

Mystics, Mavericks, and Merrymakers: An Intimate Journey among Hasidic Girls

Stephanie Wellen Levine



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From the ardently religious young woman who longs for the life of a male scholar to the young rebel who visits a strip club, smokes pot, and agonizes over her loss of faith to the proud Lubavitcher with a desire for a high-powered career, Stephanie Wellen Levine provides a rare glimpse into the inner worlds and daily lives of these Hasidic girls.

Lubavitcher Hasidim are famous for their efforts to inspire secular Jews to become more observant and for their messianic fervor. Strict followers of Orthodox Judaism, they maintain sharp gender-role distinctions.

Levine spent a year living in the Lubavitch community of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, participating in the rhythms of Hasidic girlhood. Drawing on many intimate hours among Hasidim and over 30 in-depth interviews, **Mystics, Mavericks, and Merrymakers** offers rich portraits of individual Hasidic young women and how they deal with the conflicts between the regimented society in which they live and the pull of mainstream American life.

This superbly crafted book offers intimate stories from Hasidic teenagers' lives, providing an intriguing twist to a universal theme: the struggle to grow up and define who we are within the context of culture, family, and life-driving beliefs.

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