

Allison's Book Corner March 2020

[Wild Game: My Mother, Her Lover, and Me](#), by Adrienne Brodeur
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2019)

I know what you are thinking upon reading the book title. I have to tell you that it is hard to convey how special this memoir is without reading it for yourself. But I do like a challenge.

“I think your depression might have to do with knowing you need to dismantle the unrealistic version of your mother that you hold in your heart.”



This is just one of many quotes from this book that really affected me. I walked around with this quote in my phone and would read it from time to time. As many of you know, the mother/daughter relationship is a very complex thing. I admit that I had an unrealistic version of my mother that I carried around for years, and I think my own daughter may also have the same problem.

In this memoir, which reads like a thriller, a mother/daughter relationship is at the center.

While it is wonderful to have a very mature child whom you believe you can confide in, the author's mother takes it to a whole different level by making her 14-year old daughter an accomplice in her extramarital affair.

Yes, I agree that this sounds like a tawdry tale, a lot like a soap opera. But the fact that this is the true story of a woman who became a very well-established editor and writer makes it all the more compelling.

This is a beautifully written book. The language draws the reader into this teenage girl's world of summers on Cape Cod. While this world is privileged, we know money does not buy peace or happiness. As readers,

we know this young girl will be emotionally scarred for the rest of her life by five words whispered one night from her mother to her. Spoken as if they were both teenagers, "Ben Souther just kissed me." Ben Souther is not only a family friend but her father's *best* friend from a young age.

And so it begins, until inevitably things spiral and an older Adrienne realizes she has to try to have a life separate from her mother's, if possible. Not so easy. We can physically move away, but ...

I have heard some critics say there is nothing to be learned by the author airing her family's dirty laundry or even from the emotional distress and its aftereffects in the author's life. Here I will share another quote, from when the author's stepmother shares: "You have no idea how much you can learn about yourself by plunging into someone else's life."

Just read any memoir and you can see the truth in this quote. I have experienced this myself so many times. Do not deprive yourself of this experience. Perhaps you can start with this bestseller.