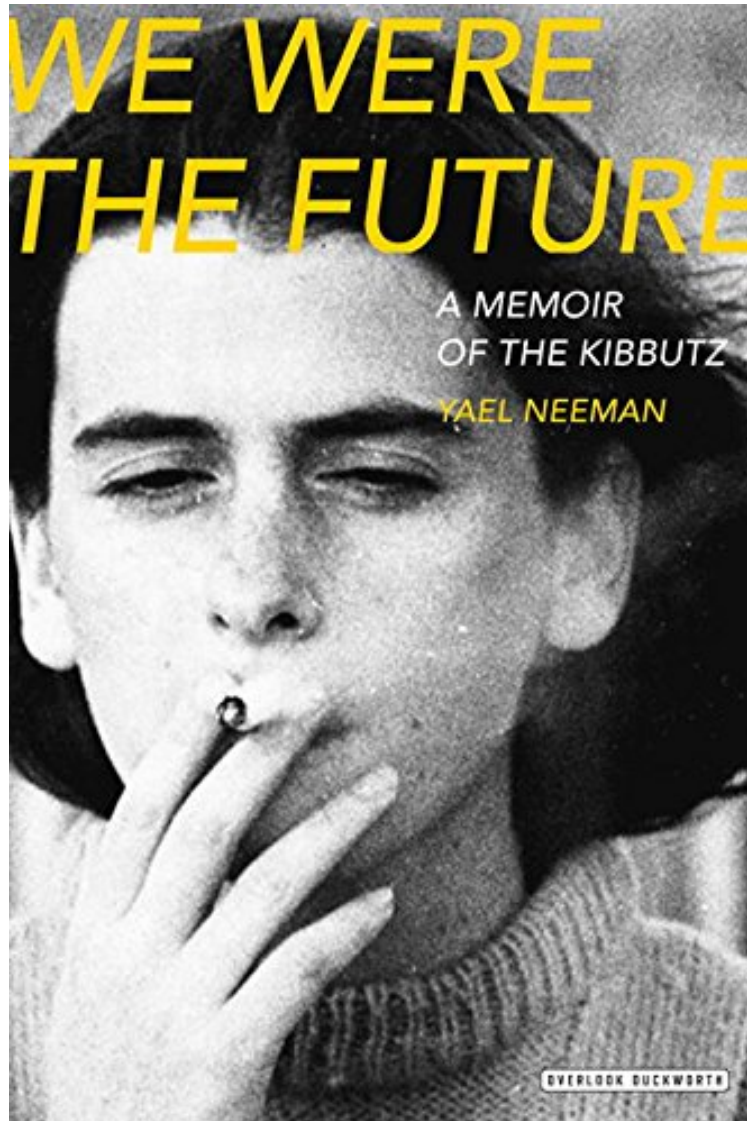


[Download pdf] We Were The Future: A Memoir of the Kibbutz

## We Were The Future: A Memoir of the Kibbutz

Yael Neeman

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**Yael Neeman : We Were The Future: A Memoir of the Kibbutz** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Were The Future: A Memoir of the Kibbutz:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. It sort of seemed like the author was trying to narrate as a child ...By Drealml found the writing style atrocious, and I'm by no means a grammar nut. The writing felt childish and was full of long run on sentences. I don't know if this was done for stylistic reasons or as a result of being translated from Hebrew. I know Hebrew doesn't translate well to English. It sort of seemed like the author was trying to narrate as a

child or young woman even though the book was written as an adult many years later. Next, as a non Israeli, I was hoping to use this first hand account as a introduction to Kibbutz as whole. The book is definitely a first hand account, but it's written for an Israeli audience. The book assumes you are already intimately familiar with the Kibbutz history.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy Jack PermanToo much petty details, not very interesting.3 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Israeli kibbutz teenager life -- not so muchBy William Garrison Jr.We Were the Future: A Memoir of the Kibbutz by Yael Neeman (Oct 2016).The bookjackets accolades of it being an extraordinarily affecting masterpiecemarvelouseye-opening book -- I found to be deceiving: just not much substance.As the author was born in Kibbutz Yehiam (Israel) in 1960, I was expecting this book to reveal her life experiences while growing up on a kibbutz. Sure, to set the stage the author discusses the history of the development of the kibbutz she lived on but, she spent about 40% of the first portion of the book doing so a short history before she was born. I mean, really, 40% of filler material?So for the next decade (another 40% of the book) the author discusses what it was like growing up as a child in an environment whereby she (and the other kids) lived in a communal building, whereby they shared common experiences of joint potty training with boys and girls showering together until they were seven years old. About 100-150 kids lived together, played together and schooled together usually under the watchful eyes of their nannies (metapelet). They were allowed to visit their parents at their homes only between 5-7:20pm daily, before returning to their kids barracks.The purpose of this communal life was, as the author wrote: From the moment we were released from the hospital [after being born], they never tried to separate us. On the contrary, they joined us, glued us, welded us together.Their intention wasnt to weld, but just the opposite, to separate; to separate the children from the oppressive weight of their parents, who would pamper them and impose their wills on them with mothers milk and fathers ambitions. To separate and protect the children from the bourgeois nature of the family -- that was the goal of the Internationale: that the new child would grow into a new kind of person devoted to the egalitarianism of co-workers.The author said that she enjoyed her youth; it wasnt until her mid-teens did she and her fellow youths began to contemplate their self-identity, the other sex, dating, and began pondering living outside the commune.As the teenage boys and girls shared rooms, some began experimenting in sex and she relates how the staff would assist with abortions. However, the author never really got into detailing the level of promiscuity how many of the kids became sexually active, nor the number of abortions, nor discussion by their handlers as to how to contemplate pre-marital sex.There have been numerous other books that really analyze the operations of the kibbutz, how they are organized, and what products they produced and acreage farmed. This is not such of a statically-filled scholarly book.In her late teens, the author noted that she was disappointed that despite the goal of egalitarianism, the men were sent to do field work while the gals were trapped into doing the laundry, cooking, cleaning and, well, wife-work -- gender, sexism was rife.The author related that even as teenagers they werent forced to study for some future job in the outside world most were expected that they would remain on the kibbutz to do farming our communal housework. They didnt receive grades on education-building school work but got evaluations as to how they were relating with others: Sadly, they weren't challenged to excel -- a rather "laid back" experience. They didnt receive matriculation certificates.The author noted that as they graduated from being mandatorily kept on the kibbutz, about half of them left the kibbutz for city life. It was interesting to learn that the kibbutzim didnt account for more than 17% of the Israeli population (maybe 600,000 children), and then by the 1980s went into almost total obliviation.The author noted that in her twenties that she missed not having a nuclear-family life and upbringing.After leaving the kibbutz, the author was mustered into the army, where she soldiered along for only 11 months before she cracked and received a psychiatric discharge from the army almost just too much more communal living. She went to work in the city, and, after writing several novels, wrote this book.Initially, I was torn whether to rate this book as a one-star or two-stars. I mean, it really is BORING! It has some insights. But there are so many other books out there discussing kibbutz life already. So, this is one teenager gals unchallenging experiences of growing up as part of a social experiment striving for egalitarianism but failing to find much purposefulness through it. She had many childhood friends, but from her commentary one can tell that she didnt find much love. Perhaps a book for those interested in unfilled love from an almost wasted youth.I recall reading somewhere that the author received some literary medal from the president of Israel for having written this book about her narrow experiences living on a kibbutz. Good for her, but, lacking as a "meaty" book -- too much tofu and not enough beef of substance

