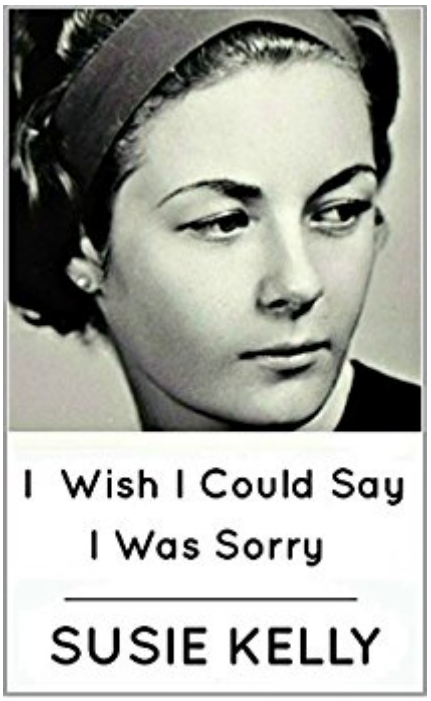
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I Wish I Could Say I Was Sorry



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Synopsis

"A Child Called It meets Out Of Africa in this stunning memoir of a woman’s 1950s childhood in Kenya. Filled with candid humor and insights, this authentic tale captures one woman’s incredible coming-of-age journey." BookBubEach time it seems things cannot get any worse, they do as the popular travel author lifts the lid on her own, often shocking, behaviour in her quest to protect herself and those she loves. Rebellious, lonely and self-destructive, it is a small grey horse named Cinderella who saves Susie from herself and brings her the love she craves. Susie recalls a 1950s childhood in post-war London’s every shade of grey and the splendours of Africa as, with her glamorous mother and father, she boards a ship bound for exotic, technicolor Kenya. Then in its final decade as a colony, Kenya was peopled with larger-than-life characters who had helped to forge its identity. There, with the threats of the Mau Mau uprising ever-present, Susie’s life disintegrates at break-neck speed into a web of jealousy, rejection and casual cruelty.Readers will shed a tear at her losses and laugh at her predicaments in this sometimes hilarious, often heartbreaking, true story that gives a moving and often shocking insight in to the earlier life of the author famed for her humour and her honesty."Susie wins my Ã¢â ¬Ëœbest book of the yearÃ¢â ¬â„¢ without hesitation for the quality of her writing and the honesty and truth which makes this book such a great read. It had me gripped from the first page and left me feeling quite emotional at the end.I happily award a rare five out of five stars."The Writing DeskÃ¢â ¬Å“What an astounding story, sometimes true life experiences are better than fiction.Ã¢â ¬Â• UK Reader Ã¢â ¬Å“There is something very special about this book and the way the reader is instantly drawn into Susie’s world and the appalling people and situations she had to endure.Ã¢â ¬Â• US ReaderÃ¢â ¬Å“This memoir kept me up. I could not stop reading this. An almost idyllic early girlhood that becomes more and more dysfunctional. What a story!Ã¢â ¬Â• US Reader Ã¢â ¬Å“The whole story is a great tug on the heart strings. I couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t put the book down and have every intention of reading it again.Ã¢â ¬Â• UK ReaderÃ¢â ¬Å“A dysfunctional families true story that had me shedding real tears in some places and laughing out loud in other places as I read. A marvellous book.Ã¢â ¬Â• US Reader"Great, engaging, memoir. Funny and very sad at times." US ReaderÃ¢â ¬Å“Spellbinding. I didn’t want to put it down.Ã¢â ¬Â• US RevÃ¢â ¬Å“I am blown away by such talent. Fabulous, the kind of book where you can’t wait to drop everything and get back to reading.Ã¢â ¬Â• US Rev"A misery memoir with so so much heart and warmth in it, packed with sadness but also humor and love." A US Top 100 Title

Book Information

File Size: 1068 KB

Print Length: 242 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Blackbird Digital Books (January 14, 2014)

Publication Date: January 14, 2014

Sold by:Ã Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00CS8YG34

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #57,856 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #2 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Africa > Kenya #3 inÃ Â Books > History > Africa > Kenya #4 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Africa > East Africa

