



The Leopard Hat: A Daughter's Story

Valerie Steiker

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In this tender loving memoir, Valerie Steiker evokes a magical childhood on the Upper East side of New York with a woman whose own losses led her to delight in family, beauty and life itself.

Valerie Steiker's Belgian Jewish mother, Gisèle—who, as a child in Antwerp, was hidden from the Nazis—wasn't a typical American mom. She spoke with throaty Belgian Rs and wore only high heels. Before her marriage, she had studied acting with Lee Strasburg and been a model in Mexico. With her vitality and elegance, she created a joyous childhood for Valerie and her sister. Together they tangoed through their vibrant Manhattan apartment, took in great art, and shared "women's hidden secrets." Gisèle's premature death left Valerie (at the time a junior at Harvard) unmoored, but in grieving and in finding her own path to womanhood, Valerie would ultimately grow to understand Gisèle more profoundly than she ever had as a child. Beautifully evocative of a glamorous and now-vanished world, **The Leopard Hat** is an extraordinary memoir about the warm and indelible bond between mother and daughter.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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