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The Orpheus Clock: The Search for My Familyrsquo;s Art Treasures Stolen by the Nazis

Simon Goodman
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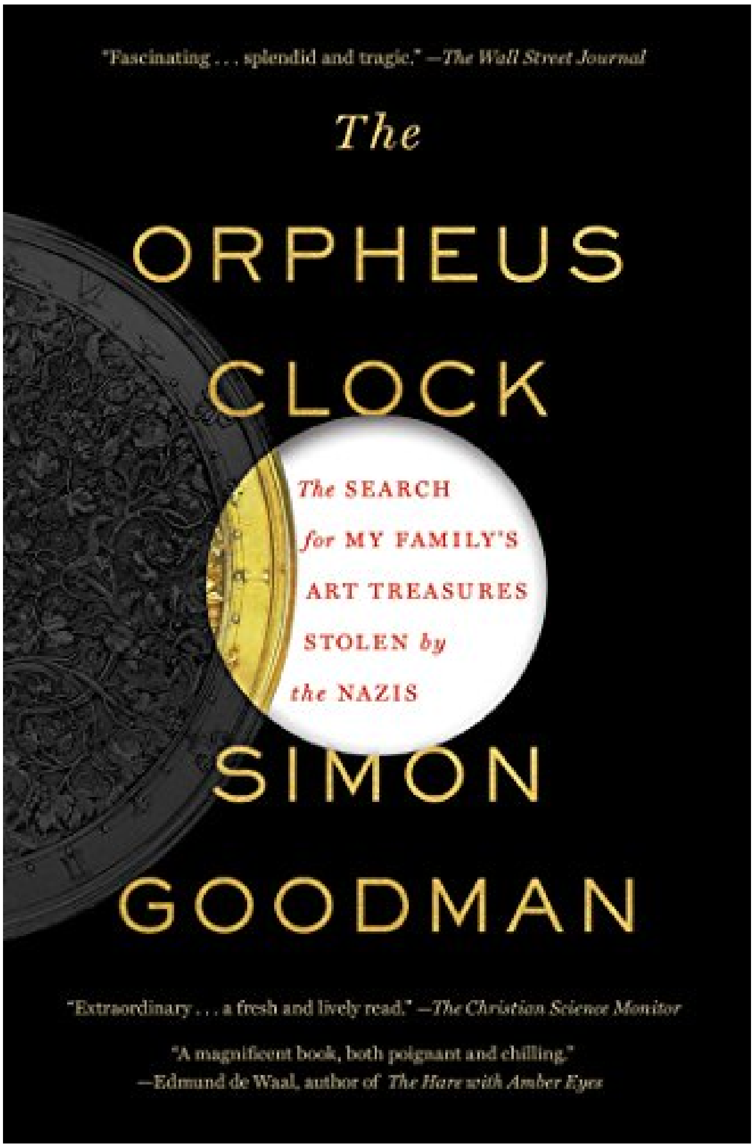

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Simon Goodman : The Orpheus Clock: The Search for My Familyrsquo;s Art Treasures Stolen by the Nazis before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Orpheus Clock: The Search for My Familyrsquo;s Art Treasures Stolen by the Nazis:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Reclaiming A HeritageBy John D. CofieldSimon Goodman grew up with a family mystery. His father was always traveling on mysterious missions that took him across Europe and

involved many visits to museums and art dealers, but Simon and his older brother Nick never knew the reason for the journeys. There seemed to be some cousins on their father's side, but they were rarely in contact with any of them. As for their grandparents and other forebears, all they were told is that they had died during World War II. It was not until after their father died in 1994 that Simon and Nick learned that he had been trying to trace and recover what had been an amazing family art collection, stolen by the Nazis and now scattered far and wide. Simon took on his father's quest, and the results of his nearly two decade long search are detailed in this fascinating book.The family fortune began in the nineteenth century with a bank in Dresden. Hard work, smart investing, and an expanding German industrial economy led to great wealth for the Gutmann dynasty, which intermarried with and became part of an expansive, predominantly Jewish, association of banking families. The Gutmanns were secular rather than observant Jews, and eventually many of them converted to Lutheranism and for all intents and purposes completely assimilated into German society. Their great wealth allowed them to establish wonderful art collections, including a magnificent set of silver statues and objets d'art.Although the Gutmanns had apparently left their Jewish heritage behind them, rising anti-Semitism in post-World War I Germany began to cause them problems. Simon's grandparents moved to Holland and established a comfortable existence for themselves, continuing to add to their art collections until their home became a veritable palace. Unfortunately, they were trapped when the Germans invaded Holland in 1940, and eventually their collection was confiscated and they themselves were swallowed up and perished in the Holocaust.The story of how Simon's father and then Simon himself spent years searching for and reclaiming their family's lost art is a fascinating one. The family's silver collection and their paintings and other valuables had disappeared into collections made by leading Nazis like Hermann Goering and Adolf Hitler himself. When World War II ended much of the Nazis' stolen art then ended up in museums or in the hands of private collectors in Europe and the United States. Simon had to deal with bureaucracies moving at a glacial pace, hostile or indifferent officials and collectors, and massive legal expenses in order to track down and reclaim the art. When asked by Morley Safer of 60 Minutes why he was doing it, he replied that it was "unfinished business" that needed to be taken care of, not just for himself but for the memories of his forebears who had collected and loved the pieces he was seeking.This is a very emotional story. Simon's search is not only for the physical goods that his family once owned, but also for their memories and the heritage that passed down to him through them. His search is ongoing, but it's obvious that he has already accomplished has earned him, and hopefully his family, new peace. Edmund de Waal's The Hare With Amber Eyes and Robert W. Edsel's The Monuments Men recount similar stories and cover much of the same period in history.9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An amazing story of perseveranceBy julansThis is the most amazing story of a family's loss - not only their home and wealth, but many of their family members. The story evolves from a son dealing with some boxes of papers left from his father's estate. He finds answers about why his father traveled (he thought) for