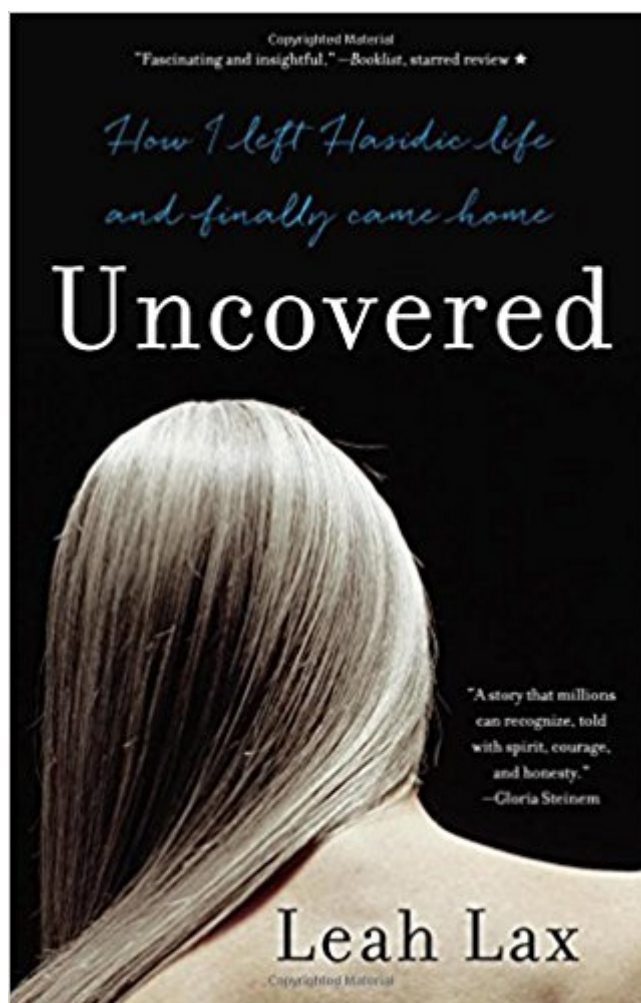


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# Uncovered: How I Left Hasidic Life And Finally Came Home



## Synopsis

In *Uncovered*, Leah Lax tells her story--beginning as a young teen who left her liberal, secular home for life as a Hasidic Jew and ending as a forty-something woman who has to abandon the only world she's known for thirty years in order to achieve personal freedom. In understated, crystalline prose, Lax details her experiences with arranged marriage, fundamentalist faith, and motherhood during her years with the Hasidim, and explores how her creative, sexual, and spiritual longings simmer beneath the surface throughout her time there. The first memoir to tell of a gay woman who spent years in the Hasidic fold, *Uncovered* is the moving story of Lax's journey toward finding a home where she truly belongs.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Leah Lax has won awards in both fiction and nonfiction and her work has been included in numerous anthologies and publications, print and online--including *Dame*, *Lilith*, and *Salon*. Her work for stage has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, and *Rolling Stone* magazine, and has been broadcast on NPR. She has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Houston.

â œFascinating and insightful . . .â •â "Booklist, Starred Reviewâ œSomething new is afoot in *Uncovered*. Lax tells a story that resists codified narratives and breaks through to a new way of understanding the world.â •â "Lambda Literaryâ œA truly mesmerizing memoir.â •â "Redbookâ œThis is a remarkable book.â •â "OutSmart Magazineâ œIn *Uncovered*, Leah Lax tells a personal story that millions of women can recognize. All over the world are women

whose bodies are covered, not by their own decision, but by one of the many patriarchal religions that by definition rule their wombs. Leah Lax lived that life, yet has the spirit, courage and honesty to tell her story. It's been said that, if one woman told the truth, the world would split open. If others follow her, it just might.

• "Gloria Steinem's *Aching*, absorbingly told, and with genuine tenderness toward the damaged, struggling, and sometimes helpful souls who populate a life, *Uncovered* is a marvelous memoir, one in which any reader will find echoes of our own quests for an authentic life.

• "Mark Doty, National Book Award author of *Fire to Fire*, *Firebird*, and *Deep Lane* "Absolutely stunning! With memorable, passionate detail, Leah Lax recounts a unique search for wholeness and healing that paradoxically plunged her into the quicksand of shame. Written in poetic prose whose color and savor will linger long after you finish the book, this memoir makes the flickering appeal of a life of inflexible rules as seductively clear as it is claustrophobic " a remarkable achievement. Dramatic, revelatory, deeply moving, and ultimately inspiring, this is a truly one-of-a-kind memoir about the universal longing to discover, nurture, and celebrate one's authentic self.

• "Lev Raphael, author of *My Germany: A Jewish Author Returns to the World His Parents Escaped* "In this courageous, important book, Leah Lax reveals a voice once doubly silenced by orthodox religion " as a woman and a lesbian " on a deeply moving journey to selfhood. Should be required reading!

• "Sandi DuBowski, Director, *Trembling Before G-d* "In *Uncovered*, Leah Lax remembers in rich detail how she moved from loneliness through what promised to be a new family and a new community, into a pure appreciation of the world " and how, instead, it suppressed her deepest needs. Her book is a profound and poignant story of innocence and experience, those ancient universals, and transforming joy at the end.

• "Rosellen Brown, author of the New York Times bestseller *Before and After* "Uncovered is masterful " searingly honest and lyrically rendered.

• "American Library Association, *GLBT Reviews* "Dealing with abortion, LGBT identity, and Hasidic life, this story is too complex to fit neatly into the "ex-Hasidic memoir craze " but that makes it all the richer.

