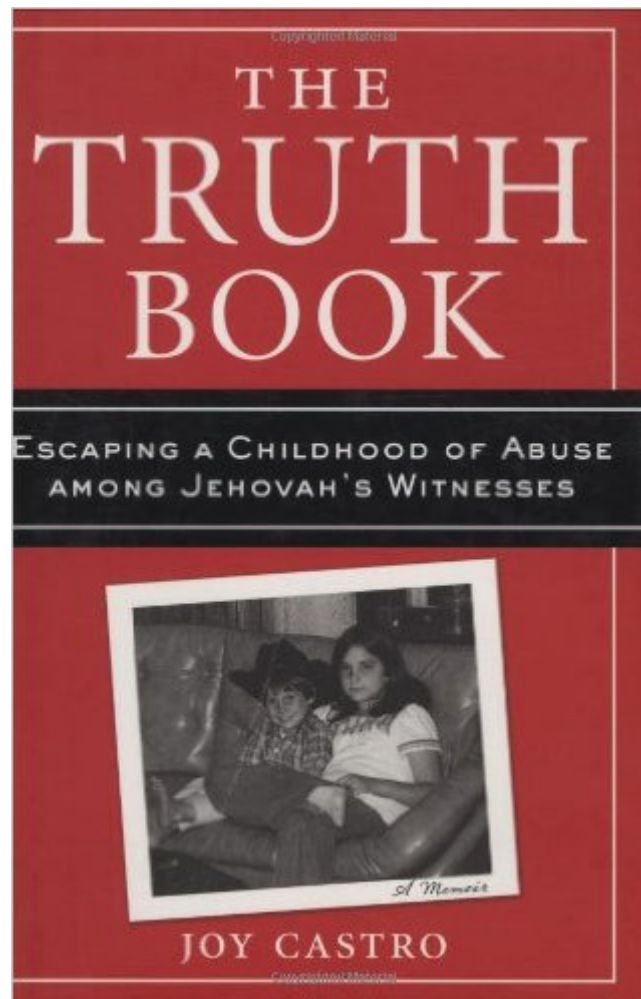


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# The Truth Book: Escaping A Childhood Of Abuse Among Jehovah's Witnesses



## Synopsis

-You must always, always tell the truth, no matter the consequences, for you must model yourself on Jehovah, and Jehovah does not lie. This is the most crucial rule of all,+ Joy Castro is told as a young girl in a Jehovah+s Witness family. Joy is 12 years old when her divorced mother marries a brother in the church. He is highly respected in the community, having displayed the ultimate sign of spiritual devotion: he served at Bethel, the Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn. At home, however, he is a despicable brute. For the two years her mother is married to him, Joy does not grow at all; in fact, she loses 16 pounds, an eloquent testimony to the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse she suffers at his hands. Her battered mother does nothing to protect her, nor does her church. She is sustained by a consuming fascination for horses and books and her protective love for her younger brother. Their daring escape from this unspeakable cruelty, to discover a nurturing home with their father, is the key to their survival and salvation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I thought I knew Joy Castro pretty well. We've worked together for seven or eight years; I've read her frequent submissions to Wabash Magazine, online journals, magazines and newspapers; and I've even sat in on her classes a few times. She is meticulously polite, soft-spoken, and always eager to collaborate on a range of projects to improve education and provide access to it. I thought I knew her pretty well. Then I read The Truth Book. Subtitled "Escaping a childhood of abuse among Jehovah's Witnesses," Joy's memoir tells the story of a brutal stepfather who routinely beat her and

her brother, Tony. They were denied television, books, and given only tiny portions of food to eat. They were told how to walk, talk, and behave. They wore only second and third-hand clothes. All in the name of Jehovah. After reading an advance copy of the book, I kept asking myself, "Why isn't she angry? Why didn't she end up on the streets? How could she be such a caring, loving mother to her son when she was denied such basic instincts from her own mother? Why doesn't she show the scars of her abuse?" But the book isn't just about the abuse Joy and her brother suffered. In many ways, it's a book about hope and will and sacrifice. It's the true story of a young woman with an imagination off the charts, whose love of books and the written word propelled her to a graduate degree in English and a tenured position in the English department at Wabash College; whose unfailing love of her son has no boundaries. Joy was denied even a scrap of respect as a child. Today she is respectful of others, and quintessentially respected by her colleagues, students, and anyone who has read her work.

I'm also a former JW and also stayed up into the wee hours on several nights to ingest, experience and process the complex issues this book brings to the surface for any former JW. It's like a fine Cabernet-let it breathe and swish it around before you internalize. There is plenty of anti-Witness ammo here if you're looking for it, but I don't believe it belongs on the same playing field with many of the Witness "tell-alls" that are more about the author's anger and revenge. Ms. Castro is simply telling a riveting, compelling story that is deeply credible. The outrage is palatable. I found my fists were clenched when reading about her stepfather. I don't know if it was her intent or not, but Ms. Castro tied the bullying and abuse and ridiculous habits her stepfather required, to the restrictive, confining--and yes--abusive lifestyle required of the devout JW. Take away the belt and the principles are uncomfortably similar. She shows tremendous skill in telling the story of why the abused sometimes obey the abuser; defying them will lead to more physical and emotional pain, there will be no support on the "outside," or perhaps they mistakenly believe the abuser is correct when they say they deserve to be mistreated. On another level, it's an indictment of the Watchtower organization that again shows that in many ways it has become the religion it has criticized in other faiths for so long; leaders more concerned about numbers, statistics, pride and dogma than in helping the weak and helpless in their flock, just like Ms. Castro's stepfather was more concerned about his holy image as a Bethelite until his world crashed around him.

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