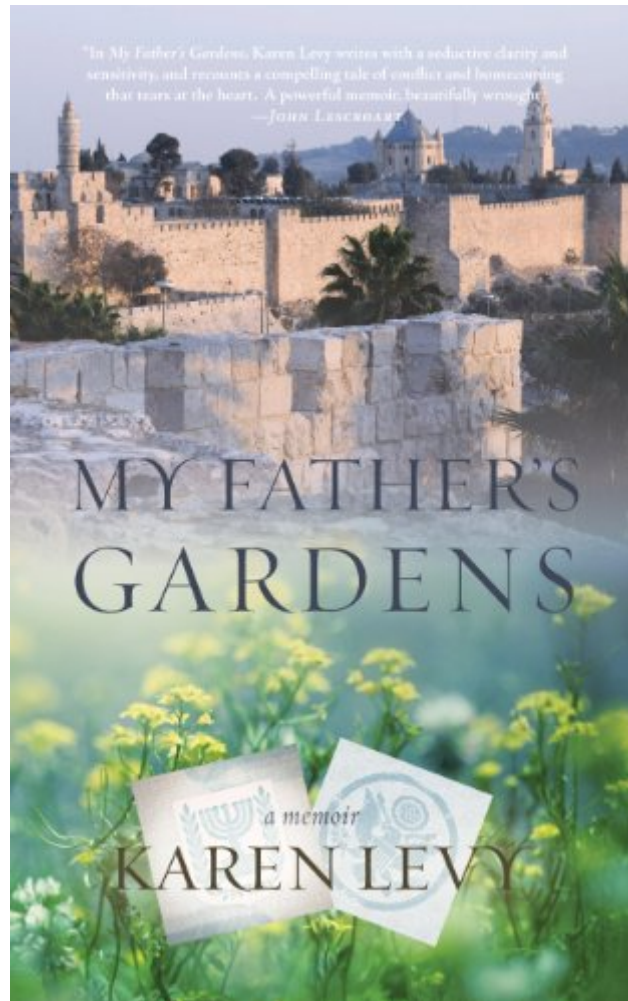




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My Father's Gardens



Synopsis

My Father's Garden is the story of a young girl who comes of age in two languages, and on two shores, between warring parents and rules that change depending on the landscape and the proximity of her mother. Struggling to find her voice and her place in the world as a result of her frequent travels between her native Israel and the United States, she feels that she must choose a place to call home. As her scenery alternates between warm Mediterranean and snow-capped mountains, loud-mouthed Israelis and polite Americans, so do her loyalties: Is she more Israeli or American? How will she know when she has arrived? And while she chooses she is slowly transplanting bits of her father's gardens on foreign soil.

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Customer Reviews

I absolutely loved the book! The author writes with such honesty and vulnerability. I didn't want to put it down. I hope Karen Levy will author more books!
Melinda Locke

The writing is superb and the images the words evoke so much! I loved the whole reading

experience and felt her love for her family, and the scents and the feel of her homeland.

My Father's Garden is a captivating memoir written by author Karen Levy. This memoir tells the story of how Levy had to grow up in two very different cultures that shaped her into the woman that she has become today. This memoir takes its readers on a wonderful spiritual journey from the Mediterranean shores of Israel, to the Californian coast, and showcases what it really means to live the American Dream as an outsider. In this memoir, Levy brings her readers into her world by including every little detail about her experiences that could help her tell her story in a very vivid way. In this memoir, the reader really feels as though they are living vicariously through Levy. Her family feels like the reader's family, and all of the events that happen to her feel so real that you have to put the book down to make sure that you aren't really in her crazy world. Levy makes sure to put the events in a chronological order, so it is easier for the reader to follow her on her journey. She sections off each of her chapters as a fragment of her overall memory, which is very interesting, and her clever titles keep the reader captivated. However, Levy tends to jump from her memories in America, to her memories in Israel very quickly, which can make the reader feel lost or disoriented. Although, I think this could be on purpose so that the reader can really put themselves in Levy's shoes since she herself was jumping in-between countries so quickly. This kind of connection helps the readers identify more with the author, and the memoir then becomes that much clearer, and easier for the reader to relate to. I believe that this book would best suit those who are interested in what it's like to grow up in another culture, and those who are interested in spiritual enlightenment.

The most substantial question that most people want to figure out at some point in their maturation process is who am I, and where do I belong. These are poignant questions for immigrants and the children of immigrants. But it can be an especially difficult question for someone not only with dual citizenship, but someone living in dual countries with dual cultures, languages, and customs. And this is the main conflict about which Karen Levy writes in this memoir. Also, in a sense, she comes from a dual family where there is such diversity of personality between the husband and wife that a constant war ensues. Karen Levy is born to Jewish parents of European descent in Israel. Her father, an academic, is invited to lecture at various colleges in the U.S.; hence, Karen comes to live in the U.S. periodically. Eventually, her parents separate, and she moves to Davis, CA with her mother and brother for her high school years. She returns to Israel to do military service, describes

her relationship with her very controlling mother and oblivious father (or so she thinks), writes about romantic relationships, friends, and the two cultures of the U.S. and Israel, in general. This I found to be very interesting. Her story is told in small vignants, some a paragraph long, and others up to five pages. Her voice is intimate and very emotionally appealing, and her choice of words and sentence structure a joy to read. And always she asks the question "where is home?" Does she find home in the house of her childhood in Israel, in her school, the arms of lovers? Just as she begins to fit in in one place, she is moved on to another and has to begin the process all over again. I really relate to her story since my family moved around a lot and I was always the new girl in school. This is a beautifully written book about a woman's life experiences and her great desire to stand on her own two feet, to be independent of family and culture, and to make strong life choices in her quest to find her psychological, spiritual, and literal home.

Teary-eyed, I want to ask Karen to keep writing her story; to keep reminding me of lost loves, lost grandparents and parents; to keep reminding me of my most beloved son left behind in order to selfishly expand my own horizons in a place I don't think of as home. Suffice it to say: Thank you, Karen!!

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