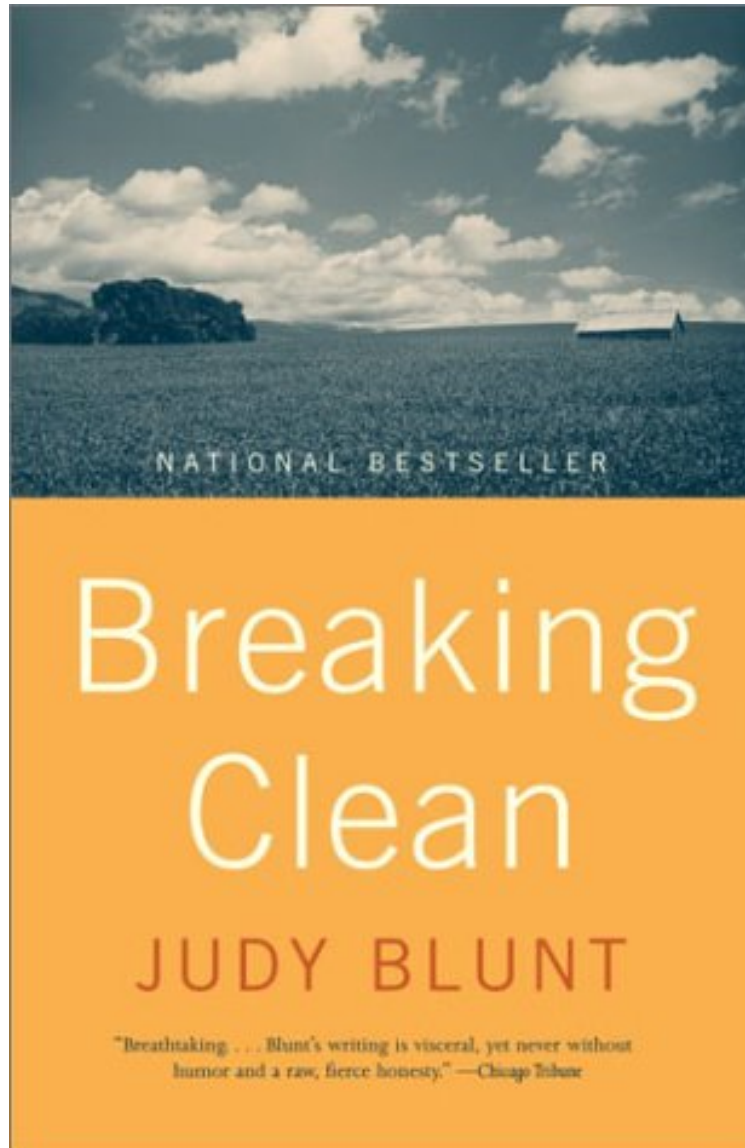


(Ebook pdf) Breaking Clean

Breaking Clean

Judy Blunt

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Judy Blunt : Breaking Clean before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Breaking Clean:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Death of the American west-- an end of an era is chronicled --By Fyrecurl Breaking Clean is a well written book with plenty of vivid scenes of the last American Frontier to be settled, and the end of the last pioneer families to settle our great northern plains, of hardpan and sagebrush, in big sky country, with gumbo roads that are blown over with ten foot drifts in the winter, and impassable mud swamps in

spring. Blunt's honest portrayal of a glamor less life of poor ranch families who settled on homesteads in Montana during the turn of the century on land so hard and remote that it must grow its own replacements as it grows its own food, is both stunning, and unsettling, peeling back the austere notions that the world has had of cowboys, and ranch women over the years. In her memoir, Blunt chronicles her childhood, growing up with her siblings on a ranch in remote Montana, seventy miles from the nearest town. The ranching families battle, blizzards, prairie fires, extreme temperatures, boredom, monotony, ignorance and prejudice, and outside threats to their fading way of life. Her unique style of writing and voice, make the book a literary classic, with original, tart metaphors and similies, that bring the scenes into clear focus, and make her novel a real pleasure to read. The book deals with breaking clean from the gender stereo types that had evolved from a voluntary submissive position for women, who like their husbands had struggled on the land to achieve independence and autonomy, into an intolerable, involuntary servitude for women who suffered alongside their male partners eking out a living without any guarantee of security for the future. Blunt has created a masterpiece of literature that will surely become one of the great American novels of our time. I highly recommend this book.

