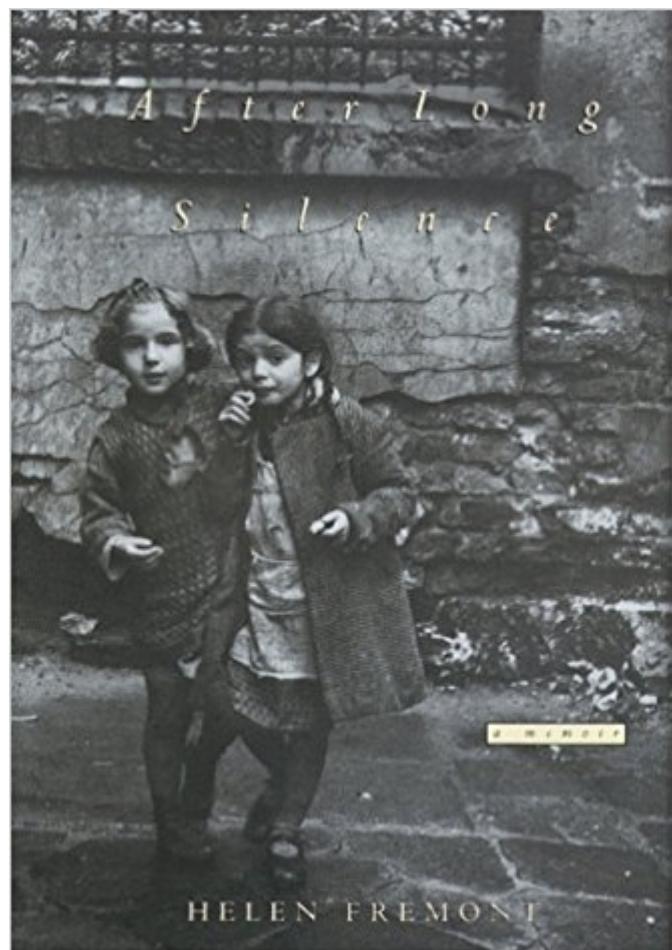


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After Long Silence: A Memoir



Synopsis

Helen Fremont was raised Roman Catholic in America, only to discover in adulthood that her parents were Jews who had survived the Holocaust. Delving into the extraordinary secrets that held her family together in a bond of silence for more than forty years, she recounts with heartbreakingly clarity and candor a remarkable tale of survival, as vivid as fiction but with the eloquence of truth. When Helen was small, her mother taught her the sign of the cross in six languages. There was the tender conspiracy of a little girl and her mother at bedtime, protected by a God who could respond in any language. What she didn't understand was that she was being equipped with proof of her Catholicism, a hedge against persecution, real or imagined. It wasn't until adulthood that she began to comprehend the terrible irony of her mother's gesture, as she and her sister discovered their parents' remarkable, long-held secret. She knew that her father had spent six years in the Siberian Gulag, surviving nearly on will alone; that her mother's elder sister, fearless and proud, had married an Italian Fascist whose title and connections helped them to survive during the war. But their faith, their legacy as Jews, was kept hidden for decades. After Long Silence is a searching inquiry into the meaning of identity, self, and history. It's about the devastating price of hiding the truth; about the steps we take, foolish or wise, to protect ourselves and our loved ones. No one who reads this book can be left unmoved, or fail to understand the seductive, damaging power of secrets.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vintage Tepper. And a lovely piece of work it is. Jubal, a planet in the process of colonization by

humans, is a world full of strange and wonderful things, some amusing, some dangerous. The Presences, large crystalline structures scattered throughout the land, are dangerous, and they are everywhere, preventing easy travel between settlements. They can be passed only with the aid of a Tripsinger, a trained vocalist and musician who accompanies a group of travelers and, in essence, sings the party past the fragile crystal mountains. Each structure requires a different song; the song seems to set up some sort of counter-resonance peculiar to the individual structure that prevents the crystal from fracturing due to the vibrations made by the mules, wagons, and humans as they pass. Even one wrong note could cause a potentially fatal shatter. One structure, called Enigma, has thus far proven impassable: no one has discovered the proper song which will allow safe passage. Except, perhaps, one person. And then there are those who want to see the Presences destroyed because they hinder free trade and easy commerce. A strange cult which worships the Presences has also arisen. Amid much intra-planetary politics, money grubbing, and, umm, a few alluded-to deviant sex games, the fates of Jubal and the Presences will be decided. In this early novel, Tepper establishes some of her touchstone themes which she continues to develop in her later work: responsible use of natural resources; religious fanaticism; tolerance of differences; human (and non-human) rights. Tepper's vivid imagination stands her in good stead here. As a trained vocalist myself, I was intrigued by the notion of literally singing for one's life.

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