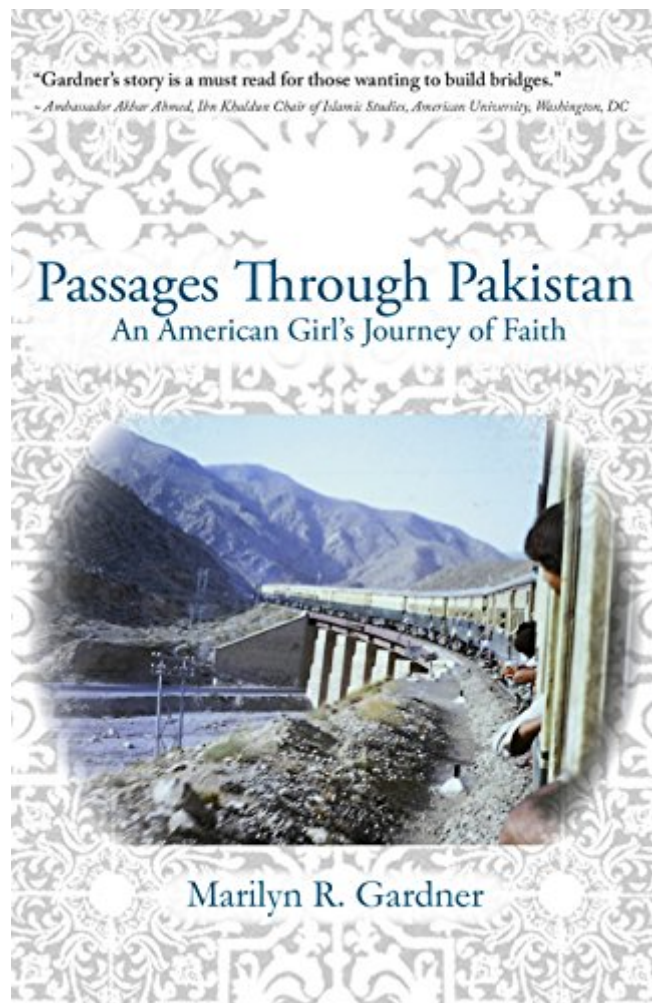




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Passages Through Pakistan: An American Girl's Journey Of Faith



Synopsis

Memories of joy and pain, close friendships and loneliness interweave in this compelling portrait of an extraordinary childhood. In *Passages Through Pakistan*, Marilyn Gardner traces a journey of growing faith and emerging identity in a small missionary community. From the close quarters of boarding school, to the strangeness of furloughs in her parents' native Massachusetts, this honest portrayal of a young girl's struggles with faith, friendship, and belonging will resonate deeply with a wide range of readers. Marilyn Gardner spent her childhood and adolescence in Pakistan and raised her five children in Pakistan and Egypt. She now lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she works as a public health nurse with underserved immigrant communities. Marilyn is the author of *Between Worlds: Essays on Culture and Belonging* and blogs at *Communicating Across Boundaries* and *A Life Overseas*.

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Customer Reviews

The UPS truck delivered this book yesterday afternoon. I finished reading it this afternoon. I enjoyed the vivid stories, I appreciated the intimate honesty and candor of the author's self-analysis. I know that the imagery of Marilyn Gardner's reminiscences is one that will especially appeal to those who

have lived in the East, or anyone who has lived abroad in a foreign culture due to their parents' employment; a kid who is a statistical "third culture kid." But it's not limited to that audience because it is also written generously as a human perspective on the integration of childhood and adolescence and faith.

This has been one of my favorite reads this year! As an adult that lives in between worlds, the book made me laugh and cry at the same time, and left me wishing for more. Marilyn is raw and honest, and her love for diversity, culture and the world at large comes through loud and clear. Her stories are captivating and real, so much so that at the end of the book the reader feels connected to the people that have shaped her character. You will not regret picking this up!

It's been said that if you dig down into your story deep enough, you find the common things. I didn't grow up in Pakistan, and I didn't experience boarding school or life as a missionary kid. But that doesn't matter, because in this book Marilyn digs down deep enough into her own journey that I found myself resonating throughout. And crying. The cross-cultural connections and the cross-cultural stretching, the faith struggles, the reverence of older missionaries, the questions about God's sovereignty in the midst of catastrophe, and the confusion surrounding the loaded word, Calling. It's all here. We need this story. The missions community needs this story. Yes, it's one person's history, but this is a book that missionaries and TCKs of all stripes need to read, because *Passages through Pakistan* ties us to our shared history. It links us with the bigger Story, and it reminds young cross-cultural workers that they're not the first. Not the first to travel. Not the first to care about social justice. Not the first to raise children abroad. It shows us that we are part of a larger plot arc that both preceded us and will in fact follow us. These reminders are much needed and deeply enriching. I am sure that Marilyn's gentle storytelling and textured memories will encourage and inspire and heal many.

I was privileged to read an advanced copy of Marilyn's memoir, which, like her other writing, is a sensory, evocative exploration of both memory and place. (Incidentally, she and Margie Haack [in *The Exact Place*], I think, have captured the memoir of faith genre so perfectly, and they both deserve wider readerships.) Readers with an interest in missions -- long or short -- should read this latest book, and pretty much all of Gardner's writing. Readers who want to smell, taste, and see into a fascinating life, as Marilyn's is, will find themselves thirsty for chai as they read. Marilyn plumbs the mysteries of her unique life and, reading her, we find that she is giving voice to questions we

ourselves ask about our common human experience.

I was sad to finish this hilarious and deeply touching memoir of Marilyn Gardner's journey of faith in Pakistan. As I consider my own and my children's faith journeys, I resonated with her full, apt description of the evolution of faith from childhood to early adulthood. In the midst of loss, insecurity, pain and constant transition, she felt God sustaining her and her faith became a "living, breathing entity". Leaving Pakistan, and upon reflection, she wrestles with living life between worlds, and comes to a place of loving it, marrying happiness with loss. Her feeling of saudade, "that wistful longing for what no longer exists," is something to which most readers can relate, contemplating childhood experiences that are no more. And yet there is hope and deep gratitude for a life so extraordinary and full.

In this beautiful memoir, Gardner exquisitely captures the life of a third-culture kid. She spent her entire childhood in Pakistan, went off to boarding school 800 miles away at age 6, struggled through furloughs in America, battled to find her identity, yet looks back with wonder and awe. She brings her readers into the sorrow and joy of boarding school; she is deeply honest in her assessment of her younger self; she poignantly expresses the tension of growing up between worlds. I highly recommend this memoir to anyone who wants to better understand the TCK experience.

This book touched so many tender areas for me - as a mother raising my children outside our passport country, I resonated with Marilyn's stories. There is such great hope and comfort in how she remembers her childhood, even the painful experiences, as she processes the way those experiences formed her. For parents of Third Culture Kids, especially families with a faith background, I am happy to recommend this book. For me, it feels like a perfect graduation gift, the stories and writing can help parents and kids talk about the choices they've made and the impact those have had on their family.

Engaging, well-written. I would have liked to hear about her adjustment to the US after high school, but I guess I'll have to wait for the sequel!

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