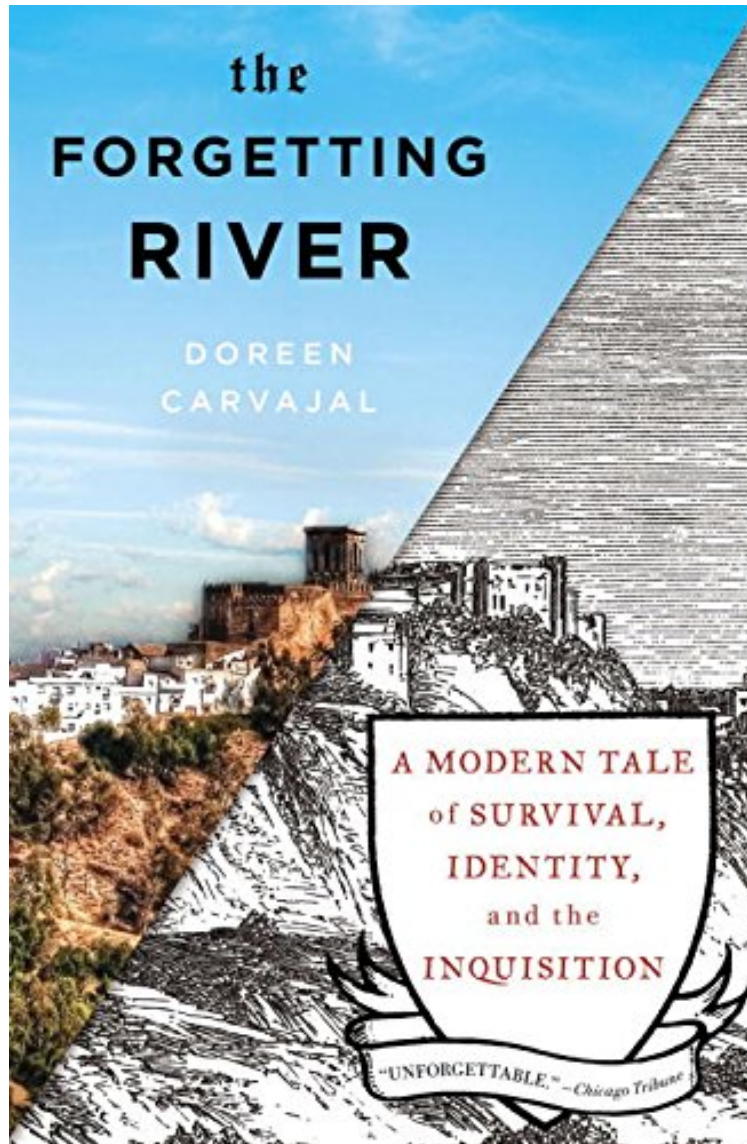


(Free) The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity, and the Inquisition

# The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity, and the Inquisition

*Doreen Carvajal*

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**Doreen Carvajal : The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity, and the Inquisition** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Forgetting River: A Modern Tale of Survival, Identity, and the Inquisition:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Appealing, meaningful patchworkBy Konrad RiggermannIn her two-star review, Miranda criticizes that single threads of the book are separated from each other by other threads. In my