work, and why he was always tucked away in his office at home. Unbeknownst to his son, his father was searching for thousands of items, stolen by the Nazis from his family, and not returned after the war. Now his son is going to research his family, and try to track down some of the artwork that was taken. I warn you, do not read this book at bedtime. I did and got no sleep; I got so pissed I had a hard time sleeping. First and foremost, it's a terrific read . . . it's an amazing mystery for his son to take on. However, once you read about how ALL the governments (including those you might not expect, such as Holland, France, and other allies) denied any involvement in lost artifacts, and even when the artwork is found in their possession, they demand fees (large ones) before the particular artwork piece would be returned. But the son keeps working on the threads of information he finds, with some positive results. But you'll have to read the book to see how everything turns out . . .I couldn't recommend a better book.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A remarkable readBy Gillian GreenI heard an interview with the author of this book on my local radio station in New Zealand, and knowing how much I had loved 'The Hare with the Amber Eyes' I looked forward to readingit. It is an enhancing story in the end, a family's long fight to have restored to them what had been stolen from them by the Nazi Party's art thefts. Goodman and his brother are two of the heirs of the Gutmann family which had risen from Bavarian origins to become one of Germany's great banking houses. Wealthy and confident, the family had over several generations acquired an astounding personal art collection and in the early years of the rise of the Nazi Party had moved to the Netherlands in what turned out to be a vain attempt to preserve the family's business and possessions. Their story was little different from that of tens of thousands of other European Jewish families, and by the end of the war few of the Gutmann family were left alive and their beautiful art collection had been looted to provide articles for Hitler and Goring.The author's father, Bernard, educated in England, spent every year of his life post-war trying to track down those works of art with a life-sapping lack of success. Simon and his brother Nick knew little of this battle; all they knew was their father was frequently absent in mind and body. After their father's death by drowning, the brothers received boxes of his papers which illustrated the attempts he had made so valiantly to have restored those precious symbols of a nearly extinct family. Simon and Nick take up the staff and with the emergence from secrecy of many Nazi and Dutch documents they begin to trace the travels of as many pieces of their grandparents' collection as they can. In the process they learn the terrible story of Fritz and Louise's fate, but they also battle governments and institutions loathe to accept that the pieces they now own were Holocaust thefts. While some of these organisations behave shamefully, there are some whose honour and courage provide heartwarming examples of public goodness.Over the space of the book, the Goodmans, as they are now known, track down a large number of works - paintings, sculpture, china, glassware and silver. In a modern world where people do not live in vast houses, the brothers are forced to make difficult decisions about which pieces they might treasure for the links they provide to an almost silent past, and which they must be prepared to sell. The search takes them all over Europe and the United States and each find is a celebration for the reader. The story is compelling as a good detective novel is compelling, but this is real life. The courage and determination that is illustrated here is remarkable.If I have one criticism, it is that I found irritating Simon Goodman's determination to label the Nazi perpetrators as "vile" or "greedy". Their actions speak for themselves and I did not need to be told how to respond to them. I think the story stands strongly without this intrusive attempt to force my opinion in a way that I eventually found patronising, but it is in truth a very small criticism. The story is at turns grim, deeply moving, exciting and exultant. It is a testament to the human spirit.

