



My Lie: A True Story of False Memory

Meredith Maran

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Meredith Maran lived a daughter's nightmare: she accused her father of sexual abuse, then realized, nearly too late, that he was innocent.

During the 1980s and 1990s, tens of thousands of Americans became convinced that they had repressed memories of childhood sexual abuse, and then, decades later, recovered those memories in therapy.

Journalist, mother, and daughter Meredith Maran was one of them. Her accusation and estrangement from her father caused her sons to grow up without their only grandfather, divided her family into those who believed her and those who didn't, and led her to isolate herself on "Planet Incest," where "survivors" devoted their lives, and life savings, to recovering memories of events that had never occurred.

Maran unveils her family's devastation and ultimate redemption against the backdrop of the sex-abuse scandals, beginning with the infamous McMartin preschool trial, that sent hundreds of innocents to jail—several of whom remain imprisoned today.

Exploring the psychological, cultural, and neuroscientific causes of this modern American witch-hunt, *My Lie* asks: how could so many people come to believe the same lie at the same time? What has neuroscience discovered about the brain's capacity to create false memories and encode false beliefs? What are the "big lies" gaining traction in American culture today—and how can we keep them from taking hold?

My Lie is a wrenchingly honest, unexpectedly witty, and profoundly human story that proves the personal is indeed political—and the political can become painfully personal.

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