



# Glitter and Glue

*Kelly Corrigan*

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**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER**

**From the author of *The Middle Place* comes a new memoir that examines the bond—sometimes nourishing, sometimes exasperating, occasionally divine—between mothers and daughters.**

When Kelly Corrigan was in high school, her mother neatly summarized the family dynamic as “Your father’s the glitter but I’m the glue.” This meant nothing to Kelly, who left childhood sure that her mom—with her inviolable commandments and proud stoicism—would be nothing more than background chatter for the rest of Kelly’s life, which she was carefully orienting toward adventure. After college, armed with a backpack, her personal mission statement, and a wad of traveler’s checks, she took off for Australia to see things and do things and Become Interesting.

But it didn’t turn out the way she pictured it. In a matter of months, her savings shot, she had a choice: get a job or go home. That’s how Kelly met John Tanner, a newly widowed father of two looking for a live-in nanny. They chatted for an hour, discussed timing and pay, and a week later, Kelly moved in. And there, in that house in a suburb north of Sydney, 10,000 miles from the house where she was raised, her mother’s voice was suddenly everywhere, nudging and advising, cautioning and directing, escorting her through a terrain as foreign as any she had ever trekked. Every day she spent with the Tanner kids was a day spent reconsidering her relationship with her mother, turning it over in her hands like a shell, straining to hear whatever messages might be trapped in its spiral.

This is a book about the difference between travel and life experience, stepping out and stepping up, fathers and mothers. But mostly it’s about who you admire and why, and how that changes over time.

## Glitter and Glue Details

Date : Published February 4th 2014 by Ballantine Books

ISBN : 9780345532831

Author : Kelly Corrigan

Format : Hardcover 224 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction, Biography, Audiobook

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# From Reader Review *Glitter and Glue* for online ebook

## Marti says

**Glitter and Glue** by Kelly Corrigan is a memoir about her life with her mom. The story follows Kelly's but is a long reflection about her mother. The younger Kelly felt her mother was too hard, always had rules, didn't let anything go and always pushed her. The older Kelly realized that her mother took her job as mother seriously.

What make this a great book are the emotions of a woman coming into her own. A woman who starts out feeling about her mom, like many of us did as a teenager {roll the ey

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I loved this with my whole heart. At times it's difficult to get through (because much like Kelly's observation below) it's exhausting to FEEL so much, but it's absolutely worth it. So many layers to absorb as a woman, a daughter, a mother, and a friend.

“And it occurs to me that maybe the reason my mother was so exhausted all the time wasn't because she was doing so much but because she was feeling so much.”

"It's hard to watch someone struggle, with a testy machine, a sticky door, a heavy suitcase, much less listen to them cough or cry. People want to help, and the more we've seen and heard and done, the more useful we are. And this is why even the tiniest show of stoicism in little girls and grown women makes me mad. It makes us useless to each other."

“The mother is the most essential piece on the board, the one you must protect. Only she has the range. Only she can move in multiple directions. Once she's gone, it's a whole different game.”

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## Barbara (The Bibliophage) says

Solid 3.5 stars. Corrigan tells her experiences as a mother and daughter through three life events. First, as a nanny for a family whose mother had died. Second, and more briefly, seeing her mother as a mutable human with the potential to become ill. And more briefly still, how the possible recurrence of her own cancer blends these two previous moments into a third—imagining what her family would do without her. She navigates these stories with wry humor and pithy insight. It's a coming of age story within a narrow lens, which may or may not be an advantage.

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### **Jeanette says**

It's probably me, not the book. But I had to force myself to finish. 2.5 star, with a .5 star given for the truthfulness level. And yet these "me, me, me" and "I had to find myself" books are just not my cup of tea. It was suggested as a cozy? Why does it not surprise me that when she finally was forced to physically and mentally work for others' wants and needs, she begins to wake up to her own past parental reality. Having spent 13 years taking care of ill parents and their house too, and just losing the last, my Dad, in April (he was 95 and stroke victim for the last 8 years)- I am probably not an audience for parental critiques, even if they suggest growth and found love for a parent after the fact. To me, it just took her way too long to get there. My cultural background does not put parental care and concern by a child for a parent (NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND)-in the same light. So because of that, this was just not the feel good read for me either that it seems to be for many others with a more USA/ Western Civ. cultural background.

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### **Irene says**

By the time I finished this heartfelt book, tears quietly slid down my cheeks. After I read a certain quote, I sobbed. I will forever hold this in my heart, "You don't have to be able to decode every passage to want to hug it when you finish." Hug it, I did.

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### **Jana says**

I miss my mom. This memoir brings it all back. She died when I was 19, so I never got to experience being an adult with a mom. This memoir is about a daughter and her relationship with her mother over the years.