ldquo;An extraordinary piece of history...a fresh and lively readrdquo; (The Christian Science Monitor)mdash;the passionate, gripping, true story of one manrsquo;s single-minded quest to reclaim his familyrsquo;s art collection, stolen by the Nazis in World War II.Simon Goodmanrsquo;s grandparents came from German-Jewish banking dynasties and perished in concentration camps. And thatrsquo;s almost all he knew about themmdash;his father rarely spoke of their family history or heritage. But when his father passed away, and Simon received his old papers, a story began to emerge. The Gutmanns, as they were known then, rose from a small Bohemian hamlet to become one of Germanyrsquo;s most powerful banking families. They also amassed a magnificent, world-class art collection that included works by Degas, Renoir, Botticelli, Guardi, and many, many more. But the Nazi regime snatched from them everything they had worked to build: their remarkable art, their immense wealth, their prominent social standing, and their very lives. Only after his fatherrsquo;s death did Simon begin to piece together the clues about the Gutmannsrsquo; stolen legacy and the Nazi looting machine. With painstaking detective work across two continents, Simon has been able to prove that many works belonged to his family and successfully secure their return. ldquo;Fascinating...splendid and tragicrdquo; (The Wall Street Journal), ldquo;Goodmanrsquo;s story is alternately wrenching and inspiring...An emotional tale of unspeakable horrors, family devotion, and art as a symbol of hoperdquo; (Kirkus Reviews). It is not only the account of a twenty-year detective hunt for family treasure, but an unforgettable tale of redemption and restoration.

"This is a magnificent book, both poignant and chilling. Ultimately it stands as testimony to how family stories can grip across generations, and how fierce is the impulse to right wrongs. It is very moving indeed a huge achievement.rdquo; (Edmund de Waal, author of The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance)ldquo;A remarkable achievement. The Nazis stole the Gutmann familyrsquo;s art and tried to erase them from history; they almost succeeded. Here, now, with the sweep of a pen and the diligence of a crime reporter, author Simon Goodman has restored his familyrsquo;s legacy. Shocking, stunning and totally unputdownable, The Orpheus Clock is an absolute must read.rdquo; (Annie Jacobsen, New York Times bestselling author of Operation Paperclip)ldquo;An extraordinary piece of history...Even readers well familiar with World War II and Holocaust history will find this a fresh and lively read.rdquo; (Christian Science Monitor)"With a novelistrsquo;s narrative gifts, Goodman movingly portrays his familyrsquo;s victimization by the Nazis and the post war repercussions of those events....In combining a modern day detective story with nuanced context for its importance, Goodman produces much more than another Holocaust book." (Publishers Weekly, STARRED review)"Goodman's story is alternately wrenching and inspiring...extraordinary...An emotional tale of unspeakable horrors, family devotion, and art as a symbol of hope." (Kirkus)"Goodman's absorbing debut will appeal to readers with an interest in the business of art collecting, the cultural heritage of Western Europe, family histories, the work of the Monuments Men, and those who enjoyed The Lady in Gold, or its film version, Woman in Gold." (Library Journal)"When [Goodman's] father died at the age of 80...letters, documents, and other correspondences revealed a trove of family secrets that led Goodman and his family on a quest for both justice and discovery of their family history....The search is still ongoing, but this account of the struggle so far is both arresting and poignant, combining elements of a family chronicle and an intricate detective story." (Booklist)"In this heartbreaking book, Simon Goodman uses the theft of his familyrsquo;s art collection as a lens through which to view the [Holocaust]...therersquo;s a large component of redemption at work here as well. Donrsquo;t miss this gripping historical detective story." (History Book Club)About the AuthorBorn in London shortly after WWII and educated at the French Lyceacute;e in London, then at Munich University, Simon Goodman entered the music business in the late 1960s, specializing in breaking new British artists abroad. Goodman is married to the actress and teacher May Quigley and has one son and three daughters. He lives in Los Angeles where his search for his familyrsquo;s treasures continues.Excerpt. The Orpheus Clock CHAPTER 1 MY FATHERrsquo;S OLD BOXES Bernard with his typewriter in between flights, 1948.The boxes were rather ordinary, the sort of musty, collapsing-in-on-themselves corrugated containers that one might find gathering dust in millions of attics and basements. They had arrived from Germany, of all places, at my brotherrsquo;s sunny hillside home in Los Angeles in the fall of 1994mdash;the last tired remnants of our late fatherrsquo;s estate.

