

Marion Elizabeth Witte

Author Biography



Marion Witte was raised on a farm on the North Dakota prairie, where she lived with her mother, father, older brother and younger sister until she was 18.

Conditions inside the Witte household were often as brutal as the outdoor winters. Disobedience was severely punished and Marion in particular was the target of her mother's wrath. She was beaten for the slightest offense and locked in a terrifyingly dark cellar. The violent dysfunction seemed contagious -- Marion's brother once slaughtered her beloved pet rabbits with a shotgun in a fit of anger.

In her compelling memoir, "Little Madhouse on the Prairie," Witte vividly describes how abandonment, alcoholism, isolation and unhappiness plagued her family for generations, creating a perfect storm of child abuse. We learn of her parents' and grandparents' grueling struggles as they scratched out livings on the harsh Midwestern plains, where lessons were taught by beatings and children were seen, never heard.

Witte's great compassion and clear-eyed perspective elevates "Little Madhouse on the Prairie" beyond a story of violence. By shedding light on the cultural roots of her own abuse, Witte sets the stage for a way out of the cycle of violence against all children. "Little Madhouse on the Prairie" is an impassioned plea for action to extend human rights to the planet's youngest citizens. Her memoir also suggests ways one can heal from the wounds of abuse. Left untreated, she writes, those wounds can lead to self-destruction, and turn an abused child into an abusive adult.

Witte finally escaped her misery by attending college, where she excelled academically and graduated in three years at the top of her class with a degree in business administration and accounting. She passed the CPA exam while a junior, becoming one of the youngest CPAs in the country that year.

Yet even as her career soared she was haunted by the emotional damage she had suffered as a child and which followed her into adulthood. In 1991, she began the long road to emotional recovery. In 2007, Witte sold her successful business to provide the funding necessary to pursue her passion – empowering children. She established the Angel Heart Foundation, whose vision is "All Children Deserve a Safe and Just World."

Witte lives in Ventura, California, not far from her daughter, Angela.