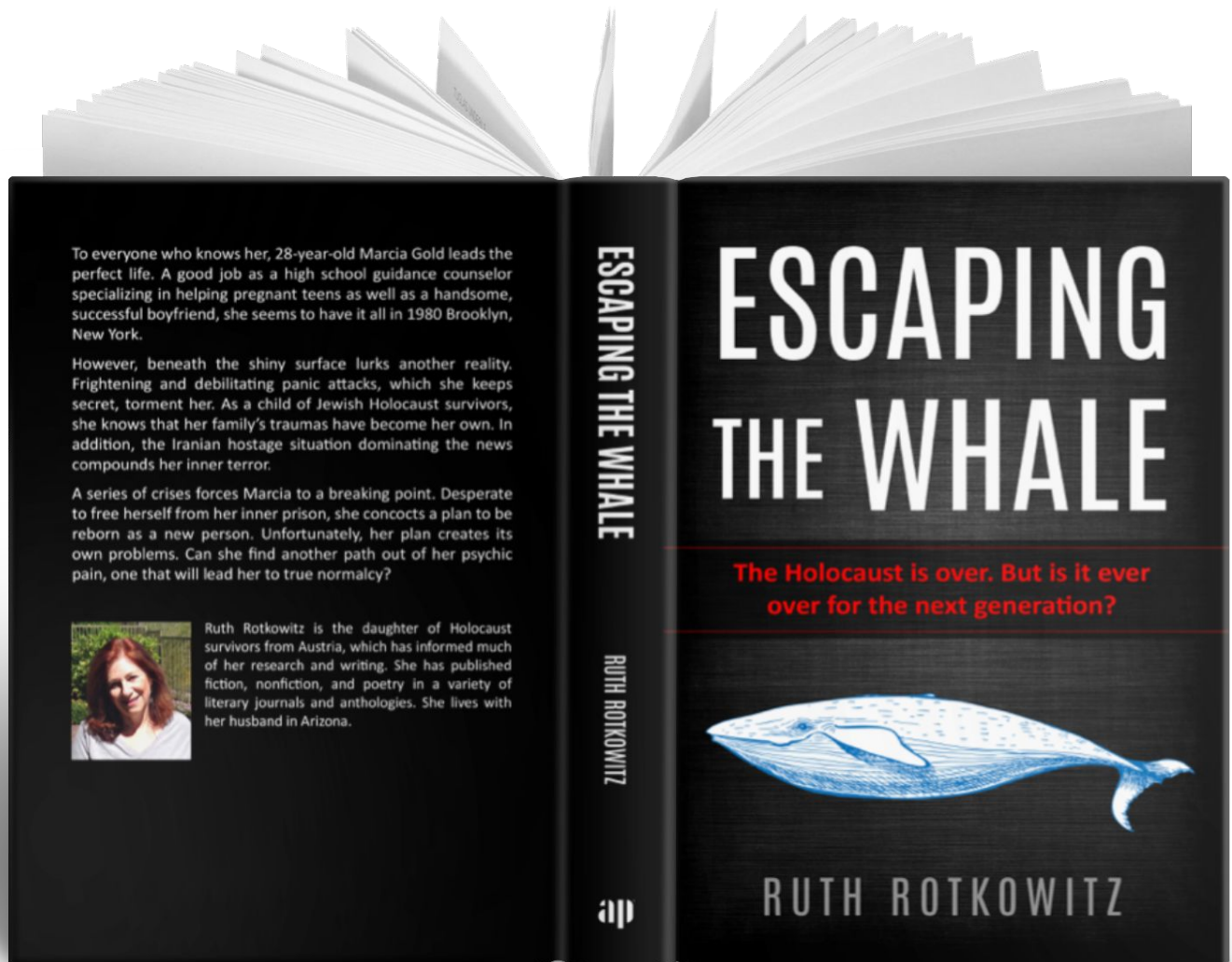


RUTH ROTKOWITZ

AUTHOR. SPEAKER. TEACHER. ADVOCATE. AWARD WINNING AUTHOR



PUBLISHED

April 2020

*Ruth
Rotkowitz*

RUTH ROTKOWITZ

AUTHOR BIO

Ruth Rotkowitz,

a daughter of Holocaust survivors, has become an expert on inherited trauma. In her debut novel, *ESCAPING THE WHALE*, we follow a 28-year old New York guidance counselor as she attempts to appear normal to the world while concealing the inner demons that plague her and which constitute her legacy of inherited trauma.



