

The Rabbi's Daughter - A True Story of Sex, Drugs and Orthodoxy by Reva Mann.
Hodder and Stoughton 2007.

This is a heart-rending story on many levels: Reva Mann is searingly honest about her life, as a daughter, a wife and a mother, about her deceased parents and her ex-husband. The Rabbi's Daughter is a book that is hard to read, because there is so much pain and distress in its pages, and yet, in her slow and tortuous journey to some sort of serenity and self-understanding, Reva Mann is also quite inspirational. There are moments in the text when the reader laughs with her, moments when you cry for her, and times when you don't like her very much at all. But at the end of the book there is a strong sense of privilege in having been allowed to share in something incredibly personal and intimate.

Reva Mann could only have written this book after the death of her parents, for their high profile within Anglo-Jewry would have made the detail in The Rabbi's Daughter both personally and professionally devastating; Reva Mann is a *nom de plume*, for reasons that are obvious, and any reader with knowledge of Anglo-Jewry will spend the first part of the book trying to identify her father the rabbi and the synagogue in which she grew up. I believe that I have made the identification, and if I am correct had met Reva's father on several occasions and thought very highly of him. Her revelations about what went on behind closed doors makes him a no less admirable man, and even more sympathetic.

I am sure that some readers will conclude The Rabbi's Daughter with a shudder and the heartfelt wish that Reva Mann had never exposed so much private linen to the public gaze: such an attitude expresses the insecurity that does so much damage to Anglo-Jewry and should be completely rejected.

The Rabbi's Daughter exposes to scrutiny aspects of Orthodox Jewish lives that might never otherwise have seen the light of day, not least in the chapters about her ultra-Orthodox phase in Jerusalem, and whatever the value of writing the book has been for the author it is also in this aspect that it has great worth.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh