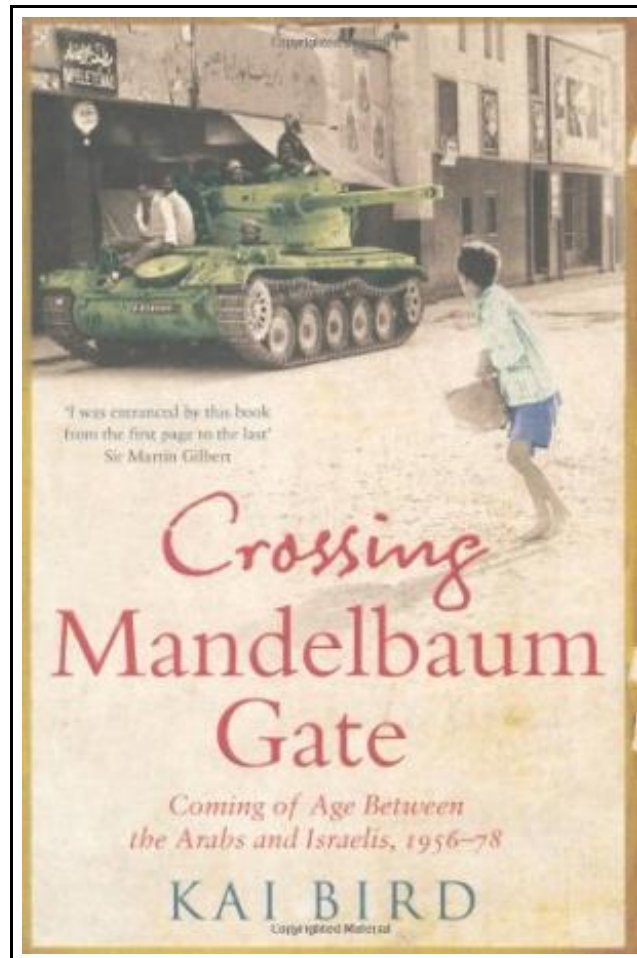


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Reviews

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Simon & Schuster Ltd. Hardback. Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956-1978, Kai Bird, Crossing Mandelbaum Gate is a vivid memoir of an American boy growing up in the midst of the Arab-Israeli conflict, three major wars and three decades of political upheavals in the Middle East. Set in Jerusalem (1956-1958), Beirut (1970), Saudi Arabia (1962-1965), Amman and Cairo (1965-1967), Bird's book explains through a blend of memoir and history why the Western experience in the Middle East has been so turbulent. Through Bird's Zelig-like presence, the reader experiences the Suez War of 1956, the June 1967 War and the Black September hijackings of 1970 that led to the Jordanian Civil War. Bird's memoir shows how all of these momentous events led to the rise and tragic downfall of a secular Arab nationalist ethos -- only to be replaced by the rise of a fundamentalist, politically reactionary Islamist movement. The narrative history tells the stories of such illuminating figures as life-long Jerusalem resident George Antonius, author of *The Arab Awakening*, and his charismatic wife; Jordan's King Hussein and his CIA connections; the businessman Salem bin Laden, Osama's older brother and a family friend; Saudi kings Faisal and Khalid; President Nasser of Egypt; and Leila Khaled, the striking young Palestinian radical who hijacked one of the Black September planes. The son of a U.S. Foreign Service officer, Kai Bird spent his formative years with the Arabs, but he ended up marrying the only daughter of two Holocaust survivors. This Shoah survival story becomes a part of Bird's own personal narrative, and provides him with a deeper understanding of the historical relationship between the destruction of European Jewry and the Arab-Israeli conflict. This extraordinary memoir by a Pulitzer-prize-winning historian sheds new light on...

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