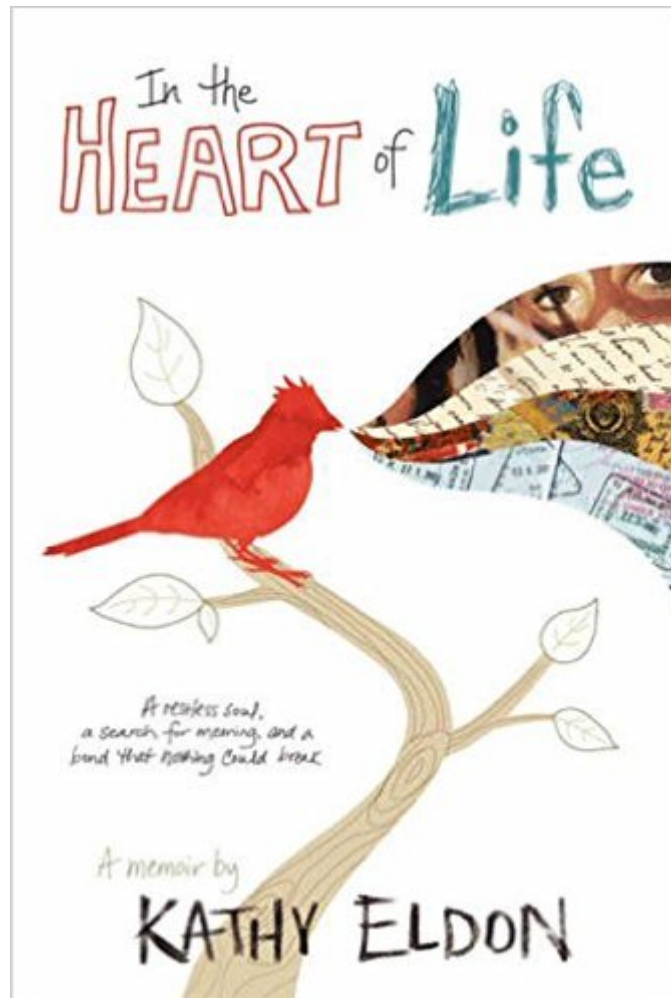


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In The Heart Of Life: A Memoir



Synopsis

A Mother Loses Almost Everything Before She Discovers True Joy In 1977, Kathy Eldon moved with her husband and two children from England to Kenya, where she found freedom as she had never known it before and was ready to push back from her old, restrictive life. Diving into this tumultuous new world as a journalist and writer, she embraced the energy and creativity of Kenyans, both black and white. But her world collapsed when her twenty-two-year-old son, Dan—a "an artist and photojournalist on assignment for Reuters"—was stoned to death by an angry mob in Somalia, killed by the very people he was trying to help. Kathy's journey through this tragic loss was deeply spiritual as she discovered that, in many ways, Dan was still ever-present in her life. This gripping international saga includes a passionate love, a dangerous coup in Kenya, and a compelling glimpse into a woman on the brink of self-discovery. After her son's murder, Kathy began to publish his art, which gained popularity worldwide and— "together with her daughter, Amy— "launched a global foundation celebrating Dan's work as a creative activist. Throughout Kathy's exploration of profound tragedy, we find the secrets to not only surviving, but being truly, gloriously alive.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed the parts of the book about her son Dan. But I was surprised that the first 200 pages (yes, 200!) were all about her own life, her personal relationships, her selfishness, etc. Yes, I realize it is her memoir but when you read the summary of the book, it is about her dealing with the death of her son. I wasn't expecting to read so much about her pathetic relationships. While Dan is incredible and Kathy has made something of her life now, I found her to be not very likable. She was

somewhat arrogant about her desire to live in Africa - for instance, when she went to enjoy something simple in Nairobi, just enjoy it - no need to say how much she preferred this compared to staying at the Ritz (or something like that). It was like she kept making little digs at people who live suburban lives. Even the picture of her kids riding bikes, she bothered to mention that they weren't wearing helmets - is that to point out that suburban kids wear helmets - back in the day - I don't think anyone wore helmets. There were so many examples of this where she pointed out that she is not like the typical suburban mom. Just live the moment - no need to point these things out to us - we all can see that you chose to live a different kind of life. As an aside, I'm one of those people who spent a lot of time in Africa, have adopted a child from another country, but never felt the need to act superior to those who prefer less adventurous lives or more traditional, boring, suburban lives. It also seemed a little like an ad for all the other books she and Amy have written. The end of the book was very good though, Dan was an amazing man, and I'm glad Kathy has found peace.

"In the Heart of Life," takes you on an incredible journey of self-discovery, loss, love, adventure and overall emotional survival. Kathy Eldon chooses to let us in on the "whole" story, including the parts of her life that might not shed the best light on some of her choices. This raw and truthful depiction gives us as readers permission to fully engage in the world with all of our fears and flaws. Her choices were powerful and brave and scary and inspiring, even frightening at times. And by hearing her full story, you are able to get true, deep and meaningful insight into the bond she had with her children and their fascinating and incredibly unique upbringing. As a mother, I felt envious of their African adventure and all that my children will never experience. I loved the description of the country, the people and their way of life. I really felt like I was there. I found myself at times fearful of the inevitable tragedy I knew was coming. And I can't pretend that it isn't devastating and difficult to read the details. However, not only is it not a sad book - it is a remarkably inspiring, uplifting - even motivating read. Overall, I was swept away in her story. I read 3/4 of the book in one sitting! I highly recommend this thoughtful, raw, compassionate and beautiful story. I can't wait to get her son Dan's journal. I heard a rumor a movie is in the works - one can hope!

This book was a sundering surprise. I picked it up after midnight in my usual way, looking for an hour of an author's voice and then a return to much-needed sleep. What a mistake! When I turned the final page the next morning, I hadn't slept but I felt more awake, more alive than if I had. Kathy Eldon's wry, unvarnished and deeply affecting memoir is a literary breadcrumb trail left by a keen searcher, a seeker sharing her glimpses of meaning behind shards of destruction. Under a

sheltering sky and across continents, she shape-shifts and reinvents herself in ways that stick with me. Most books just help you escape for awhile--this one does too, but it is an enlightening journey chock full of wisdom and surprises, and replaced my sleep with a renewed sense of wonder at a life lived so vividly, and reported so faithfully. It would make a fine, caring gift--but not for an insomniac!

In the deepest pain a mother can feel, the death of her son, Kathy was able to give birth to a renewal of his spirit in an even grander gift to him and to the world. Her son Dan was a beautiful, courageous and sensitive man who found the injustices and cruelty of the world almost too much to bear. In Mogadishu he gave a needy child a coin -- only to watch in horror as other killed him to get the coin. His whole life was about giving, from setting up programs to help Africa in college to his photojournalism, giving a voice to the voiceless, Again and again the good he was doing was rewarded with pain, but he didn't give up. When he came to the aid of survivors of a Massacre, going with them to document their story, he and his colleagues were stoned to death -- just for trying to bring light to, to do good. How does a mother deal with that? Does she become bitter that "No good deed goes unpunished?" Hateful? Amazingly Kathy was able to carry on the good her son was doing in the face of pain, having faith that in the end doing good is the right thing and will prevail. I was swept away by her amazing courage in giving her son's spirit a way to live on through her. Out of his spirit, she created a wonderful foundation that continues to carry on amazingly good works!

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