At one point the daughter/author/Kelly Corrigan is in Australia and a boy is explaining chess to her: The queen is the most important piece. She can move everywhere. And if she is gone, you're lost.

Later, she rewords this with "the mother". It's true.

NOTE: I listened to the audio of this, which was well done. The quote about chess is from my memory since I don't have a book to refer to, but I think (hope) I got pretty close! I look forward to meeting the author in Vermont next month. Though I don't have a small group session with her, I will still be able to hear her speak in the larger group. I've seen video of her and she is wonderful.

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### **Anne says**

I loved Kelly Corrigan's "The Middle Place" - even though I don't have children, I found her insight into the changing role of being an adult child to be very honest. As much as I loved TMP, I think I love "Glitter and

Glue" more. It really resonated with me as someone who grew up idolizing her more exciting and jovial dad and getting frustrated with the rules-oriented, calm mom. I love the description of her mother summarizing "the division of labor in her family as 'Your father's the glitter, but I'm the glue.'" And so it was in my house.

I never was a nanny in Australia, but I too grew to value my mother's voice, her perspective, her approach to life. Today, I find myself being much more like my mother than my father. I think Kelly Corrigan's ability to tease out the details of life is a great gift. G&G is the story of Kelly heading off for an extended trip to Australia, because "things happen when you leave the house." But she quickly learns that it's hard to find the great adventure when you've run out of cash. She signs on as a nanny for a family whose mother/wife has recently died. As she sinks in to their day to day life, trying to connect and find the right things to say and do, she realizes that she is drawing on the lessons learned from her mother - the glue - more than the joyous abandon of her father - the glitter.

Kelly grows and changes, and comes to the realization as she grows older that there are times when you just want your mom, that you hear her voice in your head and say the things she said. She learns that she will always protect and defend her mom, because the game changes when she's gone.

Great read - I was lucky enough to read an advance copy of Glitter and Glue which will be on sale February 2014. Please pre-order this one. Get two - and give one to your mom.

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I also highly recommend Kelly Corrigan's "Lift" and the accompanying music - fantastic short read, and I'm thankful to Kelly for introducing me to the music of Mike Errico - "Count to Ten" and "Ever Since" are two of the most beautiful songs ever.

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### **Janet says**

That was a real sob fest. I started it in the doctor's office but couldn't continue because I was tearing up in a waiting room full of strangers. I explained to the lady sitting next to me, who then showed me pictures on her phone of her 92 year old mother....when she was young and beautiful. She had movie star looks, reminded me of Lana Turner. This is a story that most every woman can relate to and then proceed to celebrate the uniqueness of her own mother. My mother passed 26 years ago but I think of her every day.

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### **Deb says**

This book hit me in ways I didn't expect. It made me laugh but it made me cry so suddenly as her words snuck up on me. I related to this book on many levels. One I lost my mom when I was 17 and helped raise my three brothers one of which was only 1 1/2. I related to Evan.

My brother recently lost his wife to cancer leaving him to raise two children at 4 & 7 years old. I could see my brother in John.

My oldest daughter just became a mom and I see our relationship changing as moms united.

Beautiful story Kelly Corrigan. I cannot wait to meet you in Vermont in April!!!

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## Amy says

I wanted to like this more than I did. In fact, I want to give in 2.75 stars :). The memory of her travels abroad with the Tanner family after college were compelling and I really enjoyed the writing. I felt the current day "tie" to her mother was lacking and she didn't make me care about their relationship like I did about her relationship with the Tanners.

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## Lauren Henderson says

*Your father may be the glitter, but I'm the glue.*

Whoa... heartstrings.. hold on. This book is a great read for anyone who has a mom... so EVERYONE. I found myself tearing up often with memories of my own mom. *Glitter and Glue* is a beautiful tribute to the mother-daughter relationship.

Kelly Corrigan is a really great writer. I've never read anything by her, and I picked this one up solely because I love memoirs about mother-daughter relationships. She writes the story in first person, so it reads like fiction and is very entertaining. Also, Kelly Corrigan must have (1) been keeping insanely detailed journals her entire life, or (2) exaggerated some details in this story, or (3) have superhuman abilities for remembering details. I'm going to guess it's number one. So notes to self: KEEP JOURNALS, WRITE IN FIRST PERSON - if I ever decide to write a book. Although I think I'll just stick with blogging.

The first 85% of the book is about her experience with nannying in Australia and how it made her appreciate her mother. It's vividly written with details and emotional responses. I LOVED this part. She struggles with winning the love of Milly who just lost her mother to cancer, and she realizes that she hears her mother's voice with everything that happens and finds herself becoming her mother - like a lot of us do.