Our father, Bernard Goodman, had died in Venice a few months earlier, on the day after his eightieth birthday, while swimming in the Adriatic Sea. The night before he had enjoyed a slap-up dinner at Harryrsquo;s Bar. Cipriani, the owner, had given Pa a bottle of grappa on the house. A noted athlete in his university days at Cambridge, my father had remained physically active all his yearsmdash;it was not his body that life had brokenmdash;and despite his age, he was a keen swimmer. According to the authorities, he had suffered either a stroke or a heart attack and had lost consciousness in the water. As Eva, his longtime companion, had screamed and waved her arms from the shore, the lifeguards had plunged in and dragged him out, but it was too late. The official ruling was death by drowning. His death was unexpected and somewhat unusual; eighty-year-old men do not often die while swimming in the sea. But perhaps that was only fitting. Our father had lived an unusual and unexpected life. We arranged for his burial in a small wood outside Tuuml;bingen in Germanymdash;and through various courts and solicitors I cleared up his financial affairs, which, sadly, were rather meager. By the time of his death he was living in what might be called genteel povertymdash;comfortable enough, but far removed from the circumstances into which we vaguely understood he had been born. Then came the boxes, packed with papers and documents our father had painstakingly saved over half a century. Curious, not at all certain what we might find, my brother, Nick, and I started to go through them, ripping through the shipping labels printed in Germanmdash;the language our father had once vowed never to speak againmdash;and laying out the brittle contents in fragile piles on Nickrsquo;s dining-room table. There were sheaves of yellowing notes written in our fatherrsquo;s own hand and blurry carbons of letters that he had pounded out on an ancient typewriter. There were stacks of government documents in English, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Czechmdash;except for the Czech, my father could read and speak each languagemdash;their pages festooned with coat-of-arms letterheads and official stamps and seals. There were long-forgotten receipts and bills of sale, and black-and-gold, expired British passports with visa pages covered top to bottom with entry and exit stamps. Shockingly to modern eyes, the prewar stamps from Germany featured the Nazi eagle clutching a swastika. There were some dog-eared, old art catalogs, some faded museum brochures, and in a single, unlabeled envelope three black-and-white photographic negativesmdash;the old kind, each some three by five inchesmdash;of paintings that I didnrsquo;t specifically recognize but which appeared to be French Impressionist paintings. The stacks grew higher, and then higher still. The appearance of my fatherrsquo;s papers gave no outward indication of secrets long concealed, no promise of dramatic revelationsmdash;certainly not life-changing ones. Yet, as we began to look more closely at them, to examine the details, certain things stood out. The art collection that we understood had once been owned by our fatherrsquo;s parents, the grandparents we had never known, consisted of works by some of the greatest masters, old and newmdash;Degas, Renoir, Botticelli, Memling, Cranach, Guardi. There were also inventories of priceless Renaissance sculptures in gold and silver, of valuable tapestries and Louis XV furniture, and then a photostat of an aged, wrinkled handwritten note from my grandfather, describing the location of certain artworks and signed P. for ldquo;Papi.rdquo; Curiously, and in retrospect ominously, amid those same documents, often on the same pages, were references to some of historyrsquo;s most infamous figuresmdash;Adolf Hitler, Reichsmarschall Hermann Gouml;ring, Heinrich Himmler, Martin Bormann, Nazi ldquo;philosopherrdquo; Alfred Rosenbergmdash;and to the monuments dedicated to themselves: the planned Fuuml;hrermuseum in the Austrian city of Linz and the Reichsmarschallrsquo;s estate at Carinhall. Coupled with them were the names of men I did not then recognize, but who nonetheless sounded sinistermdash;Haberstock and Hofer, Bouml;hler and Plietzsch and Miedl. Within those stacks of my fatherrsquo;s papersmdash;stacks already tipping over and starting to spread, glacierlike, across my brotherrsquo;s tablemdash;were references to Theresienstadt, the Nazisrsquo; ldquo;modelrdquo; concentration camp, and to the death chambers of Auschwitz. There were allusions to the Nazi occupation of Holland, to the SS and the Gestapo, to the French Resistance and the American World War II spy service, the OSS, to Scotland Yard and the international police agency Interpol. Then came memorandums from various postwar ldquo;restitutionrdquo; bureaus in West Germany, France, and Holland, followed by notations concerning corrupt Swiss art dealers, spies and collaborators, hoards of priceless art packed into Parisian warehouses and Austrian salt minesmdash;and much more. The papers were confusing, mysterious, enigmatic. They were, I realized, very much like the man who had assembled them. He had not always been so. As a young boy growing up in postwar London, I remember my father as an open, loving man, perhaps a bit reserved in the British style, but not above expressions of affection. One of my earliest memories is of my father hoisting me up on his shouldersmdash;probably painfully, I now realize, because of his war woundsmdash;so that I could watch the funeral procession for King George VI, who had died a few days earlier on my fourth birthday. From that lofty perspective, it seemed to me that my father was enormously tallmdash;which actually he was notmdash;and terribly strong, which he was. I remember also that despite