

Half In: A Coming-of-Age Memoir of Forbidden Love

Felice Cohen

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Coming-of-age and coming out collide in Felice Cohen's poignant memoir *Half In*.

When Cohen was a twenty-three-year-old recent college graduate, she faced her future with uncertainty. She hoped to become a full-time professional writer, as well as to write a book about how her grandfather survived the Holocaust as a gift for him. But she also knew that she needed time to discover who she really was, instead of who she was expected to be. Getting a counseling job at her alma mater bought her that time. It also brought her an unexpected, life-changing love story, one made possible by secrets and lies: Cohen fell in love with her boss, Sarah, an imposing woman who was thirty-four years her senior. The growing attraction between the women was undeniable, despite Sarah's long-term relationship with her partner, Linda, and the consequences that their discovery could have on their homes and working lives.

Cohen's story is multifaceted, emotive, and complex. She writes that her new relationship challenged her fragile and developing self-image, even as it ignited her passion. Questioning her own identity, she asked, "Why come out of the closet when I couldn't be sure my only reason for being in there wasn't just to organize it?" She was forced to confront her conditioned beliefs about family, relationships, honesty, and age. In the end, Cohen's fears about what others might think kept her from going all in. Her own self-judgment, shame, and fear, she writes, led her to a shattering decision.

Filled with the exquisite joy of new love, and the pain of walking away from it, *Half In* is an intimate memoir about growth toward self-awareness—and toward the poignant realization that love calls for a wholehearted commitment.

KRISTINE MORRIS (September / October 2022)

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