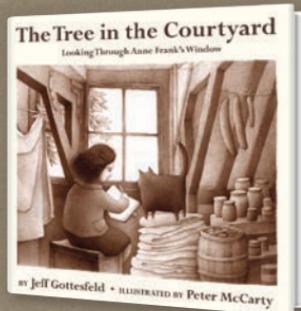
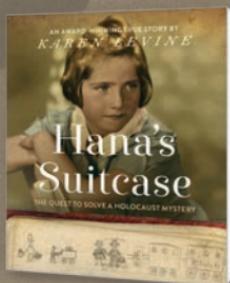
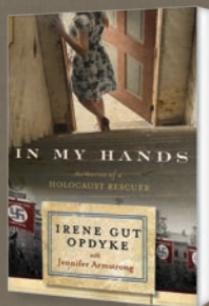
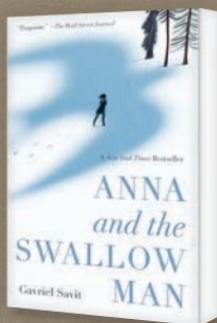
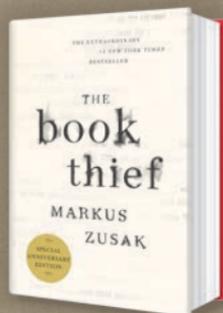
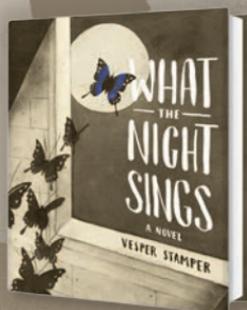


Read to Remember

A Guide to Discussing Literature About the Holocaust



what the night sings

Vesper Stamper



ABOUT THE BOOK

After losing her family and everything she knew in the Nazi concentration camps, Gerta is finally liberated, only to find herself completely alone. Without her papa, her music, or even her true identity, she must move past the task of surviving and onto living her life. In the displaced persons camp where she is staying, Gerta meets Lev, a fellow teen survivor who she just might be falling for, despite her feelings for someone else. With a newfound Jewish identity she never knew she had, and a return to the life of music she thought she lost forever, Gerta must choose how to build a new future. Vesper's moving portrayal of Gerta's experience only scratches the surface of what makes this book so special. Her stunning illustrations work with the text to create an unforgettable narrative, which digs deep into the heart of what it meant to go through something so unspeakable at such a young age and the strength it took for survivors to go on. In that way, *What the Night Sings* finds the space between light and dark, hope and tragedy, love and loss.

“A tour de force. This powerful story of love, loss, and survival is not to be missed.”

—Kristin Hannah, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author
of *The Nightingale*



WHAT
— THE —
NIGHT
SINGS

A NOVEL

VESPER STAMPER

Alfred A. Knopf  New York

Keep Reading for a Sneak Peek. . . .

THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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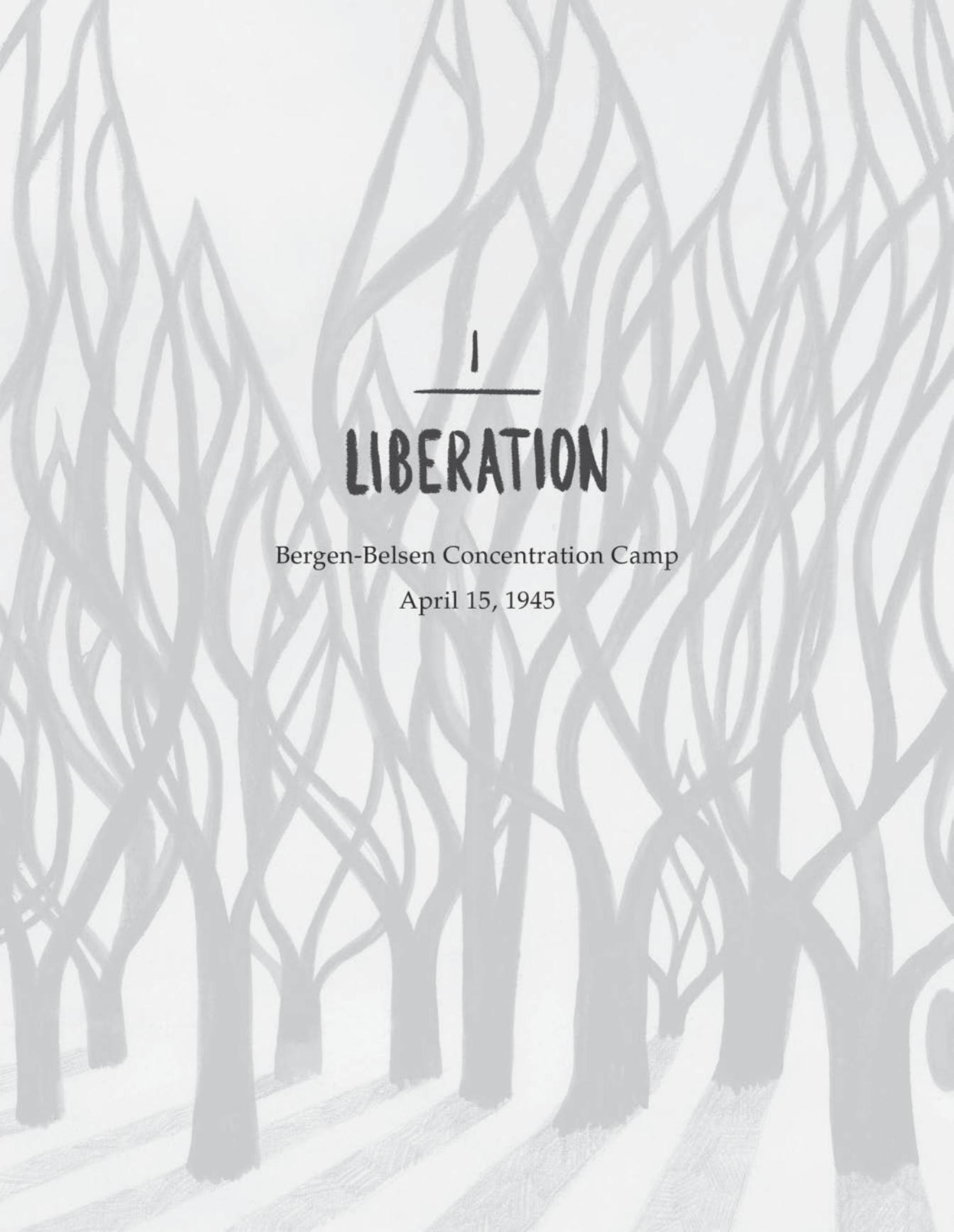
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First Edition

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LIBERATION

Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp

April 15, 1945

CHAPTER 1

I am lying next to Rivkah in the bunk when the announcement comes. She is burning; she is freezing. I hold her, and I sing to her:

Az ir vet, kinderlekh, elter vern, vet ir aleyh farshteyn—

When, dear children, you grow older, you will understand
for yourselves—

I learned this Yiddish song from another musician on my transport here. I only spoke German before, though I sang in many other languages. When they came for me, I was rehearsing Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, but even in German I understood nothing except the language of music. But now what do I care? I may as well die singing. Typhus is sweeping everyone away anyway. Die this way, die that way; pass out at hard labor, or get shot shuffling from one mysterious mound to the next—what's the difference?

So I hold Rivkah, and I mutter the song.

I am nearly sixteen years old. At least I think so.

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Rivkah is my fourth bunkmate in Bergen-Belsen. Somehow I've survived four these last few wretched months. The first was a sick old woman from one of the death marches. She had diabetes and died from a seizure. We were packed so tightly that she shook against me for twenty minutes. I felt my brain shake in my skull; I felt my stomach shake behind my ribs. We pushed her body to the floor and folded her arms. Someone muttered a prayer over her and we fell back to sleep. It was the most dignity we could give her.



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There was no time to learn her name.

The next two girls were pretty, even younger than me. This was obviously their first camp—hard to believe after so much war. It was a crowded week of transports, and the three of us shared one blanket. They kept to themselves and had managed to smuggle in a tube of lipstick. The girls were always whispering and putting on the lipstick, pinching their cheeks and ringing my ears with their acidic giggling. I didn't understand their language, but I



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understood the tone: a stupid survival plot, as if they actually had a say in their fate. They starved a little more slowly than the rest of us, but one day they disappeared, one in the morning, the other that night.

Rivkah came two days later from the Buna factory. She is also from Köln, the city where I was born, and she knew my parents. She's a laboratory scientist, the mother of two boys, Michah and Chaim, fond of boxing. She said she usually scolded them for fighting, but she was secretly proud of her strong sons. They'd buy her little trinkets with the winnings from their after-school fights—flowers, chocolates—and kiss and flatter her to keep her from fussing too much. Big, sweet boys. She lost them to a transport last year but believes with her whole heart that they will all be reunited. Meanwhile, I'm a temporary substitute, a foster child. Somehow she is always smiling, even in fever. I think she's in shock—or maybe she's the kind of person who smiles so much, her face is fixed with a permanent grin, in her eyes as much as on her lips.

Rivkah had met my parents a few times at the club in Köln. My mother died in the raid on the club, I told her. She was sorry, she said. Her voice got raspy and she used her little, growing cough as an excuse not to finish her thought. A couple of weeks after Rivkah came here to Bergen-Belsen, the typhus took root. Now she is dying in my arms.

The soldiers burst into the barracks, and I keep singing. I'm dazed. I am catching fever and I don't recognize their uniforms.

Soldiers are soldiers. Guns are guns. Language is language.

They shout to us in English, with British accents, I think, muffled through the rags they hold over their noses and mouths. I'm so used to the smell of filth and death that only when I see those handkerchiefs am I reawakened

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to the true state of things. I'm inexplicably ashamed. I have nothing left to be ashamed about—but I pull my uniform shirt lower over my bare thighs anyway.

The soldiers begin removing the dead. There are so many. How could I not have noticed them lying right next to me?

And suddenly—Rivkah, too, is gone.

I feel her final breath wisp across my lips. They pull her from me, but I can't let her go. She is my last connection to the living world. I clutch her arm, her hand, her fingers. I sing the lullaby after her, my foster mother. I know no one else in all of Bergen-Belsen, either from Auschwitz or Theresienstadt. Everyone has come and gone, piles of shells pulled in and out of waves, and I'm still here, a skeleton of a sea creature, dropped in this tide pool, living, watching, still living.

CHAPTER 2

Two soldiers extract me from the bunk like a splinter. I'm still mumbling the song as one of them wraps me in a dirty blanket and the other picks me up like a sick baby. He carries me out of the barracks into the blinding sunshine. Every thirty seconds, I fade into blackness and reemerge. I don't feel the soldier's arms under me or the roughness of his uniform lapel on my cheek. Through a tunnel of washy sounds, I hover just above his arms, floating on a current above this chaos.

Strange I hadn't noticed it before, the bodies strewn in the courtyard. An old man who sat down to die against a wall. A woman stroking the hair of the lifeless friend in her lap. The nearly dead call out for help, reaching up to soldiers rushing by, and die with their hands in the air. People are running in zig-zags. Several fall under the feet of frenzied crowds. Children wander blindly through piles of limbs and breasts that might have been mothers, open eyes, gaping mouths—I'm looking into a mirror at myself, my eyes half-lidded, my spirit exiting, entering through my mouth, making no commitment.

