreaded apartment hunting.

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### **Judy says**

I have to admit that I like the first half of this book much more than the last half. In fact, I have to plead guilty of sort of skimming the final 30 pages. But the first half made me laugh out loud several times.

Growing up on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Gilman had many experiences in her early years that are universal. I mean who didn't lie during show-and-tell? Who didn't feel constant peer pressure, have an awkward adolescence, and be plagued by school yard bullies? But, Susan Jane Gilman tells these stories in such a way that I had to laugh--especially the tale of being cast in a movie during summer vacation. Sorry, coworkers. I was taking a short reading break at my desk and, apparently, my giggling was disruptive.

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### **Steph (loves water) says**

I read this because Ms. Gilman and I are the same age, and we had a few things in common growing up, but were light years apart in our upbringing. Batgirl, Tony DeFranco, Mick Jagger. Mostly I found her a little annoying and over the top, but at the end I recognized that she was brutally honest in her account. I don't know if I could be that honest in my own memoir.

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### **Kayla says**

I enjoyed this book, which was a loan from a friend, more than I thought I was going to. I expected the laughter as the author takes us on a trip through the hippie antics of her parents but there were unexpected moments of real poignancy...especially in describing the effects of a divorce on children, forever.

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### **Marie says**

Enjoyed this memoir of a girl growing up with hippie parents, struggling with her feminist ideals and how to incorporate them into her life.

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### **Gretchen says**

I was literally laughing out loud during the first chapters of this book. The author's commentary on her unique childhood experiences was hilarious and irreverent. I was really looking forward to the rest of the book. I had high hopes for it, but started feeling disappointed the more I read. Instead of becoming more self-aware and grown up, the author seemed to just revel in being a clueless, shallow person who seemed obsessed with the size of her breasts and having sex with every male who walks. She falsely seems to believe that by throwing around the F word and embracing liberal ideologies she can be a nouveau feminist. Instead, she just comes across as loud, brash and offensive.

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### **Niki says**

THIS BOOK IS AWESOME!!!! Originally suggested to me as an interpretation piece for debate, my friend's mother warned me that I may take a liking to the protagonist....understatement of the week. Gilman's recreation of her childhood and adult experiences are hilarious and easily related to, and the descriptions leave nothing to the imagination. Her gritty description of the punk streets of NYC as a teenager are

everything that VH1 describes and complaints about being a feminist bride who is planning her wedding are nothing short of hilarious, even if you have never been around a wedding being planned or never been subjected to the Bridezilla television show. As an 18 year old about to enter college, this book helped me to gain perspective on what it means to be a strong woman, to find your identity and to never lose it, in a very subtle and unique way. If you are open minded and looking for an amusing laugh, I highly recommend this book...you won't be disappointed

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### **Kris Holland says**

Slightly boring memoir. I got the impression the author thought she led a crazy, rebellious life, but she came off too often sounding overprivileged & whiny. I enjoyed her book Undress Me in the Temple of Heaven, but I couldn't be done with this one fast enough.

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### **Annie Noblin says**

I absolutely adored this book. I read it years ago, probably in 2004, when I should have been studying for a history final in college. It was totally worth the D I got on that test.

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### **Maro Alphabet says**

yet another memoir of sorts... but this one is inspirational and simply hysterical.  
we follow a young woman realizing her identity and also coming to terms with her slightly off kilter family and her specific expectations from the world.  
i have given this book to.. my mother, my sister, my friend danielle and a coworker mike... they have all loved it and even become inspired by it.  
if you're in the mood to laugh out loud, here's a book that will have you cryin'!! david sedaris meets augusten borroughs. what more could you want.

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### **Febz Belyo says**

it's a fun, wildly imbecilic memoir of a Manhattanite who thought of the world as her playground. I instantly felt this connection with her.

I was the child who bragged and lied in Show and Tell to distinguish myself from the hordes of crying and pee-crazy 5-year-olds in Kindergarten. I admit I lied not to be difficult but to be special. I conjured and fantasized on what I wanted to be when I grow up. I wanted to be a doctor, a ballerina, a social worker, a fireman and a nun. All the while feigning nonchalance when the girls in my class also had grander ambitions. I even firmly believed that we'd all be riding flying saucers by the year 2000 just like in the Jetsons.

Gilman also reminds me of my dysfunctional family. A mother who is predictable in her unpredictability. A father who chokes up while watching boxing. A brother who has his own distorted sense of reality. Another brother who has a killer sense of humor but a naivete that makes you want to protect him from the

viciousness of the world.

Like her, I wanted to be subservient. I abhor authority figures and I am a feminist in my own little way.

The book was like an epiphany at a time when I felt like an oddity - being 26 and single in a couples' world can surely have its toll on anyone.

Her "coming of age" stories surely made me laugh with chapter titles like Love and the Maharishi, Mick Jagger Wants Me and Speak at the Tuna to name a few. Her stories also gave that nod of approval that it was okay to grow up ambitious and engage in some spectacularly imbecilic behavior.

According to one of the reviews of the book – Susie Jane Gilman channels the voices of her inner geek, freak, hipster, and princess with razor sharp wit and no small measure of grace. I could not agree more.

To my female friends, I wish to share this with you. Just ring me if you want to borrow this piece of genius.

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### **Kathy (Bermudaonion) says**

Susan Jane Gilman was raised in Upper West Manhattan in the 1970's, before it became gentrified. Her family was pretty laid back and "groovy" - her grandmother claimed to be a Communist and her mother signed the whole family up for Transcendental Meditation. Throughout it all, Susie retained an active imagination and developed a sense of humor. Her family motto was, "Reality is for people with no imagination." Hypocrite in a Pouffy White Dress: Tales of Growing Up Groovy and Clueless by Susan Jane Gilman is her memoir. It starts in her pre-school years and ends when she moved to Geneva shortly after her marriage.

