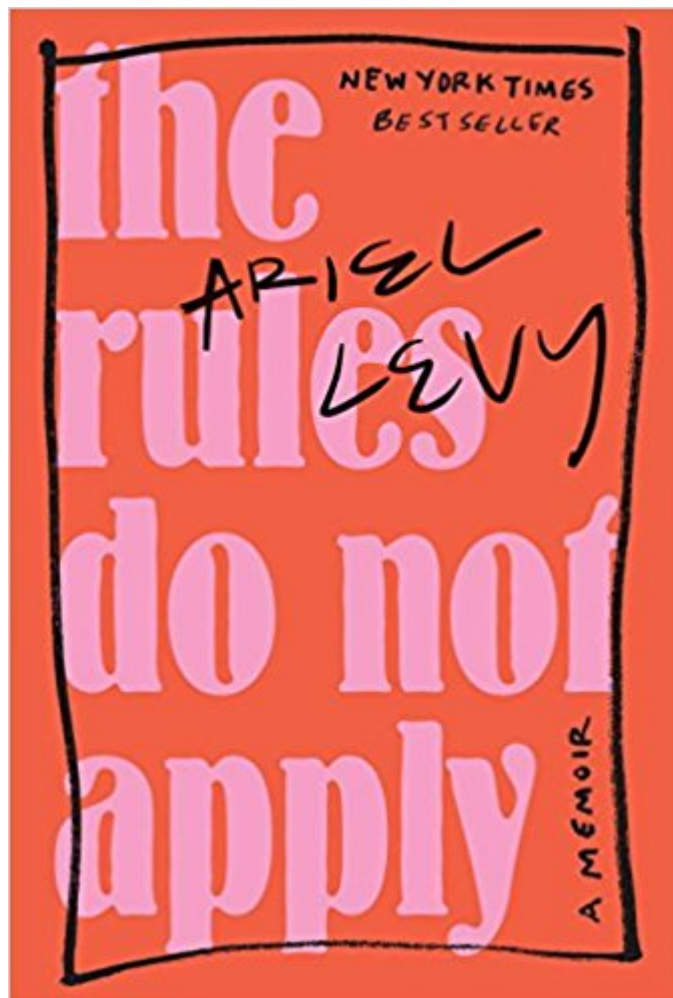


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# The Rules Do Not Apply: A Memoir



## Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER *“A gorgeous memoir about a woman overcoming dramatic loss and finding reinvention.”* “Cheryl Strayed meets a Nora Ephron movie. You’ll laugh, ugly cry, and finish it before the weekend” *“over.”* *“theSkimm* Named one of the best books of 2017 so far by *Time* and *Entertainment Weekly* When Ariel Levy left for a reporting trip to Mongolia in 2012, she was pregnant, married, financially secure, and successful on her own terms. A month later, none of that was true. Levy picks you up and hurls you through the story of how she built an unconventional life and then watched it fall apart with astonishing speed. Like much of her generation, she was raised to resist traditional rules *“about work, about love, and about womanhood.* In this *“deeply human and deeply moving”* (The New York Times Book Review) memoir, Levy chronicles the adventure and heartbreak of being, in her own words, *“a woman who is free to do whatever she chooses.”* Her story of resilience becomes an unforgettable portrait of the shifting forces in our culture, of what has changed *“and of what is eternal.* Praise for *The Rules Do Not Apply* *“Levy has the rare gift of seeing herself with fierce, unforgiving clarity. And she deploys prose to match, raw and agile. She plumbs the commotion deep within and takes the measure of her have-it-all generation.”* *“The Atlantic* *“[The Rules Do Not Apply] is a short, sharp American memoir in the Mary Karr tradition of life-chronicling. Which is to say that Levy, like Karr, is a natural writer who is also as unsparing and bleakly hilarious as it’s possible to be about oneself. . . . I devoured her story in one sitting.”* *“Financial Times* *“It’s an act of courage to hunt for meaning within grief, particularly if the search upends your life and shakes out the contents for all the world to sift through. Ariel Levy embarks on the hunt beautifully in her new memoir.”* *“Chicago Tribune* *“I read it in one big messy gulp, because it is beautiful and heartbreaking and unruly and real. You should preorder it immediately so you can fall into her complicated, funny, and finely wrought world as soon as humanly possible.”* *“Lenny.com* *“A thoroughly modern memoir, the elements of The Rules Do Not Apply seem plucked not from the script of Girls, which has also been exploring reproductive issues of late, but Transparent”* *“even Portlandia.”* *“The New York Times* *“Frank and unflinchingly sincere . . . A gut-wrenching, emotionally charged work of soul-baring writing in the spirit of Joan Didion, Helen Macdonald, and Elizabeth Gilbert,”* *The Rules Do Not Apply* *“is a must-read for women.”* *“Bustle* *“Unflinching and intimate, wrenching and revelatory, Ariel Levy’s powerful memoir about love, loss, and*

