



## THE BOY FROM BOSKOVICE *A father's secret life*

Vicky Unwin

Hardback £25

*'In her engaging memoir, Vicky Unwin approaches her family's hidden history with all the care of an archeologist and bears out Faulkner's assertion that, "No man is himself, he is the sum of his past."'*

Peter Godwin, author of *Mukiwa*; *A White Boy in Africa* and *When the Crocodile Eats the Sun*

**What makes a good man bad? Nature or nurture?**

**This is the extraordinary story of the author's father, a Holocaust survivor who left a trail of pain and secrets in his wake**

Vicky Unwin had always known her father – an erstwhile intelligence officer and respected United Nations diplomat – was Czech, but it was not until a stranger turned up on her doorstep that she discovered he was also Jewish.

So began a quest to discover the truth about his past – one that perhaps would help answer the niggling doubts she had always had about her ‘perfect’ dad. Finally persuading him to allow her to open a closely-guarded cache of family books and papers, Vicky discovered the identity of her grandfather: the tormented author and diplomat Hermann Ungar, hugely controversial both in life and in death, who was a protégé and possible lover of Thomas Mann, and a friend of Berthold Brecht and Stefan Zweig. How much of her father’s child was Vicky – and how much of his father’s child was he?

As Vicky worked to uncover deeply-buried family secrets, she would find herself slowly unpicking the lingering power of ‘survivor guilt’ on the generations that followed the Holocaust, and would learn, via a deathbed confession, of the existence of a previously unknown sister.

Together, the sisters attempt to come to terms with what had made their father into the deeply flawed, complex, yet charismatic man he had always been, journeying together through grief and heartache towards forgiveness.

### About Vicky Unwin:

Vicky Unwin has had a long career in both book and newspaper publishing, centred round her African roots, and is currently the chair of *Wasafiri Magazine* and a Caine Prize Council member. Her first book, *Love and War in the WRNS*, a collection of her mother’s letters home during the Second World War, was published by History Press in June 2015. She has always been fascinated by family secrets and began researching the story behind *The Boy from Boskovice* shortly before her father’s death in 2012. Vicky writes extensively about living with cancer at [healthylivingwithcancer.co](http://healthylivingwithcancer.co), and is a Trustee of Transform Drug Policy Foundation campaigning for the decriminalisation of drugs after losing her daughter to a ketamine overdose in 2011. She lives in Belsize Park, close to her fleeing family’s first home in Fairfax Road, Swiss Cottage.

