

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

High resolution photos available from [info@lagoonhousepress.com](mailto:info@lagoonhousepress.com)

CONTACT: Barbara Crane (562) 433-7114, Lagoon House Press

Date: December 5, 2018

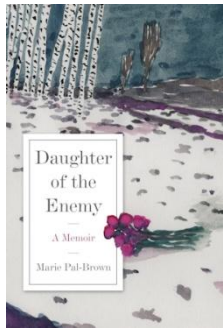


**Lagoon House Press Author Marie Pal-Brown Receives National Recognition from The 7th Annual Beverly Hills Book Awards®!**

Beverly Hills, California -- The 7th Annual Beverly Hills Book Awards® recognized *Daughter of the Enemy* by Marie Pal-Brown in the Memoir category as a finalist.

Established in 2013, the Beverly Hills Book Awards® competition is judged by experts from all aspects of the book industry, including publishers, writers, editors, book designers and professional copywriters. Contest winners and finalists are determined based on "overall excellence of presentation – a synergy of form and content" over a wide range of genres.

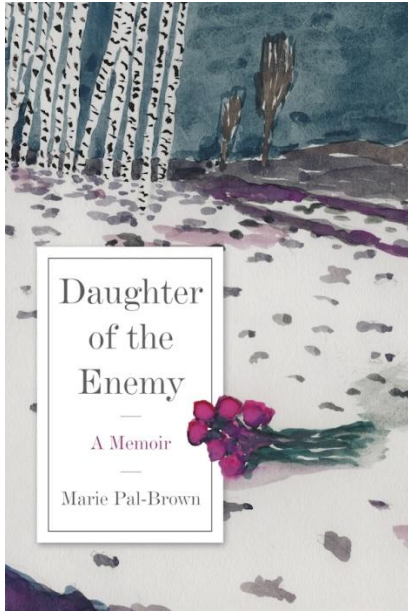
"We are proud to announce the winners and finalists whose books truly embody the excellence that this award was created to celebrate, and we salute you all for your fine work" – Ellen Reid, Founder BHBA



*Daughter of the Enemy* is both a personal and social history – it recounts how women and children survived the hardships of WWII and postwar Germany, and how a ravaged country succumbed to the silence surrounding the Holocaust. It weaves, from the frayed strands of memory, a fully human accounting of coming to terms with hard truths, finally creating a tender memorial to the father lost in war. The story is a journey, and the journey is a story that has been waiting to be told.

Marie Pal-Brown was born and raised in a small town near Cologne, Germany. Educated at Durham University in England and the SDI in Munich, she emigrated to America in the early sixties. She is the co-author of three works of lexicography. Her poetry has been included in various anthologies. She lives in Long Beach, California.





## Daughter of the Enemy

by Marie Pal-Brown

Memoir

Paperback ISBN-10: 0997260955

Ebook ISBN

406 pages

Retail price: \$17.00

Published by Lagoon House Press, 2018

Available online at [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#)

A child is born in a time of war, and when she is five years old, her father, a soldier in the German *Wehrmacht*, is killed in battle. Not until that child is older will she understand the full horror of her country's role in that war. Then begins a long and painful reckoning, a quest for identity and a way to remember a father beloved but, nevertheless, on the wrong side of history.

Marie Pal-Brown's moving and beautifully written memoir faces, without flinching, the complexity of that reckoning. *Daughter of the Enemy* is both a personal and a social history – it recounts how women and children survived the hardships of WWII and postwar Germany, and how a ravaged country succumbed to the silence surrounding the Holocaust. It weaves, from the frayed strands of memory, a fully human accounting of coming to terms with hard truths, finally creating a tender memorial to the father lost in war. The story is a journey and the journey is a story that has been waiting to be told.

Lagoon House Press is an independent press that publishes works of literary merit. Located in Long Beach, California, LHP publishes fiction, memoir, nonfiction, poetry, plays, and books of photography.



