

= My Life in Orange =

My Life in Orange : Growing Up with the Guru is an account of a child growing up in the Rajneesh movement led by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh . The book is a firsthand account , written by Tim Guest at the age of 27 , years after his experiences . The book was published in 2004 by Granta Books . The book 's title is a reference to the term " the orange people " , which was used to refer to members of the Rajneesh movement due to the color they dyed their clothes .

Guest describes how his mother was initially raised in strict Catholicism , but later turned to a tape of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh after going through a period of experimenting with sex and drugs . She dyed all of her clothes orange , took on the name of " Ma Prem Vismaya " , and " Yogesh " for her son , and moved to an Rajneesh movement commune near Bombay . Guest 's mother moved to many different communes , and had leadership roles within the movement , eventually running a commune in Suffolk . Guest recounts how he regretted the absence of his mother 's presence during this time , and describes controversial living conditions with other children at the various ashrams . Guest and his mother moved to the 64 @,@ 000 @-@ acre (260 km2) commune in Oregon , but his mother was demoted in position and sent to live at a different commune in Cologne . His family later disassociated from the Rajneesh movement and moved back to North London , where they each encountered difficulties reintegrating back into mainstream society .

My Life in Orange received generally positive reviews , and was highlighted in a " Top 20 non @-@ fiction " list by The Daily Telegraph , and a " 50 Best Books for the Beach " by The Independent . Kirkus Reviews called the book " a rightly disturbing record of malignant child neglect by people who sought a heaven , but made a hell " , and William Leith of New Statesman described it as " an excellent study of what happens when a charismatic leader comes into contact with a group of rudderless , dispirited people " . Publishers Weekly called it " an absorbing book about survival and good intentions gone awry " .

= = Author = =

Tim Guest attended Sussex University where he studied psychology , and obtained a M.A. degree in creative writing from the University of East Anglia . Guest was a journalist for The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph . After the publication of My Life in Orange , Guest later wrote a book about the phenomenon of electronic virtual worlds and video games , titled Second Lives : A Journey Through Virtual Worlds , published in 2008 by Random House . On 31 July 2009 , Guest died of a suspected heart attack at 34 years old . He was found dead by his wife Jo ; despite her efforts to resuscitate him , she was unable to revive him . It was later determined that Guest had died of a morphine overdose .

= = Contents = =

Tim Guest 's mother Anne was born in 1950 into a Catholic family . She took courses in psychology at the University of Sheffield . His father was a psychologist on staff at the university . She gave birth to Tim Guest in 1975 . Guest 's mother fell in love with another man when Guest was six months old . She became a feminist , studied Ronald David Laing , and experimented with sex and drugs . Guest 's mother became a follower of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh when Guest was a toddler , after listening to a cassette tape of Rajneesh which displayed the cover text " Surrender to me , and I will transform you " , and was titled : " Meditation : the art of ecstasy " . Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh taught his followers his perspective on chaotic therapy , sexual freedom and mysticism . She brought her son into the movement in 1979 . She was given the name of " Ma Prem Vismaya " (Sanskrit : Mother Love Wonder) , and dyed all of her clothes orange .

In 1981 , his mother took him to live on an ashram operated by Rajneesh in Poona , India . Guest was renamed as " Yogesh " by Rajneesh . As the Rajneesh movement grew in influence and became involved in controversy , Guest 's mother became more involved in the movement . Guest was moved to various Rajneeshee communes , including London , Devon , India , Oregon and

Germany . Guest was moved at times to communes and sent to live without his mother . Guest 's mother was involved in running the commune and his father lived in the United States . He was raised by other members of the Rajneesh movement , and lived with other children in the ashrams .

His mother ran a commune called " Medina Rajneesh " in Suffolk , and Guest went to a school run on the commune where no history classes were given . Guest describes multiple rules he disliked which he had to observe while living on the Osho commune , including a restricted diet and mandated worship . His stuffed animals and books were taken away from him . He did not spend much time with his mother , because she was frequently working for the movement . When Rajneesh moved from India to Oregon , Guest and his mother moved to Oregon as well , and though Guest enjoyed roaming on the 64 @, @ 000 @-@ acre (260 km²) commune he still wished to spend time with his mother .

