



Just Passing Through: A German-American Family Saga

Hans Peter Zell

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Just Passing Through is the story of a German family caught up in the political maelstrom of the *Third Reich*. The author's mother was born in Frankfurt on Main into a middle-class family and at age eighteen married a Jewish businessman with whom she had two children. When the Nazis came to power and began to persecute the Jews, the couple got a divorce and while he left for America taking their son with him, their daughter remained in Germany with her mother. Unable to remarry because she was classified as a non-Aryan and to keep her daughter from being caught up in the Holocaust, the author's mother had four more children--all by state sanctioned Aryan fathers. In her affection and care, she was partial to the author but indifferent and abusive toward his younger siblings. After the war, the author's half-sister immigrated to America and brought over the rest of the family. In a section entitled *Three Lives*, the author discusses his ancestors, the stormy relationships among the family members, and their different experiences in pursuit of their fortunes on two continents. The work begins with *A German Childhood* in which the author describes his adventures during the Second World War, including the apocalyptic firebombing of his hometown of Stuttgart by the western Allies, and his first years after the war in Germany and the United States.



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