I'm suddenly afraid that I'm being put into another selection, and I

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wonder, *Who have I offended now, just by being?* Until I was captured, I had no idea I was even Jewish. I held the *Ahnenpass*, the certificate of racial purity. It stated I was Gerta Richter, four grandparents deep in Aryan blood.

The soldier lays me down on the ground inside a green tent, looks at me—looks away. His forehead is wrinkled. The rag tied around his nose and mouth is damp from sweat and tears. I see why: I am contagion. I am a threat to his life even as he saves mine. And he will handle hundreds of us today, carry us to the tent, touch our skin and clothes, breathe our miasma.

Under the olive-green sunlight I lie here. I feel the dirt; I caress the dirt; I pack the dirt under my nails, as deep as it will go. I sing—“*. . . vet ir aleyn farshteyn*—” but a flutter, barely perceptible, arises in my throat, and suddenly, silence. My dry lips hang open; my voice has finally given out.

There is a boy—a man?—lying on the ground next to me. I’ve been in women’s barracks for so long, I’ve forgotten what it feels like to be near one. He is another skeleton, but even in their dark hollows, his eyes are bright, hazel like my father’s. He looks like a marionette, with glass eyes and a smile painted over his skin-wrapped skull. He apparently isn’t sick, just starved. He has the beginnings of a shock of red hair. He speaks.

“We are free.”

I turn to look at him, this madman. I must be delirious; he is speaking nonsense.

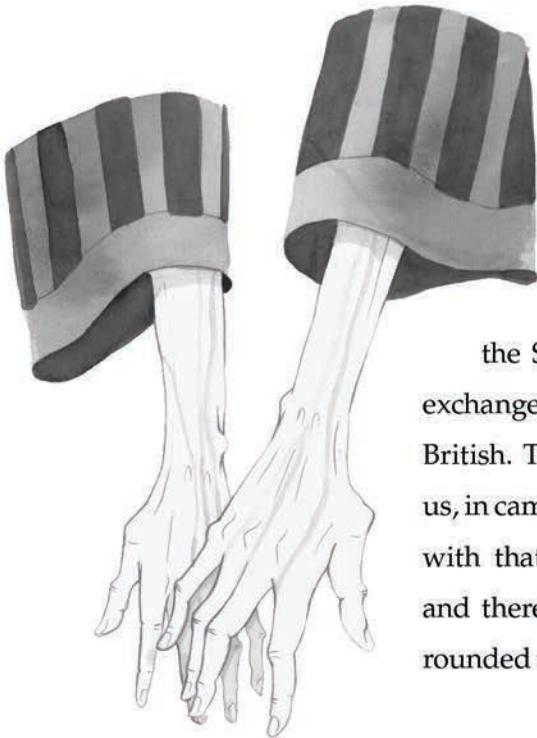
“I can see you don’t believe me. But it’s true. The British. They’re rounding up the SS. We are free.” This stranger inches his hand over to mine and grasps it.

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I am staring at him, and his face morphs into abstract shapes, and I think, *This is reality; everything is made of shapes; no one is human; language is shapes.* I fade in and out again and find I've scratched the dirt with my free hand until my papery fingertips are raw and bleeding. This is the moment I understand. I have survived.

The boy next to me stays only three days. With a little food in him, he is strong enough to get up and help the soldiers. He seems to have taken an interest in me and comes back to visit, to spoon soup into my mouth and wipe it from my chin. There is something familiar in his eyes, but I can't name it. It might be . . . kindness.

"Guten Morgen!" he greets me. "How about some soup?"



I can't speak, but he tells me in his rough, rushed German what is going on outside in the stabbing sunshine. "You've never seen a thing like it," he says, lifting the spoon to my lips. "When they opened the camp, it's like the SS knew they were coming. They just exchanged commanders: yesterday, SS—today, British. The guards even tried to blend in with us, in camp uniforms. But they couldn't get away with that. And everyone is dying, dying . . . and there are too many to bury. So today they rounded up the guards and made them dig huge

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new pits. And in one of those pits, do you know what they did?" Here he catches a potato and maneuvers it into my mouth. "The soldiers made the guards lie with their faces in the dirt, like corpses. They had to lie there with guns at the back of their necks for the longest time. And when they were allowed to climb out, they had to carry each body from the piles by hand and bury it and say, 'Rest in peace!'"

I realize I'm smiling at the thought. My jaw feels a little looser as I chew. The boy pats my shoulder, strokes my forehead and pulls the blanket back over me.

CHAPTER 3

I've been in this tent ten days, and I make no decision to walk out; my brain just lifts me, and I leave. A British nurse grabs my arm and I feel the sickening lack of muscle, the bare nerve rolling between my skin and bone.

"Your name?" she asks. I have to think a moment.

My *name*?

"I'm glad you're able to get up," she says, "and you're free to leave the medical tent, but I need your name so I can write that you've gone."

I pull up the sleeve on my left arm and show her the tattoo of my number: A28865. She begins writing it on a card.

"All right, that's helpful, too, but, my dear, I really do need to know your name. Oh, and your place of residence before the war."

I blink halfway, swallow, moisten my lips. "Rausch," I say, the first word since I lost my voice on the day of liberation. "Gerta . . . Rausch. Würzburg." I walk away into the afternoon sun.

"Wait, Gerta Rausch!" She is frantic, calling after me. "They are moving everyone out of the barracks! You'll need to get a new bed assignment!"

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But I'm almost across the courtyard now. There are still mounds of bodies waiting to be buried, like cordwood or piles of matchsticks. Men with religion emerge to say Kaddish, the mourner's prayer, as the dirt is packed over and patted down. I never learned any prayers, so I wander away into the fields, beyond the gates and watchtowers, as far from the barracks and bodies as my atrophied muscles will carry me. My legs begin to feel their strength, and I break into what I think is a run but must be more like the shuffle of an elderly woman.

I am midway across a vast meadow, tall grass cutting my legs, before I realize I have nowhere to go.

Barbed wire edges this barren, infinite wilderness, just a line of stitching along a gray tea towel. How did such flimsy boundaries hold us here?

And if I am free, how do I get home?

And where is home?

I walk back through the gates, exhausted.

Nurses, new soldiers, relief workers ask questions among themselves in English, thinking we can't understand—

"Why did they not rise up?"

"Didn't they know?"

"Couldn't someone have armed them?"

—as though these hypotheses could be tested. As though we could have fathomed the intricacies of the Nazi web: the reinvention of language, the animalization of human souls.

As I round the corner back to the main camp road, I pass a group walking by in street clothes. For almost two years, I've seen nothing but uniforms of

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either captives or captors. But here now are pretty flowered spring dresses, tweed coats and trousers, crocheted sweaters on fat babies. It's so alien to my eyes, I think I must have walked into the wrong place, into some kind of Easter parade.

The British have brought our neighbors here for a visit.

Families from Winsen, Buchholz, Osterheide. I think about the transports from camp to camp, how I screamed inside as we passed village after village: *Do you know there are human beings on this train? Do you care?* But long before, it had been codified into law, digested in the guts of children along with their biscuits and milk: we weren't humans, but infectious vermin. We were simply animals in these . . . appropriate vehicles.

So now the soldiers round up the old village ladies, young mothers with their hair curled and pinned, wounded and decommissioned German soldiers. They bring them on a little excursion through the corpse-woods, past the stinking mass graves, into the storage rooms where luggage molders unclaimed and shorn hair piles up in a corner, destined to be stuffed into mattresses and woven into cloth for SS uniforms. Such things are merely the by-products of their animal neighbors. Shoes, thousands upon thousands, fill another warehouse: white kid-leather baby booties, red high-heeled dancing shoes. A closet holds the half-skeletal remains of discarded women.

Some of the visitors vomit on themselves. Hardened veterans faint. Women holding their pretty children become furious and spit their demand to leave. The soldiers won't relent. One woman is shouting so loud, a sergeant grabs her red cheeks until his fingers press them white. He yanks her head and forces her to stare into the room.

"You will look at this! You will take it in with your blind eyes until they

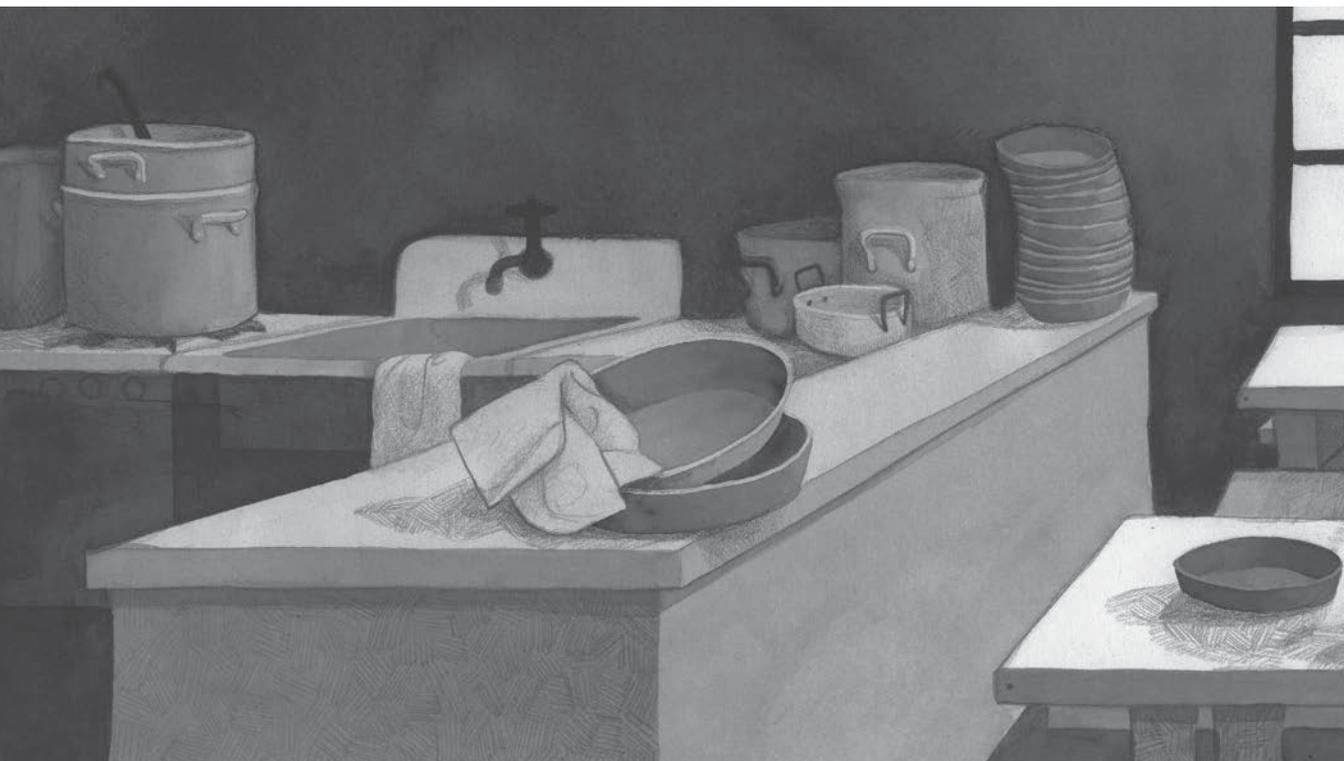
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truly see! You, you let this happen—to your own neighbors, in your own country, your own streets. These are humans! Human beings!” His mouth foams; he shakes her with all his own shock and indignation. She slaps his hand away. Her cheeks have begun to bruise.