the solemnity of the occasion, played out under inevitably gray London skies, to me it had a magical qualitymdash;the plumed helmets of the Life Guards, the Kingrsquo;s coffin draped in the royal standard, adorned with the Crown Jewels, and mounted on a gun carriage pulled by a clip-clopping team of Windsor Greys. The rank upon rigid rank of marching soldiers and funereally paced cavalry came from every far-flung country of what had once been the British Empire. For a small boy, seeing the coffin of the wartime King, the last Emperor of India, there was no sense of the warrsquo;s tragedy, no feeling of lossmdash;loss of lives, of treasure, of innocence. It was all simply glorious. The war was never far away in the physical sense. Against our parentsrsquo; stern admonitions, Nick and I could not resist exploring the countless bomb sites that still scarred London even a decade after the peace, dressing up in too-large war-surplus uniforms and balancing wobbly Tommy helmets on our too-small heads. Every Thursday I would race to the newsagent stand in the South Kensington tube station to buy the latest installment of the War Picture Library, a comic book series featuring the gallant exploits of World War II British commandos and fighter pilots. Other families still talked about the war constantly, yet it seemed strangely off-limits, almost taboo, in my family. My mother seldom spoke of it, except in the most general terms. Most disappointingly for a young boy with martial fantasies, despite my fatherrsquo;s service in the British army, in the distinguished Gloucestershire Regiment, and his having been wounded by a German bomb in the Blitz, he refused to speak even a single word about his participation in the war. His silence on the subject was unwavering and an utter frustration to Nick and me. He might occasionally, in passing, refer to some historical person or eventmdash;Field Marshal Montgomery, perhaps, or some great British victory such as the Battle of Britainmdash;but on a personal level he seemed not to have found the war glorious at all. I was perhaps ten or eleven before I finally pieced together, from the whispered and coded adult conversations that children instinctively pick up on, that my fatherrsquo;s parents had somehow ldquo;died in the war.rdquo; Only later did my mother guardedly, reluctantly, reveal that those grandparents, those distant, unvisualized people whom I had never known, had been, more or less, Jewish. Still later I gathered vague indications that my fatherrsquo;s parents had also once been enormously wealthy, and that I had various aunts and cousins scattered about in Italy, America, even Mexicomdash;although, strangely, that family, those grandparents, had apparently been German-born ldquo;Gutmanns,rdquo; while we were very British ldquo;Goodmans.rdquo; Different names, different nationalities, different religionsmdash;it was all quite confusing. Naturally, these grudgingly shared bits of knowledge raised questions. Although I knew that we were not poor, I also knew that we were not rich. And who were these far-flung relatives I had never met? We had been to Italy on holiday, but no one had ever introduced me or my brother to any relatives there. And if indeed these mysterious relations did have some sort of German or Italian connections, wasnrsquo;t it the Germans, and to a lesser extent the Italians, who had been the very enemies battled so heroically by our British soldiers every issue in the pages of the War Picture Library? I couldnrsquo;t have been more confused if I had learned that I was somehow descended from the Japanese. And what did being Jewish mean? I was barely aware of what being Jewish had to do with someone having ldquo;died in the war.rdquo; Still, from the coarse comments of boyhood chumsmdash;boys repeating what they had heard from their parentsmdash;I had picked up insinuations that to be a Jew was to be different somehow, almost ldquo;un-British,rdquo; perhaps even disreputable in some way. And if my grandparents had been Jewish, did it not follow that my father was Jewish, and that I was at least partly Jewish? But how could that be? It was true that my mother, a descendant of Protestant Highland Scots, with an impressive string of official birth names (Irene Doreen Rosy Amy Simpson, ultimately shortened to Dee), had never been overtly religious. Indeed, one of her ancestors, James Young Simpson, a physician who had discovered the anesthetic qualities of chloroform and had subsequently been knighted by Queen Victoria, had been a notorious freethinkermdash;a nonbelief system that my mother also seemed to embrace. Nevertheless, she had insisted that Nick and I become proper Anglicans, enrolling us in a Sunday school from which we each eventually earned a certificate for reading the entire Bible. She had us officially christenedmdash;albeit, in my case, not until I was at the somewhat advanced age of twelve. Was it possible, I wondered, to be a member in relatively good standing of the Church of England and to be Jewish, or part Jewish, at the same time? Even with hindsight, I would never figure out if this stab at Anglican induction had been for conventional social reasons or, in a more ominous way, as some kind of insurance. My father was never able to show any enthusiasm or even interest in the whole process, but clearly my mother felt it necessary. These were not questions I could discuss with my parentsmdash;my father in particular. If he was silent on the subject of the war, he was even more silent, if that was possible, on the subject of his family, Jewish or otherwise. I sensed that these were things best left alone. Yet, for me, it all led to an increasing feeling of otherness, of not quite belonging in the country and the society and even the family into which I had been bornmdash;a feeling heightened