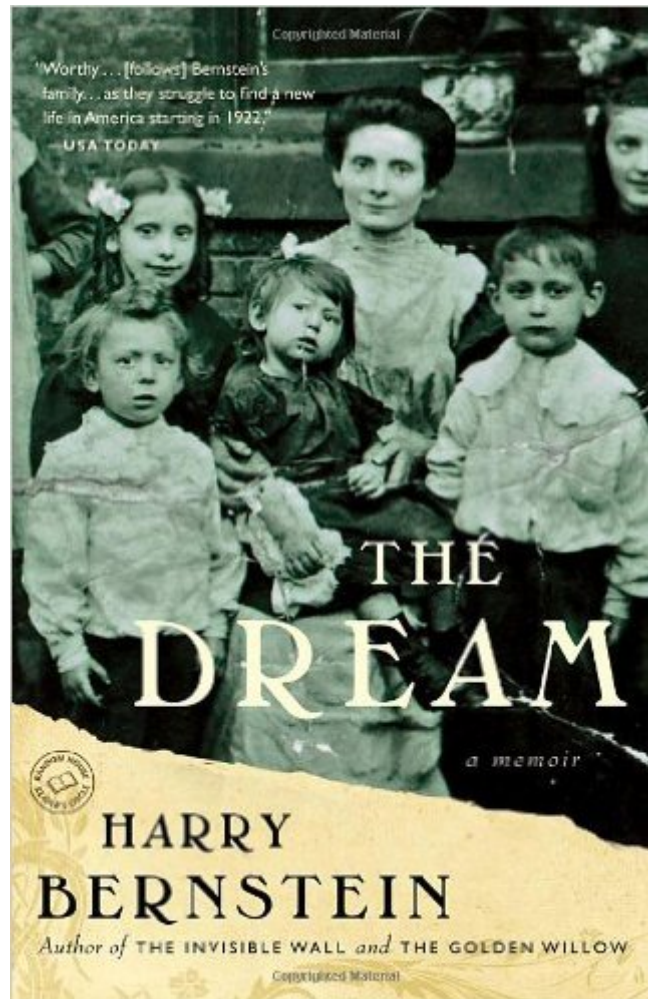


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# The Dream: A Memoir (Random House Reader's Circle)



## Synopsis

During the hard and bitter years of his youth in England, Harry Bernstein's selfless mother never stops dreaming of a better life in America, no matter how unlikely. Then, one miraculous day when Harry is twelve years old, steamship tickets arrive in the mail, sent by an anonymous benefactor. Suddenly, a new life full of the promise of prosperity seems possible "and the family sets sail for America, meeting relatives in Chicago. For a time, they get a taste of the good life: electric lights, a bathtub, a telephone. But soon the harsh realities of the Great Depression envelop them. Skeletons in the family closet come to light, mafiosi darken their doorstep, family members are lost, and dreams are shattered. In the face of so much loss, Harry and his mother must make a fateful decision "one that will change their lives forever. And though he has struggled for so long, there is an incredible bounty waiting for Harry in New York: his future wife, Ruby. It is their romance that will finally bring the peace and happiness that Harry's mother always dreamed was possible.

## Book Information

Series: Random House Reader's Circle

Paperback: 296 pages

Publisher: Ballantine Books (April 7, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0345503899

ISBN-13: 978-0345503893

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (98 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #454,545 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #189 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > Midwest #237 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > Mid Atlantic #408 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Jewish

## Customer Reviews

After reading his moving and evocative first memoir, *The Invisible Wall*, about his life till age 12 living in Manchester as a child of Polish Jewish immigrants, I had eagerly awaited the possible sequel. This new book is as good as the first. Mr. Bernstein, now 98 years old, continues his story, covering the time of the family move to the USA, their experiences in Chicago and New York, their life during good times and then the depression. This book fits into several genera: 1. It is an autobiography, 2. It is a case study in parental abuse and general dysfunctional family members,

and 3. It is a personal memoir of how this boy, and then man, responded to the various situations. To be honest, while I loved the writing and the story, something I cannot forget is the beautiful picture of Mr. Bernstein's wife, in her later years, looking up at him. The love is just so clear in her face. Read this book, after reading the Invisible Wall, and be swept into this remarkable family history.