Ruth holds a B.A. and M.A. in English. In New Jersey, she taught writing at two community colleges. In New York, Ruth taught English at one of the city's specialized high schools. Therefore, she knows the world of the large urban high school her protagonist inhabits. In addition, she has tutored pregnant homebound students; thus, the pregnant students her protagonist counsels are familiar to the author.

After moving to Arizona, she joined the Phoenix Holocaust Association, an organization dedicated to preserving the Shoah memory. As a representative of the organization, she gives talks throughout the Phoenix area on Holocaust-related books and programs. Ruth has presented at the OLLI Adult Education program of Arizona State University, at the Limmud workshop, libraries, synagogues, and book clubs. Her understanding of the Holocaust and its impact on survivors and their descendants is addressed in much of the fiction, nonfiction, and poetry published in literary journals and anthologies.

As a staff writer and member of the Editorial Board of the (now-defunct) *WOMAN'S NEWSPAPER OF PRINCETON*, she covered a range of topics relating to women, accruing awards for a number of her articles. The protagonist of *ESCAPING THE WHALE*, in addition to struggling with inherited trauma, must also deal with the issues facing her as a woman. Rotkowitz's years at the *WOMAN'S NEWSPAPER* have combined with her experience as a child of Holocaust survivors to culminate in her portrayal of an interesting and troubled young lady.

*Ruth
Rotkowitz*

*"The sea is the favorite symbol for the unconscious,
the mother of all that lives."*

~ Carl Jung

ESCAPING THE WHALE

BOOK SYNOPSIS

To everyone who knows her, 28-year-old Marcia Gold leads the perfect life. A high school guidance counselor in 1980 Brooklyn, New York who specializes in helping pregnant teens, Marcia thrives in her work. She also has a handsome, successful boyfriend who has won the approval of her Jewish, Holocaust-survivor family – no easy feat.

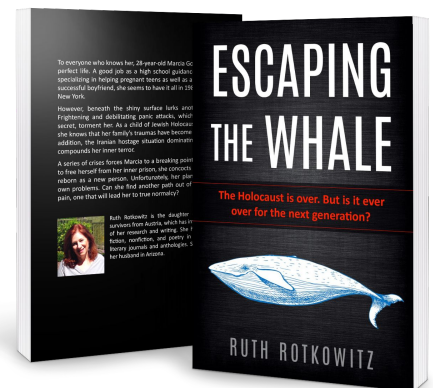
However, beneath the shiny surface lurks another reality. Plagued by frightening and debilitating panic attacks brought on by her family's wartime legacy and exacerbated by the Iranian hostage crisis in the news, Marcia becomes convinced that “demons” are occupying her closet and her mind. Determined to keep her terrifying secret life a secret, Marcia is pushed closer and closer to a breaking point.

A series of crises finally forces the explosion Marcia can no longer contain. Determined to rid herself of her “demons,” she concocts a plan, desperate to be reborn as a new person. Unfortunately, she discovers that her plan creates its own problems. Can she find another path out of her psychic pain, one that will lead her to true normalcy?

IN DEPTH BOOK SYNOPSIS

You can run but you can't hide. This old adage does not apply exclusively to running from an external threat. As the protagonist of the novel *ESCAPING THE WHALE* discovers, running from internal threats is even more problematic.

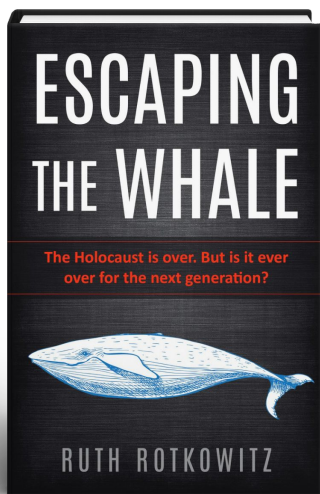
The novel's main character, Marcia, has a lot she yearns to escape. The daughter of Jewish Holocaust survivors, she has grown up absorbing the terrors and fears embodied in her family's experiences in Europe. Her legacy of inherited trauma fills every aspect of her life, from the crackers and mints she hoards in her desk drawer at work 'just in case' to her fear of getting into an elevator before checking every corner of it. The book takes place in spring and summer of 1980 when the takeover of the American embassy in Tehran is major news. Concern for the hostages and alarm over the constant stream of news reports about it permeate the atmosphere and Marcia's already fragile sense of safety is gradually being eroded. As a 28-year old guidance counselor



ESCAPING THE WHALE

specializing in handling the pregnant students at a large urban high school in Brooklyn, New York, she forces herself to keep it together in order to do her job advocating for her charges. She also does her best to present as “normal” to colleagues at the school and to her boyfriend, whom everyone considers a perfect catch yet who fills her with confusion and discomfort. In addition, she has her family and their expectations to contend with.