Published by Lagoon House Press, LLC

Long Beach, CA

[www.lagoonhousepress.com](http://www.lagoonhousepress.com)

## An Excerpt

I woke up early the next morning to a persistent sound, like the sound of metal scraping against metal. Suspended at intervals by hushed pauses, it rose from the street below my fourth-floor hotel room. I lay in bed, listening, trying to identify it, waiting for it to stop.

When it didn't, I got up and parted the curtains to look outside. What had been a dismal view of concrete against concrete the previous evening, had been transformed overnight into a picturesque cityscape in winter. The crumbling stucco of the façades appeared less bleak. The state flag of red/white/red stripes billowed atop the snow-laden roof of the imposing, colonnaded theater at the far end of the square. Snow weighted down the foliage on the trees.

Yesterday's busy city thoroughfare had been rendered impassable under a blanket of snow. It was pristine, except for the sidewalk directly below, where an old man's shoveling became the scraping sound I'd heard. He was digging a channel through which the odd pedestrian could pass. Every so often, he would stop and, leaning on his shovel, take a break.

After a hasty good morning in the hotel restaurant – a room that resembled a banquet hall of old-fashioned splendor – Dieter asked me, “Do you realize the significance of this snowfall?” While the concern in his voice took me by surprise, the question itself did not.

The unseasonal late September snow replicated the wartime weather conditions in December 1944. *Snow covers the trees of the forest where our unit has been dug in, the winter sun makes the white of the rolling hills glisten, but I am blind to all this beauty and devoid of the spirit of Christmas*, my father had written in his second-to-last letter to Mother on December 14, 1944.

“Isn't it like a nod from the past, the same weather as back then?” I said, in answer to Dieter's question.

Dieter was looking past me. He stood up from the table and stepped to an alcove window with a view onto the square. He gazed into the serene winterscape. From a distance, the sound of the old man shoveling snow, then silence while he rested for a moment, could be heard.

With his back turned to me, as if he couldn't bear the news he was about to deliver, Dieter said, “It most likely means the end of this journey.”

He pointed out the all-too-obvious ramifications I had ignored: "The traffic in the city is paralyzed. We have no winter tires, no snow chains." He needed to say no more.

The snow would hold us captive in this hotel. At best, we would be able to venture to the end of the channel the old man was digging along the sidewalk.

Oddly, Dieter's prediction didn't stun me, nor did I question its accuracy. Rather, it thrust me into reviewing the expectations I'd had of this journey. I had harbored no secret hopes of finding evidence of my father, where he might have fought or where he had been buried. Instead, I had longed to be in these woods and plains where he had spent the last days of his life, whatever that experience might be. But utter defeat? That I had not considered.

I recalled the images of the dream on the *St. Petersburg* two nights earlier – crucifixes and a group of high-rise buildings. Now this city, made impassible by the snow, separated me from the thousands of nameless dead left by the war, buried under snow that covered the past. Perhaps, the dream was all that I would take home from this journey.

## Praise for *Daughter of the Enemy*

Marie Pal-Brown's suspenseful and vivid account grants the reader entry into the mind and psyche of a German child living through the end of WWII and the vicissitudes of its aftermath. A memoir of an individuation like hers is a treasure -- a life's work. A valuable example of a writer gathering her memories to lay the groundwork for a final healing.

Patrick Roth, Author, *Starlite Terrace*

*Daughter of the Enemy* is not just a compelling and superbly written account of the author's experience growing up in West Germany after World War II, but it is the story of a generation. Pal-Brown's memoir makes an important contribution to postwar social history by grounding its portrait of everyday life in the historical moment. The book offers a rare and nuanced depiction of girlhood which illuminates the connections between gender violence and the brutality of war. Pal-Brown has crafted a sophisticated narrative that succeeds because of its larger stakes. On the one hand, the author's intermittent reflection on the genre of memoir foregrounds its fundamental concern with the reconstruction not of the past, but of memory and its lapses. She does this while simultaneously capturing the truth and immediacy of her younger self's lived experiences. Both impulses bring substance to the structuring produced by her father's death and to the willful repression of the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II by the previous generation. *Daughter of the Enemy* is a gripping personal narrative as well as a thoughtful intervention into the German project of reckoning with the past.

