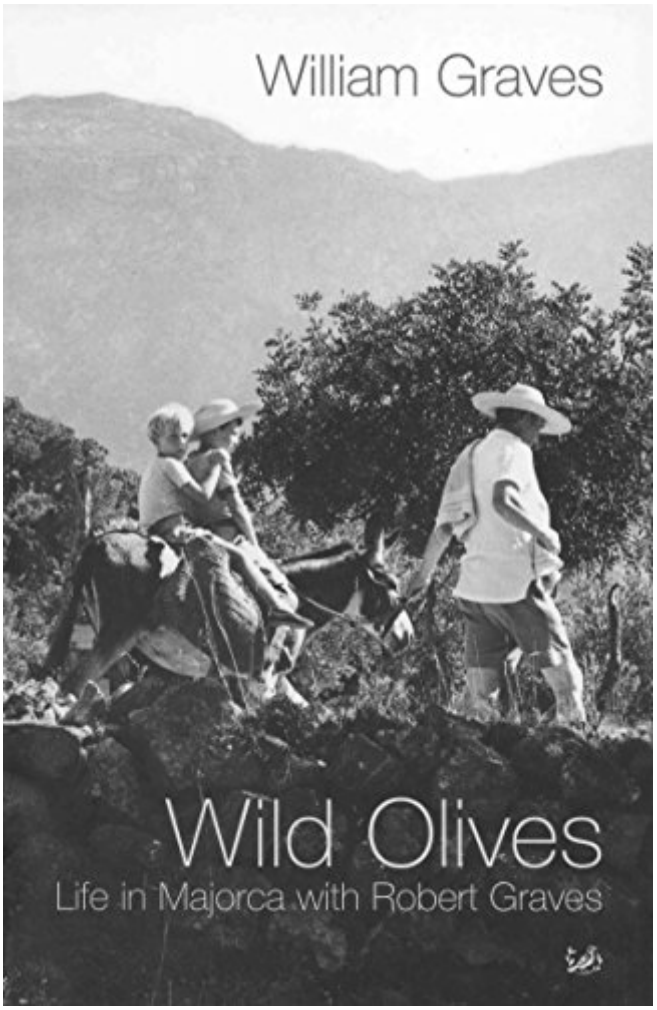
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Wild Olives: Life In Majorca With Robert Graves



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Synopsis

In 1944, at the age of five, William Graves was taken from England to the delightful mountain village of Deya in Majorca, where his father - the poet Robert Graves - had returned with his new family to the place he had lived with Laura Riding before the war.Young William grew up in the shadow of this great writer in the Englishness of the Graves household, while experiencing the ways of life of the Majorcans, which had hardly changed for hundreds of years.Wonderfully observant, and full of feeling for the locality, this book is also a fascinating portrait of Robert Graves himself, his 'Muses', and his entourage, and a revealing study of how the son of a famous father finds his own identity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book was a fascinating read. It was a wonderful and revealing description of life in Deia, Mallorca by a person who was at first an outsider from his English birthplace who became a true Mallorcan, part of the fabric of his new home. It also was an heartfelt story of a child of a famous, but at times, eccentric poet, novelist father. For anyone who has had to endure a parent's deviation from a "normal" marriage, this story will touch you. Having a famous and brilliant, older father who wasn't dictated, at times, by conventional marital commitment was a test William Graves was able to

triumph over and achieve a different type of success in life beneath the shadow of a literary giant.

William Graves is the oldest son of Robert Graves (best remembered forÃ Â I, Claudius: From the Autobiography of Tiberius ClaudiusÃ Â andÃ Â Good-Bye to All That: An Autobiography) from his second marriage and moved to the village of Deia (or Deya) on the Spanish island of Majorca (or Mallorca) with his family at age 6 in 1947."I, Claudius" is one of my favorite books - this is how I think of the father Robert, however I gather in the academic world his is known more for being a poet and scholar of ancient myths, biblical stuff etc. That was one interesting tidbit from this book, that Robert wrote "I, Claudius" just to make money and considered it a potboiler. Funny, I thought it was great but I guess that is the difference between an academic and a regular reader.The focus of this book is not Robert but William and his life on Deia, he considered it magical and home. He discusses how he saw it change from a authentic village to a pseudo-artist hippie hangout with most of the traditional occupations replaced by jobs to support the tourist industry, really the whole village was completely transformed in its look and character within 25 years. How strange that must have been to the villagers.I drove thru Deia a few years ago and it is so stunning, and there were so many tourists, I couldn't help but wonder how wonderful it might have been when it was still real and isolated so it was interesting and a little sad to read about the transformation.Unlike most writers, Robert seems highly productive and disciplined and domestic, there every day like a regular father. Of course he has some digressions with his search for the 'muse' but it was nice to read what a regular dad he was, not the best dad but a dad nevertheless.But if you have never been to Deia, I doubt this book would be of much interest as so much is about life in the village. Unless a real fan of Robert Graves and want something so supplement his many biographies.

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