I have read many memoirs, since those are what I prefer to read. Now that I have read this beautiful memoir, *The Dream*, written by Harry Bernstein, all the others pale in comparison. I first picked up *The Invisible Wall* by Mr. Bernstein, I liked it from the first page. I was glued to that book and absolutely could not put it down. While reading it I was thinking, Oh please let there be many many more of his books continuing the tale of his very interesting family. As soon as I finished *The Invisible Wall* and found there to be a sequel, I ordered it from Amazon and was so impatient, could barely wait for its arrival. I just finished it. It took about 18 hours, non stop, except to sleep. It was just as good as the first. He tells his story so vividly. I felt that I was there with these people, that I knew them personally. I cringed when I knew something that was said or done was going to make the father angry. For I had "known" how his father was by now. I felt sad for Harry's mother. I cried, deep rib racking cries at the end of *The Dream*. I know Harry is 98 now, but I selfishly want him to keep producing books. But, I know in reality..... But the grapevine says he started another. Wow, this man is something else. I don't remember what happened in my life nine years ago let alone 90 years ago. I will never forget these stories of how it was for this family in those days. Very interesting to see it through a mind of a child all the way through to his adulthood. The story was so easy to read, well told and written beautifully, by this beautiful man and his heart wrenching account of what took place. Oh "Harry", my only regret is that you didn't start to write this sooner. Thank you for bringing readers this unforgettable story. It will stay in my mind and heart forever!

I could not wait until this book arrived and it was even better than Bernstein's first book. He really describes his family members so that the reader can understand who and why they are. His devotion to both his mother who was the inspiration for his dreams and his wife who was the love of his life is very touching. I cried when I finished the book. My only solace is the note at the end which indicates that he is planning a third book. What a feat for a man of 98!

As soon as I heard that Harry Bernstein had written a second memoir dealing with his early life in America, I ordered it at once and devoured it. God bless this writer! He is 98 years old and hopes to give us a third memoir of his life with his beloved wife Ruby. I will buy it the day it is printed. Young

Harry and his brothers and sisters, devoted mother and rather despicable, drunken and despotic father, leave their Liverpool poverty and travel to America in the early twentieth century. As Harry grows, the first of his family to complete high school (his mother cannot read or write), he takes on the role of the man in the house, eventually managing to work even during the Depression (though nearly killed by a band of thugs), trying to get his mother away from his father who has always made their life miserable. The strength, charm and humor of young Harry is wonderful and when he at last falls in love with a girl he meets in a dance hall, he begins a romance and marriage which will last him almost three quarters of a century. So many people are lovingly and fascinatingly portrayed, none less than his grandfather who in a strange, lonely, almost unbelievable profession, supports them all. Please write the next book quickly, Mr. Bernstein! Stephanie Cowell (author of the novel MARRYING MOZART)

After reading "The Invisible Wall" I knew that I had to purchase "The Dream." Not only is Mr. Bernstein an effective writer--he just happens to live in the town next-door! Mr. Bernstein's account of his early years in England, living on a street comprised of both Christians and Jews and of the "invisible wall" between the two cultures was so moving that I immediately started on "The Dream." This book does not disappoint. The 98-year old author continues his story, now in the United States. But the realization of his mother's dream of living in the USA does not make life easier for this family. They say that truth is stranger than fiction and Mr. Bernstein's history certainly proves the old maxim to be true. Unusual characters, from mobsters to rabbis, many of them relatives, abound. Poignant but never maudlin, his books are reminiscent of those of Frank McCourt and tell of an age long past. Replete with sorrow and deep sadness we are reminded in the end of the triumph of the human spirit and of our shared humanity. In telling his own tale Mr. Bernstein has managed to tell the story of us all and to tear down the walls that separate us. This book is a must-read!!

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