by my appearance. My older brother, Nick, had inherited our attractive motherrsquo;s fair-haired, fair-skinned Anglo-Scots looks, while I, like my father, seemed to have come from a place much farther away. My hair was almost black, my eyes dark brown, my skin olive. I remember once returning from a summer in France, a vacation spent largely on a sunny beach, and having British customs and immigration officers look at my deeply tanned face and then carefully and dubiously examine my British passport. Someone even suggested that I might be an Algerianmdash;they spoke the word like a curse. I couldnrsquo;t possibly be a real English boy. Given all this, and my youthful doubts about my place in the world, perhaps it was fortunate that for our schooling my parents chose the Lyceacute;e Franccedil;ais in South Kensington, where classes were taught almost entirely in French, the desks occupied by a cosmopolitan mix of the children of eacute;migreacute;s and refugees and various and sundry eccentrics. It was a most un-British institution, and as a consequence I felt comfortable there. Perhaps fortunate also was that our family lived in Shepherd Market, a small square in the Mayfair district of central London, just three stops away on the Piccadilly Line from the Lyceacute;e. In the 1920s, it had been an ultrafashionable address, home to any number of successful writers, actors, and artists, and although it had become a bit sketchier in the postwar years, it retained its eclectic, nontraditional character. This environment perfectly suited my mother, a funny, vivacious, life-loving woman, who had studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts before the war and later became a successful theatrical stage manager and producer. With my godmother, Anna Wiman, she discovered the iconoclastic comedy group Beyond the Fringe at the Edinburgh Festivalmdash;featuring, among others, the young actor Dudley Moore. When it opened, in the West End in 1960, at my impresario godmotherrsquo;s theater, the Fortune Theater, it became an overnight sensation. How my father fit into all of this was, as usual, a mystery. He was in all ways a proper English gentlemanmdash;in almost all of my memories he is wearing a jacket and tie, or at least a cravatmdash;but he did not seem to have a regular job, at least not in the sense that other boysrsquo; fathers had jobs, places that fathers went to in the morning and returned from at night. I remember he had letterhead stationery that identified him as B. E. Goodman, Manufacturerrsquo;s Agent, with an office address in Golden Square, Soho, but I donrsquo;t remember his ever actually going there, or mentioning the manufacturing of anything. Instead, he spent most of his time at home locked in his study, correspondingmdash;as the contents of those dusty boxes would later revealmdash;with various lawyers and government officials. He must have given up the unused office in Soho because when I looked at his correspondence many years later, I noticed with bemusement that he had xrsquo;ed out the Soho address in the letterhead and typed in our home address. It was so very much like my father not to waste perfectly good stationery. He traveled a great deal, mostly to Holland, but also to other countries throughout the Continent, although where he went and what he did on any particular trip I did not know, and he did not say. He was abroad so frequently that later, when he did take a recognizable job, it was as a travel agentmdash;a position that helped facilitate his wanderings but, somehow, given his education and background, seemed a bit beneath him. As we got older, he would sometimes take us with him on these journeys, to France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria, and once to Germanymdash;although in that case he insisted upon driving completely across that country without stopping, except once to allow us, in extremis, to go to the loo. Germany had seemed to put him in a dark mood. The results of these trips were for us boys almost invariably disappointing. Instead of taking us to old castles and museums choked with guns and swords and suits of armor, our father seemed primarily interested in visiting, what was for us, a seemingly endless succession of musty and boring art museums. This might not have been surprising since he had majored in history at Cambridge (with an emphasis on art). The odd thing about these museum visits, however, was that Pa did not spend them in a leisurely contemplation of the art on display, but rather rushing from gallery to gallery, scanning the walls and then quickly moving on, as if he were looking for something and not finding it. Sometimes he would park us on a bench and then spend ages with a museum curator going over old lists and catalogsmdash;again, as always, without explanation. There was, I remember, one notable exception. Years later we took a trip from Los Angeles to the San Diego Museum of Art in Balboa Park, where my father stood gazing for what seemed like an uncharacteristically long time at a seventeenth-century oil painting, Portrait of Isaac Abrahamsz. Massa, by Dutch Golden Age painter Frans Hals. Even more uncharacteristically, he told me that this painting had once been owned by his father, my grandfather, but it had been sold during World War II. He sounded bitter about it, angry in a way that I was only just beginning to understand. But he would say no more, and I didnrsquo;t ask. It seemed like ancient historymdash;sad, perhaps, but with little bearing on my life. Eventually, as the years passed, I began to understand the basic outlines of my fatherrsquo;s family storymdash;again, through bits and snippets and vague asides. Yes, my father and his father before him had been born into one of the wealthiest, most powerful Jewish banking dynasties in Germany, the