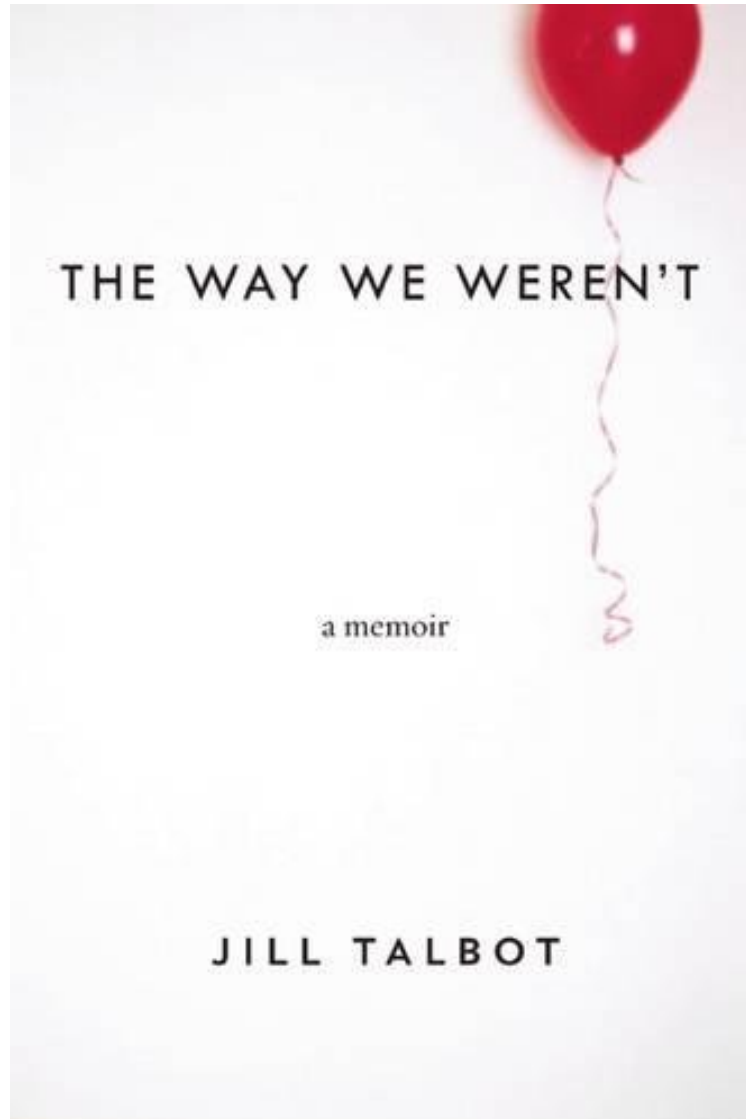


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The Way We Weren't

Jill Talbot

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Jill Talbot : The Way We Weren't before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Way We Weren't:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. AWESOME WORKBy fernando chaconDr. Talbot is more than amazing! Read this and comprehend each word because they all serve a purpose.3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Searching Portrait of Single Motherhood and the Stories We TellBy Sonya HuberTalbot writes, "Fiction and history are neighbors. The stories we tell about our own histories might as well be fiction--for what we tell, what we don't." This book is about being left and then leaving--via a Ford Escape and heartbreak and relocations

and glasses of wine. It is about the ways a woman navigates and makes space in her own life for creation. Above all this book is about the varied and shifting stories we tell ourselves. I always find the urgency and specificity of Jill Talbot's writing transfixing, and this book is no exception. Talbot's narration shifts between third and first person, crossing state lines and swirling around the pairing of a mother and a daughter to create a specific and compelling portrait of single motherhood without child support--a huge challenge that Talbot meets gamely. The essays here play with form and point of view, and come as a wine list, a syllabus, a court transcript, and all dazzle with their intensity. 2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Bigness made small By Leesa Cross-Smith This book is practically perfect in every way and I mean even down to how it is structured. I appreciate the different sections and how they *feel* differently...depending on the location/what's happening in her life @ the time. I don't read a lot of memoir/creative nonfiction...rarely does it interest me to be quite honest. I like to read military nonfiction and I like reading abt motherhood (sometimes) but that's about it. That being said: JILL TALBOT IS ONE OF MY FAVE MEMOIRISTS. The reason is because I never feel like Jill is writing simply just to tell us abt herself....I feel like Jill writes to tell us about OURSELVES...to allow us to dig deeper into/write our own stories. That interests me...the universality of all it. I like spending time there, reading abt her life/her daughter/her anxieties and cravings/fears/addictions/triumphs/failures. Jill does something different w/memoir and creative nonfiction...something that flips a switch in my heart and I'm not easily made to feel that way. There has to be a spark...a bigness made small...that's how Jill's writing makes me feel.

After years of futon passion, Hemingway discussions, and three-mile runs, Jill Talbot's relationship with a man carved in her doubts so deep she wrote to ignore them. And even though he was as unwilling to commit to a place or a job as Talbot was to marrying him, he insisted that she keep the baby when a pregnancy surprised them during their fourth year together. As it turned out, Kenny wasn't able to commit to a child either, so when the court ordered visitation and support for their four-month-old daughter, he vanished. His disappearing act was the catalyst for Talbot's own, as she moved her daughter through nine states in as many years running from the memory of their failed relationship and the hope of an impossible reunion, all the while raising a daughter on her own. Then, one day while packing boxes, she found a photograph that changed everything. In this memoir-in-essays, Talbot attempts to set the record straight, even as she argues that our shared histories are merely competing stories we choose to tell ourselves. A bold look at the challenges of love and the struggles of a single mother in America today, *The Way We Weren't* tells a complex, unforgettable story of loss and leaving, and of how Talbot learned that writing can't bring anything back, but that because of it, nothing is ever really lost.

"simple and highly addictive . . . the reader might feel herself gripping the book not only to see where Talbot and her daughter Indie end up . . . but also to eat up her delectable prose." Brevity "A magnetic pull sets in while reading *The Way We Weren't*, a sinking into the author's state of heart and mind, a compulsion to keep turning the pages. The memoir allures is a testament to Jill Talbot's formidable talent." *The Boston Globe* To say that Jill Talbot steps into the controversial borderlands between fiction and non fiction with *The Way We Weren't* is a vast understatement. It is more like she plunges into them off the fifty-meter springboard, doing three somersaults and a half gainer on the way down. This gut wrenching tale of abandonment (though it is never perfectly clear who was the abandoner, who the abandonee) makes us ask giant, soul-bending questions, like Does anyone ever know anyone? and Are we always the creators of our own misery? A brave story of one woman's fight to survive, most of all, her own proclivities. Pam Houston, author of *Contents May Have Shifted* "White-knuckled on the steering wheel, Talbot drives her readers headlong into the fray of her own past. Powerful, effective, and relentless, Talbot reminds us that life is always half-highway and half-dirt road, that our experiences no matter how universal demand we pave the way ourselves." B.J. Hollars, author of *Dispatches from the Drownings*