Alison Guenther-Pal, Ph.D., Associate Professor of German Studies, Lawrence University

The best memoirs draw you into another person's world in intimate and moving ways. *Daughter of the Enemy* does just that, specifically evoking the author's conflicted girlhood of hardships as WWII draws to a close in her native Germany. Throughout the postwar years, just as the fractured nation must face its tragic past and what the future might hold, the author struggles through loss, guilt, and forgiveness to ultimately come to terms with who she truly is.

Jean Hastings Ardell, Co-author, *Making My Pitch: A Woman's Baseball Odyssey*

I was completely captured from the very first page of this powerful memoir. Rarely do we hear testimonials of the tragedy of war from the perspective of the "enemy". Marie Pal-Brown provides just that. She eloquently elaborates with magnificent detail the gripping events she lives through, helping the reader to find empathy for all of war's victims.

The writing is deeply personal, emotionally descriptive and evidence of a serious and persistent self-reflection. It is the story of a young girl's struggle to comprehend and cope with the enormous tragedy of war, how this young girl emerges into adulthood to gradually shed the shame of being a "daughter of the enemy," and finally achieves some semblance of

understanding and acceptance. This memoir, written in the voice of a “daughter of the enemy,” is one that is unique and rarely considered, yet so valuable to hear. It reminds us that we typically honor the “victor” and rarely empathize with the “enemy.”

Ms. Pal-Brown's book is a testimony to what, I imagine, was a long and difficult journey to remember and process truly traumatic experiences, and, as a result, a cathartic one. I am glad she found the courage. We all are better for it. I was so moved that I looked for and found her childhood home in Delrath, Germany, on Google Maps, in order to be even closer to her. Anyone drawn to the human experience and history of humankind will find “Daughter of the Enemy” a book worth reading.

Congratulations and my highest regard to Ms. Pal-Brown for this remarkable work.

David M. Pratt, Ph.D., Psychologist

### **A sampling of some of the Five Star reviews that Amazon readers have posted:**

#### **Very original untold perspective; extremely well written**

A little German girl loses her father in WWII, and throughout her young and adult life she engages in a journey, both psychological and geographical, in search of the truth. Not only a historical truth, as she learns about the atrocities perpetrated during the war, but also an overwhelming personal one, as she stands accountable for her origin and her country's past, and travels through Eastern Europe to look for her father's grave. Painstakingly detailed and beautifully written, this book is like a treasure box from which the reader can pick colorful and precious gems, such as her perilous journey home at the end of the war, her relationship with her friend Dieter, her discovery of the Anne Frank diary, the strength of the women in her family, and many many others.

#### **An often overlooked viewpoint to a sad piece of history**

There has been much written about Germany, their Jewish population and WWII, and I have read my share of it. Therefore, when I decided to read Daughter of the Enemy, I did not expect to learn anything new. However, I wasn't very far into this beautifully written memoir when I realized that this was the first time I had ever given a thought to the ordinary German people. The little girl in the story could have been me -- we played the same games, we had the same conversations with our friends and she knew as much about the Holocaust as I did at the time -- which was absolutely nothing. The Jewish people were not the only victims -- the fallout from the atrocities scarred an entire generation in post war Germany. This fresh perspective offers an important lesson in today's society as we sit quietly by watching a new interest in old ideas that promote old hatreds.

## **A Captivating and Fascinating Story**

Daughter of the Enemy by Marie Pal-Brown is autobiographical but reads like a novel. The setting is in Germany during World War II and thereafter. The book does not heavily emphasize the military conflict. Most of the story occurs after the war. Even so, the war's impact is an inescapable backdrop to everything. Essentially this is an intimate and personal story about a child growing to womanhood during horrific times. Marie shares her life—the mundane and the harrowing—in lively detail with clarity and dispassionate objectivity. This is a finely-crafted book, quite remarkably so, considering English is the author's second language.