Gutmanns. Yes, my grandfather and grandmother, herself a member of a Jewish banking family, a baroness no less, had lived with their two childrenmdash;my father and his younger sistermdash;in a luxurious estate in Holland, where they had presided over not only an enormous fortune and a fabulous art collection of old masters and famous Impressionists, but also an almost priceless collection of Renaissance silver and gold works of art. And, yes, the war and the Nazis had come, and while my father had survived in England, anglicizing his name to Goodman and serving in the British army, everything elsemdash;the fabulous estate, the vast fortune, the magnificent art collection, my grandparents themselvesmdash;had been swept away. At the time, my scant knowledge of this history did not much affect memdash;any real sense of loss would only come later. As for the lost fortune, the vanished art collection, it all seemed like part of some other world. Many families have stories of lost wealthmdash;the fortune lost overnight in the Wall Street crash, the family bank accounts squandered at the roulette wheels of Monte Carlo by some dissolute great-unclemdash;but by the third or fourth generation these stories usually become nothing more than interesting, and perhaps only half-believed, bits of family lore and legend. Young men think of their own futures, not someone elsersquo;s past. Besides, by this time I was living in Los Angeles, and in all the world there probably is no place less conducive to pondering the past than LA. Still, as I got older, I began to understand, or at least was better able to appreciate, the profound effect that this tragic family history had exerted on my fathermdash;and later, through him, on me. For my father, these terrible events had been close, real, things he had lived and experienced. When I tried to imagine myself in his place, I thought, no wonder he refused to talk about the war; no wonder he never spoke of his parents. Some things, I understood, were simply too painful to talk about, buried beyond words. But curiously, as the years passed, as the dreadful history of my fatherrsquo;s family receded in time, their effects on him seemed to increase, not lessen. He had a growing aura of pent-up frustration and bitterness and anger about him, a sense that some mysterious defeat, some terrible failure, was weighing on him, bending his spirit and then finally, it seemed, breaking it altogether. He grew increasingly withdrawn, uncommunicative, inaccessible. When my parents would have guests overmdash;or more accurately, when my social and outgoing mother would have guests overmdash;I remember my father usually standing off and alone in a corner, as if he were someplace else. He could still talk animatedly about cricket and football (or, as Americans say, soccer), but almost nothing else seemed to interest him. As for the war, everything but the Allied victories now seemed off-limits. It got to the point that whenever a news report or documentary about the victims and, specifically, the Holocaust would come on the television, my mother had trained Nick and me to quickly jump up and change the channel. Otherwise my father would angrily switch off the set and then sit glumly, silently, in his chair. There was one memorable exception. One day in June 1967, I came home to find my father alone, hunched forward in his chair, watching the BBC news reports on Israelrsquo;s air and ground strikes against Egyptian military airfields and the Arab armies massing against them from Jordan, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Desertmdash;the start of the Six-Day War. He was cheering, shaking his fist, urging the Israelis on. Thatrsquo;s it! Bash the bloody bastards! Nick, who was older, had already left home, and my mother was away, so for the next six days my father and I spent every spare minute following the war news togethermdash;he explaining the strategy and tactics and weapons as I listened, fascinated by this previously unseen side of him. It was the longest, most intimate time I had ever spent with my father. Yet, even then, as we watched with satisfaction as the Israelis rolled over the Arab armies at El Arish and Gush Etzion and Jericho and Jerusalem, my father barely spoke of his own Jewish heritage, or of that other, earlier war of attempted annihilation of the Jews. Then the Six-Day War was over, and the news looked elsewhere, and my fatherrsquo;s silence returned. Nick and I were growing up and had our own lives now. We were accustomed to Pa simply being Pa. But for our mother, the silence, the distance, the sadness, finally became too much. Sadly, they divorced. Ma eventually remarried and moved to Australia, while Pa remained in London, a quiet and somewhat reclusive aging bachelor. Later he met Eva, who, though twenty years his junior, had attended the same exclusive school in Switzerland that my father had attended as a boy. Surprisingly, given our familyrsquo;s history, Eva was Germanmdash;but she had been a young girl during the war. More unusual still, he eventually went to live with her in Germany, in the small southwestern university town of Tuuml;bingen. This was another mystery for me and Nick. Nevertheless, in Eva he found a comfortable companionship and, in his later years, perhaps some measure of peace. We noticed that he still traveled extensively. But about his past, he remained as silent as ever. Some men grow garrulous as they get older, telling the various stories from their lives again and again to anyone who will listen. Pa, as far as we could tell, had never told his story even once. And now he was dead. It might have ended there, except that a few months after his death I rang up Parsquo;s sister, our aunt Lili, just to say hello. Aunt Lili was one of those rumored, far-flung relatives I had wondered about as a