What she feels she can never reveal to anyone are the panic attacks and delusions that plague her. Convinced there are rodents scurrying about in her closet, ready to pounce and do her harm, she suffers in silence. If she confessed this to anyone, what would they think of her? “How could she ever explain the way she was?” she wonders. Imagining sharks and other creatures of the deep converging on land and attacking humans, courting danger by wandering the Brooklyn streets late at night, seeing body parts in inanimate objects – all these symptoms of inherited trauma rule her life. Every frightening event brings her mind back to stories she has heard of tortures and persecutions during the war. She cannot seem to rid herself of these tormenting thoughts.



At one low point, Marcia wails, “Why hadn’t something been invented to squeeze horrifying thoughts out of one’s mind, like a vise that could siphon out the undesirable imaginings?”

That is her wish. Unfortunately, she discovers that there is no such thing, no easy out. A series of crises at work and in the news push her closer and closer to a breakdown, and she can no longer continue leading her double life. Determined to escape before she explodes, she flees to a beach resort in Mexico, convinced that in a new locale, away from her regular life and her dangerous closet, she can reinvent herself and be rid of those “inner demons,” as she thinks of them.

The Biblical Jonah tried to run away from who he was, so why should she succeed when he could not? Instead of inner peace, what she finds in Mexico is her mental anguish building to a fever pitch. At that point, she knows she has to make some serious decisions in order to take control of her life and achieve true mental health. Can she muster the courage to do what is necessary in order to banish her demons?

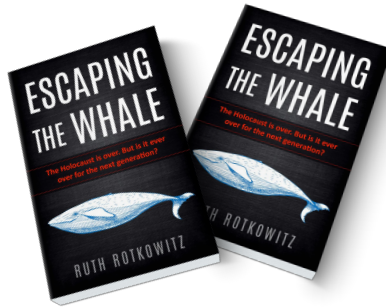
“These are the times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean’s skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it...”

~Herman Melville, Moby Dick

ESCAPING THE WHALE

TARGET AUDIENCE

- Jewish Women who want to learn more about their ancestors and history background.
- Readers of Historical Fiction inspired by true events.
- Readers who are looking for fiction characters that present mental illness and emotional problems.



PRAISE / ENDORSEMENTS

... Rotkowitz brilliantly demonstrates that the historical period forty years ago was a warm-up to the challenges we face now. Imagine being a young woman raised by parents traumatized by their escape from the Nazis, trying to lead the perfect life as the perfect daughter, while the entire country tensely waits for the resolution of the Iran hostage crisis. How do you take the risks needed to set yourself free from your loved ones' debilitating trauma?

~ Pamela Burke, PhD.,

Social Psychologist and N.J. Council of the Arts Fellowship Recipient for Fiction

It's hard to believe this riveting new novel about a young woman's struggle with her own inner demons is the author's debut. That's how well Ruth Rotkowitz has created a protagonist whose desperate quest to "escape the whale" is often as dangerous and compelling as Ahab's quest to find it.

~ Michael Zam,

Author and Co-Creator of Feud: Bette and Joan

Rotkowitz deftly addresses the theme of inherited trauma, artfully telling the moving story of a young woman who takes on the burden of her parents' Holocaust nightmares. While her parents survived the Holocaust and established a new life with their three American-born children, their middle child is haunted by the tragic experiences they had faced before her birth. This fast-paced book examines topics of family, love, and self-preservation. A remarkable first novel.

