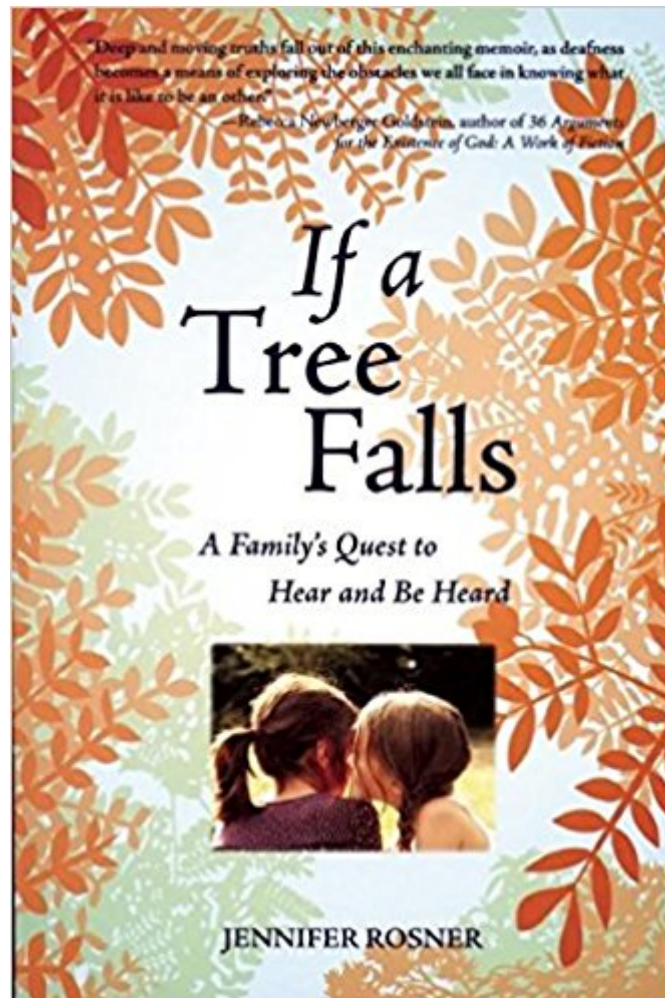




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# If A Tree Falls: A Family's Quest To Hear And Be Heard



## Synopsis

Jennifer Rosner's revelatory memoir explores family, silence, and what it means to be heard. When her daughters are born deaf, Rosner is stunned. Then she discovers a hidden history of deafness in her family, going back generations to the Jewish enclaves of Eastern Europe. Traveling back in time, she imagines her silent relatives, who showed surprising creativity in dealing with a world that preferred to ignore them. Rosner shares her journey into the modern world of deafness, and the controversial decisions she and her husband have made about hearing aids, cochlear implants and sign language. An imaginative odyssey, punctuated by memories of being unheard, Rosner's story of her daughters' deafness is at heart a story of whether she's a mother with perfect hearing will hear her children.

## Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: The Feminist Press at CUNY (May 1, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1558616624

ISBN-13: 978-1558616622

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #605,069 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Diseases & Physical Ailments > Hearing Problems #359 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Disabled #563 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Special Needs

## Customer Reviews

Rosner turns what could have been a depressing story into a gentle meditation on sound and silence, love and family. She writes with honesty and empathy about her daughter Sophia's diagnosis with deafness and the adjustments she and her husband had to make. She describes the birth of her second daughter, Juliet, a few years later (who received a similar diagnosis) and shares the programs and technology available to help the hearing impaired. "Bill and I were talkers. We were constantly debating, questioning, arguing, doubting, agreeing, wondering aloud. And we were hearers, in the hearing world. A soundless, wordless world was unimaginable to us." The author can't resist looking into the hows and whys of her situation and examines her family tree only to find

