

Upfront

BOOKS

## Growing Up Judy

The latest from the famed kids' author is for adults



**G**ENERATIONS OF YOUNG readers have adored Judy Blume's novels, including the iconic *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*. But her new book, *In the Unlikely Event*, is for grownups. Set in her childhood hometown of Elizabeth, New Jersey, in the early '50s, it centers on a series of real-life plane crashes that occurred nearby.

**Did you write this book based on your memories of those events?**

I remembered the plane crashes, but I had to do a lot of research. And I checked the period detail, like was I wearing Pixie Pink lipstick in 1952? I was. Everybody was. I want to take readers back.

**Do you look back on that era fondly?**

I've always believed that the '50s were so boring, so bland. But, you know, there was a lot going on. It was going on in a way that was kind of undercover, though. Nobody I knew talked to their kids about real life. It was, "Don't upset the children; everything is great." I hated secrets, so I read a lot—all the books on the bookshelves at home—to try to learn the secrets of the adult world.

**What's up next for you?** I have no plans to ever write a complicated, intense book like this again. I've done it—and I'm glad I did it. I may want to write a memoir, from birth to 12. I can say to you, "I'm 77," but in my mind, it's a joke. I've always felt kind of 12. —Christina Ianzito

### Just Judy Facts

- **Number of books sold:** More than 85 million

- **Blume's *Forever* (1975),** which deals with teenage sexuality, was among the 10 books most targeted for censorship in the 1990s.

- **Recent book she loved:** 2013's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* by Karen Joy Fowler