His mother was later demoted in leadership status by other members of the female leadership of the commune , and sent with Guest to a commune in Cologne . Guest had difficulty learning German , and spent time hiding behind a pile of mattresses with a book and playing with Legos . He describes his childhood in the Rajneesh movement as " somewhere in between Peter Pan and Lord of the Flies " , and writes that he had 200 " mothers " , but did not spend time with his own mother . According to Guest , group leaders in the Rajneesh movement often initiated fourteen and fifteen @-@ year @-@ old girls into sex . Guest and his mother left the movement when he was a teenager , and she burned all of her orange clothing . Guest himself left at first ; he phoned his mother at age 10 to inform her he was leaving to live with his father in San Francisco .

When his mother left the group , Guest moved back with her to the United Kingdom . Guest , his mother and stepfather Martin moved to north London , and he began the process of experiencing adolescence in a society different from that inside the Rajneesh movement . Guest reentered society at age 11 , and faced confusion over the contrast in experiences between his childhood in the Rajneesh movement and his new experiences as a teenager in London . He enrolled in the Haverstock School in north London , but had trouble during his teen years with drugs and alcohol . He had difficult relations with his stepfather , and had not spent much time with him prior to the move to London . Anne and Martin went through a period of time where they thought they were beings from a different world , and read books on UFOs . Guest fostered his interest in reading , and went on to study at university .

= = Reception = =

My Life in Orange received generally positive reviews in book trade publications and in the media . The New Yorker critic John Lahr characterized My Life in Orange as " one of the best autobiographies of the decade " . The Daily Telegraph placed the book in its " Top 20 non @-@ fiction " list of " the year 's best biographies , histories and memoirs " for 2004 , and The Independent highlighted the book among its " 50 Best Books for the Beach " . A review in Reference & Research Book News commented that participants in the Rajneesh movement created " adults like Guest who are marked by the neglect suffered in a childhood among the completely self @-@ absorbed " . Kirkus Reviews described the book as " a rightly disturbing record of malignant child neglect by people who sought a heaven , but made a hell " . My Life in Orange was highlighted among Kirkus Reviews " Best books for reading groups " . In his review of the book for M2 Best Books , Peter Haswell concluded : " A thoroughly enjoyable read and a fascinating insight into the workings of a commune along with the people , their beliefs and their attitudes . Both amusing and sad . Pretty much something for everyone . "

The book received a favorable review in New Statesman , and William Leith wrote : " This is an excellent study of what happens when a charismatic leader comes into contact with a group of rudderless , dispirited people . They follow him blindly . They let him get away with anything . " Montagu Curzon of The Spectator wrote that " Guest makes an astonishingly mature debut (he is 27) and has the rare ability to describe childhood as a small child lives it ; accepting , helpless , curious . " Lois Kendall gave the book a positive review in Cultic Studies Review , and wrote : " The book is deep , yet light and readable , both for those who have had similar life experiences and who

, I am sure , will find solace in this book , and for those with no such personal experience , who will find the narrative fascinating . " Publishers Weekly characterized My Life in Orange as " Honest and vivid , this is an absorbing book about survival and good intentions gone awry . " Gillian Engberg of Booklist called the book a " stirring memoir " , and wrote : " Guest writes with a reporter 's sense of economy and restraint , letting absurd , even shocking details speak for themselves . " Christopher Hart gave the book a positive review in The Sunday Times , and wrote : " Tim Guest ? s extraordinary account of his childhood in the communes of Bhagwan , the notorious Indian guru , is a survivor ? s tale , poignant , funny and wise . "

A review in The Daily Telegraph commented that " the main failure of Guest 's otherwise excellent book is the absence of character : even his mother comes across rather as a history than a personality . " " My Life in Orange , though slightly patchwork in its construction , is an absorbing piece of writing , all the more compelling for begging as many questions as it answers and for the author 's refusal to ask for pity , " wrote Geraldine Bedell in a review of the book in The Observer . Director of the Cheltenham Festival of Literature , Christopher Cook , characterized My Life in Orange as " the most extraordinary account of his [Tim Guest 's] childhood and the bravest writing I 've read in ages " . Sudipta Datta of the Indian Express described the book as " a postcard from the past that the Osho ashram may not rave about . " Datta noted though that after having been angry with his mother and Rajneesh , Guest had reconciled with his family , reclaimed his childhood and come to see Rajneesh as " a loveable rogue who got away with doing his own thing " . Catherine A. Powers of The Boston Globe characterized the book as a " moving , superbly written account of growing up in the midst of ... cruel madness " . Michael E. Young of The Dallas Morning News gave the book a favorable review , and wrote : " The book offers a glimpse into the thoughts of the followers , and examines the fine line between spirituality and insanity , between religion and cult . " Shane Hegarty of The Irish Times characterized the book as " an intriguing and often humorous mix of straightforward 1980s nostalgia and cult delusion " .