“No,” she says, her eyes wide but her voice calm. “No. They are not. They never were. This never happened.”

CHAPTER 4

It's been a month since the British came. We've been moved into the SS quarters across the woods. There are still many living in the old barracks, but less crowding means at least everyone gets her own mat and blanket. We no longer have to line up outside for a supper of cloudy dishwater. Now we can



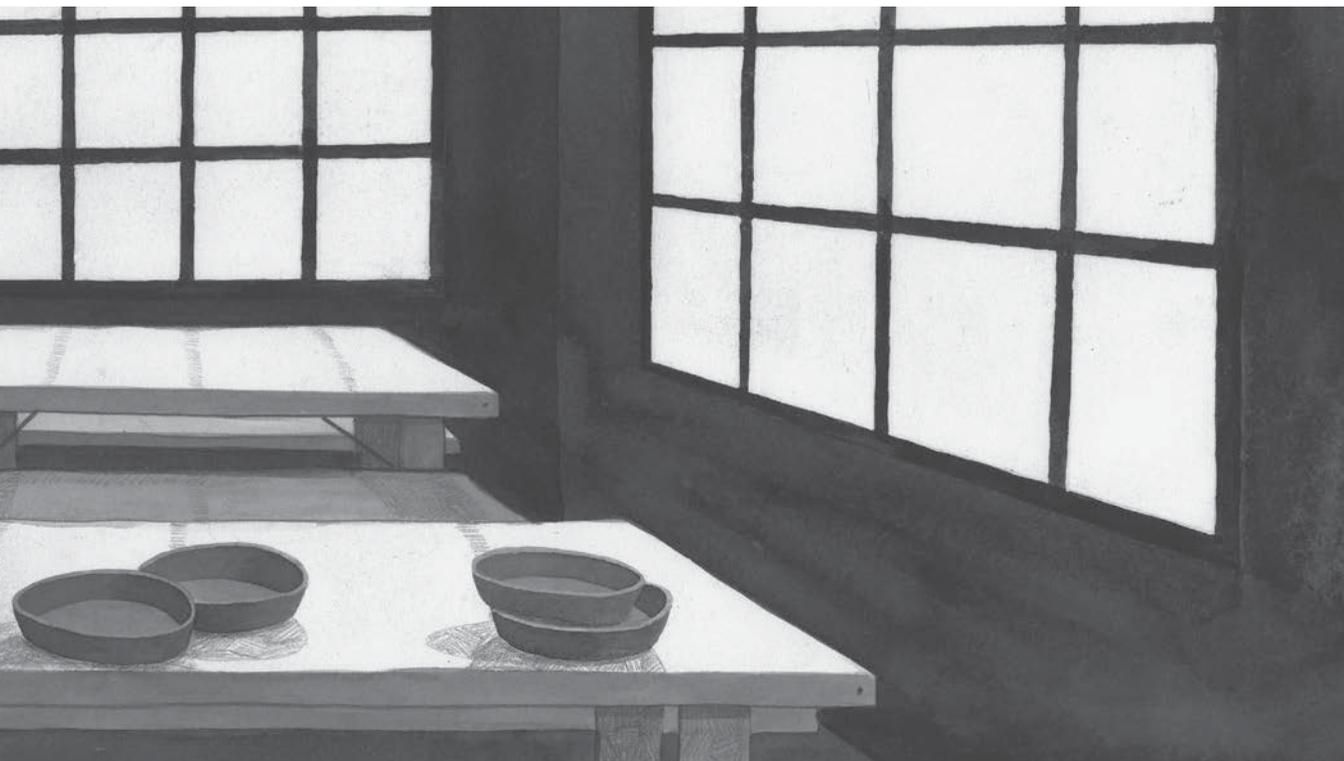
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sit in shifts in the dining hall and eat a whole potato; now and then we get a little margarine.

There is a woman in the camp, a lady whose hair has grown in like patchy grass, who never stops laughing or grinning. Some fool noticed this lunatic quality and gave her the task of “boosting morale” among us. Thanks to her maddening pep, though, it may backfire. She takes her post at the door to the dining hall and greets each person with a saccharine “Good morning, good morning! How are we doing? It’s a beautiful day to be alive! A little warm, a little cold, a little wet, a little dry—depends how you look at it, depends on your perspective! *Make* it a great day!”

She is like a cup of warm lemonade buzzed about with wasps. I suppose there must be a way to be friendly and kind, to laugh heartily without making people want to throw you from a bridge. I *almost* let a remark slip—

“Time and place, Gerta,” my papa used to say, when my mouth would



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run faster than my brain. “Wisdom is knowing the time and place.” I wish I could find the time and place to pour this soup over her head.

In my daydream of Papa, I forget where I am for a moment and how weak my legs still are. The sounds around me become muffled, as though my head were under a pillow. The *ding* of metal falling on a brick floor, a *splash* of liquid—and just before my vision goes completely dark, I feel myself caught under the arms.

I emerge back into the present to the shrieking of a woman chastising someone over the waste. My sight brightens. The shrieker is none other than the waspy-lemonade woman. It’s in *my* face that she’s waving her finger, as two others hold her back and remind her—

“There is plenty now—”

“We are no longer starving—”

“The soup will not bring back the dead.”

Whoever has caught me turns me around: it’s my friend from the medical tent. He has color in his face now, and the beginnings of red whiskers, like his hair. He’s smiling softly, the many-paned window reflecting in his eyes. He sits me down at the table and hands me his own tin cup of soup.

“Go ahead; I’m not hungry,” he lies. I look down into the cup. What I feel in my belly is different somehow—the hunger of someone who’s suddenly remembered what fullness feels like.

“I used to be a singer,” I tell him.

He looks at me, smiles, nods. “Oh,” he says, unsure of how to respond. “I’m sorry, I should have asked, all this time—I don’t know your name.”

“Gerta. Rausch.” I use my real last name, pausing a moment as I think of

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the lengths to which Papa went to avoid it. I attempt a handshake but he puts his hand up, politely refusing to shake it. It seems odd that this boy who held my hand in the tent, stroked my forehead and caught me when I fainted will not shake it now. "Yours?"

"Levi Goldszmit. You can call me Lev."

"Lev," I choose, with a smile. "Nice to really meet you now."

"And where are you from, Gerta Rausch?"

"I'm from Köln, but I've lived in Würzburg since I was little."

"And you were a singer, you said? *Jazz?*" He makes a vaudevillian face.

"I was studying opera."

"Opera!" he says, brightening. "Will you sing for me?"

I'm suddenly embarrassed. I haven't sung at all since the day of liberation, but *actual* singing? Not since Theresienstadt. "Not yet," I say. "I'm not ready." I point to my throat. "Takes a while to get it back."

"Well, God gave you a gift to share with the world," he says, a bit sanctimoniously, which I think he realizes. He reaches up and tugs his earlobe. "But opera? Isn't it only old ladies who sing opera?" He laughs at the thought. "How old *are* you?"

"It's May—" I calculate. "Right—I must have just turned sixteen! Imagine forgetting that. . . . You?"

"Eighteen."

I'm shocked. He looks so much older than that. I wonder if he thinks the same about me. Gone from everyone in the camp is any hint of round-faced youthfulness, from the babies, too. Our faces are chiseled stone, even with a month of food in our bellies.

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“And where did you live?” I ask. “Before the war, I mean.”

“I’m from Poland. My town is Kielce. But my mother is . . . was German.”

He looks blankly at his hands. “So I speak a little.” He smiles again. “Quite well, no?”

“Getting better!” I laugh. I take a sip of the soup. Somehow it’s the most delicious thing I’ve tasted in years.

CHAPTER 5

For two weeks, I've been treated and disinfected; I've washed and rewashed my one ratty uniform shirt. A team of American medical students comes this morning with a truck full of clothes and shoes. They dump the crates in the dining hall. Some are donations from charity drives. Some are the discards of the dead.

Two middle-aged women take the reins and organize things. They have some men arrange the tables into long rows, and everyone helps make piles of clothes: women's, men's, boys' and girls'. This brings everybody into the hall, and for the first time I see several of the other women from my orchestra at Auschwitz. We embrace, but there is nothing to say. How odd that we, of all people, would have survived.

Everyone is overtaken by an intense desire to impose order. We line shoes up by size along the benches and make signs with cardboard and sticks. Each piece of clothing is folded neatly, with reverence, especially the children's clothes, which have the most items and the fewest takers. Some take the little baby shirts just to put under their pillows, to hold like real children.



Damenblusen

3:5





Röcke

7:7

3:9

WHAT THE NIGHT SINGS

I remember my size before I was deported. I'm so much thinner, but maybe I've grown taller. I start at the end of the line and choose a brassiere and matching underpants, blue gray with a little lace along the edge. Pretty nothings from an elegant lady who had something beautiful to wear them under. Or someone to show them to.

It's been a year since I've thought about Maria Büchner, my step-mother, my maestra. She was magnificent, a goddess. I was too young to study opera, but she heard something in my voice and took a chance, shifting me toward serious study. For my debut, she gave me one of her gowns, pale green taffeta with a pleated skirt and a million crystal beads. I never did get to wear that dress. It could still be hanging on the back of the closet door at home. I clench the clothes in my hands and wonder what she did after we were taken. Did she cry for us? Did she forget us? *Could she . . . could she have been the one who turned us in?*

I shake away the thought and take a navy skirt, black dress shoes and a light blue blouse with a pattern of blossoms on it. It reminds me of the pale sky of a Würzburg summer morning, the white blossoms on the orange trees in the gardens.

I'm swimming in these clothes, still skeletal, though I know I've put on some weight in the past few weeks. I make a pleat in the front of the skirt and roll the waistband over to hold it. Under the skirt, the blouse has to be pulled down practically to my knees just to keep it fitted against me. But these are *my* clothes now, ones I chose for myself. I step out of invisibility. I have a name. I am Gerta Rausch.

I am a girl again, in clothes *I* chose, with a sky full of flowers on my blouse.

WHAT THE NIGHT SINGS

Discussion Questions

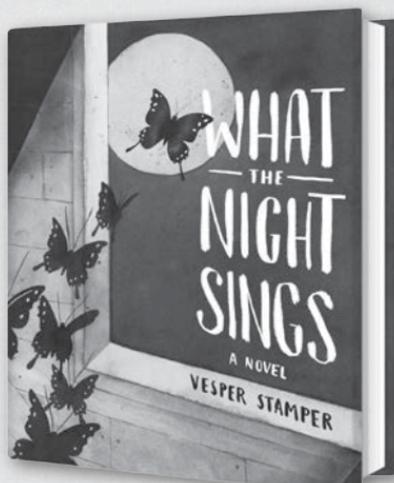
- As the novel opens, readers witness the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on April 15, 1945. What are your immediate reactions to the descriptions given?
- After describing the typhus sweeping away those inflicted or the hard labor killing so many, Gerta states, “I may as well die singing.” (p. 3) What can readers infer from her statement?
- Why is Rivkah’s death particularly difficult for Gerta to bear?
- Gerta shares, “The soldier lays me down on the ground inside a green tent, looks at me—looks away. . . . I see why: I am contagion. I am a threat to his life even as he saves mine.” (p. 9) Discuss the reactions of the British soldiers that liberate Gerta’s camp. Why is this work so challenging to them?
- As she overhears the soldiers and relief workers questioning why the camp prisoners didn’t rise up or take arms, Gerta thinks, “As though we could have fathomed the intricacies of the Nazi web: the reinvention of language, the animalization of human souls.” (p. 13) What does she mean? Why is this point essential to understanding the experience of these prisoners?
- What causes people to consider other groups in society to be “undesirable”? Why is this mindset so dangerous?
- Compare Lev and Michah. How do their understandings of their realities capture the differences in their core beliefs about resistance? What is it about each of them that Gerta clings to? How does that change as time goes by?

