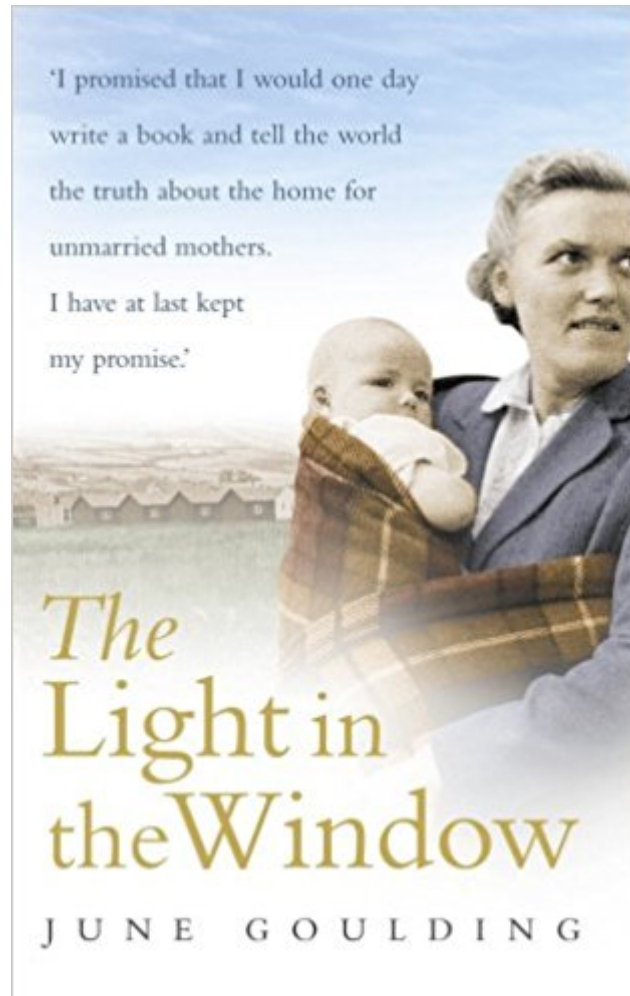




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The Light In The Window



Synopsis

In Ireland, 1951, the young June Goulding took up a position as midwife in a home for unmarried mothers run by the Sacred Heart nuns. What she witnessed there was to haunt her for the next fifty years. It was a place of secrets, lies and cruelty. A place where women picked grass by hand and tarred roads whilst heavily pregnant. Where they were denied any contact with the outside world; denied basic medical treatment and abused for their 'sins'; where, after the birth, they were forced into hard labour in the convent for three years. But worst of all was that the young women were expected to raise their babies during these three years so that they could then be sold¹ given up for adoption in exchange for a donation to the nuns. Shocked by the nuns' inhumane treatment of the frightened young women, June risked her job to bring some light into their dark lives. June's memoir tells the story of twelve women's experiences in this home and of the hardships they endured, but also the kindness she offered them, and the hope she was able to bring.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"I promised that I would one day write a book and tell the world about the home for unmarried mothers. I have at last kept my promise."

June Goulding worked as a midwife in a 'home' for unmarried mothers in 1951. She is the mother of seven children and lives in Cork. *The Light in the Window* is her first book.

I know 5 stars is supposed to mean I 'love' the book and I can't say I loved reading about the horrific treatment of unwed mothers and their children in Ireland over decades of time. Though I've read reports, seen documentaries, and read fictionalized accounts of the infamous mother/baby homes and the Magdalene Laundries this was a first-hand account by a witness/participant. Some readers have criticized Goulding's writing technique, but I think she wrote as I'd expect her to speak and her style made this all more credible. Her ambivalence is understandable to someone raised in the 1950s; I still remember in the U.S. how hard it was for an independent woman in the '70s much less Ireland in the '50s. A hundred thank-yous for setting these into book form. Ireland is not all green hills and picturesque stone walls.

June Golding's account of her two years as a midwife at a convent run as a home for unwed mothers in Ireland in the early fifties is a haunting reminder about human rights and basic human decency. These young mothers were effectively convicted and incarcerated for the untenable crime of conceiving a child out of wedlock. Their children were taken, ostensibly to provide "better" lives for them, but often without the consent of their mothers. Golding did what she could and ultimately, all she could do was tell their stories. I am a birth mother, but the circumstances around my son's adoption was so far from what these women endured. I had a strong support network around me that included the parents I chose for my son and I knew that I was doing what was best for him and for me. These women in these homes had no such luck. My heart breaks for them but I am so grateful to Golding for bringing their stories to light.

Parts were very boring. Too much detail about her personal stuff re: her boyfriend and upcoming wedding; didn't care about that at all. But as a different perspective on attitudes and treatment of unwed mothers of those times, it was interesting to note that despite her disagreement with how they were treated, she was essentially powerless to change anything. The Church ruled the times and the pervasive attitude was that these were sinful, fallen women. The men, of course, were blameless and got no punishment at all.

An utterly amazing and true story of the harsh treatment young girls received in Ireland that's putting it mildly-the abuse young women suffered in Ireland at the hands of Eamon de Valera a Puerto Rican prime minister who devalued women and allowed this abuse to make money.

This is a valuable account of one mother and baby home. It is unique in that it is written from the

perspective of the nurse-midwife who worked delivering babies in one of the homes. Therefore, the author's account is akin to that of a reporter embedded in this private world telling those on the outside what life was like on the inside. Perhaps the most important point of the book is that the home was, in all the ways that counted, a prison. Few people comprehend that these women were under duress, and there was no informed consent upon entering the home or giving up the rights to their children.

This book is written from the point of view of the "fly on the wall". It really confirms the assertions written from the point of the victims since this topic was unearthed in the 1990's. Powerful.

Unbelievable the way so many of these nuns terrorized young, helpless women who often found themselves pregnant after having been victims of rape, incest, and ignorance and abandonment by their families.

at just 22, stood alone between them and a lifetime of physical impairment. This is a must read for all who have been following the ecclesiastical abuses in Ireland and the disenfranchisement of the young women who were so deliberately and even happily abused by psychopathic "Servants of God."

An amazing story. June gave every piece of herself to those women; she was the only hope and comfort they experienced. Thank you for bringing your story and the stories of young women to light for all of us to understand. You brought light out of darkness; shame, fear, and guilt- that is the greatest gift of all. "... and the truth shall set you free." Shame on the church for enabling this abuse; may their souls rest in peace.

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