Customer Reviews

Susie Kelly’s books have a real charm about them. Unlike some of her other writings, this book is not a cookbook, but rather a sort of autobiography covering her life from age about 8 to roughly into her 20’s. As an autobiography, I found it interesting, especially since it takes place partly in Kenya, partly in Europe and partly in England. The societal contrasts of these three cultures make interesting reading, even as revealed by a not yet mature young girl. Although she does not explicitly emphasize her rebellious nature, still, it is clear she lived life with her own very independent personal style, sometimes triumphing over adversity, other times burdened by it, and other times victimized by it. She makes no apologies, indeed, seems to almost unaware that some of her unhappy misfortunes were the consequences of her own (poor) choices. I have four daughters (not to mention six sons), and I can see Suzie as one of my own daughters, who was independent as a young girl, and after suffering some hard life knocks, finally matured at about age 30 ... and has been a responsible and "solid citizen" ever since. I sense in Suzie’s writings a spirit kindred to my daughter’s: a sort of rebellious (but not using that word herself) nature, developing a late maturity into a solid member of society. In that sense, this book is an unfinished work ... and,

Suzie, I encourage you to write a sequel describing your life’s next chapter.Did the book hold my interest? Well, I started it about 10 AM and did not put it down until I read the last page at about 6:30 PM the same day! I gave the book 4 stars because it is an unfinished story. Suzie, I encourage you to write the next volume companion to this one, perhaps covering the next twenty years?I gave this book only 4 stars because it is an unfunished work,

I feel I know Susie Kelly, although we have never met. We have much in common. We are roughly the same age, both war babies; we seem to have the same attitude to animals and to food; we both live in France; we have both undertaken epic walks and written books about that. We have corresponded and discovered many coincidences between our lives. We even seem to have both put our houses on the market at the same time.But many others who have read Susie’s books will also feel they know her. This is the mark of an exceptional writer - Susie draws you into her world and you experience the adventure with her.In the case of "I Wish I Could Say I Was Sorry" this means that we suffer, as Susie clearly did so often during her early life and also while dredging up the painful memories to put them on paper. Susie’s writing is so evocative that once again we are with her, having to decide between parents at the age of seven and at zero minutes notice; finding that the chosen parent sends her away from the chosen country to a dreadful school run by nasty nuns; being told that she will now be going back to Kenya and, oh, by the way, Daddy is now remarried and has even had another child; being plunged into a household run by a neurotic and volatile stepmother and a father who is distant because he presumably does not want to rock the boat. And don’t mention the mother!As an adult, Susie plunges into another situation with which I am very familiar - she marries into an Italian family. I have not done that, but one of my daughters has, and Susie’s experiences as a non-Italian daughter-in-law were very recognisable and not to be recommended.I could go on with more about Susie’s relationships with her mother, her father and her stepmother, how all those ended and the traumas involved. But I have said enough and do not want to tell you the whole story before you read it. All I will say is Get This Book. There are not as many laughs in it as there are in other Susie Kelly books, but I guarantee it will make you cry. Whether or not you have experienced anything similar you will come out in sympathy. If you have not, you will thank your lucky stars that your childhood and early adult years were not like this. There are of course happy times but the miracle is that Susie has survived to become the person she is and to entertain and inform us in that wonderful way she has.

I loved this very well written memoir of a life spent in Kenya and England. The author draws you into

her world, and makes it almost impossible to put the book down. Ms. Kelly is a true survivor, very honest, and with no sniveling. Anyone who has lived through step-parents can relate to this memoir. I highly recommend.

This book is beautifully written and sometimes gut-wrenching. The title is very misleading, because this woman has nothing to apologize about. Her survival in the face of cruelty and indifference is amazing and her ability to forgive is admirable. Anyone who yearns for the "good old days" when a woman could be denied contact with her child because she chose to end an unhappy marriage should read this book.As sad as the story is at times, there are many heart-warming parts. While her father, his family, and his second wife failed her in every way imaginable, there were always kind people who went out of their way to try to help her. It is a lesson in the value of reaching out and becoming involved.

I have such mixed feelings about this memoir. The stories of growing up in a Kenya that was moving from colonial rule to independence were fascinating and quite similar to my experiences living in Nairobi as a teenager in the early 1960s. But whereas my family was loving and supportive, the author recounts a family that was trapped in a cold. rigid, non-communicative set of norms. She then marries into an Italian family that does not accept her. Both were downright mean. The East Africa stories were enjoyable, frequently funny, and well written. I just felt so sad reading of the dysfunctional families that I ended up both drawn to the book and wanting to put it down depending on the section I was reading.Nevertheless, it is well written. You can’t un-ring the bell and she can’t take back her life. So if you can tolerate the meanness, you will may find this interesting and educational about different times, places and societal norms.

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