

## About the Book

Hoarders collect to excess, filling bathtubs, closets, kitchens, garages, storage sheds—floor-to-ceiling—to render their living spaces uninhabitable. They're so consumed they lose jobs, family and friends, homes, health, and occasionally their lives. To the rest of us, these people seem bizarre or mentally ill, and we view their challenges with impatience, frustration and simplistic answers.

Yet a true fix isn't so simple.

But *My Husband's Under Here Somewhere* strives to unearth them.

Morbidly fascinating tales abound as the lives of hoarders who amass animals and collectors who spin out of control are examined. The science behind hoarding—including its link with Obsessive-Compulsive disorders—as well as promising forms of treatment, meet with consideration. Our materialistic culture, one that's obsessed with having more and more, further informs the narrative.

Certain types of stockpiling stem from challenging life experiences. A fellow who'd been imprisoned in a Russian Gulag spent the remainder of his days amassing keys. Jodin, a resistance fighter during World War II, is a consummate saver of twine. For her, a possession of such insignificance once meant the difference between extinction and survival. As a boy, Norman's father insisted the house be kept as neat as a pin. Should anything fall out of place—absolutely anything—and he got beaten. So nowadays, he thoroughly enjoys his messes and views them as a way to get even.

Ordinary hoarders and extreme collectors notwithstanding, they're also found among the rich and famous. Peter the Great kept a human zoo of freakish oddities, and also enjoyed excising his subjects' teeth, adding them to his vast assemblage. The hapless Collyer brothers crammed their Manhattan brownstone to the brim and accidentally entombed themselves within it. Unable to part with his shorn locks and nail clippings, Howard Hughes stored them away for "safekeeping."

Then there's China's remarkable Emperor Qin. After conquering all surrounding kingdoms, he constructed 270 palaces to live in. As if that weren't enough, he built roads and dug irrigation canals alongside, standardized laws, established a system of weights and measures, created a form of currency, and then formalized the use of written characters. While not a hoarder by today's standards, he was, quite possibly, the first to promulgate the axiom, "He who dies with the most toys wins."

Eccentricity, wealth and death aside, each of the aforementioned had way too much stuff, which is a problem familiar to most of us.

Dare to quest for answers about this, and our acquisitive culture must be examined.

Harnessing humor and compassion, *My Husband's Under Here Somewhere* does precisely that. As the first of its kind, this book of narrative non-fiction looks at hoarding and collecting as part of a continuum. And, while many self-help decluttering books and

hoarding-related memoirs, as well as works dealing with Obsessive-Compulsive Hoarding already exist, none of them focus on the psycho-spiritual ramifications of suffocating to death beneath heaps of possessions.

Hopefully, this publication will appeal to hoarders and collectors, as well as family, friends and neighbors impacted by the hoarder's behaviors. It's also for clinicians and public agencies in search of positive ways to respond. Lastly, it's for curious folks who seek to understand.