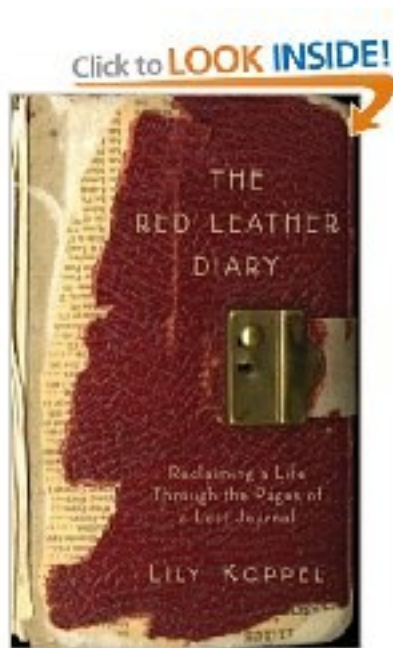


# The Red Leather Diary: Reclaiming a Life through the Pages o



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著者:Lily Koppel

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From Publishers Weekly

Journalist Koppel found the inspiration for this book, based on her 2006 New York Times article, after discovering Florence Wolfson's diary in a Manhattan dumpster. Koppel eventually locates Florence in Florida and surprises the 90-year-old with this artifact from her past, which reveals her views on growing up as an intelligent, ambitious and creative teenager on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the 1930s. Florence received the diary as a present on her 14th birthday. She recorded everything from her first kiss (with a boy) to her crush on actress Eva Le Gallienne (which led her to

question her sexuality) to her passion for writing and art. The diary acts as a window into a fascinating and privileged world, one that Koppel tries to recreate by writing in a novelistic way, using no more than snippets of text from Florence's diary and, we can presume, multiple interviews as support. The result, which some readers may find frustrating and others rewarding, is that the original inspiration—the diary itself—becomes no more than a starting point for a much larger story: that of Florence's life.

## Review

"Skillful reporting, fine prose and [an] excellent eye for period detail. . . . A story about not one but two lovable characters—and the city that brought them together." -- New York Times Book Review

"THE RED LEATHER DIARY is a fascinating book—inventive and inspiring." -- Erica Jong, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Fear of Flying*

Rescued from a Dumpster on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, a discarded diary brings to life the glamorous, forgotten world of an extraordinary young woman.

For more than half a century, the red leather diary lay silent, languishing inside a steamer trunk, its worn cover crumbling into little flakes. When a cleaning sweep of a New York City apartment building brings this lost treasure to light, both the diary and its owner are given a second life.

Recovered by Lily Koppel, a young writer working at the New York Times, the journal paints a vivid picture of 1930s New York--horseback riding in Central Park, summer excursions to the Catskills, and an obsession with a famous avant-garde actress. From 1929 to 1934, not a single day's entry is skipped.

Opening the tarnished brass lock, Koppel embarks on a journey into the past, traveling to a New York in which women of privilege meet for tea at Schrafft's, dance at the Hotel Pennsylvania, and toast the night at El Morocco. As she turns the diary's brittle pages, Koppel is captivated by the headstrong young woman whose intimate thoughts and emotions fill the pale blue lines. Who was this lovely ingénue who adored the works of Baudelaire and Jane Austen, who was sexually curious beyond her years, who traveled to Rome, Paris, and London?

Compelled by the hopes and heartaches captured in the pages, Koppel sets out to find the diary's owner, her only clue the inscription on the frontispiece--"This book belongs to . . . Florence Wolfson." A chance phone call from a private investigator leads Koppel to Florence, a ninety-year-old woman living with her husband of sixty-seven years. Reunited with her diary, Florence ventures back to the girl she once was, rediscovering a lost self that burned with artistic fervor.

Joining intimate interviews with original diary entries, Koppel reveals the world of a New York teenager obsessed with the state of her soul and her appearance, and muses on the serendipitous chain of events that returned the lost journal to its owner. Evocative and entrancing, *The Red Leather Diary* re-creates the romance and glitter, sophistication and promise, of 1930s New York, bringing to life the true story of a precocious young woman who dared to follow her dreams.

More Praise for *The Red Leather Diary*

## BookPage

"Florence's life reads like E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* in places, with all the famous paths crossed and situations experienced; while descriptions of city life recall Marjorie Hart's *Summer at Tiffany*... Together, Koppel and Florence take readers through a world dizzy with new ideas, rhythms and inventions."

## Booklist

"After a front-page story appeared in the New York Times Sunday City section, interest in Florence's fascinating story prompted the author to write a full-length book that works as both a biography and a spellbinding glimpse into a vanished era."

## Library Journal

"Koppel's love of New York is obvious in the details she draws from Florence's diary, which show how the city has changed in ways both big and small. An entertaining and enjoyable work..."

## Reader's Digest Editors' Choice

"In *The Red Leather Diary*, Lily Koppel finds an old journal in a Dumpster, gets lost in its rich take on 1930s New York and, improbably, tracks down the now-90-year-old woman whose life--real and imagined--fills its worn pages--"

## Elle

"New York Times writer Lily Koppel's *The Red Leather Diary* melds three life-affirming subjects--Florence Wolfson's journal of life in 1930s Manhattan, Koppel's discovery of it in a Dumpster decades later, and the meeting of the two women--into one enchanting memoir."

## Vogue

"Sparked by a felicitous discovery in an Upper West Side dumpster, New York Times writer Lily Koppel spins an enthralling true fairy tale about a Depression-era ingénue."

## Publishers Weekly

"A window into a fascinating and privileged world. . . . Rewarding."

Erica Jong, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Fear of Flying*

"*The Red Leather Diary* is a fascinating book--inventive and inspiring." -- Book Description

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