

My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan

By Hiner Saleem

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This beautiful, spare, autobiographical narrative tells of the life of a Kurd named Azad as he grows to manhood in Iraq during the 1960s and 1970s. Azad is born into a vibrant village culture that hopes for a free Kurdish future. He loves his mother's orchard, his cousin's stunt pigeons, his father's old Czech rifle, his brother who is fighting in the mountains. But before he is even of school age, Azad has seen friends and neighbors assassinated, and his own family driven to starvation.

After being forced into a refugee camp in Iran for years, his family realizes, on their return, that the Baathist regime is destroying the autonomy it had promised their people. *My Father's Rifle* ends with Azad's heartbreaking departure from his parents and flight across the Syrian border to freedom.

Stunning in its unadorned intensity, *My Father's Rifle* is a moving portrait of a boy who embraces the land and culture he loves, even as he leaves them.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Using a child's unsparing, detailed eye, this boyhood chronicle of life in embattled 1960s and '70s Kurdistan portrays a time of soaring nationalist pride, family tragedy and government betrayal. With stirring lyricism, Saleem writes of his oppressed Iraqi homeland, his mother's fruit-laden orchard, his cousin's stunt pigeons, his father's ancient Czech rifle and his own place in a unified village community where every man would fight for the Kurdish way of life. Saleem and his family join those Kurds who, leery of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party's promises of peace, flee to the mountains, where they put up fierce resistance and are finally forced across the Iranian border into refugee camps. After the Iraqi government eventually prompts the Kurds to return to their villages, Hussein then moves hundreds of Arabs to their territories to establish homes and businesses, transforming much of Kurdistan into a haven for true believers in the Baath Party, although the Kurdish *peshmerga* (volunteer fighters) continue to battle for their homeland. Saleem's family goes home, but the Baath pressure forces the author and his brothers to settle in Europe; his sister remains in a concentration camp (and thus is not able to attend their father's funeral). Saleem, who's now a filmmaker in Paris, offers a haunting, sympathetic account of a young life amid the horrors of a war zone.
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From The New Yorker
Saleem, the son of a Kurdish guerrilla, narrates his harrowing memoir of his family's experiences in Iraq during the nineteen-sixties and seventies from the naïve perspective of his childhood self. At one point, the family, demoralized by the murder of relatives and the destruction of their home by collaborators, flee to Iran. Later, faced with a choice between repatriation or extermination, they return and are officially labelled aïdoun—meaning "fallen back into line." At school, Saleem attends classes taught in a language he doesn't understand (Arabic) and witnesses his young niece die when a doctor refuses to treat a "terrorist's daughter." At eighteen, Saleem concludes that war will never advance the Kurdish cause, and he leaves his family and the country he loves.
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From Booklist
At the opening of this slim, potent memoir, Saleem chronicles his coming-of-age as an Iraqi Kurd whose family fought to reestablish an independent Kurdistan. The political and military horrors are here: Saddam Hussein rises to power, concentration camps are built, Kurds who speak against the regime disappear. Saleem, now a filmmaker living in France, shows with cinematic precision how these larger events affect his family members--the enormous, private sacrifices of home, security, love, and identity that they are forced to make. And he creates a poignant sense of what it's like to work through archetypal adolescent challenges during such terrifying upheaval. The narrative doesn't always transition smoothly between scenes, but Saleem writes with searing imagery about the landscape, the politics, and the small moments and gestures that reveal the largest emotions and truths. An enlightening memoir of struggle about a region on the forefront of most Americans' minds. Suggest also Christiane Bird's *A Thousand Sighs, a Thousand Revolts* [BKL My 15 04] for more background about Iraqi Kurds. *Gillian Engberg*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christine Curnutt:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Reserve is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each guide has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They can be reading whatever they get because their hobby is actually reading a book. What about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, person feel need book once they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will need this My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan.

Effie Phillips:

As people who live in the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or data even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era and that is always change and move forward. Some of you maybe may update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you is you don't know what one you should start with. This My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, as this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Jewel Tarr:

That guide can make you to feel relax. This specific book My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan was vibrant and of course has pictures on there. As we know that book My Father's Rifle: A Childhood in Kurdistan has many kinds or genre. Start from kids until teens. For example Naruto or Investigation company Conan you can read and believe you are the character on there. Therefore not at all of book are generally make you bored, any it can make you feel happy, fun and chill out. Try to choose the best book to suit your needs and try to like reading that.

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