



Mother, Mother: A Novel

By Koren Zailckas

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Mother, Mother: A Novel By Koren Zailckas

From Koren Zailckas, author of the iconic memoir SMASHED: an electrifying debut novel about a family being torn apart by the woman who claims to love them most

Josephine Hurst has her family under control. With two beautiful daughters, a brilliantly intelligent son, a tech-guru of a husband, and a historical landmark home, her life is picture perfect. But living in this matriarch's determinedly cheerful, yet subtly controlling domain hasn't been easy for her family, and when her oldest daughter, Rose, runs off with a mysterious boyfriend, Josephine tightens her grip, gradually turning her flawless home into a darker sort of prison.

Resentful of her sister's newfound freedom, Violet turns to eastern philosophy, hallucinogenic drugs, and extreme fasting, eventually landing herself in a psych ward. Meanwhile, her brother, Will, recently diagnosed with Asperger's, shrinks further into a world of self-doubt. Their father, Douglas, finds resolve in the bottom of a bottle—an addict craving his own chance to escape. Josephine struggles to maintain the family's impeccable façade, but when a violent incident leads to a visit from child protective services, the truth about the Hursts might finally be revealed.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Zailckas, known for her biting memoirs *Smashed: Story of a Drunken Girlhood* (2005) and *Fury: True Tales of a Girl Gone Ballistic* (2010), turns to the (hopefully) fictional tale of a woman hell-bent on manipulating the world around her. Matriarch Josephine doesn't quite have things under control the way she would prefer. Her husband is an alcoholic; her son is on the autism spectrum; her younger daughter, Violet, has just been committed to a mental hospital; and her older daughter is a runaway. But to the outside world, this extremely dysfunctional family looks practically flawless, thanks to Josephine's well-plotted machinations. When she concocts a story meant to keep Violet locked away, it means a visit from Child Protective Services that puts the family in a spotlight, and Josephine's carefully constructed world begins to crumble (much like the Martha Stewart scones she has ready for them upon their arrival). Josephine is a truly frightening character—realistically flawed with just the right touch of over-the-top madness—and Zailckas crafts an intriguing mystery surrounding this family that will keep readers on edge as she slowly peels back layer after layer of deception. --Rebecca Vnuk

Review

2014 WINNER OF THE ALA ALEX AWARD

“Superbly unsettling...Provocative...A haunting meditation on family, love and unimaginable loss...A firecracker thriller full of whip-smart psychological insights.”

—*San Francisco Chronicle*

“Zailckas is a writer to watch and treasure...fiercely disturbing...one of the most profound and insightful books about mother-child relationships when they go devastatingly wrong.” —*Dallas Morning News*

“A creepy thriller [that] starts with an ordinary family and ends in nail-biting suspense...A horrifying and deeply moving look into the dark secrets in a seemingly ‘perfect family,’ this is a hard-hitting page turner.” —*Parkersburg News & Sentinel*

“A stunning debut that is sure to spark debate and cause a stir...Full of wise and witty observations, and a mounting sense of dread...brilliant firecracker-like prose, a page-turning plot, and an unmistakable voice.” —*Paramus Post*

“Think *Mommie Dearest* meets *Psycho*. Then just sit back, open the book, and have an absolute ball.” —*Suspense Magazine*

“Mind-blowing... Delving deeply into the psyches of a disturbed, vicious woman, an insecure man, and younger, developing minds, [Zailckas] cleverly uncovers the intense ways in which personal interactions affect each member of a family. *Mother, Mother* will certainly make you look at your relationships with your closest relatives in a very different light” —*Woodbury*

“Grab a copy of this book... her story is riveting. Don't miss it.” —*Hudson Valley News*

“An electrifying debut novel about a family being torn apart by the woman who claims to love them most.” —*Chronogram*

“[An] impressive debut novel...engaging, well-crafted.” —***Bustle.com***

“Koren Zailckas's Mother Mother is disturbing in the best possible way: believably. The slow, subtle darkness at the core of this book starts as a trickle and grows to a flash flood, and not once does it stop feeling absolutely authentic. Zailckas has written a gut-wrenching exploration of narcissism, dependence and family. It's an amazing book.”

—***Kelly Bruffet, author of Save Yourself and Josie and Jack***

“An exquisitely written psychological thriller...Just as captivating as her memoirs.”

—***BookPage***

“A riveting fiction debut...it's the kind of book that keeps you up at night, featuring a mother to rival Medea or Mrs. Bates...The shocking and violent denouement shows Zailckas to be a consummate storyteller.” —***Publishers Weekly***

“Richly imagined and bring[s] to mind Susanna Kaysen's *Girl, Interrupted*... An excellent page-turner recommended for those who enjoy psychological thrillers and aren't afraid of narratives that look evil in the face.” —***Library Journal***

“Zailckas crafts an intriguing mystery surrounding this family that will keep readers on edge as she slowly peels back layer after layer of deception.” —***Booklist***

“A hall of mirrors reflecting chaotic maternal psychological mayhem reminiscent of *Mommie Dearest* or *Push* or *Ordinary People*.” —***Kirkus Reviews***

About the Author

KOREN ZAILCKAS is an internationally bestselling writer, and has contributed to *The Guardian*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Glamour*, *Jane*, and *Seventeen* magazine. She currently lives with her family in the Catskill mountains of New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Bartlett:

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Lillie Corley:

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