Some of her stories are hilarious - she was tired of her ordinary name, so she convinced her kindergarten teacher that she was changing her name to Sapphire. Her mother signed the whole family up to learn Transcendental Meditation, and her biggest concern was that she might run into a boy she had a crush on who happened to live in the same building as the TM Center. When she wrote an article about gay Rabbis, everyone assumed she was a lesbian and she had to figure out a way to "come out of the closet."

Parts of the book were touching. Susan was assigned to go to Poland to write an article on the March of the Living - an event where three thousand Jewish teen-agers met in Poland to learn about the Holocaust. Her parents broke up when her brother was in college and she felt her family suffered from a "temporary psychosis that plagued every other divorcing family in America."

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I laughed out loud quite a few times. After reading this book, I feel like I could sit and talk to Susan Jane Gilman for hours - she's so interesting and funny!

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### **Amyss says**

Her parents were hippies but all she wanted to do was wear a tutu- and she did- to school!! See? It's funny because she is so QUIRKY! So many zany things happen to her, so she has to write about each terribly hilarious embarrassing episode of her white, overprotected, privileged life! But never fear, there is heart and

love in the gooey middle! She realizes this when she tests her meddle in a foreign country (Switzerland! oh the culture shock!! The sockets look WEIRD!) that allows her to continue her lily white, privileged, overprotected life EVEN THO SOME PEOPLE DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH THERE! Gag me.

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### **Nicole says**

I just finished reading it.

And it. Was. AMAZING.

It wasn't even on my original list of books I wanted to read. I found it on the same shelf as *Committed* by Elizabeth Gilbert (still not sure why I was so eager to read that one, considering my current aversion to all things relationship-oriented, let alone marriage) and added it to the huge tower in my arms on a whim.

But it truly is amazing how some of the best books you'll ever read are the ones you find by chance. This book is snarky, soulful, innocent and worldly all at once. It deals with feminism, race, religion, stereotypes and world issues in a direct, insightful and hilarious way.

Do not read this book while eating soup or drinking anything. I warned you. :)

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### **John says**

For those who've yet to read it, the book can be divided into roughly three [unequal] parts: childhood, high school/college and Susan-as-an-adult. The first part was the best for me - perfect mix of funny and sad, just like a good sweet-and-sour sauce should be. The second section is shorter than the others, which is a good thing.

High school pretty much consists of a loooooooooong riff on virginity, with a drawn-out celebrity stalking adventure thrown in. Her college years are covered by one anecdote; all I'll say about that is that Henry seemed like a "metrosexual before his time" and the more he went on about needing to screw his girlfriend the less convincing he sounded. This section was the low point for me. Stick with it though as the later stuff gets better.

Ms. Gilman's conclusions on the concentration camp tour of Poland were the high point of the book for me; her subsequent Congressional job and wedding plans are well-written, interesting stories that coast the book nicely to a smooth end.

I did have a major problem with her presentation: how could she possibly have gotten into Stuyvesant (one of the most prestigious high schools in the nation) and Brown, and have been that clueless? Her rant on having all those deductions from her first actual paycheck (as a high school student) struck me as preposterous. I don't see how she could possibly have not known about deductions (nor have missed the student withholding exemption status when she filled out her tax forms)? Her ignorance about Judaism (she is a native New Yorker raised in an ethnically Jewish, though non-practicing, household!) was so very far-fetched that I had to consciously disregard it as a failed fictional device. I deducted a star for this, and the uneven middle section.

That having been said, I enjoyed the book a lot, and would consider it as gift material for friends and family.

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### **Susan says**

If you like snarky (love that word), sarcastic, witty, self-deprecating humor, then this book is for you. Susan Jane Gilman is a Jewish New Yorker with some pretty funny stories to share; some were laugh out loud funny. I began this book rather unamused but was quickly converted and enjoyed this easy read by this very talented writer.

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### **Stephanie Biese says**

She gets 4.5 stars for saying pretty much everything this privileged, white feminist thinks and feels. I kept thinking...she gets me!! I'm her!!! It's super white privilege, but so am I.

However, I docked her a star and a half for un-inclusive language (use of the R word and comparing people in a negative light to a "special ed class"). That shit ruins it.

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### **Lormac says**

Susan Gilman's book is memoir which takes the form of essays - each a funny or poignant story of a part of her life. Her first chapter is a recounting of her summer at a "leftist" commune in the Catskills when she was five years old and asked to play a part in a psychedelic movie being filmed by one of the campers. The final chapter is set in Geneva where she finds herself living - a New Yorker abroad - in her thirties.

If I had read this book when I was in my twenties, I would have given it 5 stars. I would have seen myself in Gilman, reveled in her indiscretions, applauded her chutzpah, and, in general, wished to be her. If I had read this book in my thirties, I would have given this book 4 stars. I would have seen her decisions played out in my life and the lives of my friends, understood her workplace dilemmas, and sympathized with her urges and yearnings. But I just read this book for the first time, and here I am - let's just say I am well out of my thirties - and I can't give it more than three stars. I guess now I am looking at Gilman not as myself, or a possible friend, but instead, as a daughter, which gives the whole book a different filter. The book made me feel fretful. Obviously this is not Gilman's fault, but I just came to this book a little too late.

Still I love her passages about growing up in New York. She gets the whole 70s and 80s vibe down pat. The chapter about her infatuation with Mick Jagger is really worth the price of the book alone, so if you do get a chance to read this book, I would say, "Go ahead - don't rely on an old fogey's review." (Unless, of course, you are an old fogey too.)

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