- How did the Nazis use Theresienstadt and the artists and musicians imprisoned there to deceive the Red Cross?
How does this camp change after the international visitors leave?
- Consider the marriage of Lev and Gerta. How have their experiences prepared them for this commitment?
- After returning to Lev's childhood home, Gerta and Lev discover that the persecution and murder of Jews has continued. Examine their reactions to this knowledge. How does this understanding finalize their decision to create a future home in Palestine?
- Discuss the character traits that allow Gerta and Lev to persevere. How are these characters similar to each other? In what ways are they different?
- What makes the Holocaust such a unique event in history? Can you argue that it is not unique? How? What have we learned from the Holocaust? Are there things that we have failed to learn? How do we address them?
- On the dedication page before the opening of the novel, Stamper simply states, "Remember." Why do you believe she has chosen to do this, rather than going with a more traditional dedication? Given the current climate in the US and throughout the world, why is remembering this event more important than ever?

Prepared by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor of library science at Sam Houston State University.

I step out of invisibility. I have a name. I am Gerta Rausch.

Perfect for fans of *The Book Thief* and *The Nightingale*, *What the Night Sings* is a lushly illustrated novel for teenagers and adults about a teen Holocaust survivor who must rebuild her life and embrace the music and love that await her.



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★ **“A STRONG ADDITION**
to the bookshelf of Holocaust fiction.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, Starred

★ **“STAMPER SPARES READERS NOTHING.”**

—*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

“A tour de force. **THIS POWERFUL STORY OF LOVE, LOSS, AND SURVIVAL IS NOT TO BE MISSED.**”

—Kristin Hannah, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Nightingale*

“*What the Night Sings* is a **BOOK FROM THE HEART, OF THE HEART, AND TO THE HEART**”

—Deborah Heiligman, award-winning author of *Charles and Emma* and *Vincent and Theo*

the dollmaker of kraków

R. M. Romero

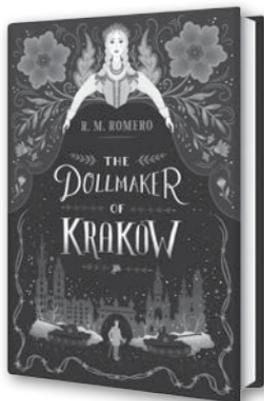
ABOUT THE BOOK

In the Land of Dolls, there is magic.
In the land of humans, there is war.
Everywhere there is pain.
But together there is hope.

Karolina is a living doll whose king and queen have been overthrown. But when a strange wind spirits her away from the Land of the Dolls, she finds herself in Kraków, Poland, in the company of the Dollmaker, a man with an unusual power and a marked past.

The Dollmaker has learned to keep to himself, but Karolina's courageous and compassionate manner leads him to smile and to even befriend a violin-playing father and his daughter—that is, once the Dollmaker gets over the shock of realizing a doll is speaking to him.

But their newfound happiness is dashed when Nazi soldiers descend upon Poland. Karolina and the Dollmaker quickly realize that their Jewish friends are in grave danger, and they are determined to help save them, no matter what the risks.



A fusion of fairy tales, folklore, and World War II history that eloquently illustrates the power of love and the inherent will to survive even in the darkest of times.



THE
DOLLMAKER
OF
KRAKÓW

R. M. ROMERO



DELACORTE PRESS

Keep Reading for a Sneak Peek. . . .

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PROLOGUE



THE SEAMSTRESS AND THE LAND OF THE DOLLS



There once was a little doll named Karolina, who lived in a country far from the human world.

The Land of the Dolls was a large kingdom that stretched countless miles in every direction. To the east lay the sea, and to the west, a glass mountain sprouted from the earth and climbed toward the sun. In the days when the wise king and queen ruled, the sky had always been a perfect shade of midsummer blue, the moonlight as pure as silver, and no one had ever grown old or shabby.

Across the sea, however, lay a dark country. A wicked witch had crafted its residents, huge rats whose appetites seemed as great as the ocean itself, from shadows and tears and ash. The doll king and queen feared that one day the rats would grow hungry enough to come to their home and would bring with them only cruelty and greed.

But Karolina knew nothing of these rumors. Her home was a tiny cottage nestled beside a brook that flowed between two green hills. The curtains were spun from wildflowers, and the walls had been built from slabs of gingerbread, though Karolina was never tempted to nibble at them. The little candy house was all she had wanted, for Karolina was not a king or a queen or even a princess; she was a seamstress.

She'd made satin ball gowns and velvet waistcoats, skirts that fanned out like butterfly wings and handsome jackets with gold buttons. Best of all, Karolina sewed wishes into each piece of clothing with her needle and thread. Each wish was an incomplete hope, a half-spun tale that still needed an ending. But Karolina could not grant the wishes she sewed; she had little magic to call her own.

Karolina loved her work, but there were a few customers whose wishes had pained her to hear. These dolls were quiet and sad, and their tales of woe were so easy to read they might as well have been printed on their porcelain faces and little wooden hands.

What did the sad dolls want? To return to the human world that all the dolls had once lived in. Why? Because

unlike most dolls, who could remember nothing about their time in that distant place, Karolina's melancholy friends longed to see the children who had become their closest companions.

She would never have told them so, but she did not think their wishes could be granted. The human children who had owned them were kind to dolls at first, but eventually, they grew up, leaving their once-beloved playmates to gather dust and mildew in attics and beneath beds. When their wood and cloth and porcelain could sustain their souls no longer, they went back to the Land of the Dolls.

Karolina had never tried to remember who had owned her in the human world; it had done her friends no good. The sad dolls had learned to cry, and little sounded worse to Karolina than that. She had no desire to enter that other land full of boys and girls and imaginary games ever again.

One day, the rats did indeed come to the shoreline of Karolina's country. They overthrew the king and queen with their iron bayonets and sharp teeth and unleashed their own brand of terror. So with a crack on her cheek and her dress in tatters, Karolina fled into the deep, dark woods from the invaders and the pyres of flame they had built.

It was in the woods that she met a toy soldier named Fritz, and together with the help of a kind wind, Dogoda, she found she was destined to return to the human world after all.

CHAPTER 1



THE DOLLMAKER



Karolina awoke in her new world with a glass heart.

It felt as if both roses and their thorns grew within that heart, for it held all the happiness and sorrow she had ever experienced in the Land of the Dolls. When she moved, it rattled against the glossy wood of the panel in her chest.

Trembling, Karolina raised a hand to her face. It took only a single touch for her to realize that the crack that had raced up her cheek in the Land of the Dolls was gone. When she lowered her arm, her fingers were smudged with blush-pink paint that smelled fresh. The kind wind

had told her that someone in this human world had called out to her. So that person—whoever it was—must have been the one who had fixed her face and placed the glass heart inside her.

Karolina glanced around and realized that she had been set on top of a high table amid wood shavings and coils of ribbon. While she was not made of glass or porcelain, as some of her friends had been, she did not want to fall from her perch, so she stayed very still to avoid losing her balance. To her right was a huge shape like a mountain, though it was not as big as the ones in her country. A long, rough cloth had been draped over it. Karolina could not imagine what could be underneath it.

Across from the table, a large window looked out into the darkness, which was broken only by the faint yellow glow of streetlamps. They were not made of peppermint sticks, as the ones in the Land of the Dolls had been, but instead rose like dark, sturdy trees from the cobblestones. The world outside did not look inviting, but the room around her reminded Karolina of her cottage: warm and friendly. However, this shop—for it *was* a shop, she realized—was not full of ball gowns and jackets and scarves, as her cottage had been.

It was full of toys.

There was row upon row of rocking horses whose flanks had been painted with daisy chains and autumn leaves. There were plush animals of many different shapes and sizes on the shelves, their tiny thread mouths smiling.

And best of all, there were dolls everywhere. None of them had scratched faces or limbs scorched by fire. They all seemed at peace, ready to love and be loved.

They were *safe*.

These other toys weren't like Karolina, though. She did not see any of them walking along their shelves, and none of them greeted her. They weren't alive and had no hearts of their own, and Karolina knew as well as any doll that only a creature who possessed a heart could be truly alive.

But Karolina envied the silent toys a little; *her* glass heart had filled with gray dread. She was so alone, but if the kind wind was to be believed, someone was waiting for her. Where was this person?

The clatter of approaching footsteps made Karolina go rigid. A door at the back of the shop opened, and a man appeared. He had a red beard, as if the Morning Star had briefly touched it with her fingertips, and wore a pair of white pajamas. He rubbed his green eyes as he walked toward her, limping. Now that he was closer, Karolina saw that the stranger was neither a little boy nor an old man, but somewhere in between. Still, Karolina imagined that if he picked her up, she would stand only a little taller than his hand, which was speckled with the same pink paint that now coated Karolina's fingers.

He must be the person the wind had told her about, the one who had repaired her face and given her a new heart!

The man—the *Dollmaker*—sat down on the stool beside

Karolina, wringing his hands. She could see that his face was streaked with tears that looked fresh. They had turned the pale skin of his cheeks as red and angry as battle cries.

“The Great War was twenty years ago,” the Dollmaker said to himself. “It’s 1939. I’m home in Kraków. I’m *home*. The nightmares aren’t real.”

It hadn’t occurred to Karolina that there would be war in the human world too.

If the Dollmaker had been another toy, the right words to comfort him might have come to her, but she could not think of anything to say. He was so different from anyone Karolina had ever seen. Being able to show one’s pain with tears so openly seemed to her like a terrible magic trick, one that humans performed almost without knowing it.

His hands trembling, the Dollmaker removed the cloth from the mountain—revealing that it was no mountain at all. It was a grand dollhouse that stood three stories tall, the perfect size for Karolina. Her head would not scrape its ceilings, nor would she have to strain to reach the kitchen table or to open the wardrobe she saw in the high attic bedroom. The flower boxes in each window overflowed with cloth roses, and a sleek black cat sat on the railing of the second-floor balcony. Karolina particularly liked this touch; the cat would gobble up any rats who strayed near.

The Dollmaker set to work putting the finishing touches on the roof’s trim using a slim knife. His hand moved so

quickly that it was as if he could not have stopped even if he had wanted to. He carved a delicate, wavy design that was so smooth it reminded Karolina of cake frosting.

As he worked, the Dollmaker's tears stopped, and Karolina thought she understood why. Creating something always made *her* feel better. It was only when her hands were still that she could not fend off the fears that threatened to overtake her heart.

