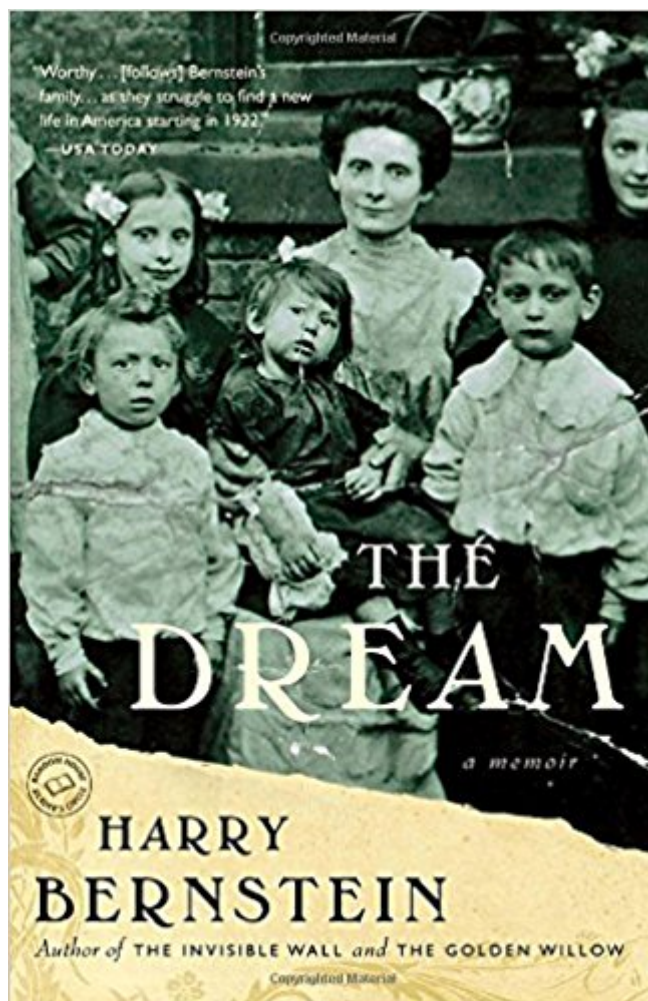


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The Dream: A Memoir (Random House Reader's Circle)



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.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Having mined his English upbringing in *The Invisible Wall*, Bernstein resumes a nine-decade reckoning in this gently observed memoir of a Jewish immigrant family riven from within. Eager to escape English mill town life, his mother promises her brood a better life in America—a dream providentially fulfilled with steamship tickets. But even after reuniting with family in

Chicago, his father's "bloody 'ell" bellows and monstrous rage continue to smite. The author takes in his new surroundings with a keen adolescent eye, observing "back porches all piled on top of one another like egg crates," belying celluloid America-as do his ragamuffin elders, with his grandfather reduced to begging in secret. At school he confounds Midwestern types with his Lancashire accent, comically mistaken for an Egyptian named "Arry." Engulfed in the Roaring '20s, the Bernsteins revel in the luxuries of telephones and parlor rooms, only to feel the wallop of the Depression as the decade wanes. Uprooted to New York, Bernstein ekes out a living and falls quietly, desperately in love, achieving a joyful 67-year marriage. Coming on the heels of his first book, this one will delight readers eager for more of Bernstein's distinctive voice and gift for character. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In 2007, when he was 96, Bernstein wrote his first memoir, *The Invisible Wall*. Now he continues the story of his life. He writes about his early days in England, where his mother strived to raise her six children, and their coming to America, where they met relatives in Chicago during the Depression. Bernstein also describes the poor section of a Lancashire mill town where he lived, "an invisible wall, the imaginary barrier that separated the Christians and the Jews," and the warm welcome the family received in Chicago, where they were unprepared for the freezing weather. He worked as a clerk in the main Chicago post office after graduating from high school and then moved to Brooklyn, "a huge ghetto composed largely of Jewish immigrants who had fled the anti-Semitism of Poland and Russia." This coherent account of Bernstein's life is a fascinating and well-written book. --George Cohen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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 read The Inviabale Wall first then I read The Dream. I have also ordered his last book The Golden Willow which I will start tomorrow. I must say that these books have touched my heart. What an incredible family this was. The father was worthless and never loved his family or took care of them. The mother was as sweet and kind as they come. What a hard hard life she had. Her dream was to make a good life for her children and she did the best she could with so little. One could learn so much from this mother. We should be thankful for what we have for there are others, like this family that have so little, yet make the best of what they have and never complain. They lived through the Great Depression and on occasion were homeless. These three books are a must read. You will be changed forever.

Wonderful story, just loved it. Part of a set of three the first The Invisible Wall, and the last The Golden Willow. I downloaded the first and last from the library as I prefer to listen to books, but for some reason The Dream has not been recorded and I just had to read it before listening to the last part!

Fascinating true story. A sequel to a book I picked up at a second hand store. An entire life story, sometimes sad but real and a decent ending.

THE DREAM---Follows (and continues where) the first book (THE WALL) leaves off. It tells of the author (and his family's) move from England to Chicago...speaks of the depression and the difficulties people had back then finding work and surviving on the salaries that were paid. Survival at all was difficult...the living and working conditions were so bad. Harry (the author) writes of his own families struggles post World War and landing in America --fabled "land of plenty". He writes of the difficulties Jews faced when they came over here from Europe. Life was not as those who came here...thought it would be. This is a heartbreaker-tear jerker and yet wonderful accounting of survival against all odds...and of families and what it means to be part of one like Harry's. This book will keep you reading late into the night!

THE DREAM is volume two in Harry Bernstein's memoir trilogy. This one takes Harry from his arrival in America at 12 years old - along with his parents and five siblings - until he meets and marries his wife at age 25 (in 1935). The first of his family to graduate from high school, Harry finally

stands up to his brute of a father in a violent confrontation and escapes with his mother and youngest brother to New York, leaving his father in a Chicago jail. In NYC during the depths of the Great Depression, he struggles for years to find meaningful work. Tough times. I loved *The Invisible Wall: A Love Story That Broke Barriers*, and this book is every bit as good - a moving, beautifully written page-turner. Highly recommended. (And now on to volume three, *The Golden Willow: The Story of a Lifetime of Love*.)- Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir, BOOKLOVER

This is the third and final book of the memoirs of Harry Bernstein. I recommend that the first two books be read first before this one in order to have more appreciation of his final memoir. Please keep in mind also that he wrote all three books in his mid-90's. The books are all well-written, humorous and a pleasure to read! He describes his life living in poverty in England, and then in Chicago and New York City trying to survive the depression and finally, in his final book, *The Dream Memoir*, his life with his wife. He had a wonderful, long romantic relationship with his wife that had me laughing and crying. I love all three books by this author and I definitely recommend all three. I just wish he were still alive so that I could tell him what a great writer he is! PLEASE TAKE THE TIME AND READ HIS THREE BOOKS!

As soon as I heard that Harry Bernstein had written a second memoir dealing with his early life 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*)

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