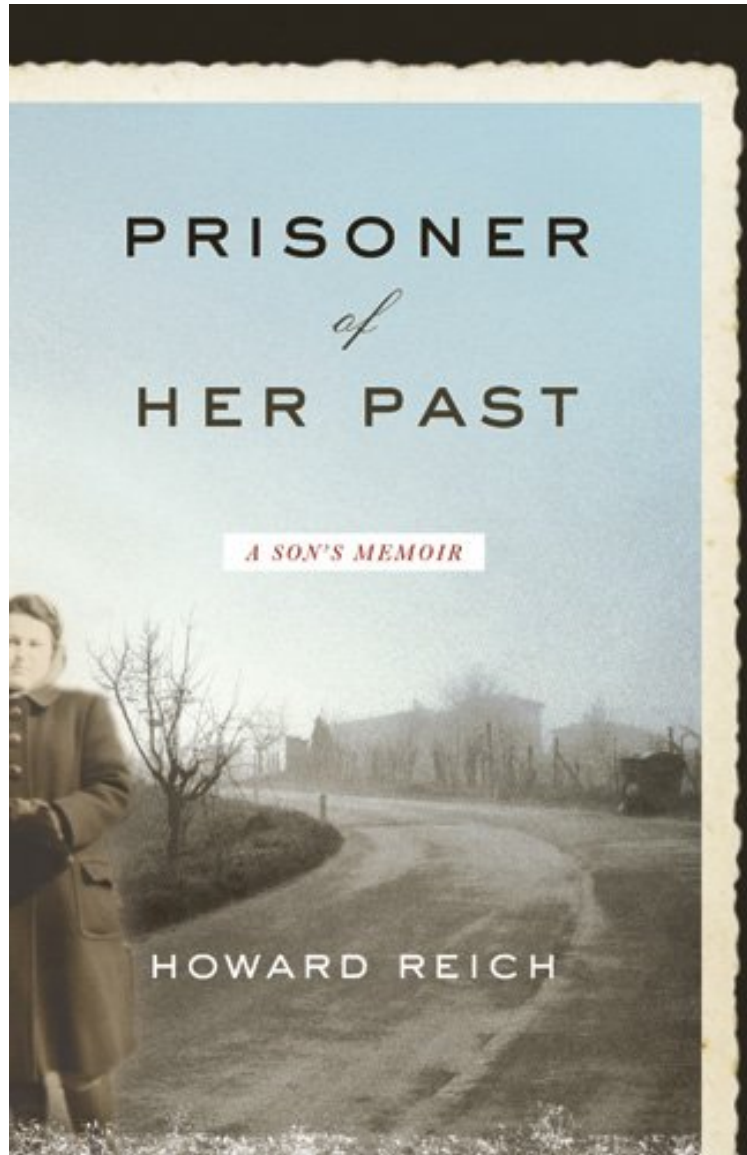


[E-BOOK] Prisoner of Her Past: A Son's Memoir

## Prisoner of Her Past: A Son's Memoir

*Howard Reich*

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**Howard Reich : Prisoner of Her Past: A Son's Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prisoner of Her Past: A Son's Memoir:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An extraordinary book.By Robert W. EshbachThis is a beautiful and important book that I cannot recommend too highly, and that I will not forget: Prisoner of Her Past, Howard Reichs family memoir of growing up in Chicago with parents who had survived the Holocaust, and of his Mothers late-life struggle with late-onset Post Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting from her unfathomably brutal childhood experiences.

It is an extraordinarily loving and humane look at his Mothers life and a clear-eyed look at her disease in a way, the diametrical opposite of dementia which is characterized by extreme awareness of her surroundings (a survival mechanism from her childhood), coupled with paranoid delusions that people want to kill her. As she aged and her symptoms began to express themselves, Reich went to extraordinary lengths to understand his Mothers childhood experience something she had concealed, and would not talk about reading the existing documents, going back to her little Polish village, talking with residents, visiting the house she grew up in, seeing the Jewish cemetery, and the places where so many perished. Reich brings this all into the present: Surveying the psychological wreckage of the war this many years later, I couldnt help thinking of the children of the world today in Iraq, Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, Afghanistan, Darfur, Liberia. Youngsters in these war-torn places are suffering experiences with too many similarities to those my mother and father endured. These children, too, typically receive scant treatment for a disorder virtually unrecognized by practicing psychiatrists In making a compelling case for understanding late-onset PTSD, he writes: PTSD may be the most patient and persistent of illnesses, content to wait half a century or more to unleash its full wrath, when its victims are old, weak, and at their most vulnerable. He concludes his book: Now when I look at my mother small, frail but defiant Im awed by her heroism in standing up to the horrors she believes she is facing once again. At last, I know and love my mother for who she really is, a woman whose steadfastness as a child saved her life and eventually gave life to me and so many others, a hero who to this day wants nothing more than to live, and to protect the lives of those she loves. This is an extraordinary book. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. About a brave woman By A. Biancalana This book is very well written and informative. I didn't know that post traumatic stress disorder could appear many years after the trauma, while at first the person appears to function just fine. But the same book is published under a different title and I bought both not knowing that. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Patricia Graunke The book was very good, but I ordered two copies and only received the first one.

Until February 15, 2001, Howard Reichs mother, Sonia, had managed to keep almost everything about her experience of the Holocaust from her son. That night, she packed some clothes and fled her house in Skokie, Illinois, convinced that someone was trying to kill her. This was the first indication that she was suffering from late-onset post traumatic stress disorder, a little-known condition that can emerge decades after the initial trauma. For Howard, it was also the opening of a window onto his mothers past. In *Prisoner of Her Past*, Howard Reich has written a moving memoir about growing up as the child of Holocaust survivors and finding refuge from silence and fear in the world of jazz. It is only when Sonias memories overwhelm her and Howard begins to piece together her story that he comes to understand how his parents lives shaped his own. The paperback edition includes an epilogue by the author that relates developments since the publication of the cloth edition.

About the Author Howard Reich has been an award-winning Chicago Tribune arts critic and writer since 1983. He is also a correspondent for *DownBeat* magazine. In addition to covering jazz, blues, gospel, and world music for the Tribune, he has authored several investigative reports that have been featured on ABCs *Nightline* and various National Public Radio programs. He is the author of three other books: *The First and Final Nightmare of Sonia Reich: A Sons Memoir* (2006); *Jellys Blues: The Life, Music, and Redemption of Jelly Roll Morton* (2003), written with William Gaines; and *Van Cliburn* (1993). He most recently wrote, produced, and narrated a documentary film about his mothers unspoken Holocaust childhood, *Prisoner of Her Past*. Reich graduated from Northwestern Universitys School of Music.