When the story begins in 1945, Marie is 5 years old and her father is fighting Russians on the eastern front. His death in combat is not a surprise to the reader but causes profound shock waves that reverberate throughout the author's life, even to the end of the book when she is an adult. Early in the book, after losing her father, and as the war turns against Germany, she and her widowed mother must flee the advancing Russian army. They barely escape.

The post-war challenges of the mother and daughter living in a totally devastated country is dealt with by ingenuity, stoicism and assistance from relatives. Marie's chronically-aggrieved mother is frustrated and depressed by the terrible national circumstances that stole her cherished husband's life. Marie remains remarkably resilient throughout, partially fortified by her religious beliefs. As she grows and develops, she proves to be a good student and her skills are noticed by an academic mentor whose favor propels her professional career forward. Ultimately, she is able to find gainful employment with an American film company shooting on location in Europe. There she meets and falls in love with an American who brings her to the United States.

Marie's life is indelibly imprinted by the swirling circumstances of post-war Germany and by the loss of her father at such a young age. A recurrent theme of the book is the struggle of the author to find peace with the memory of her father. On the one hand, her personal memories about him were totally positive. On the other hand, as Marie grows up, she is eventually confronted with the shame and societal culpability of the Holocaust. The story draws to a close with Marie back in Europe searching for the final resting place of her father where he perished fighting on the eastern front.

This book stirs deep emotions. Obviously, with the name "Scholz," I can't help but feel connected personally to the horrible acts perpetrated by the people of my origins. I extremely grateful that my great-grandfather emigrated to the US in 1880! However, that only partly assuages my feelings of cultural guilt. I'm certainly proud of my heritage and the laudable German characteristics such as being hard working, capable, passionate and organized. On the

other hand, it's deeply shocking and humbling to consider the apparent potential for every-day people to descend to the depths of depravity when these same strengths are pointed in a malevolent direction.

This book is a totally captivating story about an attractive and intelligent young woman seemingly unaware of her beauty and apparently surprised to discover that she is a capable academician. The author has an excellent grasp of the personalities of her family, friends and other characters. Their skillful portrayal draws the reader into a precious and privileged intimacy, into a deep heart-felt relationship with her authentic life. We share Marie's unique and soulful personality while she wrestles against the inescapable sadness of the surrounding violent circumstances. Well-told true stories give us the privilege of vicariously experiencing life's stunning victories and painful defeats. This book's impact is real. It will stay with me always.



## Q&A with Marie Pal-Brown

### **What prompted you to write this memoir?**

This book began as an anxiety-ridden experience during a writing workshop – a letter written to my dead father – which I describe in the acknowledgements. In a sense, it is an “accidental” memoir. Writing a long prose piece, especially a memoir, was never my aspiration. Still, it seems that it wanted to be written. In retrospect, I justify its existence as a story worth telling, in that it moves beyond my own personal life and that of my family to that of my generation of non-Jewish Germans born during and shortly after the war. Many of us share the fate of having lost their fathers in battle. All of us grew up in a time of deprivation as the country lay in ruins. All of us witnessed that country’s renewal -- the formation of Germany’s postwar democratic government and the economic recovery that lasted well into the 1950s. Many of us felt called upon to confront a history of horror and later of silence that was our parents’ legacy.

### **How would you characterize the theme or themes of this book?**

As I wrote this very personal story, certain themes arose. The book opens with loss – father loss. That is the leitmotif that affects much of my journey – inner and outer – which ultimately leads to Latvia, in search of the location of my father’s death. Along the way come the loss of a child’s early innocence; the loss of religious faith; the loss of total trust in a loving mother. As a sixteen-year-old, I learn about the Holocaust. As an adult, it is the loss of country and friends; the partial loss of my native tongue – caused by lack of use -- while never feeling quite at home in English as an acquired language. There is the theme of survival, mainly through the strength of women left without husbands after the war. There is the theme of shame and guilt vis-à-vis the harmless transgressions of a child and the ultimate horror of the annihilation in concentration camps of 6 million Jews and others deemed undesirable by Nazi ideology. Finally, the struggle for redemption – of finding a way to live with irreconcilable opposites.

