



The Epoch Times

BOOKS



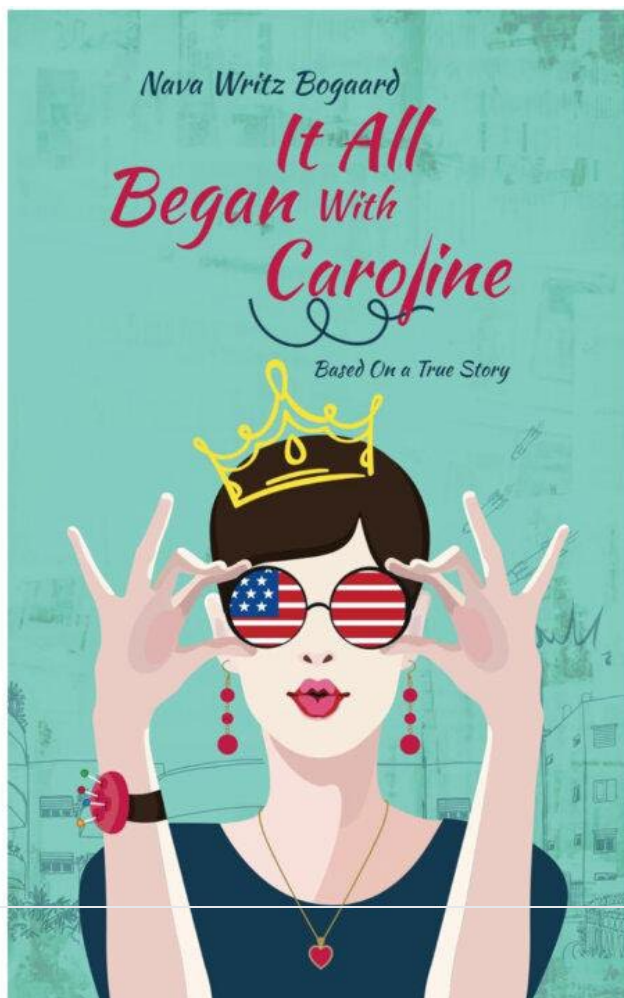
BOOK REVIEW

## 'It All Began With Caroline: Based on a True Story'

Nava Writz Bogaard's memoir includes lots of action but little reflection.



Save



Comment



All Began with Caroline: Based On a True Story," by Nava Writz Bogaard

Share

By Anna Lad

8/7/2024 Updated: 8/7/2024

**Print**

America, the land of opportunity. Many Americans wake up and go about their day, never thinking for a second that their nation is a life's dream for someone on the other side of the world. Nava Writz Bogaard is one such woman. Her dream? Emigrate to the United States and leave boring, lackluster Tel Aviv behind.

"It All Began With Caroline: Based On a True Story," by Nava Writz Bogaard, tells the fast-paced life story of its infant-bedding designer and world-traveling author. Bogaard's memoir is chock-full of excitement, drama, and scrappy business acumen, but it suffers from a lack of purpose.

## A Childhood Dream

Born into a large family that made it clear she was more burden than blessing, Bogaard quickly shed her roots in observant Judaism for the siren song of Western culture's glamour. The TV taught her more than just English. A world of opportunity awaited, if she could just get a foothold.

Bogaard easily transports readers to Tel Aviv neighborhoods of the 1960s and 1970s. Dysfunctional family dynamics, her fight to attend a secular school, and the thrill of a first kiss are described with gusto. Readers will have compassion for this eldest sister, who stood up to physical abuse from her father and brother, yet was resented for her independence and ambition.

When she escaped her hypocritical family, Bogaard found a moral compass in American culture. But that compass was faulty. Hollywood was built on shifting sands; American movies and shows were fiction. Being "kissed in English" led to painful choices with decades-long effects.

## Scattered Memories

As readers follow Bogaard's story, they'll notice her strength of will, tenacity, and

creativity. She lives in the moment, taking each day as it comes. Unfortunately, there's some shortsightedness. Book Nava's dreams: to live in the United States, to be as glamorous as Joan Lunden, and to appear on "Good Morning America."

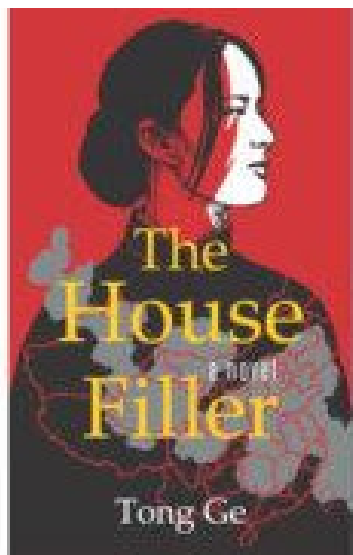
The book's structure makes her story hard to follow. It's arranged chronologically, but topics lack the differentiation and analysis that conveys what's important. She glazes over deep feeling, which prevents readers from getting to know her.

"I read ... many books of inspiration and motivation." What books? "I realized the solution [to get a green card] lay with Buddy." Did she have reservations about committing immigration fraud? We "went wild on my boss's magnificent wall to wall carpet." Do readers need to know?

