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Growing Up Jewish In Small Town America: A Memoir

GROWING UP JEWISH IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA: A MEMOIR



Elaine Fantle Shimberg



Synopsis

This book will make you laugh and might make you cry as you remember life in the 40's and 50's whether you come from a small town or not. You certainly do not have to be Jewish to enjoy this book. It will remind you of the days of Roy Rogers and The Shadow, when popcorn was 5 cents a bag at the movies. You'll laugh as Elaine tells about her adventures as an ear of corn and of playing "Mary" in the Christmas play. A tear might be shed when you learn of the 'sugar' episode, but you'll come away proud of a small town girl who used every scrap of imagination to reach her goals.

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Customer Reviews

Elaine Fantle Shimberg writes an extraordinary paean to growing up Jewish in a small, not-so-Jewish town. She shows how connected family helps one survive the unique cultural pressures of being just a little "different" and even the very few teenage Jewish couples dancing closely at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church socials can manage to "leave some space for the Holy Spirit" as they were frequently reminded by watchful Clergy. *Growing Up Jewish In Small Town America* is a charming and revealing memoir that you don't have to be Jewish to love---as the 80's Levy's Rye Bread subway advertisements proclaimed. With delicious comic timing, an ear for dialogue and an eye for detail, Shimberg captures both the tenderness and difficulties of finding common ground in a diverse childhood. Oh--I adored it. --Sherry Suib Cohen, author of 24 books and I wish I'd written this one You don't have to be Jewish to love Elaine Fantle Shimberg's book *Growing Up Jewish In Small Town America*. This is a must-read for anyone who grew up in small town America in the 40's and 50's. You're sure to be moved by Shimberg's sweet memories and

vivid details of radio programs like the Shadow and Boston Blackie, of Saturday double feature movies when popcorn was five cents a bag, of the first time she realized that being Jewish made her different from any of her friends. Shimberg describes herself in the book as a klutz (a clumsy person) when it comes to sports. As a writer, she is a shaynah maidel (beautiful girl). My only criticism -- This book is too short. I want more. --Judy Mandell, Writer of books and articles on popular culture, aging, women's health, etc. You'll laugh; you'll cry; you'll kvell. Elaine has written a warm, charmingly detailed memory of growing up Jewish... I loved reading about life in Fort Dodge, Iowa. I loved that Elaine was an ear of corn in the holiday pageants. I loved this book. You will too. --Bonnie Kohn Remsberg Award winning author & Host, Some of My Best Friends, NBC-TV, Chicago.

Elaine Fantle Shimberg is the author of twenty-two books and five children's books. She writes about health subjects and family issues, including Tourette Syndrome, writing, and blending families. GROWING UP JEWISH IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA: A MEMOIR describes her life in Fort Dodge, Iowa and what it was like to be Jewish with only thirty-two Jewish families. Shimberg has appeared on the TODAY show and AM CHICAGO and is the author of numerous magazine articles in Reader's Digest, Glamour, Seventeen, Woman's Day, and others. For five years she co-hosted a women's talk show on WFLA-TV in Tampa. She is a Northwestern graduate, is married, and lives in Tampa, Florida, spending her summers in Maine. She has five adult children and ten grandchildren.

good book The Fantles Store in Fort Dodge was a landmark for many years until it burned down. Took out all most a block

This was not at all what I expected...it is a memoir of the growing up years of an intelligent, precocious, privileged young woman. I am glad I read it, but would not recommend it to anyone looking for an in-depth story about most Jewish families. This is about the family of successful, well-off merchants. I purchase many books, and other items, from and appreciate the wide selection available.

Tidbits of Jewish customs and history are woven throughout Elaine Fantle Shimberg's delightful memoir of a typical small town girl with whom we can easily identify. After all, I'm sure many of us swiped something from the dime store, got found out, and still have the tainted object (in my neighborhood it was almost a rite of passage). GROWING UP JEWISH IN SMALL TOWN

AMERICA is a mirror of the lives of many kids growing up in the 1940s and '50s, regardless of their family's religious beliefs. Shimberg's keen sense of humor shines through, making this memoir both a picture of one girl's experience and a reflection of our society as it was before the advent of computers and cellphones. If you remember ration books and oleomargarine, you'll love reliving the memories. If you're "too young" for Captain Video, GROWING UP JEWISH IN SMALL TOWN AMERICA is a fun way to learn about the post-war years. This book is a quick read and a real treat! Reviewed by Laurie Loveman Author of the Firehouse Family Mysteries: MEMORIES, THE QUARRY, THE FARM FIRES and DEMISE OF THE HORSE FAIRY

Among the numerous delights in Elaine Fantle Shimberg's latest release, "Growing Up Jewish in Small Town America: A Memoir", are the inclusion of quotes that speak as much to Jewish culture and philosophy as they do to the universally bewildering dichotomy of wanting to blend in and yet still stand out as unique. Shimberg's fond recollections of being one of the 32 Jewish families living in 1940's Fort Dodge, Iowa are funny, conversational and reminiscent of a safer era in which kids could ride their bicycles after dusk down neighborhood streets and not worry about ending up on the back of a milk carton. The black and white captioned photographs sprinkled throughout the text are sweet frosting on an already delicious cake, and it's easy to see how the young Elaine's curiosity, daredevil sense of adventure, and unabashed mirth laid the foundation for such a successful career as an author, columnist and talk show host when she grew up. As a former actress, I can likewise find much to relate to in her anecdotes about treading the boards as the Virgin Mary at her kindergarten's Christmas pageant and turning her time in the spotlight into a boisterous solo of "Rock a Bye Baby". That she disavows blame or credit for her embarrassed teacher later joining a convent is one of many humorous postscript remarks guaranteed to have liquid come out of your nose if you're foolish enough to be drinking while reading. What I especially admire about Shimberg's breezy and approachable style is that she doesn't resort to one of the common practices of others who have penned life stories; specifically, their penchant for analyzing, interpreting and justifying actions and events from the 20/20 perspective of adulthood instead of just relating them from the innocence of memory. Though written decades after-the-fact, the voice in which she whimsically brings her past to life is that of an inquisitively impatient young adult who wants to rush headlong into the future and yet recognizes that - like Dorothy from "The Wizard of Oz" - everything that defines her true values has not only been with her all along but was shaped by the experiences of her ancestors, themselves strangers once upon a time in a strange land. Shimberg's book will resonate as much with teenagers starting out on their own journey as it

will with well traveled adults caught up in the introspection of all the roads not taken. If I have any criticism at all of the book, it's that it was much too short. One can only hope that this exceptional storyteller has many more chapters and pictures up her sleeve that will entertain us in the coming years. Christina Hamlett Author of *Movie Girl*

Elaine Fantle Shimberg took me on a tour of her upbringing in Iowa where she and her family were part of a small community of Jewish residents in the mid 1900s. Her stories struck a chord of familiarity in me and I'm sure they will do the same for others, especially Baby Boomers who are watching the world change so dramatically. This is a mid-western, hometown slice-of-life that goes beyond a Jewish experience and reaches into the past in a cozy, heartfelt manner uplifting to everyone. Young people should read it and be amazed at the world their parents and grandparents knew!

In this delightful memoir Elaine Fantle Shimberg brings to life the feel of small-town mid-twentieth-century America from the special vantage point of a feisty, creative child whose family was among a handful of Jewish residents. Readers of any religion will enjoy reading about the young Elaine's adventures in a bygone time. *The Complete Book of Breastfeeding, 4th edition: The Classic Guide*

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