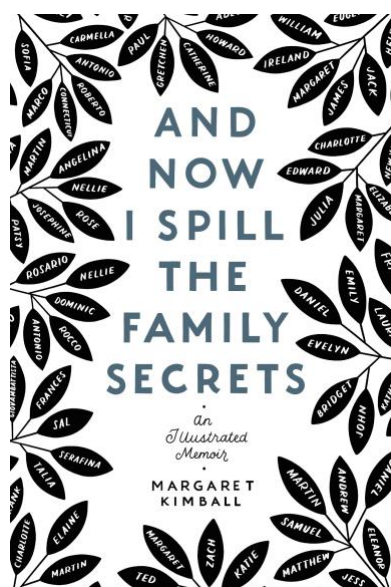


Review: And Now I Spill the Family Secrets: An Illustrated Memoir

by Margaret Kimball. HarperOne, April 2021. 288 p. ill. ISBN 9780063007444 (pbk), \$18.99.

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Rebekah Scoggins Boulton, Public Service and Instruction Librarian, Hirsch Library - Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



And Now I Spill the Family Secrets: An Illustrated Memoir is a poignant, heartfelt exploration of family, mental illness, and identity. Margaret Kimball traces her family's history from her earliest childhood memories through milestone moments spanning over thirty years of her own life and over sixty years of her extended family's past, trying to come to terms with what fractured her upbringing. Kimball tells her story in bits and pieces, mirroring her examination of her mother's mental illness and the subsequent ramifications it had on her, her siblings, and her father.

Kimball's narrative effortlessly weaves the reader through rich descriptions of events juxtaposed with intricately illustrated artifacts and mementos from each of the important moments in her life. These colorless yet striking illustrations give an interactive quality to the story, providing commentary, further questions, and humorous anecdotes about the objects, encounters, buildings, people, and landscapes she includes within the narrative. Since the story unfolds non-linearly, the illustrations are integral to her story, providing signposts for readers to navigate the timeline without getting lost. Although Kimball presents no clear resolution or perfect answers to the questions from her past, the ending feels satisfying and realistic, leaving room for further growth and understanding within her family. Overall, Kimball's memoir is a heartbreaking, relatable, and visually stunning investigation into a complicated and messy family history.

Recommended for adult readers due to discussions of suicide, graphic language, alcohol and drug use, and dark themes. Appropriate for individuals and libraries with an interest in non-fiction and graphic novels.