~ Sheryl Bronkesh,

President, Phoenix Holocaust Association

To Read A Sample Chapter of Escaping The Whale visit www.RuthsWhale.com

ESCAPING THE WHALE

To have Ruth as a guest -

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- How the Holocaust Inherited Trauma can play a role in someone's life. The impact on survivors and their descendants.
- How mental illness stigmas and psychic issues affect women and teenagers.
- My recently released book: *Escaping the Whale: The Holocaust is Over. But is it ever over for the next generation?*

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- What are the signs that show that you may live with inherited trauma? When did you realize that you, as a daughter of the holocaust, should become an expert in inherited trauma?
- You also have an interesting background in education, holding a B.A and a M.A in English. How is your experience as a teacher in New Jersey community colleges and New York high schools reflected in the story of your book, as a big part of the story takes place in a high school?
- As a teacher and counselor, you also tutored pregnant homebound students. How did you intertwine your experience with your main character's professional life?
- You write about inherited trauma and how it connects to the current recognition of PTSD on Holocaust second generation in both fictional and non-fictional works. What is your main goal with your writings?
- You acknowledge some other delicate topics in your books and articles highlighting all sorts of emotional and physical pain. Can you tell us a little bit about how the use of history and symbolism can address and raise awareness to those themes?
- Besides being an award-winning author, you are also a public speaker, advocate and columnist of topics revolving around the universal striving to overcome the fears that prevent us from truly living. How do you fight the stigma to mental illness, incentivizing people that are struggling with psychic pain to seek help?
- The Iranian Hostage Crisis is also an important topic for you. Why did you give this topic such significance?

ESCAPING THE WHALE

- Your novel is set in Brooklyn, New York, over several months in 1980. Why did you choose this specific decade?
- How did you decide it was the right time to write the book and who did you have in mind as your main audience when writing it?
- If you had to highlight one takeaway from the book, what would that be? What is your biggest wish with this book?

RUTH'S MISSION

To be gleaned from ESCAPING THE WHALE

It is my hope that readers will come away from the novel with empathy for those who suffer, whether the suffering is in the form of physical or emotional pain.

I have hoped to convey the message that one cannot hide emotional pain indefinitely, and it is in fact dangerous to attempt to do so. Bottling it all up will eventually lead to an explosion. There should be no stigma to mental illness, and people struggling with psychic pain need to seek help.

Problems among the teenage population, such as suicide and cutting, should be acknowledged and studied in order to be addressed.

The teaching of history, I believe, should be as realistic as possible. We don't do students any favors by whitewashing or ignoring events in history that have resulted in the harming of large groups of people. Human beings do horrible things to one another; students already know this. While there will probably always be some type of bias in history teaching, there should be a focus on highlighting various sides to issues.

Myth and folklore can teach us a great deal about ourselves. It is an intriguing area of study, and I would love to know that the symbolism I have employed in ESCAPING THE WHALE has opened a window into this fascinating subject.

"The Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah; and Jonah remained in the fish's belly three days and three nights. Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish."

~ Book of Jonah, Hebrew Scriptures



ESCAPING THE WHALE

Title: ESCAPING THE WHALE

Subtitle: The Holocaust is Over. But is it Ever Over for the Next Generation?

Author: Ruth Rotkowitz

Published: April 2020

Publisher: Amsterdam Publishers

Categories:

FICTION / Historical / World War II

HISTORY / Holocaust

HISTORY / Jewish

Suggested Retail Price for Print: \$14.95 - \$29.95

Suggested Retail Price for E-Book: \$9.95 - \$14.95

Available for purchase on [Amazon](#) globally

Retailers may purchase through Ingram globally

Book Size: 6 x 9 inches

of Pages: 408

Word Count: 114,074

PaperBack ISBN # – 978-9-4930564-1-1

HardCover ISBN # – 978-9-4930566-3-3

E-Book ISBN # – 978-9-4930564-2-8

Author Website – www.RuthsWhale.com

Facebook Page – [Ruth.Rotkowitz.9](https://www.facebook.com/Ruth.Rotkowitz.9)

Twitter Page – [RotkowitzRuth](https://twitter.com/RotkowitzRuth)

Instagram Page – [RuthRotkowitz](https://www.instagram.com/RuthRotkowitz)

