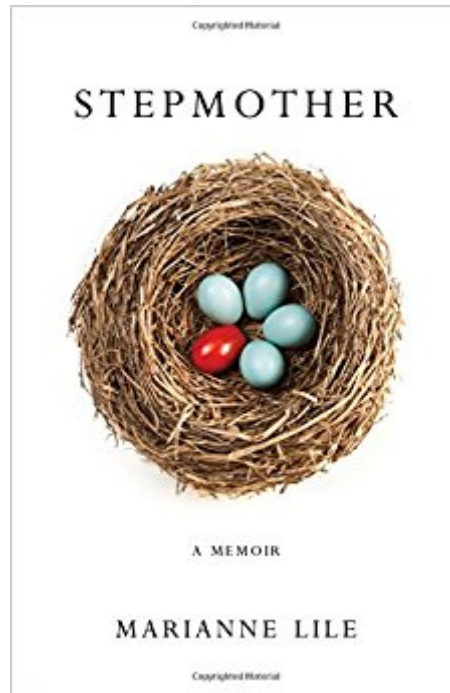




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Stepmother: A Memoir



Synopsis

Stepmother tells the story of Marianne Lile, who met a man, fell in love, got married, and arrived home from the honeymoon with a new label: stepmom. It was a role she initially embraced—but she quickly discovered she was alone in a difficult situation, with no handbook and no mentor. Here, Lile describes the complexities of the stepmom position, in a family and in the community, and shares her experience wearing a tag that is often misunderstood and weighed down by the numerous myths in society. Candid and poignant, Stepmother is a story of love and like, resentments and exasperation, resignation and hope—and a story, ultimately, of family.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“1 of 8 Best Books on Parenting in 2016” —Caring.com “This is a genuine love story that thoughtfully considers all the ways real-world obstacles conspire against a simple romance. A beautiful examination of a family and the sometimes-fragile ligatures that bind its members.” —Kirkus Reviews, selected by Indie Editors as a review in the Oct 2016 issues “As it wends from battling resentment to persevering to redefining the foundations of family, this memoir is an emotionally raw celebration of motherhood and all its forms.” —Working Mother, “21 New Books to Fall for This Autumn” —Stepping into the role of motherhood is the bravest venture of any woman’s life—but taking on the role of stepmother requires even thicker skin . . . Readers will be left with a renewed and

redefined understanding of motherhood and a substantially deeper respect for it. —

— Brit+Co

Marianne Lile lives in Seattle, WA. She has been a stepmother and mother of three children for over twenty years. This is her first book.

“Stepmother” is a realistic account of the daily reality of a smart woman who gives up a job she loves to marry a man with two children. As if that weren’t disorienting enough, she also moves to the small town, even the house, where the kids’ mom lives to minimize disruption to them. (This probably gave a hint of where the priorities are.) You can’t help but admire the heroine as she makes one more gourmet meal, takes deep breaths through insulting behavior, and plants more flowers and occasionally “loses it” completely. What I appreciate most is that she is honest with the reader, never making things out to be easier than they were, never romanticizing. She got through it with patience, persistence, love, an openness to the good things about the kids, support from her family, and professional help from therapists and lawyers. A good yarn, as my mother would say, and one that will give encouragement to anyone going through this situation herself.

I picked up *Stepmother* based on a recommendation from a friend. It pulled me right in. It was a quick paced, easy read that I devoured in two days. Only when I was partway through I realized I was reading a Diverse Book, something that I have pledged to read more of this year. It wasn’t diversity in terms of race, religion or sexual preference as I normally think of when I think diverse book. However, Marianne endured the stereotypes of being a stepmother and I realize blended families are another type of diversity. I am fortunate that I have been married over 20 years and both my parents and in-laws are also still together. However, once I expand my circle to include siblings, cousins, and close friends, I have lots of blended or shattered families in my life. I always knew they had their own set of difficulties but this book opened my eyes to all of the issues that they have to face on a daily basis. Marianne wrote the book in a way that would appeal to stepmothers and non-stepmothers alike. Although it was from her point of view as the stepmother she truly emphasized with all the other people and showed their sides to the reader, particularly her husband and two stepchildren. But she also gave us an idea of what it must be like for all the extended families, her stepchildren’s mother, her biological child, and the

community when a new family is created after a divorce. Having read this book I will take a closer look at how I treat the blended families, divorced parents, single parents, and their children often standing on the edge of the soccer games. They deserve much more than a polite nod.

It took a great deal of courage for this author to pen and publish this memoir. No doubt, old wounds were reopened, memories once buried again unearthed, feelings and raw emotions that were never expressed seen now in pages of text for all to see. However, as a stepmom myself, I could deeply relate to her story as it seems I have been on a parallel journey. Her words were chosen with great care and compassion - and by the way, where were you 20 years ago to say to me, "Blend but do not over mix!." I could have used such excellent advice. With each chapter I laughed, gasped, cried, smiled, and sometimes my heart hurt and stomach knotted. She nailed it. She reached me. My hope is that the cast of characters in her family, can embrace this book and understand that her memoir, your story, will help so many stranded stepmoms looking for the life raft of love for their own extended family. Thank you. Bravo Ms. Lile

Because I am a stepmother of two and had four stepchildren in my prior marriage, I wanted to read this book to know another stepmom's experience. Although Lile's story is uniquely hers, she also speaks for those of us who know what it's like to be the least important "shadow" person in a family. Not that there aren't rewards in being a stepmother, but Lile shows the level of patience, wisdom, grit, and love that is necessary. I wish I had had this book when I first became a stepparent so that I could have learned from Lile how to be stronger, kinder, wiser, and more loving. Stepmother is a worthy read.

I really enjoyed this book and read it in just a couple days. I loved her voice and how it seemed like she wrote it as if we were sitting in her living room and having a chat. Although I do not have stepchildren, her story sure opened my eyes to what a person would have to go through when they do. It is a lot more complicated than one would think. I felt Lile was a lot more patient than I would've been in such a situation (or at least I imagine my patience would run thinner, sooner, than Lile's). Her story was an honest account of a difficult situation. But she also shared the rewards. I sure hope the children have a greater appreciation for this particular stepmother. It seems like she was willing to make a lot of sacrifices to be a part of this family. Good job, Marianne.

To love a man so much that you're willing to endure his irascible ex, his often lost and disgruntled

children and all the excess baggage that comes with a broken family is admirable (at the very least). I couldn't help thinking of my own mother as I made my way through this no holds barred memoir. When I was thirteen, she married a man with four children and an ex-wife who raged with anger for years. It was a mess, and I'm grateful for my mother's peacemaking skills. Marianne Lile's *Stepmother* is an honest and accurate account of a woman brave enough to share the caretaking and responsibility of children who may never fully acknowledge the profound contribution she's made to their lives. It's a great read!

I respect authors who say what they mean and mean what they say, and that's precisely what you get from straight-shooting Marianne Lile in *STEPMOTHER: A MEMOIR*; a book that doesn't sugarcoat the realities and intricacies of a blended household, while deftly weaving humor into the colorful tapestry of family life. Rich and smooth, this book gives stepmotherhood a wise and authentic voice.

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