As she watched the Dollmaker, Karolina breathed in deeply. This world, this place . . . It smelled familiar, like dust and cinnamon and fields of yellow flowers. Had she been here before? There was no precise way to describe the strange feeling that had stolen over her, cutting her as deeply as the Dollmaker's knife would. But the more Karolina tried to grasp at that feeling, the more she felt that she was trying to catch a dream between her small hands.

Maybe the Dollmaker would be able to answer her questions.

Karolina took a step toward the dollhouse, trying to think of what to say. But in her haste, she tripped over the hem of her long red skirts and gasped loudly. Her arms wheeled at her sides as she struggled to regain her footing. She managed to right herself before she could tumble over.

This was *not* how she'd wanted to introduce herself, but it was too late to do anything else.

"Hello," Karolina said, and waved. "I'm Karolina."

The Dollmaker dropped the knife, and his face turned

whiter than smoke. “Oh no. It’s finally happened,” he said. “I’ve finally lost my mind.”

Karolina knew that the Dollmaker *hadn’t* lost his mind. “There’s nothing wrong with you,” she said.

The Dollmaker sprang from his stool, backing away. “But . . . but dolls can’t talk. You can’t be real. I must be tired—I’m seeing things.”

“You do look tired, but I promise, I’m just as real as you are,” said Karolina. In truth, it was almost as if the Dollmaker was the strange one, the sole human in the world of the toys, and she, simply a natural extension of the shop.

“I made you,” the Dollmaker said. “I can’t make something that comes to life.”

“Gardeners do it all the time with flowers,” said Karolina. “And you didn’t really make *me*. My soul already existed—you just called out to me, and the wind brought me to you. I thought you already knew that. You did make me this body, didn’t you?”

“Yes, but I don’t remember calling to anyone. I was trying to re-create a doll my mother had made, and . . .” The Dollmaker shook his head rapidly. “Oh, why am I talking to a figment of my imagination? This is all too much.” He slumped against the side of the table, the movement causing the hem of his pajama pants to hike up several inches. Karolina saw that his leg was made from the same pale wood *she* had been carved from.

“I didn’t think humans could be made out of wood,”



said Karolina, cocking her head to the side so that she could study the Dollmaker's leg from a different angle. He seemed so flustered that she thought he might not respond. But after a long moment filled only with the weighty ticking of a nearby clock, he did.

"Only this leg is made of wood," the Dollmaker said. "The rest of me is made of something a bit softer."

"Can I see your leg?" Karolina said.

The Dollmaker averted his gaze. "It isn't very . . . pretty," he said. "Most people don't like to look at it for long."

"Why?" asked Karolina.

"People don't like seeing broken things," the Dollmaker said.

"You're not broken," said Karolina, planting her hands on her hips. "I'm made of *all* wood, and you don't think I'm broken, do you?"

"No one has ever put it like that before," said the Dollmaker. He rolled his pants up to reveal four straps holding a wooden leg to what remained of his original leg, which was encased in a leather slip.

Apparently, things weren't as different here as Karolina had originally feared. "I like your leg," she said.

"You're one of the few who do," said the Dollmaker. Then he asked, "You're . . . you're not someone who was turned *into* a doll, are you? You're actually a living doll?" His hair had fallen over his temples, partially obscuring his eyes, and now he pushed it back impatiently.

FAMILY READING GUIDE

The Dollmaker of Kraków is the perfect family read, introducing the incredibly important and difficult topic of the Holocaust. It is a story about standing up for what is right and helping others. Now more than ever we could use that kind of real-life magic.

Questions to get your discussion started:

1. What parallels do you see between the Land of the Dolls and 1939 Kraków?
2. Discuss why the Dollmaker is so shaken in the beginning of the book when he references 1915 and “the Great War.” (p. 8)
3. What do you think the role of magic will be throughout the novel?
4. Since the Dollmaker is not a Jewish character, do you think that he will act as a bystander or upstander?

Definitions - from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

Bystander (*noun*) A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part.

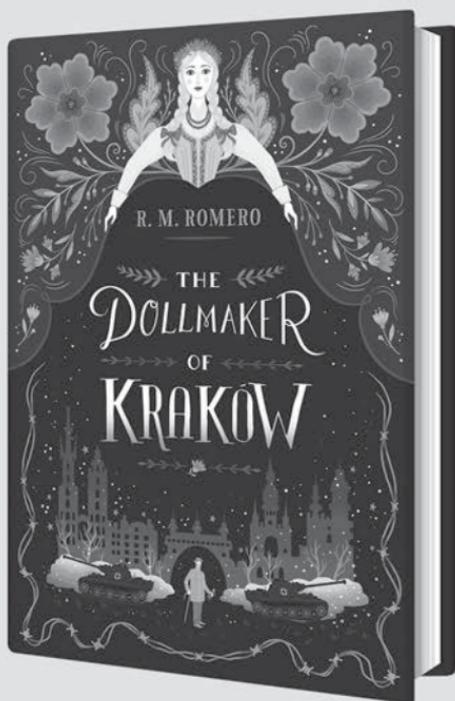
Upstander (*noun*) A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

5. Karolina is a very innocent and optimistic character; how do you think that will shape the development of the story?

If you enjoyed *The Dollmaker of Kraków*, here are some suggestions for further reading:

- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- *Milkweed* by Jerry Spinelli
- *The Winter Horses* by Philip Kerr
- *Hana's Suitcase* by Karen Levine

EVEN IN THE DARKEST TIMES,
THERE CAN BE HOPE.



For readers of **The Boy in the Striped Pajamas** and **Number the Stars** comes a lyrical and moving World War II novel about a magical doll and one man's choice to make a difference.

"Enchanting."

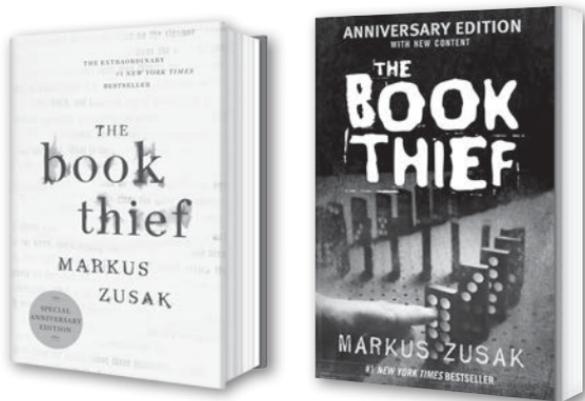
—BOOKLIST



Delacorte
Press

the book thief

Markus Zusak



ABOUT THE BOOK

Liesel Meminger is only nine years old when she is taken to live with a foster family, the Hubermanns, on Himmel Street in Molching, Germany, in the late 1930s. She arrives with few possessions, but among them is *The Grave Digger's Handbook*, a book that she stole from her brother's burial place. During the years that Liesel lives with the Hubermanns, Hitler becomes more powerful, life on Himmel Street becomes more fearful, and Liesel becomes a full-fledged book thief. She rescues books from Nazi book-burnings and steals from the library of the mayor. Liesel is illiterate when she steals her first book, but Hans Hubermann uses her prized books to teach her to read. This is a story of courage, friendship, love, survival, death, and grief. This is Liesel's life on Himmel Street, told from Death's point of view.

“It’s the kind of book that can be life-changing, because without ever denying the essential amorality and randomness of the natural order, *The Book Thief* offers us a believable hard-won hope.”

—*The New York Times*

THE
book
thief

ANNIVERSARY EDITION

MARKUS ZUSAK

illustrations by Trudy White



ALFRED A. KNOPF
New York

Keep Reading for a Sneak Peek. . . .

THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF

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PROLOGUE

a mountain range of rubble

in which our narrator introduces:
himself—the colors—and the book thief

DEATH AND CHOCOLATE

First the colors.

Then the humans.

That's usually how I see things.

Or at least, how I try.

*** * * HERE IS A SMALL FACT * * ***

You are going to die.

I am in all truthfulness attempting to be cheerful about this whole topic, though most people find themselves hindered in believing me, no matter my protestations. Please, trust me. I most definitely *can* be cheerful. I can be amiable. Agreeable. Affable. And that's only the A's. Just don't ask me to be nice. Nice has nothing to do with me.

*** * * REACTION TO THE * * ***

AFOREMENTIONED FACT

Does this worry you?

I urge you — don't be afraid.

I'm nothing if not fair.

—Of course, an introduction.

A beginning.

Where are my manners?

I could introduce myself properly, but it's not really necessary. You will know me well enough and soon enough, depending on a diverse range of variables. It suffices to say that at some point in time, I will be standing over you, as genially as possible. Your soul will be in my arms. A color will be perched on my shoulder. I will carry you gently away.

At that moment, you will be lying there (I rarely find people standing up). You will be caked in your own body. There might be a discovery; a scream will dribble down the air. The only sound I'll hear after that will be my own breathing, and the sound of the smell, of my footsteps.

The question is, what color will everything be at that moment when I come for you? What will the sky be saying?

Personally, I like a chocolate-colored sky. Dark, dark chocolate. People say it suits me. I do, however, try to enjoy every color I see—the whole spectrum. A billion or so flavors, none of them quite the same, and a sky to slowly suck on. It takes the edge off the stress. It helps me relax.

* * * A SMALL THEORY * * *

People observe the colors of a day only at its beginnings and ends, but to me it's quite clear that a day merges through a multitude of shades and intonations, with each passing moment. A single *hour* can consist of thousands of different colors. Waxy yellows, cloud-spat blues. Murky darknesses.
In my line of work, I make it a point to notice them.

As I've been alluding to, my one saving grace is distraction. It keeps me sane. It helps me cope, considering the length of time I've been

performing this job. The trouble is, who could ever replace me? Who could step in while I take a break in your stock-standard resort-style vacation destination, whether it be tropical or of the ski trip variety? The answer, of course, is nobody, which has prompted me to make a conscious, deliberate decision—to make distraction my vacation. Needless to say, I vacation in increments. In colors.

Still, it's possible that you might be asking, why does he even need a vacation? What does he need distraction *from*?

Which brings me to my next point.

It's the leftover humans.

The survivors.

They're the ones I can't stand to look at, although on many occasions I still fail. I deliberately seek out the colors to keep my mind off them, but now and then, I witness the ones who are left behind, crumbling among the jigsaw puzzle of realization, despair, and surprise. They have punctured hearts. They have beaten lungs.

Which in turn brings me to the subject I am telling you about tonight, or today, or whatever the hour and color. It's the story of one of those perpetual survivors—an expert at being left behind.

It's just a small story really, about, among other things:

- * A girl
- * Some words
- * An accordionist
- * Some fanatical Germans
- * A Jewish fist fighter
- * And quite a lot of thievery

I saw the book thief three times.

BESIDE THE RAILWAY LINE

First up is something white. Of the blinding kind.

Some of you are most likely thinking that white is not really a color and all of that tired sort of nonsense. Well, I'm here to tell you that it is. White is without question a color, and personally, I don't think you want to argue with me.

*** * * A REASSURING ANNOUNCEMENT * * ***

Please, be calm, despite that previous threat.

I am all bluster—

I am not violent.

I am not malicious.

I am a result.

Yes, it was white.

It felt as though the whole globe was dressed in snow. Like it had pulled it on, the way you pull on a sweater. Next to the train line, footprints were sunken to their shins. Trees wore blankets of ice.

