

## Barbara Bronnen

### My Fathers



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Barbara Bronnen was born in Berlin. Her family left the bombed city in 1942, as her father had become a persona non grata in the national socialist state. She grew up in Bad Goisern and Linz and currently lives in Munich, where she graduated with a doctorate in German Studies and Theater and worked as a journalist. She has been a freelance writer since 1970.

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### About

**Betrayal, feud, silence, and secrets – the true story of a Jewish-Austrian family of writers.**

Growing up, Barbara Bronnen didn't know her grandfather, Dr. Ferdinand Bronner, who under the pseudonym Franz Adamus was one of the first naturalist dramatists. Her father, Arnolt Bronnen, not only denied kinship to Bronner, but claimed for his father a certain Pastor Schmidt, whom he accused of engaging in an act of somnambulist procreation.

This tensely-written book tells the dramatic, outrageous story of a Jewish-Austrian family of writers and their great secret. It begins in the present, at a cemetery in Berlin where Barbara Bronnen's father, the expressionist writer Arnolt Bronnen is buried. And it reaches back to Auschwitz in the year 1867, where her grandfather, Ferdinand Bronner, was born.

Based on Ferdinand Bronner's extensive records, which span until the end of World War I and in which he consistently conceals his Jewish origins, Barbara Bronnen reconstructs a detailed history of her grandfather up until his death in 1948. Yet the deeper she delves into her family's story, the more evidence she finds of something amiss. Her research leads her to interview family members divided into Bronners and Bronnens, each group disowning the other, and her travels take her all the way to Auschwitz. As she pulls the threads of her family's story together, the mad clash between father and grandfather takes shape, and the dramatic relationship between grandfather, grandmother, and father is revealed to be a treacherous game of history, heritage, and betrayal.