

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **FIRST KILL ALL THE LAWYERS**

*In Pro Per*

Goodwin, Katie Law

BalboaPress (320 pp.)

\$37.95 hardcover, \$20.99 paperback, \$8.99 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

In this memoir/advice guide, a psychotherapist shares the story of her contentious divorce as well as tips for obtaining a divorce without an attorney and other “self-care” strategies.

Goodwin admits that she was gobsmacked by her second marriage: “I simply did not see this nastiness coming, nor did anything in my life before or since prepare me for the days in court which waited me.” She ended up handling her divorce from Eli, himself a corporate lawyer, largely without a lawyer since she had learned to distrust the entire profession. “The myth of needing to retain a lawyer is a terrible one,” she notes. “Lawyers are taught to drum up conflict.” In a three-part narrative, Goodwin details her “intense coupling” with Eli, which started when she was co-facilitator of a spirituality workshop that he attended. They joined forces, including living with their children from past marriages, but the relationship unraveled as Eli “psychologically deteriorated.” He ended up leaving his job, filing for disability, then filing for divorce, misrepresenting his previous divorce decree to claim financial hardship and leave Goodwin with nothing. In the second part of her book, Goodwin walks readers through the various legal forms and protocols she dealt with during her divorce. The final section focuses on exercise, nutrition, meditation and other self-care activities that she believes are critical in life overall and particularly in managing the stress of divorce. This first-person account is oddly entertaining, with Goodwin’s wry recounting of bizarre behavior—such as Eli waking the family up at 4:30 to find out who left the top off the ketchup bottle—at times reminiscent of Augusten Burroughs’s *Running with Scissors*. Overall, however, the narrative is rather murky and muddled, with Goodwin’s own back story and the resolution of her case remaining rather hazy. Still, Goodwin admirably spotlights the land mines of divorce, and if nothing else, she points those in similar straits to self-help advice available elsewhere.

Offbeat, rambling testimony that provides some practical pointers and serves as a cautionary tale for those dealing with divorce.

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