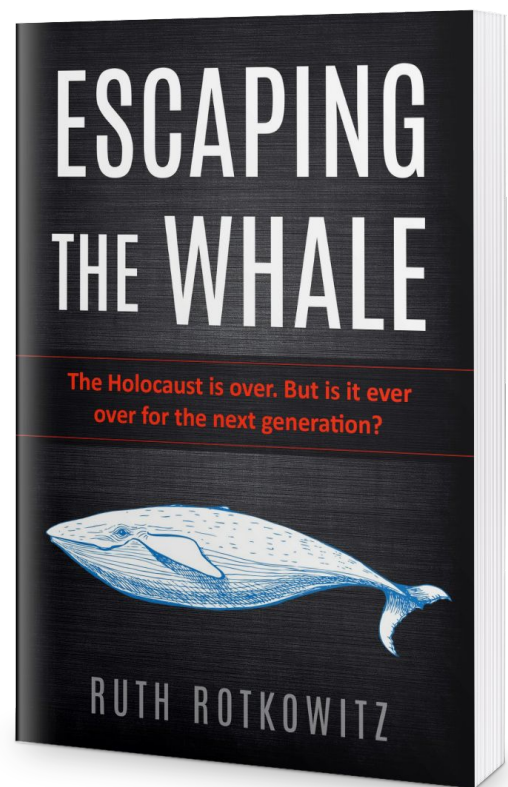
LinkedIn Page – [Ruth-Rotkowitz](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Ruth-Rotkowitz)

Author Contact:

Ruth Rotkowitz

RotkowitzRuth@gmail.com

www.RuthsWhale.com



*Ruth
Rotkowitz*

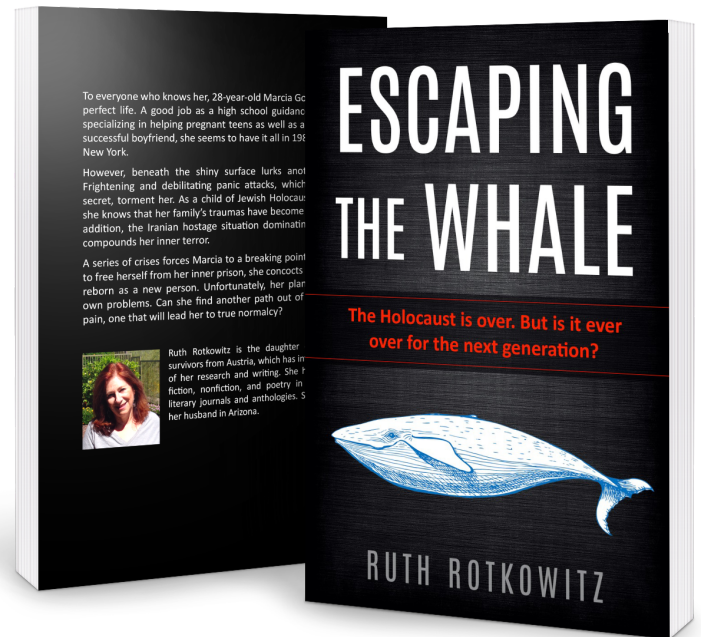
ESCAPING THE WHALE

The Holocaust is Over. But is it Ever Over for the Next Generation?

To everyone who knows her, 28-year-old Marcia Gold leads the perfect life. A high school guidance counselor in 1980 Brooklyn, New York who specializes in helping pregnant teens, Marcia thrives in her work. She also has a handsome, successful boyfriend who has won the approval of her Jewish, Holocaust-survivor family – no easy feat.

However, beneath the shiny surface lurks another reality. Plagued by frightening and debilitating panic attacks brought on by her family's wartime legacy and exacerbated by the Iranian hostage crisis in the news, Marcia becomes convinced that “demons” are occupying her closet and her mind. Determined to keep her terrifying secret life a secret, Marcia is pushed closer and closer to a breaking point.

A series of crises finally forces the explosion Marcia can no longer contain. Determined to rid herself of her “demons,” she concocts a plan, desperate to be reborn as a new person. Unfortunately, she discovers that her plan creates its own problems. Can she find another path out of her psychic pain, one that will lead her to true normalcy?



Author | Speaker | Award Winning Writer | Teacher | Advocate

Ruth, a daughter of Holocaust survivors, has become an expert on inherited trauma. She is a member of the Phoenix Holocaust Association, an organization dedicated to preserving the memory of the Shoah. Ruth gives talks throughout the Phoenix area on Holocaust-related books and programs. Ruth's understanding of the Holocaust, the impact on survivors and their descendants, is addressed in much of her fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, which has been published in literary journals and anthologies.

Ruth Rotkowitz

To Learn More Visit www.RuthsWhale.com