### **The Second World War has been over for more than seventy years. Why did you write this book now and not earlier?**

I wrote the first draft, the draft that came about “accidentally,” in the 1990s. It served as the blueprint for the final version that was published this year. The German philosopher Theodore Adorno, of Jewish and Catholic parentage, wrote in an essay, in 1949, “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” German writers, it appears, took that to heart. There was a reluctance, an unspoken prohibition, for many years to address a personal reckoning with the Hitler regime, the war and, specifically, the Holocaust. I’m not aware of early first-hand accounts written by non-Jewish Germans who’d lived through the war. In the face of the horror Germany had inflicted on others, speaking publicly about the German experience was not a true option, and

paled by comparison. That had to wait for an inner permission, a readiness and courage to give voice to whatever suffering Germans themselves had endured. Günter Grass, for example, didn't publish his book "Peeling the Onion" until 2004.

**What makes this book different from other accounts of wartime and postwar Germany?**

This memoir is an intimate story of how I fit into those times, how I experienced those times, and how they affected me – as events embedded in my memory, many of them at a young age. A frequent observation has been that the book illuminates a perspective that has not been widely explored in American literature. Understandably, the average American reader might tend to view the history of the Third Reich and its aftermath from a "victor's" point of view, sometimes with animus and little empathy for the "enemy." I am not a historian. My account is not a broadly observed history. It is my history.

**You wrote this memoir as someone of German birth who lives in America. Can you put into words how this dual state of mind had a bearing on your writing? And can you say what it was like for you to write in a language other than your own?**

For one, this dual, or split, or hybrid mindset explains the title: "Daughter of the Enemy." That title, for obvious reasons, only carries weight in this country, the victor's country. It would make little sense in Germany. I've lived in California most of my adult life. Still, my roots are German; my family traces its ancestry in the general vicinity of Cologne to 1430. Living in this country, I've been ashamed to be German, and I've been proud to be German. After more than half a century, I'm no longer the person who left her home country, nor can I ever hope to become like a native whose cradle stood on American soil. I'm a hyphenated American, and I'm an expatriate. I speak with a traceable accent. This culture has rubbed off on me, while my core remains foreign. I strongly defend the values of the United States, but also respect the cultural heritage of Germany and the progressive direction the country has taken, some of it in an effort to redress the sins of the past. Everything I write, at least hypothetically speaking, is guided by these various filters of thinking and feeling.

I wrote this book in English, my second language. One might assume that German, as my native tongue, would have been my natural preference. Even though I speak English almost flawlessly and have a wide vocabulary, the true depth and nuances of the English language are not always accessible to me. There were many times when I found it necessary to resort to Webster's, the Thesaurus and German-English dictionaries, or to ask a native speaker whether a word or a turn of phrase would fit within a given context. I left some of the dialogue in the original high German or in the Rhenish dialect, followed by an approximate translation, when I wanted to preserve a speaker's distinctive speech patterns or personality.

## **You seem to have a strikingly detailed memory for events that happened in your early childhood.**

My memory is something that has been frequently commented on, often in contrast to the questioner's own, less detailed, memory. From early childhood on, my emotional memories have been both vivid and specific, even intricate. These emotional memories seem to be rooted in real-life experiences, which I recall in equally crisp imagery. It has struck me, however, that primarily incisive and traumatic events have left readily retrievable imprints. Which may explain why, at least in the parts of the book about my childhood, I chronicle very few happy events.

## **How can you be sure that what you write is authentic?**

I can't. I can only say that I was ruthless in my attempts to move in on the truth. Still, it is the truth as I experienced it and as I remember it. I tried not to be apologetic for anything I saw or omit anything I didn't like seeing. I returned to the tough spots many times, each time boring a bit deeper until I struck, what was for me, the essence.

