



## Uncaged: A Good Girl's Journey to Reinvention

**Katia Vlachos**

Amplify Publishing

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*About the pursuit of an authentic, joyful life, the memoir Uncaged is a source of inspiration.*

Katia Vlachos's memoir *Uncaged* is about overcoming people-pleasing, leaving a toxic marriage, and loving oneself.

Vlachos was raised by a practical, self-sacrificing mother and a free-spirited father whose international business kept him away for large portions of her childhood. The mutable concept of home and the struggle created when spouses are drawn to different places later played out in Vlachos's own globe-trotting marriage to Viktor, who separated her from her support systems as he made life-changing decisions for their family without her input. Vlachos grappled with the challenges of marriage, child-rearing, and a lack of professional and creative fulfillment amid the loneliness and fear of building new lives for herself and her children in foreign countries. It was only when she took back her agency that she was able to free herself from the metaphorical cage in which her desire to make others happy trapped her.

The memoir is broken into three parts, the first covering Vlachos's youth and becoming stifled, the second portraying the increasing tension and eventual collapse of her marriage, and the third about her renewed hope postdivorce as she identified and pursued new passions. Later, Vlachos's experiences as an expatriate and sense of added empowerment are made focal too. Indeed, the book's steady progression makes space for both understanding challenges and celebrating victories. Its prose candid, the book examines the diverse factors that make up a person with clarity, including cultural influences, hobbies, and society's expectations.

But blind spots are also evident, as with the book's coverage of marital resentments around work that the spouses did not support: he looked down on her writing, and she was dismissive of his political volunteering. And while the book acknowledges Vlachos's privilege, it never quite confronts the discrepancies between the resources available to her and those that are available to others who also feel trapped but who may not be able to replicate techniques like taking international trips to visit loving family and community members. Further, some stories are belabored, as with a sequence of low points toward the end of her marriage, while others are glossed over, as with Viktor's first proposal of a separation, the aftermath of which is waved away: "Somehow, we keep going."

*Uncaged* is a gripping, inspiring memoir about escaping the traps in one's own life.

JENNA LEFKOWITZ (August 14, 2024)

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