

‘I am at a loss for sufficient words: I love this book’

Carmen Callil

Family Business: A Memoir

Peter J. Conradi

Published by

SEREN

9781781725016 • Released 20 June for the centenary of Iris Murdoch’s birth 15th July 2019 •
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***Family Business* is Conradi’s account of his Jewish family, his youthful rebellion and his ‘other family’ – Iris Murdoch and her husband John Bayley – publishing in the centenary year of Iris Murdoch’s birth**

Family Business includes a cast of characters ranging from the author’s European Jewish forebears who came to Britain in the Victorian era to influential novelist and philosopher Iris Murdoch, whose biography Conradi himself wrote. The arc of Conradi’s story travels from the relative integration of his ancestors to his rebellion against this and his long association with Murdoch, another outsider in English society.

Against the upwardly mobile successes of his immigrant ancestors – with their exotic stories – and his relationship with his beloved grandmother came the more immediate dysfunction of his parents’ marriage. Young, clever, bisexual Peter became a ‘knight errant’ protecting his mother, and set a precedent repeated later in his friendship with Murdoch. In between Conradi relates his public school education, being a kibbutznik, taking part in the early years of gay rights and becoming a writer.

In the final chapters of this enthralling biographer’s autobiography Conradi explores his long and close relationship with Iris Murdoch and John Bayley. Conradi was both Murdoch’s biographer and during her last years, her carer, and has much to say on the world of Murdoch and Bayley. **July 15th 2019 marks the centenary of Iris Murdoch’s birth.** *Family Business* contains many unseen photographs alongside previously unpublished material on Murdoch and Bayley.

Peter J. Conradi is English Professor Emeritus at Kingston University. He is known as the official biographer of Iris Murdoch, whose essays and letters he also collected and edited, in separate volumes. He has also written a study of Murdoch’s novels. In addition, he is the biographer of the soldier-poet Frank Thompson, the author of a guide to buddhism, *Going Buddhist*, and has published *At the Bright Hem of God*, a literary exploration of Radnorshire.

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Advance Praise for *Family Business*:

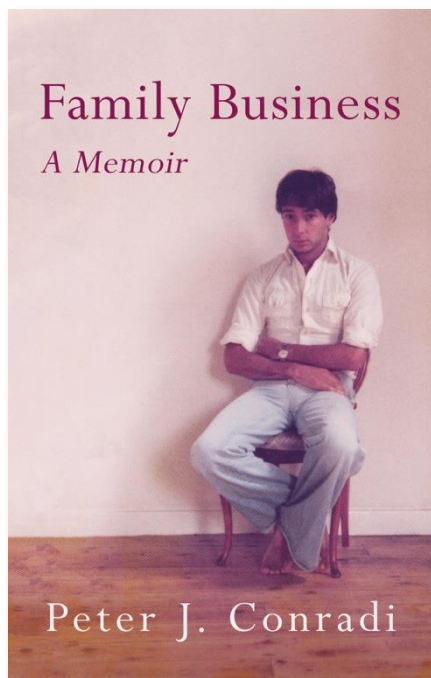
“A mingling of charm, comedy, confessional and inevitable tragedy: all beautifully orchestrated. I can only congratulate you on a brilliant series of stories” – *Michael Holroyd*

“Wonderfully bound together by his fluent, elegant style” – *Mark Amory*

“An unusual combination of social, family and personal history and the daringly open and original autobiography of a gifted and scrupulous biographer. Humorous, thoughtful, wise and very well written.” – *Anne Chisholm*

“The portrait of his parents and his relationship with them is a masterpiece. I don’t think this portrait of the nineteenth century Jewish diaspora in England will ever be bettered. Conradi’s relationship with Iris Murdoch is also brilliantly done.” – *Carmen Callil*

“Bravely refuses to shirk her moral frailty and sexual complexities, and his penetrating analysis of her inner life will help scholars understand not only Murdoch herself but also the moral psychology that drives her characters” – *Anne Rowe*



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