I thought she was going to have some splendid reunion with her mom... but she didn't. The end goes into hyper speed mode and does not give much detail about how Australia actually changes her relationship with her mother. It was kind of a let down, but did not ruin the beginning of the story that was so beautifully told - It reminded me somewhat of the writing style of Cheryl Strayed in *Wild*.

Overall, a great read that I would recommend to someone who wants to reminisce about their childhood and have lots of memories pulled out that they forgot existed.

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## Stephanie says

Glitter and Glue is a love story to Corrigan's mother that all women can relate to whether you have children or not. My mother in law gave me this book after she went to a book release event with the author, whom she found to be witty and funny. This book made me think of my own relationship with my mother and how blessed I was as a child, I am and still continue to be with my own sainted mother and how scared and excited I am to become a mother one day and most importantly that I need my mother as a 32 year old and will continue to need her for the rest of my life. This is a great light read (that will occasionally make you shed a tear or so).

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## **Judith E says**

A lightweight reflection about a young adult daughter's realization that her mother was actually a person. Also, an age old scenario of nanny trying to win over traumatized/sulky child.

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## **Patti's Book Nook says**

"Your dad's the glitter, but I'm the glue." I flew through this one...really looking forward to meeting her in Vermont:-) Corrigan does an excellent job articulating the disconnect that is often present between mothers and daughters. Due to lack of perspectives as kids, most of us can't even fathom our parents as having lives before we existed (just like it was mind boggling to see your teacher at the supermarket- gasp! they live in the classroom right??). One of my favorite excerpts was when Kelly inadvertently hears her mother talking to colleagues in a breakroom and telling a naughty joke. Her insight is "But now I see there's no such thing as a woman, one woman. There are dozens inside every one of them. I probably should've figured this out sooner, but what child can see the woman inside her mom, what with all the Motherness blocking out everything else?" This book was a great story about the mother/child dynamic and how lucky we are to have each other.

I was thinking how much I've come to understand my own mom this last year since she passed, and how much I wish I could have the "I actually get it now!!" conversation more than anything. We would always be fundamentally different in many ways, but children sure do create common ground! While I was a new parent while she was still alive, I hadn't fully entered into the nitty gritty negotiation stage with my children (more the sleepless night/squalling stage). Maybe it's simply wistful thinking, but I think our relationship's best days would have been ahead- and that makes these realizations even more devastating. For those lucky to still have their mom, it is a fascinating story in the evolution of a treasured relationship.

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## **Sara says**

Oh how I wish we had partial stars in Goodreads, because I need them to accurately describe my feelings for this book! It wasn't bad enough for a two, but it also didn't earn a 3 in my mind. A 2.5 would be perfect here!

What did I like? It was a fast read and was enjoyable for the most part (when I could get past my annoyance with the narrator)

What didn't I like? While I found her experiences in Australia to be interesting, she was a bit whiny. Perhaps this is an honest reflection of her age/perspective at the time, but as a reader it made it hard for me to invest in her. Also, while the Australia parts were decent, I found that weaving in the relationship with her mother was forced. It didn't seem to fit in an authentic way and left a bad taste in my mouth. I wasn't able to connect at all with this part of the book or her relationship with her mother at all.

In the end, this book was like a tv show you watch because it happens to be on, but don't really care about at all.

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## Arianna says

shelfnotes.com

Dear Reader,

I read this book in 3 days. I suppose that says something about both its accessibility and its engagement level. This book was, however, nothing like I'd expected. Having never read anything by this author before, I wasn't prepared by her other works. Amber and I got this book as an ARC at BEA 2013, and we'd both been eager to get to it, especially having met the author and gotten our books signed. I think the title appealed to me most of all: it evoked memories of crafting - making paper crowns and wands with which to become a princess - with my own mother when I was little.

So, I guess in one way, I was (completely unexpectedly) prepared for this book: it was ultimately about the relationship between a mother and daughter, reflected upon by a daughter who has reached womanhood and her own motherhood, and therefore is trying to sort out her complicated and often frustrating relationship with her mom. I think Kelly and her mother had an especially interesting relationship because Kelly was the only daughter in the family; having a sister to talk to and relate to might have helped her immensely during her adolescence.

They definitely did have an often-at-odds relationship, which I found fascinating to watch unfold throughout the book. But, in the long run, I wasn't quite sure this book "gave" me anything. There wasn't much of a resolution to the whole thing, besides that Kelly had come to the realization that she did, in fact, really need her mother.

