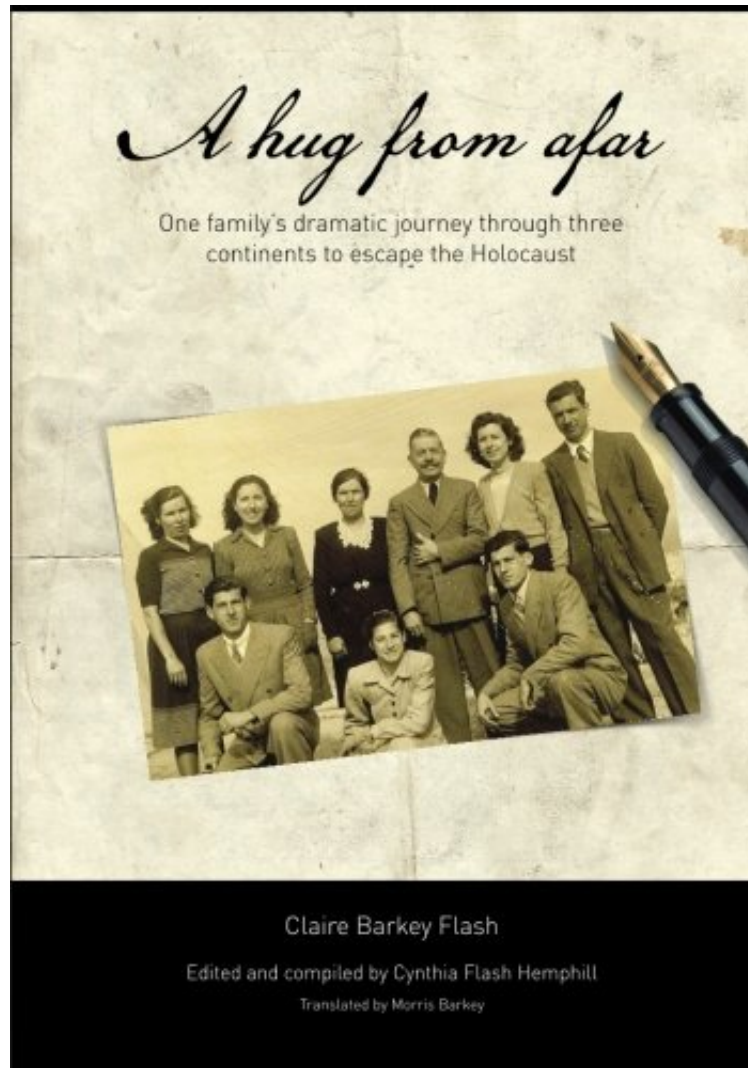


[FREE] A Hug From Afar: One family's dramatic journey through three continents to escape the Holocaust

## A Hug From Afar: One family's dramatic journey through three continents to escape the Holocaust

*Claire Barkey Flash*

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**Claire Barkey Flash : A Hug From Afar: One family's dramatic journey through three continents to escape the Holocaust** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Hug From Afar: One family's dramatic journey through three continents to escape the Holocaust:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I have to admit that I don't know very much about the Sephardic Jews except that I am learning to love their foodBy Pamela FerrisI started reading "A Hug From Afar" by Claire Flash and as promised, it was difficult to put down. I have to admit that I don't know very much about the Sephardic Jews

except that I am learning to love their food. And I know even less about their lives in Rhodes before and during WWII. This book is such a personal view into one family's life that it often left me holding my breath in wonder how any Jewish family survived Hitler. It also tells us the refugees continue to come to this country in need of a place of refuge and even though they no longer must seek safety from Hitler there are other forms of terror in other countries from which they must be protected. We too were strangers in an alien country even if the "we" were our parents, great grandparents, great, great grandparents, etc. It is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the struggles of the refugees of then and now. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great job putting all the history together. By CustomerA Hug From Afar is such a timely book given the current issues over immigration into America. All the people in this book, Claire, Ralph and the entire family are heroes, they sacrificed and struggled and thru sure perseverance they made it here. A Hug From Afar means a lot to me personally, as I grew up going to Ralph and Rachel's house often and knew Aunt Esther. I never knew their history, which I now understand and appreciate. Great job putting all the history together, I highly recommend this book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. She loved it. By CustomerHugs from afar was a story of members of our family. I bought this book for a family member. She loved it.

