

If It's Not One Thing, It's Your Mother

Julia Sweeney



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"I took so long to assemble my lovely family. If only they would disappear."

While Julia Sweeney is known as a talented comedienne and writer and performer of her one-woman shows, she is also a talented essayist. Happily for us, the past few years have provided her with some rich material. Julia adopted a Chinese girl named Mulan ("After the movie?") and then, a few years later, married and moved from Los Angeles to Chicago. She writes about deciding to adopt her child, strollers, nannies (including the Chinese Pat), knitting, being adopted by a dog, The Food Network, and meeting Mr. Right through an email from a complete stranger who wrote, "Desperately Seeking Sweeney-in-Law." She recounts how she explained the facts of life to nine-year-old Mulan, a story that became a wildly popular TED talk and YouTube video.

Some of the essays reveal Julia's ability to find that essential thread of human connection, whether it's with her mother-in-law, who candidly reveals a story that most people would keep a secret, or with an anonymous customer service rep during a late-night phone call. But no matter what the topic, Julia always writes with elegant precision, pinning her jokes with razor-sharp observations while articulating feelings that we all share.

Poignant, provocative, and wise, this is a funny, and at times powerful, memoir by a woman living her life with originality and intelligence.

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Valerie Gray:

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David Dozier:

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Jennifer Bell:

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