## **Did writing this memoir change you?**

I am the product of a particular time in the history of my country. That history left an indelible mark on my psyche, namely of the wrongdoings my parents' generation committed, and of the silence that stigmatized the post-war period. During a process that began in my Jungian analysis and continued to the last page of writing down this story, I found myself searching for more than easy explanations and rationalizations. It meant discovering blind spots; it meant anger and disillusionment; it meant shedding tears; it meant scrutinizing people I loved in a detached light; it meant having compassion even for people who I thought deserved only hate. Perhaps, those were the mechanics of the changes in me that ensued, and to opening a path to redemption.

## **Can you talk about the writing process for this book?**

The writing evolved in what I can only describe as a mysterious journey. The book consists of four parts and fifty-eight chapters. Each chapter is a separate event or memory, starting with the day, in 1945, when a stranger comes to the door to notify my mother that her husband has been killed at the Soviet front. The chapters that followed, chronologically, were prompted either by dreams or came to me with a first sentence as I waited in front of a blank computer screen. One could say that individual memories were plucked from the much larger pool of memories, randomly, certainly without conscious intent. I didn't know from one chapter to the next how and whether the writing would proceed. Even the journeys I undertook – back to the eastern part of Germany and to Latvia – evolved without a preconceived plan. One day I knew that I would

embark on them. I didn't know how the book would end until I arrived on page 392, and I wrote what would be the final words. That was the moment the heart of the book revealed itself to me.

**Was there any historical documentation that informed your telling of the story.**

During my father's lifetime, my parents wrote to each other faithfully. While my mother's letters did not survive, my father's did. At a time when I expressed interest in them – with an eye on determining my father's involvement in the Nazi Regime – my mother gave me a batch of 230 letters. I read those on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. All of them spoke of his love for his wife and two daughters. Surprisingly, the contents of many revolved around questions and instructions about ordinary goings-on in my mother's life at home. But there were also those that allowed insight, not only into the movements of his regiment and the battles in which he fought, but his state of mind, his fears, and his apparently fluctuating trust and allegiance to the war effort. In my book, I use a number of quotes from these letters to illustrate what I found.

**As someone who has read your book, I'm curious to know whether you planted the succulents, and whether they thrived.**

This is a question that can only come up at the very end of the book. The answer is, yes, I planted them. And, yes, they did thrive.

**How has "Daughter of the Enemy" been received?**

Exceptionally well. Beyond any expectations I might have had. What it tells me is that I was able to tell my story in a language that the reader finds credible. For that I am thankful.

**Where is the book available?**

It's available, internationally, on the Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites, both in paperback and ebook editions, as well as in bookstores. Inscribed and autographed copies can be purchased through Lagoon House Press, 310-991-3215.

## About the Author



*Daughter of the Enemy* is an “accidental” memoir: Writing my own story had never been my aspiration. It evolved from a letter to my dead father, written as an exercise in a workshop. It explored the memory of learning about his death as a soldier in the German *Wehrmacht*, and eventually became the first chapter of the book. After that unintentional jumpstart, I felt driven to continue writing about my personal history against the background of wartime and postwar Germany.

Born and raised in a small town near Cologne, Germany, I studied English Language & Literature at Durham University, England, took exams at Cambridge, and completed my education in English Language Studies at the SDI in Munich, with a graduate degree. As an English/German language researcher, I co-authored three works of lexicography.

After emigrating to the United States and raising three children, I began writing personal essays and poetry. My collection *Your Broad Hands Touching Me* is forthcoming. My poems have been included in various anthologies. *Daughter of the enemy* is my first venture into the long narrative form.

While I attribute my greatest influence to the German writer Christa Wolf and the German-language poet Rainer Maria Rilke, I am an avid reader of English-language literature – Marilynne Robinson, Alice Munro, Colm Toibin, Christian Wiman, Louise Glück, Charles Wright, Holly Prado, to mention a few.

For the past ten years, I’ve resided in Long Beach, California, with my husband, the actor Garrett M. Brown.