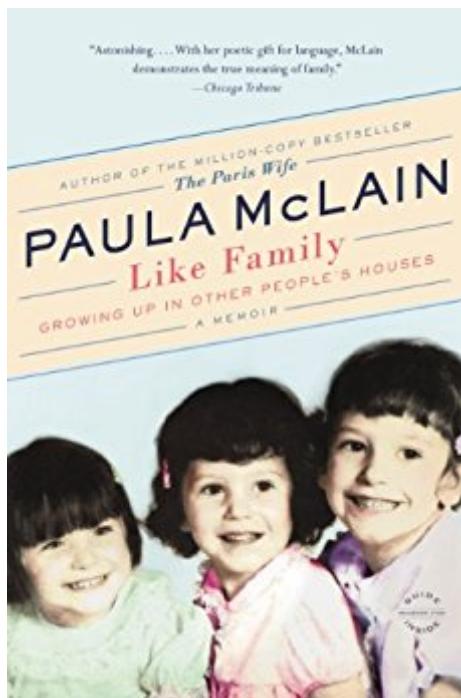


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# Like Family: Growing Up In Other People's Houses, A Memoir



## **Synopsis**

This powerful and haunting memoir details the years Paula McLain and her two sisters spent as foster children after being abandoned by both parents in California in the early 1970s. As wards of the State, the sisters spent the next 14 years moving from foster home to foster home. The dislocations, confusions, and odd pleasures of an unrooted life form the basis of one of the most compelling memoirs in recent years--a book the tradition of Jo Ann Beard's *The Boys of My Youth* and Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club*. McLain's beautiful writing and limber voice capture the intense loneliness, sadness, and determination of a young girl both on her own and responsible, with her siblings, for staying together as a family.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

McLain writes a honest portrayal of her life as she grew up in the foster care system, but her book goes far beyond that one topic. It is also a book on coming of age, sisterly love and finding bits of joy in unlikely places. McLain is a master of fresh writing. On page after page, I highlighted lines

and descriptions that were so beautifully written: They filled the furniture like rising dough, She was as quiet as a book on a lap,...emitted a postlaugh sigh that was a half leaking bicycle tire. I've been helping people write their life stories for fourteen years, (Eating an Elephant: Write Your Life One Bite at a Time) and I will certainly use this book as an example of how to tell a difficult story in a rich and vibrant way.

Paula McLain's account of her childhood is compelling reading. I am deeply concerned with the dismal state of the foster care system and the impact of it on our community's children. I have also been a foster parent. Ms. McLain's writing is powerful and personal, a beautiful and touching memoir allowing the rest of us to experience the abysmal consequences of parenting taken too lightly (by biological parents or misguided fosters or officials entrusted with responsibility). The reader does not have to have a specific interest in this topic to be moved and gain value and insight. Ms. McLain takes full responsibility as an adult to have her own life work, even with the vestiges of her childhood forever present. No whining here, which makes it all the more powerful. A quick read, highly recommended.

Paula McLain's memoir as a foster child has 'no end to sad stories.' For most of her childhood, she and her two sisters are placed with foster parents, but she never feels any love or part of their families. As a writer and astute observer, she can remember detailed events of her life in their 'care.' Although she doesn't say, she must have been very smart in school. She went to college on her own. Was there not a teacher along the way who helped her with academic endeavors? With her family background I am curious to know how and why she was able to pursue an academic life.

I just finished reading "Like Family: Growing Up in Other People's Houses". I found the author's ability to tell her story from afar without emotion, just the facts, left room for my own emotional reaction. I was looking for a new book and came across "Circling the Sun" by Paula McLain and saw she had written a memoir so chose to read that first. It did not disappoint.

Spot on about foster care experience..

Good descriptive writing. Very focused on the narrator's point of view, which the writer chose to do, but it limits perspective. Would like to have more development of characters. Enjoyed reading about the locations in Fresno

I enjoyed reading Like Family Growing Up in Other People's Houses. It gave me an understanding of The author in seeing how she was influenced by her childhood in her writing. Good book!

Beautifully and sensitively written. This book should be a must read for anyone working in social services, especially within the foster care field. It was informative, but within the context of an enjoyable and page turning story. Thank You Ms McLain for sharing your story.

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