



Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family

By Najla Said

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A frank and entertaining memoir—from the daughter of Edward Said—now in paperback.

The daughter of the famous intellectual and outspoken Palestinian advocate Edward Said and a sophisticated Lebanese mother, Najla Said grew up in New York City, confused and conflicted about her cultural background and identity. Said knew that her parents identified deeply with their homelands, but growing up in a Manhattan world that was defined largely by class and conformity, she felt unsure about who she was supposed to be, and was often in denial of the differences she sensed between her family and those around her. She may have been born a Palestinian Lebanese American, but Said denied her true roots, even to herself—until, ultimately, the psychological toll of her self-hatred began to threaten her health.

As she grew older, she eventually came to see herself, her passions, and her identity more clearly. Today she is a voice for second-generation Arab Americans nationwide.

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Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family By Najla Said **Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #149451 in Books
- Published on: 2014-09-02
- Released on: 2014-09-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .70" w x 5.46" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Playwright Said was raised in Manhattan's Upper West Side as the Palestinian Lebanese American Christian daughter of parents who raised her as a secular humanist. Her father was the world-famous intellectual Edward Said. Idyllic, sun-soaked, early-childhood trips to 1970s Beirut, full of family and love, only slowly betrayed a simmering turmoil therein, and Said spends most of her life understanding and recalibrating her perceptions of her ancestral homelands versus those seen through the lens trained on the Middle East by the world at large. While Najla grows up a prep-school kid in the 1980s and 1990s, she digests narrow views of the Arab character, turns them inward in painful ways, and struggles to understand the complicated patchwork of her identity. Although those with stakes in any of Said's backgrounds will have a more pointed interest in her explorations, most readers will relate to her ultimately universal discussion of growing up other. Said's memoir is both a dear tribute to her father's work and proof that acceptance of one's roots—the hurdle to success and success itself—is most always hard earned. --Annie Bostrom

Review

"The scholar Edward Said was born in Jerusalem when it was Palestine under the British Mandate, immigrated to the U.S., was baptized an Episcopalian, supported Palestinian independence, married a Lebanese Quaker, and became a prominent professor at Columbia University. No wonder his daughter, Najla, was conflicted about her identity. If Edward's *Orientalism* provides the intellectual framework for understanding postcolonialism, Najla's memoir, *Looking for Palestine*, is the other side of the coin, as those same complex forces tug her life in multiple directions while she tries to understand who she is."--
"Daily Beast"

""In her engaging memoir, *Looking for Palestine*, Najla Said explores the cultural confusions of growing up Arab-American in the 1970s and '80s New York City."--"Elle"

"What proves substantive and memorable about this book . . . is the author's exploration of her relationship with her family and her social surroundings. . . . her snapshots of personal interaction with her father and their sometimes droll exchanges give the book an undeniably warm and intimate feel."--"San Francisco Chronicle"

"Said's aching memoir explores her coming-of-age as a Christian Arab-American on New York's Upper West Side. . . . [Said's] complex persona, self-deprecating humor, and focus on the personal rather than the political broaden the appeal of Said's book beyond any particular ethnic, cultural, or religious audience."--
"Publishers Weekly" (starred review)

"In an illuminating memoir, the daughter of Edward Said, the writer, academic and symbol of Palestinian self-determination, explores her complex family history and its role in shaping her identity. . . . An enlightening, warm, timely coming-of-age story exploring the author's search for identity framed within the confounding maze of America's relationship with the Middle East."--"Kirkus"

"It can be a difficult story to tell: that of one's discontent in the midst of privilege. And yet with great skill, humor, and poignancy, Ms. Said accomplishes just that. In the end, she is her late father's great inheritor, ever-journeying toward that elusive home."--Alica Erian, author of *Towelhead*

"Najla Said's *Looking for Palestine* is a compassionate and candid book on her courageous coming-of-age in contemporary America. Said is a brilliant, talented and sensitive artist with a larger-than-life, loving father."--Professor Cornel West

"A deeply penetrating, often hilarious, and occasionally devastating account of growing up Arab American. Of course, Najla Said's scramble for her identity is uniquely hers. How many of us, after all, have had world-

famous intellectuals as fathers, experienced the civil war in Lebanon first hand, and been kissed on the cheek by Yasir Arafat (which she hated)? But after finally finding the conviction to be at peace with herself, Najla Said has written more than a memoir. Looking for Palestine is a survivor's guide for all of us who live with that feeling of being out of place wherever we are." --Moustafa Bayoumi, author of "How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America"

"Thoughtful, searching, and open-eyed, "Looking for Palestine "takes readers on a journey into an Arab-American girl's search for identity. The joy and pain of growing up in the long shadow of a brilliant parent, the struggle for meaning and belonging, and the painful dispossession of the Palestinians are all treated with tender care as Najla Said gives us a haunting and singular life story." --Diana Abu-Jaber, author of "Crescent"

About the Author

Najla Said has performed off Broadway, regionally and internationally, as well as in film and television. In 2010, Said completed a nine-week sold-out off-Broadway run of her solo show, *Palestine*, which features some of the material in this book. She lives in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Enrique Myers:

The book Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family make one feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can being your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem together with your subject. If you can make looking at a book Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family to be your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your current capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. You can know everything if you like open up and read a e-book Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science e-book or encyclopedia or other individuals. So , how do you think about this guide?

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As people who live in the particular modest era should be update about what going on or info even knowledge to make these keep up with the era which is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe may update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know which one you should start with. This Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Danny Solberg:

Playing with family inside a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you might have done when you have spare time, subsequently why you don't try point that really opposite from that. A single activity that make you not experience tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition info. Even you love Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family, it is possible to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still

wish to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Kyle Reese:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended to you personally is Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family this reserve consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some investigation when he makes this book. That is why this book acceptable all of you.

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