It was interesting the way the author explained her coming to terms with this through the story of her experiences in Australia over a three-month period, when she was in her early twenties. She nannied for a recent widower's children, and while they came to understand and manage life without their mother, Kelly simultaneously began to understand the connection she and her mother had. While essentially child-rearing for the first time, she began to watch herself adopt many of her own mother's mannerisms.

I feel like maybe if I'd read a few others of Corrigan's memoirs, perhaps I would have felt as if this were a more complete story, one that fit in neatly with her other works to form a whole portrait of a person. As it stood alone, though, I didn't feel like it was ... quite substantial enough. I enjoyed the narrative, but in the end felt as if I'd just finished an article reflecting in detail on one part of one woman's life, not an entire book. That's not a bad thing, though - just an observation.

I'd recommend this to women who struggle with the mother-daughter relationship, either with their mothers or their daughters. I think it was a heartwarming and entertaining book, which hit upon some good moments and did draw some great parallels between the author's situation in Australia and her situation at home. Certainly a fun and light-hearted little read. (Especially the relationship with her father; that was always adorable to watch.)

Yours,  
Arianna

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## Elizabeth says

On the surface, this seems like a fast, easy read because it is--but there are a whole lot of layers built in that I'll be thinking about for a long time: the whole business about when you start channeling your own mother in unexpected ways, the things you learn from how you're parented (by both parents) that don't necessarily present themselves until later in life, and how being a mama is simultaneously the hardest, most exciting, and most demanding way to spend one's time.

The secondary part of the story--the motherless family in Australia--drew me in as well, though, since I've witnessed firsthand the loss of the mama (and preparation for the loss of the mama) multiple times in the past few years. This is the frightening part, the unthinkable part. Kelly Corrigan really captured how fragile and lost a family is despite moving through the regular routines of life, and makes you remember without hitting you over the head with it that it could happen to anyone, really, so it's wise to figure out how to balance being present and giving your family your all without being paralyzed by fear of what your own motherless family would look like.

I am already impatient for another Kelly Corrigan book even though this one doesn't technically come out until February 2014 (hooray for advance reader copies!).

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## Kats says

Every daughter has a mother, and whilst some relationships are more fraught than others, I can only guess that no mother-daughter relationship is plain sailing at all times. This book struck so many chords with me, particularly having had an equally "uncool mother" like Kelly Corrigan's who wouldn't let me paint my nails, wear make-up, heck, even get contact lenses as she was "sensible" and would not pander to my vanity. Similarly, I wasn't allowed to watch trashy TV, read trashy books (Enid Blyton was borderline, I was allowed to get them from the library but not own them) or hang out with 'trashy people'. Oh dear. As a result, I became addicted to Australian soap operas at school, read nothing but Marian Keyes and other such chick lit authors and found myself the scuzziest boy-friends possible. The joys of teenage rebellion.

As I moved country and no longer lived at home, I started appreciating what she had given me, the moral compass she had (tried to) set for me, and the values to look for in myself and other people. As a result, I've made very few duff choices in friendships, have been able to trust my judgment and been self-reliant ever since I moved out of the family home, just turning 16.

However, it was not until I became a mother myself in early 2004 that I started truly admiring my mother and what she had been through, and turning to her at every milestone moment to share it with her, ask for her advice and use her as a sounding board, whether it was mothering matters or work issues with clients or colleagues. She was the person who knew me best, the only person who had nothing but my best interests at heart, and the person who would always be brutally honest with me. She is irreplaceable, and whilst the sharp pain of grief has been dulled over the last 8.5 years, I think of her all the time, and would give my right arm to have one last grown-up conversation with her.

No wonder then that I spent most of the time crying as I was listening to this wonderful memoir. They were tears of laughter, sadness, joy and grief, not only for my own absent mother, but also for Milly and Martin Tanner in Corrigan's story who lost their mother to cancer, aged 5 and 7. Heart-breaking. Kelly Corrigan's self-awareness, self deprecating humour and her astute observations (into what motherhood means, how we all somehow end up channelling our mothers - our worst nightmare as teenagers - and that whatever kind of mother we end up with, she is usually the best one we could have wished for) are well worth this wonderful book. Especially if you are a daughter, or a mother, or both!

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### **Karen says**

Do not read this book while premenstrual and on a plane.

I grabbed this as a prepub galley from ALA Annual 2013. I haven't read Corrigan before, but I enjoyed her light, breezy, at times humorous style. This is a book about learning to appreciate the grown-ups in your life - in this case, Corrigan's strict, hard-to-please mother. Told through the lens of a memoir of her half-year as a nanny for a widower and his children in Australia, the premise is lightweight but the emotional impact is solid. Especially if you're premenstrual and on a plane. Beware.

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### **Ayelet Waldman says**

Kelly did it again, brought us another heartbreaker that'll keep you laughing and crying.

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