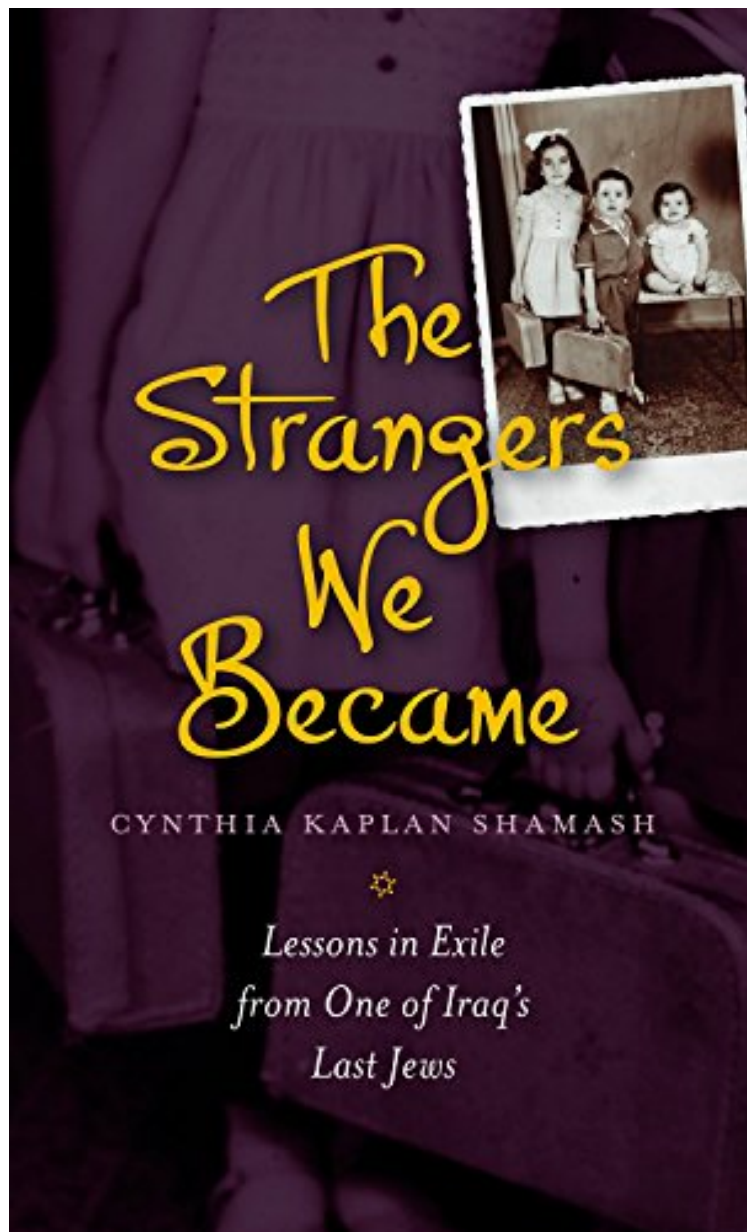


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## The Strangers We Became: Lessons in Exile from One of Iraq's Last Jews (HBI Series on Jewish Women)

Cynthia Kaplan Shamash  
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Cynthia Kaplan Shamash : The Strangers We Became: Lessons in Exile from One of Iraq's Last Jews (HBI Series on Jewish Women) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all

praised *The Strangers We Became: Lessons in Exile from One of Iraq's Last Jews* (HBI Series on Jewish Women):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**By benThis book by Cynthia Kaplan Shamash was wonderfully written and serves a critical historical purpose. I found it inspiring to read the author's story, along with the enormous struggle and challenges that she and her family faced. Cynthia's life was one of determination, resilience, and inner strength as she rebuilt her life and established a career and a family grounded in her deep Jewish values. While the world has been repeatedly reminded of Arab refugees from various lands, Cynthia reminds us that there were also Jewish refugees who were forced to leave their native lands, only to be embraced with open arms by Israel and Jewish communities in the West. Overall this book was inspiring, uplifting, and an excellent read!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. we try to find happiness and to find our true selfBy MelissaThis is an incredible book written with such honesty, emotion and poise. I could not put it down! This book should be required reading for young adults in classes everywhere. I am so thankful to the author for sharing her story with us. As we journey through life, we try to find happiness and to find our true self. This book is a guide for all of us; sending the message to persevere and never forget to laugh!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Love Cynthia Shamash' book - Greetings from a former Dutch schoolmateBy Ira HaimowitzCynthia, ik heb je hele boek in n keer uitgelezen. I went through shock, deep emotional recognition on the stories about Amsterdam, Rosj Pina and the experience of being an immigrant to NYC, and sometimes uproarious laughter, in any order. You have given the world a present to learn from and to be grateful for what they have, by writing this book. . Dank je wel en ik hoop je gauw weer te zien! Barbara Haimowitz -Snijders

This riveting and utterly unique memoir chronicles the coming of age of Cynthia Shamash, an Iraqi Jew born in Baghdad in 1963. When she was eight, her family tried to escape Iraq over the Iranian border, but they were captured and jailed for five weeks. Upon release, they were returned to their home in Baghdad, where most of their belongings had been confiscated and the door of their home sealed with wax. They moved in with friends and applied for passports to spend a ten-day vacation in Istanbul, although they never intended to return. From Turkey, the family fled to Tel Aviv and then to Amsterdam, where Cynthia's father soon died of a heart attack. At the age of twelve, Sanuti (as her mother called her) was sent to London for schooling, where she lived in an Orthodox Jewish enclave with the chief rabbi and his family. At the end of the school year, she returned to Holland to navigate her teen years in a culture that was much more sexually liberal than the one she had been born into, or indeed the one she was experiencing among Orthodox Jews in London. Shortly after finishing her schooling as a dentist, Cynthia moved to the United States in an attempt to start over. This vivid, beautiful, and very funny memoir will appeal to readers intrigued by spirituality, tolerance, the personal ramifications of statelessness and exile, the clashes of cultures, and the future of Iraq and its Jews.

"Shamash's writing beautifully communicates the confusion, imagination, and resilience that she experienced as a child from the trauma, displacement, and possibility of immigration, all caused by anti-Semitism. She weaves her story so well that the reader truly feels what the author has lived. It is only at the end of her tale that one must reckon with the impacts of poverty and instability on Shamash and her family and acknowledge the courage they all have shown in building new lives in unfamiliar places. The story moves quickly, so that there is much for a reader to absorb perhaps too much but then Shamash holds the events and the emotion so expertly in sync that the power of the story is enhanced rather than lessened by the fast pace. Jewish Book World