



Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father

By Alysia Abbott

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Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father By Alysia Abbott

A beautiful, vibrant memoir about growing up motherless in 1970s and '80s San Francisco with an openly gay father.

With a new foreword

After his wife dies in a car accident, bisexual writer and activist Steve Abbott moves with his two-year-old daughter to San Francisco. There they discover a city in the midst of revolution, bustling with gay men in search of liberation?few of whom are raising a child.

Steve throws himself into San Francisco's vibrant cultural scene. He takes Alysia to raucous parties, pushes her in front of the microphone at poetry readings, and introduces her to a world of artists, thinkers, and writers. But the pair live like nomads, moving from apartment to apartment, with a revolving cast of roommates and little structure. As a child Alysia views her father as a loving playmate who can transform the ordinary into magic, but as she gets older Alysia wants more than anything to fit in. The world, she learns, is hostile to difference.

In Alysia's teens, Steve's friends?several of whom she has befriended?fall ill as AIDS starts its rampage through their community. While Alysia is studying in New York and then in France, her father tells her it's time to come home; he's sick with AIDS. Alysia must choose whether to take on the responsibility of caring for her father or continue the independent life she has worked so hard to create.

Reconstructing their life together from a remarkable cache of her father's journals, letters, and writings, Alysia Abbott gives us an unforgettable portrait of a tumultuous, historic time in San Francisco as well as an exquisitely moving account of a father's legacy and a daughter's love.

10 illustrations

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Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father By Alysia Abbott Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #631070 in Books
- Brand: W W Norton Company
- Published on: 2014-06-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.20" h x .90" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review The child of quintessentially 1960s parents, Abbott lost her mother to a car accident when she was only two. Determined to raise her, Steve Abbott took her along to San Francisco. There, he sparsely supported her through the many moves consequent upon his bohemian lifestyle as a newly out homosexual and a writer-editor determined to make his mark on S.F.'s poetry scene. At last they settled into a one-bedroom place (she got the real bedroom, while the living room doubled as his) in the Haight-Ashbury district that she would call home for 17 years, until Steve's death from AIDS in 1992. She resumed the life she'd started in New York and never returned. But no repudiation of her father and the unconventional circumstances in which he raised her was involved in her decision to relocate. She never doubted his love because he never gave her cause; he was a devoted, even doting parent despite his very open gayness. She has maintained his reputation for two decades now (see steveabbott.org), and she writes up to a standard that would do any writer-parent proud. If there's plenty of emotion in her recollections, they lack all sentimentality, sensationalism, and special pleading. Like Ira Wagler's *Growing Up Amish* (2011), a tale of another radically different, unusual upbringing, *Fairyland* is written in shinningly clear, precise prose that gives it literary as well as testimonial distinction. --Ray Olson

Review

"I'm so glad you wrote this book." (Terry Gross, on "Fresh Air")

"Doubles as a portrait of a city and a community at a crucial point in history. . . . funny, strange, and sweet." (New Yorker)

"Alysia beautifully remembers the innocence of the age between the disappearance of the Beats and the onset of AIDS." (San Francisco Chronicle)

"Generous, precise, and deeply moving, *Fairyland* is a love story that not only brings a new generational perspective to a history we're in danger of forgetting, but irrevocably shifts the way we think about family itself." (Alison Bechdel, author of *Are You My Mother?*)

"Gorgeous. . . . As a chronicle of the moment when the San Francisco of Armistad Maupin became the city of Harvey Milk, when gay and experimental poetry flourished in California, *Fairyland* is vivid and indelible. As the portrait of a conspiracy of love between a father and a daughter, it is heartrending, a brilliant addition to the literature of American memoir." (Honor Moore, Author of *The Bishop's Daughter*)

"A beautiful, haunting book that instructs, even as it breaks our hearts." (Dani Shapiro, author of *Devotion: A Memoir*)

"Clear-eyed and heartrending, *Fairyland* captures a singular time and place in American history. It also captures something much more important: what it means to be truly loved?and to love truly. A beautiful book." (Andrew McCarthy, author of *The Longest Way Home*)

"As she depicts the dynamics of a unique, occasionally fraught, gay parent-straight child relationship, Abbott offers unforgettable glimpses into a community that has since left an indelible mark on both the literary and social histories of one of America's most colorful cities. A sympathetic and deeply moving story." (Kirkus Reviews)

About the Author

Alysia Abbott's work has appeared in Real Simple, Salon, and TheAtlantic.com. She is a graduate of the New School's MFA program and was a contributing producer at WNYC radio. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband and two children.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Chad Brown:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important normally. The book Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father ended up being making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It doesn't matter what advantages for you. The book Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father is not only giving you more new information but also being your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship while using book Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father. You never really feel lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

Carl Adams:

In this 21st one hundred year, people become competitive in each way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these individuals survives, being in the middle of often the crowded place and notice by means of surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a book your ability to survive enhance then having chance to stand up than other is high. For you personally who want to start reading the book, we give you this particular Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father book as nice and daily reading guide. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Jennifer Shipley:

This Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father is great guide for you because the content that is full of information for you who also always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it details accurately using great manage word or we can claim no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only offers you straight forward sentences but hard core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father in your hand like finding the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no e-book that offer you world with ten or fifteen small right but this reserve already do that. So , this really is good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt in which?

Rick Beard:

Is it an individual who having spare time after that spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just telling lies on the bed? Do you need something totally new? This Fairyland: A Memoir of My Father can be the reply, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your spare time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a geek activity. So what these

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