finding one's way shimmers with truth and heart on every page. •Cheryl Strayed "Every deep feeling a human is capable of will be shaken loose by this profound book. Ariel Levy has taken grief and made art out of it." •David Sedaris "Ariel Levy is a writer of uncompromising honesty, remarkable clarity, and surprising humor gathered from the wreckage of tragedy. Her account of life doing its darnedest to topple her, and her refusal to be knocked down, will leave you shaken and inspired. I am the better for having read this book." •Lena Dunham

## Book Information

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: Random House (March 14, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812996933

ISBN-13: 978-0812996937

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 0.9 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 178 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #5,701 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > LGBT Studies #9 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > LGBT #38 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies

## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of March 2017: The preface of Ariel Levy's memoir, *The Rules Do Not Apply*, is a knock-out. Though it's the Cliffs Notes to her book/life, it's written with such clarity that it transcends the searing pain and devastating loss that she's about to chronicle: "I am thunderstruck by feeling at odd times, and then I find myself gripping the kitchen counter, a subway pole, a friend's body, so I won't fall over. I don't mean that figuratively. My sorrow is so intense it often feels like it will flatten me." • With brawny and disarming candor, Levy weaves together the story of her life exactly as she was determined to live it — becoming a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, falling in love with her partner ("feeling molten and golden and saved"), writing their own vows ("gay marriage wasn't even legal — we were making it up!"), becoming pregnant at 37 — and how it all came crashing down. Teeming with vitality and wit, *The Rules Do Not Apply* is a memoir sparkling with insight on grief and grit. --Al Woodworth,

## The Book Review

“Ariel Levy’s 2013 essay “Thanksgiving in Mongolia” is one of the best pieces of nonfiction I have ever read. If I taught a class on the essay, I would make every damn student memorize it. Levy, a staff writer at The New Yorker, has expanded on this essay into a full memoir out in March, *The Rules Do Not Apply*. I read it in one big messy gulp, because it is beautiful and heartbreaking and unruly and real. You should preorder it immediately so you can fall into her complicated, funny, and finely wrought world as soon as humanly possible.”

•Lenny.com “A thoroughly modern memoir, the elements of *The Rules Do Not Apply* seem plucked not from the script of *Girls*, which has also been exploring reproductive issues of late, but *Transparent*—even *Portlandia*.”

•The New York Times “In reflecting on her own life, Levy’s tone is deeply honest, and at the same time manages to not be defensive or apologetic about her decisions; she’s not judgmental, but remains highly inquisitive. It’s a delicate balance, one rarely pulled off. The through line is her struggle to see things as accurately as possible, to translate her gift for interview and narrative into something personally productive. . . . I loved Levy’s book, and have followed her work for years, which made interviewing her a slight struggle. I had to navigate around what personally resonated with me and what would mean a great deal to other. . . . If you take anything away from our conversation, I hope it’s that you should read *The Rules Do Not Apply*.”

•Jezebel “Frank and unflinchingly sincere . . . A gut-wrenching, emotionally charged work of soul-baring writing in the spirit of Joan Didion, Helen Macdonald, and Elizabeth Gilbert, *The Rules Do Not Apply* is a must-read for women.”

•Bustle “Levy has the rare gift of seeing herself with fierce, unforgiving clarity. And she deploys prose to match, raw and agile. She plumbs the commotion deep within and takes the measure of her have-it-all generation.”

•The Atlantic “Cheryl Strayed meets a Nora Ephron movie. You’ll laugh, ugly cry, and finish it before the weekend’s over.”