40 of 42 people found the following review helpful. Unflinching memoir of early marriage, hard life, courage

By Kcorn

When Judy Blunt was only 15 she entered the only world she would imagine for herself - that of a farm wife (as her mother and grandmother had done before her). The memoir she wrote after finally breaking free of this life is not sentimental and doesn't ask for pity from the reader. It was the only life she'd known and plenty of people lived this way in Montana, expecting a rough life and bearing up to the hardships that came their way. But what Blunt does, as few writers can, is open her eyes and really look fully at the world, coming up with vivid, original descriptions of the animals, the land, the people around her. Those familiar with farm life may find their eyes reopened by Blunt's writing and those unfamiliar with it will simply love discovering this book. But I warn you - it isn't an easy read. There are plenty of farm accidents, bitter weather and descriptions of a community filled with people who don't have time for softness. They're too busy trying to get through each day and simply survive. What is amazing is that one person, Blunt herself, not only survived but ended up being an amazing writer, bringing alive the world she lived in.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Read!

By Fran

This is one book I will remember for a lifetime. This woman can write! Her discriptive phrasing and simplistic manner of dealing with challenges of everyday living on the ranch are very imaginative and captivating. Seemingly slow to start but packs a huge reward if you stick with it. I am wanting more books by her! She has been added to my heros list for her writing as well as what she has lived through. I just bought two more for my best friends.

In this extraordinary literary debut third-generation homesteader Judy Blunt describes her hardscrabble life on the prairies of eastern Montana in prose as big and bold as the landscape. On a ranch miles from nowhere, Judy Blunt grew up with cattle and snakes, outhouse and isolation, epic blizzards and devastating prairie fires. She also grew up with a set of rules and roles prescribed to her sex long before she was born, a chafing set of strictures she eventually had no choice but to flee, taking along three children and leaving behind a confused husband and the only life shed ever known. Gritty, lyrical, unsentimental and wise, *Breaking Clean* is at once informed by the myths of the West and powerful enough to break them down.

From Publishers Weekly

Poet and essayist Blunt grew up on a Montana cattle ranch in the 1950s and 60s, where "indoor plumbing" meant a door on the privy and "running water" was a fast ranch wife with two buckets. A natural tomboy, happiest around animals, Blunt dreaded leaving childhood. The gender rules of ranch life were unyielding: women married and kept to their kitchens, and they didn't own property or make decisions about the ranch. When puberty came, she did her best to hide all evidence of her sex, wearing a big coat and even lancing her growing breasts, the way she'd drain a cow's abscessed jaw. After finishing high school in town she returned to the family ranch, only to find she had no place of value there. So she accepted the inevitable: marriage to a man from a neighboring ranch. For 12 years Blunt lived in self-denial sneaking cigarettes, creeping into the calving shed to do the work she knew better than any man and bearing three children who were all she could call her own when she finally decided to leave. While she doesn't shy away from writing about hard times, Blunt's attention to detail and dry humor make this debut emboldening rather than depressing (e.g., her observation that one-room schoolhouses weren't great, but they afforded unintentional exposure to lessons a few years in advance). Her writing inspires respect for rural life and its "intimacy born of isolation, rather than blood relation." In this world without TV or books, with mail once a week at best, "a good story rose to the surface of conversation like heavy cream." Blunt's own story is so rich and genuine, readers will clean their plates and ask for seconds. (Feb. 12)

Forecast: With an eight-city author tour, an NPR appearance, advertising to the literary community and word of mouth about this fine writer, sales should be considerable. Blunt's treatment of parental discipline, sibling relationships and town vs. country ways will appeal to readers far beyond Big Sky country.

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From Library Journal

Blunt was raised on a ranch in Montana, miles from the nearest town, and attended a one-room school where she and her siblings made up the majority of the students. On the ranch, she learned how to handle the day-to-day work of farm life and to remain in a subservient role to men. Eventually, after marriage and children, she abandoned ranch life for

college and began writing award-winning poetry. In this nonfiction debut, Blunt proves to be a skillful writer, using beautiful prose to describe how she learned to survive in what remains a man's world. Unfortunately, she does not discuss in enough detail how the ranch life shaped her and made her want to "break clean." Thus, though her narrative is enjoyable to read, it carries no social implications. Collections with material on farm life or women in nontraditional careers will want to consider this title. Otherwise, this is not a necessary purchase. Danna Bell-Russel, Library of Congress

Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From *The New Yorker* Born in 1954 to poor homesteaders on the Montana prairie, the author inherited a tradition of intense work and fierce isolation. She realized early that she was doomed to a supporting role on the family ranch; although she could work cattle and tractors, she writes, "I also learned to reserve my opinion when the men were talking." This unflinching memoir is framed by Blunt's eventual decision to leave the rancher she had married at the age of eighteen and the only way of life she'd ever known. A sense of mourning underlies her account, and she honors the land that she still loves by making us intimate with its smallest details: after a thirty-six-hour blizzard, cows stand frozen, "eyes sealed tight under an inch of milky ice." Copyright 2005 *The New Yorker*