The beautiful, understated memoir by bestselling Israeli author Yael Neeman detailing the intimate, collective memories of children raised on the kibbutz.The kibbutz is one of the greatest stories in Israeli history. These collective settlements have been written about extensively over the years: The kibbutz has been the subject of many sociological studies, and has been praised as the only example in world history of entire communities attempting, voluntarily, to live in total equality. But there's a dark side to the kibbutz, which has been criticized in later years, mainly by children who were raised in these communities, as an institution which victimized its offspring for the sake of ideology.In this spare and lucid memoir, Neeman--a child of the kibbutz--draws on the collective memory of hundreds of thousands of Israelis who grew up in a kibbutz during their height and who intimately share their memories with her.We Were the Future is more than merely a compelling personal account of growing up in the kibbutz movement; it is an unstintingly

honest examination of the perils of pioneering and a new lens through which to see the history of Israel.

Neeman, an accomplished editor and novelist, writes about her kibbutz childhood with an imagistic, spare insightfulness. The result, translated by Sondra Silverston, is a rarely intimate portrait of the unusual collaborative communities on which Israel was founded. - *The Jewish Daily Forward* An eye-opening look at a fascinating era in Israeli history and what happens when a child is part of a sociopolitical experiment. - *Kirkus* sA highly recommended introduction to the kibbutz movement. - *Library Journal* Both beautifully lyric and devastatingly illuminating. - *The Times of Israel* Readers curious about life on a kibbutz in the 1960s will love this poetic autobiography. Readers who have never wondered about life on a kibbutz should read this book anyway, as they will be well rewarded . . . The history of the movement and her own kibbutz are deftly woven together, and readers come away with a sense of this not as merely an autobiography of an individual woman but as the story of the hopes, dreams, and struggles of an entire movement. A spare, and startling book. - *Christine Engel, Booklist* We Were the Future is ultimately a compassionate memoir about a bygone life . . . Neeman does a masterful job of capturing the ennui that set in between childhood and adulthood. - *Judy Bolton-Fasman, Tablet Magazine* Extraordinarily affecting . . . Ne'eman captures both the regimentation and the romance [of the kibbutz] in a dreamy, associative, dry style that forms an exquisite counterpoint to both. - *Jewish Ideas Daily* A powerful reminiscence about the fall of Israels most idealistic experiment . . . A revealing, inside look at an often-romanticized social experiment, We Were the Future is as much an elegy as it is an expos, which suits the movement that many outside of Israel identify as one of the countrys most curious creations. - *Washington Independent of Books* A graceful, non-political account of living collectively . . . The memoirs eloquent, almost lyrical, tone will draw young readers as well as their elders. - *Manhattan Book* Neemans masterpiece is a marvelous reflection on life in the Kibbutz, a depiction of a lost world that does not fall into the trap of being too nostalgic or of repeating the clichs on life in the Kibbutz. - *Dr. Vered Karti Shemtov, Stanford University* About the Author Yael Neeman was born in Kibbutz Yehiam, Israel in 1960. She studied at Tel Aviv University and participated in the International Writing Program (IWP) in Iowa City through the Fulbright Foundation. She is the author of two novels, *Orange Tuesday* and *Rumors About Love*, and a collection of stories, *The Option*. *We Were the Future*, originally published in Hebrew, was a number one bestseller in Israel and has been translated into French, Polish, and Dutch. *Sondra Silverston* has translated fiction by contemporary Israeli authors Etgar Keret, Savyon Liebrecht, and Aharon Megged, among others.