As you might expect, someone had died.

• • •

They couldn't just leave him on the ground. For now, it wasn't such a problem, but very soon, the track ahead would be cleared and the train would need to move on.

There were two guards.

There was one mother and her daughter.

One corpse.

The mother, the girl, and the corpse remained stubborn and silent.

“Well, what else do you want me to do?”

The guards were tall and short. The tall one always spoke first, though he was not in charge. He looked at the smaller, rounder one. The one with the juicy red face.

“Well,” was the response, “we can't just leave them like this, can we?”

The tall one was losing patience. “Why not?”

And the smaller one damn near exploded. He looked up at the tall one's chin and cried, “*Spinnst du?! Are you stupid?!* ” The abhorrence on his cheeks was growing thicker by the moment. His skin widened. “Come on,” he said, traipsing over the snow. “We'll carry all three of them back on if we have to. We'll notify the next stop.”

As for me, I had already made the most elementary of mistakes. I can't explain to you the severity of my self-disappointment. Originally, I'd done everything right:

I studied the blinding, white-snow sky who stood at the window of the moving train. I practically *inhaled* it, but still, I wavered. I buckled—I became interested. In the girl. Curiosity got the better of me, and I resigned myself to stay as long as my schedule allowed, and I watched.

Twenty-three minutes later, when the train was stopped, I climbed out with them.

A small soul was in my arms.

I stood a little to the right.

The dynamic train guard duo made their way back to the mother, the girl, and the small male corpse. I clearly remember that my breath was loud that day. I'm surprised the guards didn't notice me as they walked by. The world was sagging now, under the weight of all that snow.

Perhaps ten meters to my left, the pale, empty-stomached girl was standing, frost-stricken.

Her mouth jittered.

Her cold arms were folded.

Tears were frozen to the book thief's face.

THE ECLIPSE

Next is a signature black, to show the poles of my versatility, if you like. It was the darkest moment before the dawn.

This time, I had come for a man of perhaps twenty-four years of age. It was a beautiful thing in some ways. The plane was still coughing. Smoke was leaking from both its lungs.

When it crashed, three deep gashes were made in the earth. Its wings were now sawn-off arms. No more flapping. Not for this metallic little bird.

* * * SOME OTHER SMALL FACTS * * *

Sometimes I arrive too early.
I rush,
and some people cling longer
to life than expected.

After a small collection of minutes, the smoke exhausted itself. There was nothing left to give.

A boy arrived first, with cluttered breath and what appeared to be a toolbox. With great trepidation, he approached the cockpit and watched the pilot, gauging if he was alive, at which point, he still was. The book thief arrived perhaps thirty seconds later.

Years had passed, but I recognized her.

She was panting.

From the toolbox, the boy took out, of all things, a teddy bear.

He reached in through the torn windshield and placed it on the pilot's chest. The smiling bear sat huddled among the crowded wreckage of the man and the blood. A few minutes later, I took my chance. The time was right.

I walked in, loosened his soul, and carried it gently away.

All that was left was the body, the dwindling smell of smoke, and the smiling teddy bear.

As the crowd arrived in full, things, of course, had changed. The horizon was beginning to charcoal. What was left of the blackness above was nothing now but a scribble, and disappearing fast.

The man, in comparison, was the color of bone. Skeleton-colored skin. A ruffled uniform. His eyes were cold and brown—like coffee stains—and the last scrawl from above formed what, to me, appeared an odd, yet familiar, shape. A signature.

The crowd did what crowds do.

As I made my way through, each person stood and played with the quietness of it. It was a small concoction of disjointed hand movements, muffled sentences, and mute, self-conscious turns.

When I glanced back at the plane, the pilot's open mouth appeared to be smiling.

A final dirty joke.

Another human punch line.

He remained shrouded in his uniform as the graying light arm-wrestled the sky. As with many of the others, when I began my journey away, there seemed a quick shadow again, a final moment of eclipse—the recognition of another soul gone.

You see, to me, for just a moment, despite all of the colors that touch and grapple with what I see in this world, I will often catch an eclipse when a human dies.

I've seen millions of them.

I've seen more eclipses than I care to remember.

THE BOOK THIEF

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Discuss the symbolism of Death as the omniscient narrator of the novel. What are Death's feelings for each victim? Describe Death's attempt to resist Liesel. Death states, "I'm always finding humans at their best and worst. I see their ugly and their beauty, and I wonder how the same thing can be both." (p. 491) What is ugly and beautiful about Liesel, Rosa, and Hans Hubermann, Max Vandenburg, Rudy Steiner, and Mrs. Hermann? Why is Death haunted by humans?
- What is ironic about Liesel's obsession with stealing books? Discuss other uses of irony in the novel.
- *The Grave Digger's Handbook* is the first book Liesel steals. Why did she take the book? What is significant about the titles of the books she steals? Discuss why she hides *The Grave Digger's Handbook* under her mattress. Describe Hans Hubermann's reaction when he discovers the book. What does the act of book thievery teach Liesel about life and death? Explain Rudy's reaction when he discovers that Liesel is a book thief. How does stealing books from the mayor's house lead to a friendship with the mayor's wife? Explain how Liesel's own attempt to write a book saves her life.
- Liesel believes that Hans Hubermann's eyes show kindness, and from the beginning she feels closer to him than to Rosa Hubermann. How does Hans gain Liesel's love and trust? Debate whether Liesel is a substitute for Hans's children, who have strayed from the family. Why is it so difficult for Rosa to demonstrate the same warmth toward Liesel? Discuss how Liesel's relationship with Rosa changes by the end of the novel.
- Abandonment is a central theme in the novel. The reader knows that Liesel feels abandoned by her mother and by the death of her brother. How does she equate love with abandonment? At what point does she understand why she was abandoned by her mother? Who else abandons Liesel in the novel? Debate whether she was abandoned by circumstance or by the heart.

- Guilt is another recurring theme in the novel. Hans Hubermann's life was spared in France during World War I, and Erik Vandenburg's life was taken. Explain why Hans feels guilty about Erik's death. Guilt is a powerful emotion that may cause a person to become unhappy and despondent. Discuss how Hans channels his guilt into helping others. Explain Max Vandenburg's thought, "Living was living. The price was guilt and shame." (p. 208) Why does he feel guilt and shame?
- Compare and contrast the lives of Liesel and Max Vandenburg. How does Max's life give Liesel purpose? At what point do Liesel and Max become friends? Max gives Liesel a story called "The Standover Man" for her birthday. What is the significance of this story?
- Death says that Liesel was a girl "with a mountain to climb." (p. 86) What is her mountain? Who are her climbing partners? What is her greatest obstacle? At what point does she reach the summit of her mountain? Describe her descent. What does she discover at the foot of her mountain?
- Hans Junior, a Nazi soldier, calls his dad a coward because he doesn't belong to the Nazi Party. He feels that you are either for Hitler or against him. How does it take courage to oppose Hitler? There isn't one coward in the Hubermann household. Discuss how they demonstrate courage throughout the novel.
- Describe Liesel's friendship with Rudy. How does their friendship change and grow throughout the novel? Death says that Rudy doesn't offer his friendship "for free." (p. 51) What does Rudy want from Liesel? Discuss Death's statement, "The only thing worse than a boy who hates you [is] a boy who loves you." (p. 52) Why is it difficult for Liesel to love Rudy? Discuss why Liesel tells Mr. Steiner that she kissed Rudy's dead body.
- How does Zusak use the literary device of foreshadowing to pull the reader into the story?
- Liesel Meminger lived to be an old woman. Death says that he would like to tell the book thief about beauty and brutality, but those are things that she had lived. How does her life represent beauty in the wake of brutality? Discuss how Zusak's poetic writing style enhances the beauty of Liesel's story.

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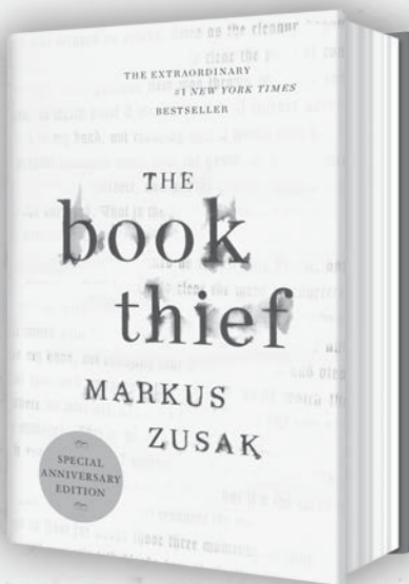
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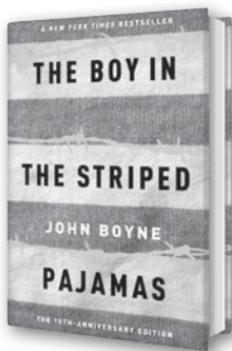
#TheBookThief



Alfred A. Knopf

the boy in the striped pajamas

John Boyne



ABOUT THE BOOK

Bruno is only nine years old when his father, a commandant in Hitler's army, is transferred from Berlin to Auschwitz during the Holocaust. The house at "Out-With," as Bruno calls it, is small, dark, and strange. He spends long days gazing out the window of his new bedroom, where he notices people dressed in striped pajamas and rows of barracks surrounded by a barbed wire fence. Bored and lonely, and not really understanding the circumstance of his new existence, Bruno sets out to explore the area and discovers Shmuel, a very thin Jewish boy who lives on the other side of the fence. An unlikely friendship develops between the two boys, but when Bruno learns that his mother plans to take her children back to Berlin, he makes a last effort to explore the forbidden territory where the boy in the striped pajamas lives.

"Powerful and unsettling. . . . As memorable
an introduction to the subject as
The Diary of Anne Frank."

—USA Today

The BOY
in the
STRIPED
PAJAMAS

A fable by

JOHN BOYNE

Illustrated by

OLIVER JEFFERS

ALFRED A. KNOPF  New York

Keep Reading for a Sneak Peek. . . .

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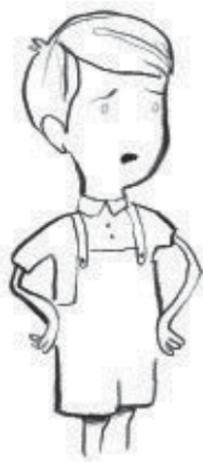


1

Bruno Makes a Discovery

One afternoon, when Bruno came home from school, he was surprised to find Maria, the family's maid – who always kept her head bowed and never looked up from the carpet – standing in his bedroom, pulling all his belongings out of the wardrobe and packing them in four large wooden crates, even the things he'd hidden at the back that belonged to him and were nobody else's business.

‘What are you doing?’ he asked in as polite a tone as he could muster, for although he wasn't happy to come



The BOY in the STRIPED PAJAMAS

home and find someone going through his possessions, his mother had always told him that he was to treat Maria respectfully and not just imitate the way Father spoke to her. 'You take your hands off my things.'

Maria shook her head and pointed towards the staircase behind him, where Bruno's mother had just appeared. She was a tall woman with long red hair that she bundled into a sort of net behind her head, and she was twisting her hands together nervously as if there was something she didn't want to have to say or something she didn't want to have to believe.

'Mother,' said Bruno, marching towards her, 'what's going on? Why is Maria going through my things?'