•theSkimm “[*The Rules Do Not Apply*] is a short, sharp American memoir in the Mary Karr tradition of life-chronicling. Which is to say that Levy, like Karr, is a natural writer who is also as unsparing and bleakly hilarious as it’s possible to be about oneself. . . . I devoured her story in one sitting. It felt, well, greedy. But greedy is how the author characterises herself, so it seemed fine, hopeful even, to read her work in the same way, perhaps absorbing as I went a tiny bit of Levy’s remarkable resilience and appetite for life.”

•Financial Times “It’s an

act of courage to hunt for meaning within grief, particularly if the search upends your life and shakes out the contents for all the world to sift through. Ariel Levy embarks on the hunt beautifully in her new memoir. . . . The Rules Do Not Apply is a search for meaning, not reason. It doesn't seek an explanation (outside of the medical one) for the death of Levy's son, any more than it seeks to explain away the love, fear, frustration and other experiences and emotions that take place within her lifetime. Her grief becomes a new part of her—something to understand and get used to. . . . She's brave and generous to share her story, which manages to be beautiful, even as it's stark and wrenching.

•Chicago Tribune "I read The Rules Do Not Apply in one long, rapt sitting. Unflinching and intimate, wrenching and revelatory, Ariel Levy's powerful memoir about love, loss, and finding one's way shimmers with truth and heart on every page.

•Cheryl Strayed "Every deep feeling a human is capable of will be shaken loose by this profound book. Ariel Levy has taken grief and made art out of it.

•David Sedaris "Ariel Levy is a writer of uncompromising honesty, remarkable clarity, and surprising humor gathered from the wreckage of tragedy. Her account of life doing its darnedest to topple her, and her refusal to be knocked down, will leave you shaken and inspired. I am the better for having read this book.

•Lena Dunham "A great memoir is not a trip through someone else's life but a series of long looks into your own. Ariel Levy's book—grieving, hopeful, painful, funny—is that.

•Amy Bloom "It's become a truism that feminists are living out our mothers' unlived lives. But Ariel Levy seems to be living out the unlived lives of an entire generation of women, simultaneously. Free to do whatever she chooses, she chooses everything. While reinventing work, marriage, family, pregnancy, sex, and divorce for herself from the ground up, Levy experiences devastating loss. And she recounts it all here with searing intimacy and an unsentimental yet openhearted rigor.

•Alison Bechdel "The Rules Do Not Apply is heartbreaking, brilliant, and disarming, the kind of book that may change you. Ariel Levy writes with a beauty that is ferociously honest and with the fervor of an explorer. No one else has written so insightfully about the current legacy of feminism's lavish gift of freedom. Levy has a voice unlike any other. This is a devastating and inspired book.

•Renée Steinke

This book was a real story. I read it in a time in my life when I was experiencing similar issues. I could really relate to Ariel Levy. It was comforting to see how someone could go through these terrible experiences and come out of it stronger.

Fantastic!Fantastic treat!

The book just ended so abruptly. The ending did not connect to the beginning. I was enjoying the story and then all of a sudden, it was over. Oh well. I guess it was good because I was enjoying it.

Fabulous read of an interesting story. I couldn't put it down.

great read

Great condition. As described.

Unfortunately I did not enjoy the book at all.

If you read the article that inspired the book-- Thanksgiving In Mongolia-- you've sort of already read the meat of this book. That story, of giving birth prematurely alone in a hotel in Mongolia, is the seeming inspiration behind the memoir, but (to continue the food theme) if that story is the meat, than what happens before and after is the very dry bread in this book sandwich. The author absolutely has a way with words, there's no denying that, but this is a story that sort of leaves the reader without a clear feeling at the end. We are sped through her childhood, we get glimpses of her parents and friends, we get snippets of her stories as a journalist, we get the Mongolia story and the story of the dissolution of her marriage, but it's all sort of out of focus. I guess what I was left with, after all was said and done, was really the story of what it's like to love an alcoholic, take calculated risks, lose an infant and a dream, and then start building again from the ground up-- except that I didn't feel like any of these topics were delved into very deeply, and the ground from which she re-builds is still being a staff writer at The New Yorker and having an apartment in NYC with supportive family and friends. It's hard to explain. I guess it really was not what I was expecting, given the description. I'm also not quite clear on why this book is in the Gay & Lesbian category unless there simply is no LBGTQA+ category. Levy was married to a woman for 10 years, but she has had relationships with more than one gender. She seems to be falling in love with a man by the time this book ends.

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