



Two Lives: A Memoir

By Vikram Seth

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Widely acclaimed as one of the world's greatest living writers, Vikram Seth -- author of the international bestseller *A Suitable Boy* -- tells the heartrending true story of a friendship, a marriage, and a century. Weaving together the strands of two extraordinary lives -- Shanti Behari Seth, an immigrant from India who came to Berlin to study in the 1930s, and Helga Gerda Caro, the young German Jewish woman he befriended and later married -- *Two Lives* is both a history of a violent era seen through the eyes of two survivors and an intimate, unforgettable portrait of a complex, abiding love.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Although listeners miss seeing the dozens of photographs in the print book that allow a person to visually study the principals of this wonderful double biography, audiobook fans are in for a rare but satisfying treat of their own: an author who can read his own work in a compelling and palpable manner. Seth is an excellent reader and his supporting cast of four, who read the numerous letters written to and by the main characters, Seth's great aunt and uncle, do a phenomenal job of bringing the written page alive. The entire package (except for the missing photos; how hard would it be to include a little booklet of them?) is of the highest caliber. Even the music that introduces the sections is fine enough that the composer is credited at the end of the book. Another bonus is a short interview with the author (although it does not provide much more insight than a listener has already gathered). The one complaint is that the four other readers are not appropriately credited for their individual roles, rather than receiving the blanket credit "letters read by."

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—At 17, the Indian-born author left his homeland to study at Oxford. He lived with his aunt and uncle, a middle-class English couple in every way except one—his Uncle Shanti was Indian and his Aunt Henny was a German Jew. Through interviews with his uncle and a trunk of correspondence from his aunt, he is able to tell their story. Readers learn that Shanti, a dentist, lost an arm, and that Henny lost all of her family during World War II. They learn the details of these losses and about the couple's romance. Shanti's story is told first and is in some ways very similar to the narrators. Henny's story takes up the majority of the book and consists largely of correspondence from before the war until several years after. Hers is mostly a Holocaust story that tells as much about the culture of the time as the woman herself. Finally, they marry, more out of convenience than love, but they stay contentedly together for more than 30 years. The final chapter, a discussion of their estate, seems somewhat rushed and tacked on after the slowly paced narrative that came before. Photographs are scattered throughout. The book is lengthy, but each fact shared is an important building block in telling the tale of this couple in the context of their era. A richly rewarding story.—*Jamie Watson, Harford County Public Library, MD*

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Equally at home producing a novel in sonnets or a cornucopian family saga, Seth has few equals as a literary technician. Here he turns to the story of Shanti and Henny, a great-uncle and great-aunt with whom he lived for a time in England. Shanti, an Indian dentist who did some training in Germany, lost an arm while serving in a British Army dental unit during the Second World War. His wife was a German Jew who fled to England in 1939, and whose mother and sister perished in concentration camps. The book is less dazzling than its predecessors, but this seems deliberate, as if Seth had adopted the mantle of dutiful family archivist a little too successfully. Nonetheless, his quiet tone has cumulative power as it leads us back in time from suburban calm to the death chambers of Birkenau.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kimberly Rubio:

This Two Lives: A Memoir are reliable for you who want to be a successful person, why. The key reason why of this Two Lives: A Memoir can be one of the great books you must have will be giving you more than just simple reading through food but feed a person with information that probably will shock your earlier knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions at e-book and printed ones. Beside that this Two Lives: A Memoir forcing you to have an enormous of experience including rich vocabulary, giving you tryout of critical thinking that we realize it useful in your day activity. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

Alex Miller:

Your reading sixth sense will not betray you, why because this Two Lives: A Memoir guide written by well-known writer who really knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written throughout good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still skepticism Two Lives: A Memoir as good book but not only by the cover but also by the content. This is one book that can break don't ascertain book by its include, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this kind of!? Oh come on your studying sixth sense already said so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Carolyn Berndt:

In this period globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to your account is Two Lives: A Memoir this publication consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented how does the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some study when he makes this book. This is why this book suitable all of you.

Irving Dorn:

Is it anyone who having spare time then spend it whole day through watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Two Lives: A Memoir can be the reply, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are so out of date, spending your time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a geek activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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