boy, but had not actually met until years later. Like my father, she also had an unusual life. Lili had married into an old Italian family, but her husband had been taken prisoner of war by the British in North Africa. Then when the Germans occupied Italy, she had been forced, due to her Jewish origins, to keep one step ahead of the Gestapo. After the war she divorced her first husband and later married a Greek diplomat. Now elderly and widowed, she was living in modest circumstances in Florence. During our conversation, my aunt mentioned, in passing, that since the fall of the Soviet Union the Russians had begun, for the first time, to exhibit publicly some of the ldquo;trophy artrdquo; taken from Germany during World War II. She wondered out loud if perhaps some of her fatherrsquo;s, my grandfatherrsquo;s, missing paintings that had disappeared during the warmdash;the two Degas, the Renoir, the Botticelli, the Guardis, and othersmdash;might be found there and even possibly returned to the family. My reaction was ldquo;Missing paintings? What missing paintings?rdquo; Nick and I had assumed, when we had thought about it at all, that all that had been settled long ago or that whatever our fatherrsquo;s family had lost had been lost irretrievably. The idea that the family might still have a claim to anything from those old days, and that a half century later it might be recovered, seemed far-fetched. Frankly, we wondered if poor Aunt Lili, who was in her late seventies, might be getting a bit dotty. Then those old boxes arrived at Nickrsquo;s house, stuffed with papers and documents. It would take us first days, then weeks, then years, to decipher it allmdash;and even as I write this, not all the mysteries have yet been solved. But I would eventually uncover the secrets that had been hidden since before I was born. And I can finally tell the story that my father never told me. bull;nbsp;nbsp;bull;nbsp;nbsp;bull; I would discover that for a half century after the war ended, Pa had fought a bitter and often unsuccessful battle to recover the priceless artworks that had been stolen from his familymdash;stolen first by the Nazis, and then, in effect, stolen again by narrow-minded bureaucrats. Unscrupulous art dealers and willfully negligent auction houses, as well as museum directors and wealthy collectors, would all be party to this theft, long after the war was over. I would discover that throughout his life our father had to deal not only with the almost unbearable knowledge that his parents had been savagely murdered, but also the knowledge that their looted legacy, their paintings and other cherished artworks, were on display in someone elsersquo;s gallery, hanging on someone elsersquo;s wall, locked in someone elsersquo;s safemdash;and that he could not get them back. In discovering his story, I would come to understand the anger, the indignation, the frustration, and the sense of loss that he must have felt. For the first time, and only after he was dead, I would finally begin to understand the strange, tormented, enigmatic man who was my father. In the years to come, my family and I would take up the search where my father had left off. The trail of our familyrsquo;s missing art would lead from Nazi-occupied Holland and France to Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and America; from warehouses in Paris to salt mines and castles in Bavaria; from dingy government storage facilities to the rarefied atmosphere of Sothebyrsquo;s and Christiersquo;s auction houses in London and New York; from the private art collections of the fabulously wealthy to the public exhibitions of some of the worldrsquo;s greatest art museums. Like my father, I would spend years searching through musty archives, haunting the back rooms of museums and libraries on two continents, tracking down clues, pursuing false leads, searching, always searching. Like my father, too, at almost every turn I would encounter indifference and apathy, and at times outright hostility, from people who seemed not to want to know about the grim history of the artworks they possessed. Even when they did know about it, too often they seemed not to care. But there was one big difference between my fatherrsquo;s quest and mine. This time, for the most part, we would prevail. It has been a long and frustrating and, at times, an almost ruinously expensive endeavor. But over the years we have recovered dozens of paintings and many other artworks that were stolen from our familymdash;although many remain missing, still stolen, to this day. In the process we have helped change the way the often ruthless business side of the art world is conducted and helped to effect new government protocols and regulations concerning the harboring of looted art. I hope we have made it easier for other heirs of Holocaust victims to find and recover their stolen legacies, all the while keeping alive the memory of the victims of long ago. Oftentimes in this very public and highly publicized battle, I have been asked by newspaper and magazine writers, by television news reporters and documentary filmmakers, why I do it, what my motivation is. I give the usual, perhaps expected answermdash;that while I know the dead can never be brought back to life, by recovering my familyrsquo;s stolen legacy I hope to achieve a long-overdue sense of justice, a degree of what is popularly known today as closure. While that is true, I have another, deeper, more visceral motivation. After learning what had happened to my familymdash;the murders, the thefts, the lies, and the betrayals they had enduredmdash;I was angry. From that anger came a desire to exact at least some small measure of retributionmdash;for my grandparents, for my father, perhaps even in some ways for myself. After the war, Bernard used his British and Dutch passports constantly.