'She's packing them,' explained Mother.

'Packing them?' he asked, running quickly through the events of the previous few days to consider whether he'd been particularly naughty or had used those words out loud that he wasn't allowed to use and was being sent away because of it. He couldn't think of anything though. In fact over the last few days he had behaved in

JOHN BOYNE

a perfectly decent manner to everyone and couldn't remember causing any chaos at all. 'Why?' he asked then. 'What have I done?'

Mother had walked into her own bedroom by then but Lars, the butler, was in there, packing her things too. She sighed and threw her hands in the air in frustration before marching back to the staircase, followed by Bruno, who wasn't going to let the matter drop without an explanation.

'Mother,' he insisted. 'What's going on? Are we moving?'

'Come downstairs with me,' said Mother, leading the way towards the large dining room where the Fury had been to dinner the week before. 'We'll talk down there.'

Bruno ran downstairs and even passed her out on the staircase so that he was waiting in the dining room when she arrived. He looked at her without saying anything for a moment and thought to himself that she couldn't have applied her make-up correctly that morning because the rims of her eyes were more red

The BOY in the STRIPED PAJAMAS

than usual, like his own after he'd been causing chaos and got into trouble and ended up crying.

'Now, you don't have to worry, Bruno,' said Mother, sitting down in the chair where the beautiful blonde woman who had come to dinner with the Fury had sat and waved at him when Father closed the doors. 'In fact if anything it's going to be a great adventure.'

'What is?' he asked. 'Am I being sent away?'

'No, not just you,' she said, looking as if she might smile for a moment but thinking better of it. 'We all are. Your father and I, Gretel and you. All four of us.'

Bruno thought about this and frowned. He wasn't particularly bothered if Gretel was being sent away because she was a Hopeless Case and caused nothing but trouble for him. But it seemed a little unfair that they all had to go with her.

'But where?' he asked. 'Where are we going exactly? Why can't we stay here?'

'Your father's job,' explained Mother. 'You know how important it is, don't you?'

JOHN BOYNE

‘Yes, of course,’ said Bruno, nodding his head, because there were always so many visitors to the house – men in fantastic uniforms, women with typewriters that he had to keep his mucky hands off – and they were always very polite to Father and told each other that he was a man to watch and that the Fury had big things in mind for him.

‘Well, sometimes when someone is very important,’ continued Mother, ‘the man who employs him asks him to go somewhere else because there’s a very special job that needs doing there.’

‘What kind of job?’ asked Bruno, because if he was honest with himself – which he always tried to be – he wasn’t entirely sure what job Father did.

In school they had talked about their fathers one day and Karl had said that his father was a greengrocer, which Bruno knew to be true because he ran the greengrocer’s shop in the centre of town. And Daniel had said that his father was a teacher, which Bruno knew to be true because he taught the big boys who it was always wise to steer clear of. And Martin had

The BOY in the STRIPED PAJAMAS

said that his father was a chef, which Bruno knew to be true because he sometimes collected Martin from school and when he did he always wore a white smock and a tartan apron, as if he'd just stepped out of his kitchen.

But when they asked Bruno what his father did he opened his mouth to tell them, then realized that he didn't know himself. All he could say was that his father was a man to watch and that the Fury had big things in mind for him. Oh, and that he had a fantastic uniform too.

'It's a very important job,' said Mother, hesitating for a moment. 'A job that needs a very special man to do it. You can understand that, can't you?'

'And we all have to go too?' asked Bruno.

'Of course we do,' said Mother. 'You wouldn't want Father to go to his new job on his own and be lonely there, would you?'

'I suppose not,' said Bruno.

'Father would miss us all terribly if we weren't with him,' she added.

JOHN BOYNE

‘Who would he miss the most?’ asked Bruno. ‘Me or Gretel?’

‘He would miss you both equally,’ said Mother, for she was a great believer in not playing favourites, which Bruno respected, especially since he knew that he was her favourite really.

‘But what about our house?’ asked Bruno. ‘Who’s going to take care of it while we’re gone?’

Mother sighed and looked around the room as if she might never see it again. It was a very beautiful house and had five floors in total, if you included the basement, where Cook made all the food and Maria and Lars sat at the table arguing with each other and calling each other names that you weren’t supposed to use. And if you added in the little room at the top of the house with the slanted windows where Bruno could see right across Berlin if he stood up on his tiptoes and held onto the frame tightly.

‘We have to close up the house for now,’ said Mother. ‘But we’ll come back to it someday.’

The BOY in the STRIPED PAJAMAS

‘And what about Cook?’ asked Bruno. ‘And Lars? And Maria? Are they not going to live in it?’

‘They’re coming with us,’ explained Mother. ‘But that’s enough questions for now. Maybe you should go upstairs and help Maria with your packing.’

Bruno stood up from the seat but didn’t go anywhere. There were just a few more questions he needed to put to her before he could allow the matter to be settled.

‘And how far away is it?’ he asked. ‘The new job, I mean. Is it further than a mile away?’

‘Oh my,’ said Mother with a laugh, although it was a strange kind of laugh because she didn’t look happy and turned away from Bruno as if she didn’t want him to see her face. ‘Yes, Bruno,’ she said. ‘It’s more than a mile away. Quite a lot more than that, in fact.’

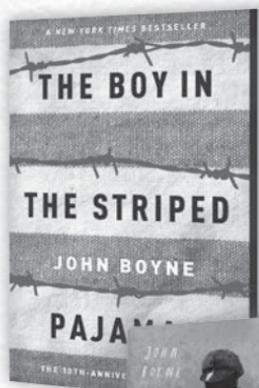
Bruno’s eyes opened wide and his mouth made the shape of an O. He felt his arms stretching out at his sides like they did whenever something surprised him. ‘You don’t mean we’re leaving Berlin?’ he asked, gasping for air as he got the words out.

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Bruno's older sister Gretel is twelve, the proper age for membership in the League of Young Girls, a branch of Hitler's Youth Organization. Why do you think she is not a member, especially since her father is a high-ranking officer in Hitler's army?
2. Describe Bruno's reaction when he first sees the people in the striped pajamas. What does Gretel mean when she says, "Something about the way [Bruno] was watching made her feel suddenly nervous"? (p. 28) How does this statement foreshadow Bruno's ultimate demise?
3. Bruno asks his father about the people outside their house at Auschwitz. His father answers, "They're not people at all, Bruno." (p. 53) Discuss the horror of this attitude. How does his father's statement make Bruno more curious about Out-With?
4. Explain what Bruno's mother means when she says, "We don't have the luxury of thinking." (p. 13) Identify scenes from the novel indicating that Bruno's mother isn't happy about their life at Out-With. Debate whether she is unhappy being away from Berlin, or whether she is angry about her husband's position. How does Bruno's grandmother react to her son's military role?
5. When Bruno and his family board the train for Auschwitz, he notices an overcrowded train headed in the same direction. How does he later make the connection between Shmuel and that train? How are both trains symbolic of each boy's final journey?
6. Bruno issues a protest about leaving Berlin. His father responds, "Do you think that I would have made such a success of my life if I hadn't learned when to argue and when to keep my mouth shut and follow orders?" (p. 49) What question might Bruno's father ask at the end of the novel?
7. A pun is most often seen as humorous. But in this novel, the narrator uses dark or solemn puns like Out-With and Fury to convey certain meanings. Bruno is simply mispronouncing the real words, but the author is clearly asking the reader to consider a double meaning to these words. Discuss the use of this wordplay as a literary device. What is the narrator trying to convey to the reader? How do these words further communicate the horror of the situation?
8. When Bruno dresses in the filthy striped pajamas, he remembers something his grandmother once said. "You wear the right outfit and you feel like the person you're pretending to be." (p. 205) How is this true for Bruno? What about his father? What does this statement contribute to the story's overall meaning?
9. Discuss the moral or message of the novel. What new insights and understandings does John Boyne want the reader to gain from reading this story?

Praise for
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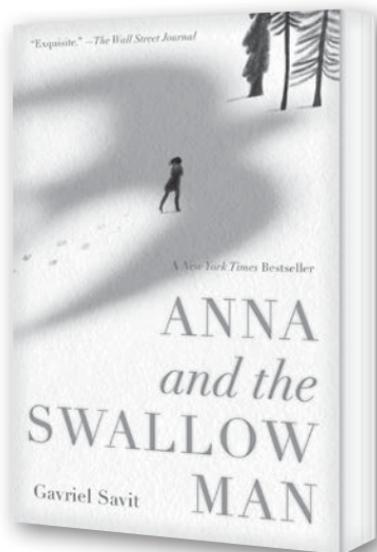
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anna and the swallow man

Gavriel Savit



ABOUT THE BOOK

Kraków, 1939. A million marching soldiers and a thousand barking dogs. This is no place to grow up. Anna Łania is just seven years old when the Germans take her father, a linguistics professor, during their purge of intellectuals in Poland. She's alone. And then Anna meets the Swallow Man. He is a mystery, strange and tall, a skilled deceiver with more than a little magic up his sleeve. And when the soldiers in the streets look at him, they see what he wants them to see. The Swallow Man is not Anna's father—she knows that very well—but she also knows that, like her father, he's in danger of being taken. And like her father, he has a gift for languages: Polish, Russian, German, Yiddish, even Bird. When he summons a bright, beautiful swallow down to his hand to stop her from crying, Anna is entranced. She follows him into the wilderness. Over the course of their travels together, Anna and the Swallow Man will dodge bombs, tame soldiers, and even, despite their better judgment, make a friend. But in a world gone mad, everything can prove dangerous. Even the Swallow Man.

“[A] splendid debut novel. . . . This is masterly storytelling.”

—*The New York Times*

Anna and the Swallow Man



Gavriel Savit

#AnnaAndTheSwallowMan



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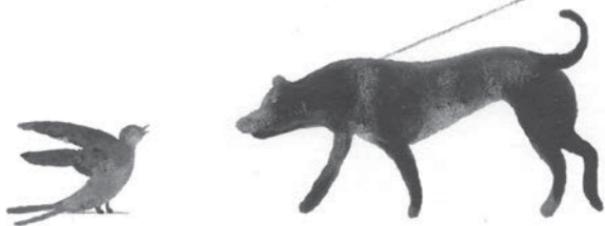
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Follow the Leader

Anna had never been outside of Kraków, but she had accompanied her father to many of the public gardens of the city before the pall of war had descended, and when, far off ahead of her, she saw the tall stranger reach the hills, she thought with a thrill that he was taking her into the grandest park she had ever seen.

It had not been difficult for Anna to track the thin man through the streets in the city center. He stood at least a head above most everyone he passed, and even from far behind she had no trouble locating the head that sprouted up beyond all the others, so long as she did not allow it to escape around a corner.

What was difficult was staying out of sight, as the thin man had instructed. There are two kinds of children in wartime streets—those who provoke passing adults to turn their heads toward their plight, and those who provoke them to turn away. Anna was, if inconveniently under the present circumstances,

fortunate enough to be one of the former; those children who fall into the latter camp are, more often than not, far beyond help.

Nonetheless, Anna very much wanted to avoid attention, and it was not long before she discovered the trick of doing so. A well-fed little girl in a pretty red-and-white dress immediately raises alarm if her face is covered with concern and effort, if she strains to see what is far ahead of her, if she moves only in fits and starts—and this was precisely what her present labor required her to do. At one intersection, though, she felt certain she had seen Monsieur Bouchard, her father's old French friend, in the street ahead, and suddenly, impulsively, abandoning all effort of following the tall stranger, she smiled and ran gleefully toward the familiar man.

