



Casting Lots: Creating a Family in a Beautiful, Broken World

By Susan Silverman

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Susan Silverman grew up with parents who were, both before and after a devastating loss, atheists. Yet, as a young adult, she shocked everyone who knew her ("*But you were elected Class Flirt in high school!*") and became a rabbi. What was not surprising, however, was that she built her own big, unwieldy family through both birth and adoption, something she had intended from childhood. With three daughters and two sons ("*We produce girls and import boys*"), this unique family becomes a metaphor for the world's contradictions and complexities—a microcosm of the tragedy and joy, hope and despair, cruelty and compassion, predictability and absurdity of this world we all live in. A meditation on identity, faith, and belonging—one that's as funny as it is moving—*Casting Lots* will resonate with anyone who has struggled to find their place in the world and to understand the significance of that place.

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Editorial Review

Review

***Boston Globe*, 4/26/16**

“Rabbi Susan Silverman matches her sister's sharp wit, foul mouth, and incongruously soft heart...[An] intimate, quirky memoir...A story of sensitivity and love.”

***Jewish Woman International*, Spring 2016**

“Compelling...This is a memoir written with passion and humor by someone who wants to improve the world. [Silverman] writes with openness and curiosity, telling a story that is both spiritual and practical.”

***Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 5/15/16**

“Irreverent and witty, but also achingly honest and touching in unexpected ways. This is not your typical adoption memoir.”

***Jewish Journal*, 6/9/16**

“An endearing and inspiring account...Silverman is a natural storyteller...*Casting Lots* is, among other things, an act of courage. Silverman is brutally honest about herself, her family and her faith. She wants to inspire her readers, but she never fails to remind them that parenting requires not only love but, perhaps even more importantly, patience, strength, compassion and determination, all qualities that's she possesses and seeks to share.”

Praise for *Casting Lots*

***Kirkus Reviews*, 1/1/16**

“A book rich in understanding and humor...[Silverman] meditates on what it means to live as a broken being in a beautifully imperfect world. Warm and spiritually engaging.”

***Publishers Weekly*, 1/4/16**

“Though the title may sound solemn, Silverman's writing is anything but; like her sister, comedian Sarah Silverman, the author has a keen sense of humor and embellishes her narrative with laughs...Devoted to family, faith, and her partnership with God, Silverman paints an honest portrait of an imperfect but loving household. Readers of many traditions will enjoy Silverman's tender adoption story.”

Nia Vardalos, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Instant Mom*

“A hilarious and touching story! If you've ever pondered your purpose on this tiny planet, you'll love this guide to living a happy life of beautiful chaos, all according to the plan.”

Mayim Bialik, actress, author of *Mayim's Vegan Table* and *Beyond the Sling*

“A funny and inspiring story of one family's journey from love to yet more love. Beautifully told!”

Melissa Fay Greene, author of *Praying for Sheetrock* and *The Underdogs*

“*Casting Lots* is a fearless wise-cracking rabble-rousing American woman's tale of how, against all odds, flanked by comedians, she ended up a rabbi. Given her nutty background, of course she's irreverent, but this

funny big-hearted rabbi is reverent where it counts the most: toward Heaven, toward Judaism, and toward her family. The book brims with sudden turns and surprising tenderness, mayhem and tears, love and laughter.”

Paul Beatty, author of *The Sellout*

“This is a beautiful, deeply touching book—one to use as a guide in how to turn our fears and anxieties into kindness and generosity, and tell a joke or two while we're at it.”

Julius Lester, author of *Lovesong: Becoming a Jew*

“*Casting Lots* is about so many things but most of all it is a book about love in all its messiness, chaos, neediness, confusion, and, ultimately glory. It is also a very funny book, proving that younger sister Sarah Silverman is not the only one in the family with a wicked sense of humor. It is a book of ruthless honesty about a family that is far from perfect, disorganization is the norm, and parenting skills could use some improvement. But nothing of that really matters where the love is as fierce as it is here. This is more than a book. It is an incredible experience.”

***New York Jewish Week*, 2/19/16**

“Silverman is an outspoken advocate for adoption.”

***New York Post*, 3/26/16**

“Silverman makes the case that international adoption, which has dropped off dramatically in recent years—from 45,000 in 2004 to 7,200 in 2013—needs to be more feasible.”

Jewish Book Council, 3/29/16

“[An] enchanting memoir by writer, activist, reform rabbi, and mother Susan Silverman about discovering her own inner strength and indomitable will to give shape to her random world, to weave a solid construct of her and her family's lives where there might have been none...Silverman's efforts to better the world by creating a family, and not settling for one that was thrown her way in a lottery is an inspiring read that gives hope to those who believe that loving kindness can be a way of life.”

***Manchester Union Leader*, 4/17/16**

“A memoir that blends spirituality, pathos, humor and wisdom.”

Neshamah Center, 4/3/16

“An excellent book...A celebration of family...Susan shares the trials and tribulations of raising five kids with the self-deprecating humor and wit of Anne Lamott...The book is very honest, almost like a reality TV show...Everything is told with love and humor...You don't have to be a parent or interested in adoption to enjoy this book. It's a compelling read.”

"Not many memoirs leave readers with the question 'How will I respond?' This one does...Anyone with a complicated, messy life and family—namely, all of us—will find a home in Silverman's story."

Christian Century

About the Author

Susan Silverman is a writer, activist and speaker. She has written for and appeared in *The Forward*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, *The Daily Beast*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *The New York Post*, *Al Jazeera*, and *CNN*, among others. She speaks on social justice issues, including partnering with her sister, comedian Sarah Silverman, to address issues and ideas of common concern, most recently at Lincoln Center as part of Tina Brown's "Women in the World" conference. She is the co-author, with her

husband, of *Jewish Family & Life*.

Users Review

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