• "Flavorwire "The defining magic of this memoir is in every immediate detail . . . I found *Uncovered* to be uplifting in its honesty.

• "Portland Book Review "Several memoirs detailing desperate escapes from Hasidic life have been published in the last year . . . But Leah Lax's memoir has managed to stand out from the crowd with some major differences.

• "Jewish Book Council "Lax's gifts " uncommon intelligence, a poetic sensibility, an eye skilled at discerning the telling detail " make her story lyrical, ruminative, and profound; she is able to impart the events of her life with a spiritual glow that shimmers long after the last page has been turned.

• "Lilith magazine "Lax is a gifted writer and her prose is captivating . . . *Uncovered* is a worthwhile read.

• "The Jerusalem Post

I read a lot of memoirs, but this is one that certainly deserves 5 stars. The author gives a vivid description of her life as a Hasidic Jew--the arranged marriage, raising her children, the rituals, the role of women in the community and in the home. Her writing style is crisp, clear, and heartfelt. But the book is really about individuation, about the author's journey to becoming her own true self--and for this reason I believe it will resonate with a broad audience, men and women, gay and straight. A quiet book that is also bold and generous, especially as the author shares the risks and challenges--and joys--that come with major life decisions at mid-life. I highly recommend it.

A wonderful book, 'Uncovered' is vivid and compelling, spanning the spiritual to the painful, the crushing to the triumphant. Extraordinarily frank about her most intimate thoughts and experiences, the author carried me not only into her life, but back into my own. On the surface, 'Uncovered' relates the journey of a maturing woman living as a Hasidic Jew after leaving a difficult family environment. Non-Jews, like myself, interested in what it feels like to lead this other life, will find 'Uncovered' fascinating. However, as much as I learned about the Hasidim, this is not what makes this book important to me personally. Although I do not share the author's religious background, gender, or family trauma, I clearly see myself in 'Uncovered'. This is both because the author so vividly portrays her inner life and because she chronicles struggles that I (and doubtless everyone) must deal with. I recognize in her a person, like myself, who was burdened with unwanted challenges and shrouded misconceptions about self and world. "Uncovered" becomes a metaphor for our discovering the scars of life and consequent misunderstandings, so difficult to recognize from the inside. For me, life's major challenge has been to find the scars and to discover, confront, and discard my many misconceptions. I've learned this difficult, but the author shows it can be done. In that sense 'Uncovered' is a tutorial by example of how to engage ethical, authentic life and to uncover and meet true self. I'm halfway through 'Uncovered' a second time. Rich and deep, on second reading it's a new book. I feel like I've met a new person and made a friend. A thoughtful and valuable book that would have helped me as a young adult needing a model for discarding obsolete notions and moving on to a new life.

Leah Lax's book "Uncovered" held me rapt. What Lax reveals in her book, the deep, underlying emotions, fears, and joys, is exceptional, and I am grateful for her willingness to be so transparent. I know it must have cost a lot. This is an inspiring book. It gave me insight into an unfamiliar culture. Lax treated the Hasidic community with respect throughout her book even when pushing against its

confines herself.

I, too, first heard an excerpt from UNCOVERED at the the Vermont Studio Center where Leah read from an early draft. It was riveting then and even more so now that I have the whole of it to read and share. One of the great things about this book, apart from Lax's effortless prose, is how she manages to tell her story without rancor or blame. She takes responsibility for the choices she made, first as a fervently observant Hassidic woman and later as an apostate. She honors traditions that she can no longer follow and respects the people she left behind. There is so much love in the telling that the reader can almost forgive the perpetrators of what I'll call "the consequences of orthodoxy."

Just finished this memoir. Stunning book. Her writing style is so beautiful and thoughtful. I hated for the book to end, actually. Leah Lax is a brave woman who chose a path as a teenager and realized in adulthood she needed to go down a different road. It's a thoroughly absorbing read. Although she left the Hasidic life and her husband, she treats both with respect in her memoir. I absolutely loved this book. Highly recommend.

It's a busy time of year. I thought, I'll just read a few pages then put it down until I have more time. Okay, maybe I'll just read another chapter, maybe two. Well, I couldn't put it down. Every time I put it down it called to me, saying "More! More!" This book is about discovering and then telling the truth about ourselves. It is about becoming authentic. The title and summary focuses on leaving the Hasidic life and coming out as a lesbian. But my summation is that it's about listening to that inner voice who knows our genuine yearnings and passions and responding to it. One more thing, I usually only "read" audibles because I have a daily long commute. I couldn't wait for an audible version so I bought this in hardback. But the author is so genuine in this telling that it is like an audible; one hears her voice telling the story. I highly recommend this for book clubs!

I had no idea what I was getting into when I started this book since I did not read any summary. As I read, the various perspectives that readers would bring to the reading began to present themselves. Both devout and rebellious Hasidic eyes are seeing Leah's true life unfold. Stifled women see they have a voice and must find it. Leah emerges from her orthodox woman's life into that of a happy lesbian woman, seeking a newly defined God. She realized that truth was always present even if she could not speak it. Her path to self discovery came through the process of memoir writing which

led her to expanded horizons and speaking her truth to herself.

This book grabs your heart and your mind and does not let go. Although it is about the author and her incredible journey--from garden variety Jewish Dallas daughter to Hassidic wife and mother to Gay ex-Hassidic wife and lover--it never feels narcissistic. Her pose is lean but warm. She shares clear insights into the inner lives of herself and the other players in this story without shirking responsibility or dumping blame. As a storyteller, there is nothing Leah lacks.

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