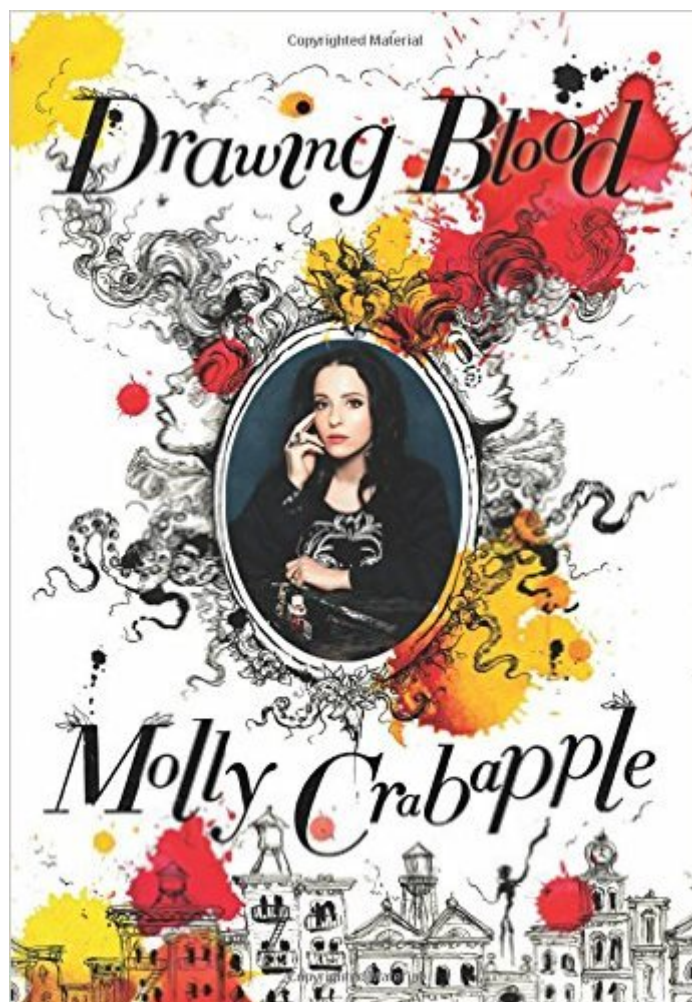


The book was found

Drawing Blood



Synopsis

Art was my dearest friend. To draw was trouble and safety, adventure and freedom. In that four-cornered kingdom of paper, I lived as I pleased. This is the story of a girl and her sketchbook. In language that is fresh, visceral, and deeply moving—and illustrations that are irreverent and gorgeous—here is a memoir that will change the way you think about art, sex, politics, and survival in our times. From a young age, Molly Crabapple had the eye of an artist and the spirit of a radical. After a restless childhood on New York's Long Island, she left America to see Europe and the Near East, a young artist plunging into unfamiliar cultures, notebook always in hand, drawing what she observed. Returning to New York City after 9/11 to study art, she posed nude for sketch artists and sketchy photographers, danced burlesque, and modeled for the world famous Suicide Girls. Frustrated with the academy and the conventional art world, she eventually landed a post as house artist at Simon Hammerstein's legendary nightclub The Box, the epicenter of decadent Manhattan nightlife before the financial crisis of 2008. There she had a ringside seat for the pitched battle between the bankers of Wall Street and the entertainers who walked among them—a scandalous, drug-fueled circus of mutual exploitation that she captured in her tart and knowing illustrations. Then, after the crash, a wave of protest movements—from student demonstrations in London to Occupy Wall Street in her own backyard—led Molly to turn her talents to a new form of witness journalism, reporting from places such as Guantanamo, Syria, Rikers Island, and the labor camps of Abu Dhabi. Using both words and artwork to shed light on the darker corners of American empire, she has swiftly become one of the most original and galvanizing voices on the cultural stage. Now, with the same blend of honesty, fierce insight, and indelible imagery that is her signature, Molly offers her own story: an unforgettable memoir of artistic exploration, political awakening, and personal transformation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Over a year ago, Vanity Fair published a report from the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa. Its Syrian correspondent, for fear of his life, remained anonymous. He sent photos of his city via cellphone. From these, the New York City native who goes by Molly Crabapple sketched intricate drawings, in her typical style of gracefully delineated shapes and wavering people. Out of digital images, Crabapple evoked illustrations harkening back to a Victorian era when artists filled the news with detailed, lively depictions. Yet, Crabapple also infuses her increasingly activist art with innovation. In *Drawing Blood*, she narrates, in "sentences as taut as garrotes," her first three decades. For an artist not yet thirty, a memoir may appear precocious. However, she infuses much of her coming-of-age story with fresh insights into the century, so far, from the perspective of a scrappy woman who confronts disorienting scenarios with mixed detachment and sensitivity. "It's a strange blend of disassociation, to stare into another's eyes only to make those eyes into shapes on paper." From an early age, she sketched to escape and to enlighten herself. Born to a Puerto Rican Marxist professor and a Jewish illustrator for children's books and products, she inherited her father's combativeness and her mother's talent. The child of their early divorce, Crabapple found solace in a few friends. Of one, a Russian immigrant teenager, she recalls their brief bond. "We clung to each other, as bookish young people often do, while waiting out the years until our real life could begin." Schooled more by her self-taught reading in anarchism and the fin-de-siècle and her listening to Kurt Cobain, punk, and Trent Reznor, she soon fled abroad.

• Art was a stranger making eyes through the smoke of a foreign dive bar • *Drawing Blood* is such an engaging read that I couldn't put the book down until I had devoured all of its contents and yet, there were so many lines and passages to savor and to reread, so many artworks by Molly to let your eyes linger over. This may not be an art catalogue but it's probably the most beautifully illustrated memoir I've ever read. Some passages I had read in the reviews or articles by Molly over the past week but they were even more enjoyable the second time around placed in context and elaborated on more fully. I came to Molly's work after she was both writing and creating visual works of art. She seemed so established, so sure by the time I encountered both her

writing and her artworks that it was good to get the backstory on her journey as an artist and a writer. I've never had the privilege of meeting Molly or attending an exhibition of her work but she and many of the characters in her book seem so familiar as part of my mental landscape that in some ways reading the book was like visiting distant friends and filling in all the gaps of what they've been up to between the various stories they've told you, you heard about, or read in their Facebook posts.

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