From the young age of 9 on the Aegean island of Rhodes, Clara Barki started writing to her uncle Ralph and aunt Rachel Capeluto in the far-away place known as Seattle, Wash. This smart and determined young woman, who was always at or near the top of her class, used the dying language of Judeo-Spanish, or Ladino, to report news of the relatives Ralph left behind on Rhodes and the happenings of her Sephardic Jewish community. But what started as friendly letters quickly turned to desperate pleas for help as life for the Jews of Rhodes deteriorated under the control of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who allied with Adolph Hitler. Forgotten and never thought of again, Clara's letters turned up more than 60 years after they were written and after she, Ralph and Rachel had passed away. Preserved and translated from Ladino into English, they paint a vivid and detailed 16-year story of how one family triumphed and survived after they became refugees and rode the roller coaster of successes and failures to legally win permission to immigrate to the United States. This compelling story of perseverance, determination, love and grit is brought to life in *A Hug From Afar*, a historical narrative nonfiction memoir that journalist Cynthia Flash Hemphill has edited and compiled based on the letters written by her mother Clara Barki (aka Barkey) from 1930 to 1946. "A Hug from Afar reads like a suspense novel only it's a true story, and it feels as though it's your family caught up in a tale of hope and fear, frustration and happiness, family ties that reach across continents and over decades, and an American immigration bureaucracy working to make family reunification as difficult as possible," Paul Burstein, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Political Science, and Stroum Professor Emeritus of Jewish Studies, University of Washington, wrote in a pre-publication commentary on the book. The book goes far beyond one family's story. It captures the history of the Sephardic Jews on the Island of Rhodes, descendants of Spanish Jews exiled during the Spanish Inquisition of 1492. The book "gives voice to a now-lost Jewish community on the verge of annihilation, to a Jewish family seeking asylum, and to one young woman who initiated a thread of correspondence with relatives in the United States that would ultimately solidify her family's escape from the Nazis," writes Devin E. Naar, Isaac Alhadeff Professor in Sephardic Studies, University of Washington, in a detailed and compelling foreword to the book. "The story itself is not only captivating and powerful on its own, but is also of great historical and cultural significance," Naar writes. "Too seldom do we have access to the perspectives of women in history, even fewer with regard to young women, and very few when it comes to the Sephardic Jewish world. While we know of Anne Frank and her diary, we have almost no sources composed by Sephardic Jewish girls or young women describing their experiences regarding the rise of fascism and the onset of the Second World War." The book uses 16 years worth of letters and official documents to take the reader through a detailed journey of exile, community annihilation, dashed hopes, and real-life drama seen through the eyes of a young woman forced to grow up too quickly as she desperately worked to save her family from Hitler's efforts to destroy the Jews. As she put this book together, Flash Hemphill reflected on the many themes it offers. "It touches on the Holocaust and includes two surviving and aging family members who are still alive and well today," she said. "It centers on the topic of immigration, a hot subject today as our country debates this important issue. And it raises the question about how family histories will be preserved in the future, now that we have moved away from formal, hand-written letters to the instant and quickly discarded forms of today's communication - e-mail, texts and tweets."

About the Author Claire Barkey Flash, AKA Clara Barki, was born on the Island of Rhodes in 1921, the first of six children in a Sephardic Jewish family. Due to her determination and perseverance, she was able to orchestrate her family's escape from Rhodes during World War II and eventual immigration to the United States by doggedly writing letters to her uncle in Seattle, Wash. Cynthia Flash Hemphill, Claire Barkey's daughter, is a journalist and publicist. She owns Flash Media Services, a media relations firm based in Bellevue, Wash. During her long media career, Flash worked for United Press International, The Scottsdale Progress, Hayward Daily, and Tacoma News Tribune. Her articles have appeared in People Magazine, The Seattle Times, the Puget Sound Business Journal, and dozens of other

magazines, newspapers and online media sources. As a first-generation American, she became interested in this important immigration story after being surrounded by the Sephardic Jewish culture of her mother's large family. She is proud to be able to preserve and pass on this story for others to enjoy.