



I Want This in Writing: Heroes. Rogues. Family. Two Centuries of Survival

Yoram Rubin

Bookworm Press

(263pp)

979-821886009-7

With wry humor and an empathetic spirit, the memoir I Want This In Writing takes a nonlinear path to the stories of people from two paternal branches.

Yoram Rubin traces his family history through generations of resilience, rebellion, grudges, and miracles in his thoughtful memoir *I Want This in Writing*.

Growing up, Rubin knew better than to ask his parents about where they came from and what happened to their families before they arrived in Israel. But the ghosts of the past, both named and unnamed, were always present in his parents' behavior and in that of the relatives who would never speak to them or visit on special occasions. It was only as an older adult that Rubin pieced together the full story of how his father's flawed, complex family broke apart time and again but still managed to survive.

With wry humor and an empathetic spirit, the book takes a nonlinear path as it explores key events and family connections that affected the lives of two branches of Rubin's father's family. It draws on family memories, supplemented by research done by Rubin and others, to illuminate corners of the past that Rubin was never told about as a child. These included tragic mistakes repeated from one generation to the next, with one disappointed father after another cutting off contact with his son, as well as more peaceful moments, as when Rubin and his father worked together on Kharg Island.

The book is filled with strong personalities. These include historical people like the rebellious nineteenth-century academic Solomon Rubin as well as people who shaped Rubin's life in more direct ways, like his Aunt Hava, who approached life with clear eyes and an unforgettable fashion sense. Their stories complicate straightforward, accepted narratives about Jewish life before and during World War II in revealing ways: Rubin's father watched crowds applaud as Jewish people were killed during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, but he also declared that the Soviet occupation of Poland was the happiest time of his life.

As he reflects on his family's contentious history, Rubin also interrogates his own fraught relationship with his father and grapples with the complex feelings that his family's story brings to the surface, as with the stomach-dropping moment when he met his grandfather for the first and only time. His personal reflections reinforce a hard lesson: that time doesn't heal all wounds, but patience and effort can make them easier to live with. However, the use of italics to separate the main narrative from Rubin's personal musings is sometimes unnecessary, while in other cases his thoughts are too illustrative to relegate to asides. Inconsistencies with dating and spellings throughout the book create moments of confusion.

I Want This in Writing is an absorbing memoir about how even unspoken memories can shape a family.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (April 28, 2026)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a

positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.