relatives generations ago who had been deaf. She also works to reconcile her difficult relationship with her mother and asks frequent theoretical questions: "What are the elements essential for identity, for personhood, for perception and existence?" She fills the discussion with philosophy and grace. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Rosner turns what could have been a depressing story into a gentle meditation on sound and silence, love and family. She writes with honesty and empathy... She fills the discussion with philosophy and grace." — Publishers Weekly "Deep and moving truths fall out of this enchanting memoir, as deafness becomes a means of exploring the grave obstacles we all face in knowing what it is like to be another." — Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, author of *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction* "This beautiful book is about listening; really listening; to children, history, and one's own knowing heart. It's an exquisite memoir, crossed with poetry and the unmistakable shine of truth." — Catherine Newman, author of *Waiting for Birdy* "With profound honesty and endearing humility, Rosner writes about the searing emotional challenges that parents can face, and about absorbing these lessons and moving into deeper wisdom. A beautiful, deeply felt exploration of love and hard choices." — Josh Swiller, author of *The Unheard: A Memoir of Deafness and Africa* "This wrenching journey into deafness from the standpoint of a mother, a wife, a daughter, a philosopher, and a Jew explores the meaning of sound in a soundless world. *If a Tree Falls* shows the extent to which what we hear comes not only from our contemporaries but from the people who came before us and those who will succeed us." — Ilan Stavans, author of *On Borrowed Words: A Memoir of Language* "Jennifer Rosner's *If a Tree Falls* is the kind of memoir that reminds the reader how we are all part of the same long line: complicated selves finding our way in a world that challenges us to discover our deeper resilience and untold strengths." — Vicki Forman, author of *This Lovely Life: A Memoir of Premature Motherhood* "Rosner turns what could have been a depressing story into a gentle meditation on sound and silence, love and family. She writes with honesty and empathy... She fills the discussion with philosophy and grace." — Publishers Weekly; "Deep and moving truths fall out of this enchanting memoir, as deafness becomes a means of exploring the grave obstacles we all face in knowing what it is like to be another." — Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, author of *36 Arguments for the Existence of God: A Work of Fiction* "This beautiful book is about listening; really listening; to children, history, and one's own knowing heart. It's an exquisite memoir, crossed with poetry and the unmistakable shine

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I found this book to be very enlightening. My son is profoundly deaf. He was not born deaf but deafened shortly after birth by a drug interaction. He is two and has cochlear implants. When I read Ms. Rosner's account of learning of her own daughter's deafness I could understand her emotions. I was very interested in her thoughts about how her ancestors fared. How must it have been to be deaf in a world without technology or understanding? To be an outcast? I read this book in a day. It pulled me in completely. If you are looking for a good book that will keep you riveted try this.

The subject of 'A Family's Quest to Hear and be Heard,' is a central issue for every family. Jennifer Rosner's personal story of decisions and outcomes around deafness provoked my mindfulness about the major decisions I, and all parents make on behalf of their children. For these things alone I like this book and there are moments of beautiful writing. Personally I am also interested in deep spiritual, soulful enquiry. This is more of a family friendly book with a very wonderful relationship between the parents.

I have three daughters, two of whom are deaf due to Connexin 26. I expected this book to be only about her feelings, struggles and decisions she had to make, which I had also made. Instead, I found that this book used it as a thread weaving together a beautiful story. The theme of being heard or unheard was a theme that resonates with all of us and I enjoyed the thoughtful meditative narrative on that theme. What really made the book for me was her imagined prose of how it was for her deaf Jewish ancestors in an Eastern European shtetl. It was striking to me that these parents

had the resources, the mobility, higher education and many things most parents do not have when they are presented with a baby with hearing loss. I work with many families who do not have these advantages and it makes all the more difficult. I would like to have heard more about how her children felt, how they developed and what it meant to them. She skillfully wrote about the emotional turmoil in real terms without becoming overly sentimental. I highly recommend this book to anyone, not only people with an interest in deafness. This would be an amazing book club selection!

I needed to read a book about a Deaf family for one of my classes, and this book was great! It is kind of side, but I like how it compares what Deaf culture and life was like back in the late 1800s to now in the 2000s. It's a pretty quick read and it's heartwarming. I've definitely learned about Deaf culture through this book and it provides me a lot of insight for my future career.

I have never before posted a review, but I am doing so for *If a Tree Falls*, because I love the book. A dozen of my friends also read it, and they all agreed: this is a compelling story that every woman can relate to as a daughter and/or mother. Jennifer's struggles to make the right decisions for her daughters, keeping in mind their medical, intellectual and emotional needs, resonated with me. Her frankness in telling her poignant, thought-provoking story drew me in right from the start. Although everyone is bound to enjoy Jennifer's three storylines, her book will appeal particularly to parents who have had to come to terms with a child's medical problem, deliberate the best course of treatment and incorporate medical appointments and therapies into daily life. Rosner inspires parents by sharing how she has done all that for her own daughters, all the while striving to maintain a sense of normalcy for them and infuse their lives with joy.

Excellent book. Not a lot on helping parents decide what approach is best but encourages peace within your decision as parents.

Excellent, heartfelt story of a parent's choice to provide cochlear implants for listening and spoken language development

I like that this book tries to uncover their family's history of deafness. I enjoyed going through the emotions the mother felt when she wants her children to hear and to be heard.

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