## RELATED STORIES

'The House Filler': Surviving the Changes in Modern China

5/31/2024



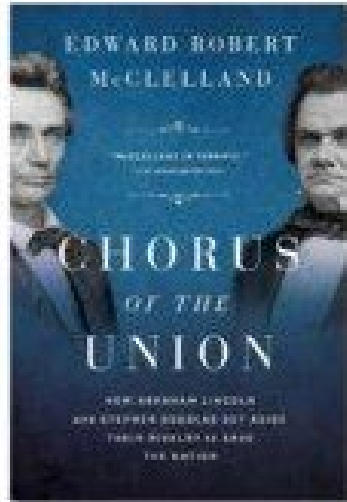
An Impassioned Account of Two 19th-Century Political Giants

6/11/2024

Just as she "immersed [her]self in work" to avoid feeling painful emotions, Bogaard numbs the reader by recounting minute details: how a fax machine "ejected [paper] slowly, bottom first, revealing line after line."

It's difficult to interpret these vague asides. Some are never mentioned again, but some are key to her future decisions. It's difficult to know what mattered most to Bogaard.

This alienates



readers. I wanted to know how Nava felt when she pushed away her first love. How did she cope

after her emergency hysterectomy? I wonder if she and her mother ever reconciled. Did she suspect John would never put her first, or was it a sudden realization?

## No Real North Star

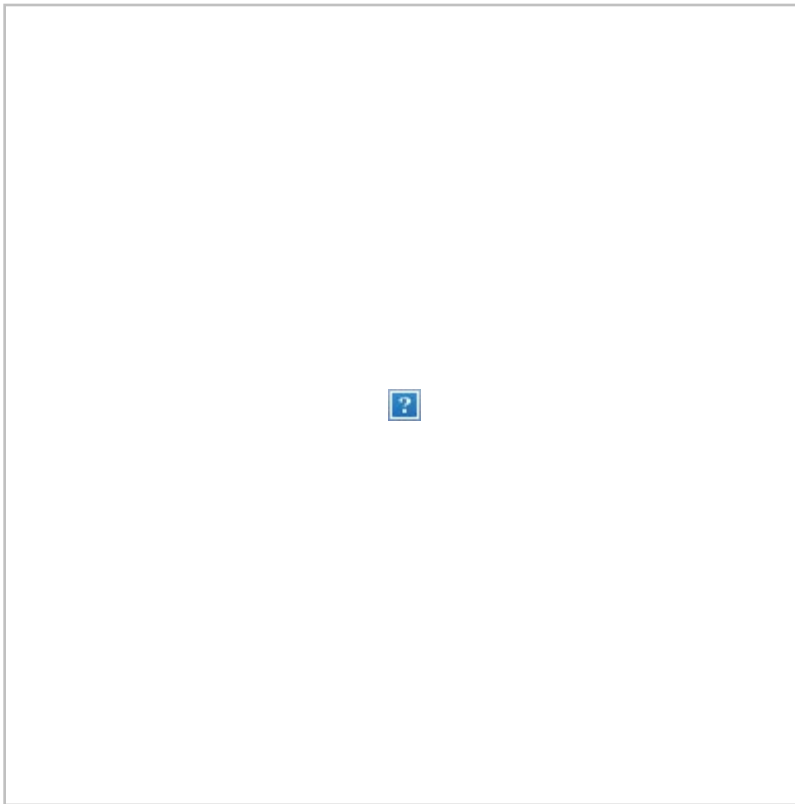
Bogaard knows how to run a business, whether she's babysitting, scheduling, catering, selling furniture, or designing bedding. Reflecting on her experiences doesn't come as naturally. Unfortunately, "It All Began with Caroline" can be disjointed and rambling at times. It doesn't help that English isn't her first language.

Our heroine experiences heartbreak and joy, rejection and triumph. But she struggles to share it. She leaves out her hard-won wisdom and sweeps her emotions under the rug. I wanted to learn more about her optimism and resilient mindset.

I hoped her memoir would do more to highlight her moxie, grit, and can-do attitude. She overcomes cancer, fights infertility, and moves to America with barely \$500. These amazing accomplishments don't stand out as much as they deserve.

I can't recommend this memoir for teens and impressionable young girls. Bogaard designs beautiful bedding sets for babies, but the way she designed her memoir isn't quite as well-appointed. Her entrepreneurship advice, however, is razor-

sharp.



"It All Began with Caroline: Based On a True Story," by Nava Writz Bogaard.

'It All Began With Caroline: Based On a True Story' By Nava Writz Bogaard  
Independently published, July 6, 2023 Paperback; 498 pages

*Would you like to see other kinds of arts and culture articles? Please email us your story ideas or feedback at [features@epochtimes.nyc](mailto:features@epochtimes.nyc)*

Share this article

Leave a comment



Anna Lad

Author

Anna Lad is a freelance writer and editor with a background in wildlife biology. Based out of Chattanooga, Tenn., she's an avid climber and crafter who loves good stories about the world, people, and their ideas.

### Author's Selected Articles

#### 'The Giver': The Dangers of Forgetting

Jul 17, 2024



Lifestyle  
Food  
Travel  
Home  
Style

Inspired  
People  
Animals  
Discovery  
Traditional Values  
Creative Wonders

Arts & Culture  
Beyond Science  
Fine Arts  
Performing Arts  
Books  
Film & TV  
Music

Family & Education

Personal Finance

Investing

Wealth Management

Retirement

Budgeting

Credit Cards

American Essence

Leadership

Career Development

Thought Leaders

Book Excerpts

Podcasts

---

Copyright © 2000 - 2024 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.