

Not a storybook marriage, but a compelling story

By Carolyn Gold

*Nine Lives of a Marriage—
A Curious Journey*

By Eva Friedlander,

°with Mickey Goodman

www.ninelivesofamarriage.com

My doctor husband used to say, “The war never ends for some people.” He was referring to those with war injuries such as amputations. Now, with the appearance of many memoirs by Holocaust survivors, we see the evidence of injuries other than physical.

It is fortunate for us that these books are being written. For those of us whose parents and grandparents immigrated to America either before or just after World War I, we are made to realize, again, how lucky we were.

Reading memoirs such as Eva Friedlander’s just published *Nine Lives of a Marriage—A Curious Journey*, we feel the myriad ramifications of World War II

on the human psyche. Knowing Eva personally, I marvel after reading her life story that she is the kind, intelligent, caring person that she is today.

The book starts out in her native Hungary, where teenager Eva and her mother have started a secretarial business in order to earn a living. Her father has left to live with his mistress.

Eva meets the handsome and brilliant George Friedlander, who comes to her as a customer. They both recount their wartime experiences. George was

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interred in three Nazi labor camps. During the bombing of Budapest, Eva and her mother lived with strangers in a cellar, where the one delicacy she had was fresh horsemeat. George later became a prisoner of the Communists and suffered horrible interrogations and beatings.

The story, which is written like a novel and very well done, follows the next phase of their lives in Rome. It describes their romance and their ingenuity in finding work for survival. These were happy days for the newly married couple.

Finally, they get their dreamed-of visas to the United States and manage to arrive in Atlanta, via the Port of New Orleans. George’s skill as a chemist provides the income that helps them establish a home

and, eventually, a family. Eva’s skill with antiques and art leads her to interesting careers at Rich’s and the Atlanta Decorative Art Center. However, George’s narcissism and need for attention results in several affairs, one of which complicates their lives for more than 45 years.

The reader will marvel at the honesty and compassion Eva Friedlander shows for her mother, who remains in Hungary, and her children growing up in Atlanta; her ability to deal with financial failure as well as success; and, finally, her devotion to an unfaithful but terminally ill, husband—who still awakens screaming from wartime nightmares.

Nine Lives of a Marriage—A Curious Journey is a tour de force of true stories, life problems, and marital history that reveals much about human psychology, the will to survive, doing right, and, ultimately, love.



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