view, every single one of the two dozen chapters contributes important aspects of Doreen Carvajal's story spanning from Spain to Costa Rica and over California and France back to Spain. In the patchwork structure of her narration, Doreen Carvajal mirrors the puzzle-like bit by bit completion of her recovered familiar history. As a skilled French/Spanish/English speaking journalist, she masters the art of writing, leading the writer ultimately to a sensible gestalt picture put together by 24 puzzle parts. Without the intention to write a scholarly book about Jewish identities broken or unbroken by Spanish inquisition or recovered in modern times as in her personal case she en passant conveys a colorful sketch of Europe's anti-Jewish past from the Reyes Catolicos' eviction edict of 1492 up to anti-Zionism of 2012. In her very down-to-earth way of reconstructing political within personal history, everything human from personal biographies to motor cycles and gastronomic recipes contributes to the whole, just as the subtle cloth embroideries are an important part of Pedro Berreguetes' painting of a stake burning that cleaves the landscape cover of Carvajal's *The Forgetting River*. Whereas this book against forgetting appealed to me not least because of my similar rediscovery of familiar rootedness, Carvajal's patchwork is rewarding for every reader defining herself or himself, in Viktor E. Frankl's diction, as man in search for meaning. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Too Much for MeBy 4th gr tchrI'm really into genealogy and thought this would be a bio of the work this person went thru to find their roots and the history of the Spanish Jews and Inquisition. Well there was some of that, but a lot of it was introspection and retrospection. And I'm just not a fan of that. I used to think it was a crime to skip thru books to the end, but as I have gotten older I have come to believe life is too short to stick with a book I don't like...so I skipped to the end to find out if it all got resolved, but I won't tell!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Sephardic ancestry--a parallel universeBy TerridWhile reading "The Forgetting River," I immediately identified with author Doreen Carvajal's path of discovery in searching for Sephardic ancestry. She describes her quest through historical records, baptism, marriage and death records, old letters, DNA testing--which parallels the journey my cousins and I are traveling. Most of us, of course, cannot afford to actually pack up and live in our ancestral homeland, but reading about Doreen's experiences are a definite encouragement to do so. While some readers may not like Doreen's meandering approach, I found that her writing style reinforces the twists and turns that ancestral research actually takes. Some ancestors are easier to find than others; some of them may never be found. Her revelation that the University of California at Berkeley has the largest collection of Mexican Inquisition records outside of Mexico was stunning, and I now intend to visit the Bancroft Library. While in that library, she learned about Blas de Magallanes--which took my breath away--as Magallanes is a family name I recently uncovered myself. As a cousin often says, "there are no coincidences," and those of us in the family who are doing family research have found that to be absolutely true. Throughout her book, Doreen excellently describes such coincidences, how a single clue can lead to a larger discovery, and how she is driven to find out more and more information. Of course, as sometimes happens, those clues can also result in frustration. Particularly, I enjoyed Doreen's tidbits about her relationships with the people in Arcos de la Frontera, and her ambivalence about the larger issue of possible conversion to Judaism. Her book is a gem, and on finishing it, I did not put it down, but turned to the first page to read the whole book a second time. In terms of describing one woman's search for her familial roots, Doreen Carvajal's book is a classic.

The unexpected and moving story of an American journalist who works to uncover her family's long-buried Jewish ancestry in Spain. Raised a Catholic in California, New York Times journalist Doreen Carvajal is shocked when she discovers that her background may actually be connected to conversos from Inquisition-era Spain: Jews who were forced to renounce their faith and convert to Christianity or face torture and death. With vivid childhood memories of Sunday sermons, catechism, and the rosary, Carvajal travels to the centuries-old Andalusian town of Arcos de la Frontera, to investigate her lineage and recover her family's original religious heritage. In Arcos, Carvajal comes to realize that fear remains a legacy of the Inquisition along with the cryptic messages left by its victims. Back at her childhood home in California, she uncovers papers documenting a family of Carvajals who were burned at the stake in the 16th-century territory of Mexico. Could the author's family history be linked to the hidden history of Arcos? And could the unfortunate Carvajals have been her ancestors? As she strives to find proof that her family had been forced to convert to Christianity six hundred years ago, Carvajal comes to understand that the past flows like a river through time and that while the truth might be submerged, it is never truly lost.

"Doreen Carvajal has undertaken an extraordinary journey, and the story she tells is both personal and universal." - Anne Lamott "[A] compelling mix of memoir and reporting." - O, The Oprah Magazine Unforgettable Carvajal immerses herself and her readers in the ringing of Arcos' ancient bells, the stories of its town historian, or *cronista*, and, most of all, the performance of haunting religious songs known as *saetas* that may have originated as Jewish laments. Chicago Tribune Darkly poetic. - Christian Science Monitor This book is an important addition to the record of Jewish history, not because it describes what history books already can tell us but because it evokes a personal sense of both loss and redemption growing out of that brutal history. Kansas City Star Carvajal is a journalist who understands the nuance and beauty of travel writing. Combining this gift with this highly personal story, she creates a book that shimmers with enchantment, pulling the reader into her life with gentle tugs on the heartstrings. What she calls hunting

family ghosts will resonate with anyone who has ever felt out of place where they were and dreamed of finding another heritage just one layer beneath the one they had always accepted as the bedrock of their self-definition.- The Jewish Book CouncilA mesmerizing journey through time, across cultures and into one woman's rich personal history.- Kirkus (starred review) Carvajal's powerful prose is strong enough to hold these divergent story lines in a cohesive and engaging narrative of self-discovery and historical investigation.- Publishers Weekly Such an intriguing topic, and Carvajal certainly knows how to write.- Library Journal [Carvajal's] exploration reveals the fascinating legacy of the Jewish conversosHer experiences not only reflect a heartfelt attempt to recapture a lost identity but also serve as a launching point for a wider exploration of the repercussions of the Inquisition.- Booklist About the AuthorDoreen Carvajal is a Paris-based reporter for the The New York Times and a senior writer for the International Herald Tribune covering European issues. She has more than 25 years of journalism experience covering a broad range of subjects, from politics and immigration to book publishing and the media. She lives with her family near Paris.