In the end he was not Monsieur Bouchard, but the effect of this burst of glee was immediately apparent to her. When she passed through the street hesitantly and with concern, the grown-ups who saw her seemed to latch on to her distress, trying to carry it off with them despite themselves, and the strain of the effort would cause a kind of unwilling connection between the adult and the child until they were out of one another's sight. For the most part Anna felt certain that their intentions were good, but it seemed only a matter of time before someone stopped her, and then she did not know what might happen.

On the other hand, when she ran through the street with a smile of anticipation, passing adults still took notice, but they

did not try to carry off her joy with them—instead, it engendered a kindred kind of joy inside of them, and well satisfied with this feeling, particularly in the eternally threatening environment of a military occupation, they continued on their way without giving her a moment's thought.

It was with joy, then, and not concern, that she followed the thin man past the guards at the outskirts of the city—they didn't give her a second glance—and by the time Anna was alone in the twilit hills, this effort of counterfeiting happiness had brought to bear a true sort of excitement within her.

The problem was that the thin man's legs were very long, and every quick stride of his required three or four of her own to match its progress. Now that they were out of the city and out of the sight of its thousand shifting denizens, Anna thought it time for the two of them to reunite; after all, she had fulfilled the task the tall man had set for her, avoiding attention until there seemed to be none left, and now she very much wanted the security of company in the growing dark.

The sun had been gone beyond the horizon for many minutes when the thin man stopped short in the middle of the packed earth path he had been following. His stillness was so sharp and abrupt that Anna herself instinctively froze for a moment before realizing that this was her chance to make up ground.

It was in that moment of stillness that she realized just how cold it had become. The wind whipped around her as she made her way down the hill toward the tall man, but just when she

thought she was drawing near enough to call out to him, he turned and, with redoubled speed, lit out into the dark, open pasture to his right.

Without thought Anna followed him.

It was only when she looked over her shoulder, back toward the road, that she saw the bobbing, jostling motion of the beams of flashlights, and heard the clamoring conversation between whoever it was that had been coming down the road.

“Stay out of sight,” he had said.

It had been difficult for Anna to keep pace with the thin man before. Now it seemed nearly impossible. He was making his way into the wide fields off the road as quickly and quietly as he could, and as the darkness gathered in around him, Anna began to worry that she would lose sight of him. She broke into a trot, and then into a run, and it seemed to her ages and ages that she ran into the uncharted darkness after the thin stranger.

Before she knew it, the darkness was deep and thick, and she could scarcely see who or what was moving down in the fields ahead of her. She wanted to call out, felt the growing throb of panic in the idea that she might have found a way to make herself yet more alone than she had been before, but something in the notion of raising her voice felt forbidden by the very air that surrounded this tall man. His entire existence was like a giant, silent forefinger raised to the lips of the universe.

Hush.

But then she saw it—approaching the thin man in the dark, cutting in quickly from some deeper corner of the pasture, in front of her but behind him—the soft, reflected flicker of a

shielded lantern. The flattened glow of the flame was vague, but in the field of sudden night, it shone forth to her eye like a beacon, and she clearly saw the figure of a broad, tight man following after the taut leash of a great dog.

Anna was a young girl of uncommon attention, but it had taken no particular skill to learn, in the Kraków from which she had lately come, what a dog at the end of a taut lead meant.

There was no hesitation in Anna's voice. "Hey!" she called, and again, "Hey!"

Three heads turned swiftly to face her. The tall stranger's response was fluid, nearly seamless, as if Anna and he had rehearsed it.

"Oh!" said the thin man on a breath of unspeakable relief, and dropping the bag that he carried, he ran as quickly as he could to where Anna was standing.

"Thank God," he said. "Are you all right?"

Anna was going to speak, but the thin man smoothed past any moment in which she might've, a swift torrent of chastisement and relieved affection pouring forth from him in "What were you thinkings" and "You had me so worried."

With one long hand he gathered Anna in close to his side. With the other he swiftly, deftly pulled the spectacles from his face, depositing them in an inner pocket of his coat, which he closed up to the neck in order to hide the well-tailored suit beneath its wide, upturned lapels.

The broad man and his dog stood where the thin man had dropped his bag, and Anna was now shepherded gently back toward them. She was overwhelmed in the torrent of attention,

so much so that when the thin man asked her a direct question, she didn't think to respond.

He stopped and asked again.

"Sweetie—I said, do you promise to be more careful?"

Anna frowned. She had been very careful. It had been the thin man who had not seen the approach of the dog and lantern man. But then again, he had told her to stay out of sight, and she'd very deliberately called attention to herself. Perhaps this was what he meant. She hated breaking the rules and doing the wrong thing, and even this peculiar kind of transgression, of which she had little understanding, engendered real contrition in her.

Anna nodded ruefully. "Yes," she said. "I promise."

The thin man sighed heavily and turned a conspiratorial gaze to the man behind the lantern, as if to say, *Why do children never learn?*

"This must be your land, hm? I'm sorry to have disturbed you. Sweetie, apologize to the man."

By now Anna had admitted her wrongdoing, and in this state no child will fail to apologize, at the very least half-heartedly.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Thank you," said the thin man. "Ah! We're much later than we said. Grandma will be worried. You have to be more careful!"

Anna couldn't for the life of her think of whom the thin man might be talking about. None of her grandparents were even still alive.

Follow the Leader

There was no time for questions, though. With fluent but unhurried speech, the thin man turned again to the man behind the lantern and spoke.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “I’m all turned around. Can you point me back to the road?”

There was sudden silence.

This was the first moment in which the man of the dog and lantern had been required, even allowed, to speak.

The thin man’s question hung in the air.

Anna did not breathe.

Finally the broad man lifted his arm and gestured with the lantern. “That way,” he said in rough, rolling Polish. “Ten minutes’ walk.”

The thin man smiled. “Thank you,” he said, and gathering Anna in close, he turned and, with deliberate steps, led her toward the road.

Anna did not know what she’d expected, but it had not been this. They walked silently, the two of them, and the air between them was heavy and hard. Had she been wrong to alert the thin man of the coming danger? Should she have stayed farther out of sight? For the first time since he had handed her the cookie in Kraków, she found herself wondering if, in fact, the tall man had meant for her to follow him in the first place.

But all the same, she had felt real shelter when he had gathered her into his side, felt real concern when he’d run across the field to her. The feeling that she recognized now in the air—this was not a simple, monolithic sense of adult displeasure.

This was a fraught thing—divided, thick with cross-woven and conflicting kinds of worry. Something was going on, something inside the tall stranger, hidden just behind the curtain.

This, Anna knew with perfect, intuitive certainty. She was a child.

At home in Kraków, Anna had developed a habit of understanding people by comparing them to those with whom she was already acquainted—as if she were translating the unfamiliar phrase of each new human being using her full, multilingual range of vocabulary. Frequently when, in the presence of her father, she had been introduced to new people, she had found herself looking forward to a private moment in which she might tell him of whom else this new person was composed:

“Like Mrs. Niemczyk if she had never gotten old, and was not mean.”

Or:

“Like Professor Dubrovich if he spoke Madame Barsamian’s Polish and had the goofiness of Monsieur Bouchard.”

Sometimes, in the course of these descriptions, Anna had hit upon some distinct quality or attribute—the aforementioned goofiness had been one—that was shared amongst many people, and her father had named it for her.

Goofiness.

Resilience.

Assurance.

Deference.

Pride.

Follow the Leader

Now, trying to understand the thin man, Anna thought that perhaps she had discovered a new example of such a quality.

Of course, the thin man was like her father in his facility with language. That was obvious. But that was not what Anna meant when she thought of daddiness.

Any child who plays out and about in the world quickly learns to distinguish between the grown-ups who have learned to deal with children and those who can be exploited for their lack of such experience—some adult authority is a well-supported fortification, and some is a flimsy, often over-elaborate, unbacked facade. It is a child's business to test these edifices, and Anna had learned as well as any to recognize both kinds.

This quality of daddiness was in part composed, in Anna's mind, of the more experienced sense of authority—but only in part. There was something else, too, something that she struggled to describe to herself, something that made her feel the kind of thorough safety and security that frequently, at the end of a childhood, ceases ever to have existed. This thing was the better half of daddiness. Not every man is in possession of much talent in this area, just as many men cannot sing in tune or compellingly depict a sunset.

But the thin man had many talents.

Not a word had yet been spoken when they reached the road. The thin man had not looked down at Anna once as they walked, but this did not mean that he wasn't watching her.

Anna was well prepared to start back along the dirt track once they found it, but this was not the thin man's intention,

and without a word of explanation, he continued on past the path, bending his course to head for a thick stand of trees on the horizon. She was about to ask him where they were going when he broke the silence.

“Thank you,” he said. “For warning me.”

Anna was terribly confused by this. Was he grateful for what she had done, or angry? She didn’t understand. She did, however, know that it was impolite not to answer when someone said thank you.

“You’re welcome,” she said with as much assurance as she could muster.

The thin man sighed and said, “You did well.”

He had slowed his gait significantly out of deference to the difference in their strides, but Anna still had to take two steps to every one of his, and now the only sound that broke the silence of the night was the rapid subdivision in the grass of his footfalls by hers.

Eventually he spoke again. “Listen very closely,” he said, slowly releasing another sigh. “The world as it exists is a very, very dangerous place.” His voice had turned cold and measured.

Anna was unprepared for the sudden fright and sadness that this statement brought about in her. Usually when adults spoke of danger in her presence, they were quick to assure her that everything would be all right, that she would be safe. The thin man did none of this, and his omission rang out as true in the night as his words had.

Everything he said, even—perhaps especially—the things he left out, seemed to carry the reliable weight of truth.

Anna and the Swallow Man

Discussion Questions

1. As the novel opens and Anna Łania is introduced, readers learn that “there were several things that she did not know” (p. 1) about her world. How does this set the stage for the story?
2. Readers immediately learn that her father, along with other professional colleagues, were rounded up and sent to prison and then to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In your opinion, what’s the benefit of her initial ignorance about the fate of her father?
3. Consider the novel’s cover. In what ways is the image symbolic of the events that transpire throughout the book?
4. Early in the novel, Anna describes what adults called “being a good girl.” (p. 14) Do you agree with their assessment? In your opinion, what makes that behavior problematic?
5. When Anna first encounters the Swallow Man, he is wearing his brown wool three-piece suit and carrying his old monogrammed physician’s bag. What does his appearance initially indicate about him? Throughout the course of the novel, what lessons does Anna learn about the role attire can play in redefining oneself? How does this attention to detail allow them to hide in plain sight?
6. The Swallow Man is described as “frightening,” but also “bright,” “exciting,” “potent,” and “good.” (p. 37) Would you agree with this assessment of his character? Why or why not?
7. Discuss the character traits that allow the Swallow Man and Anna to persevere. How are these characters similar to each other? In what ways are they different? What traits do you have that are shared by either or both of them?
8. What are some of the specific ways that the Swallow Man and Anna fight back against the Nazis? To what extent are these acts of resistance effective?
9. After she calls him “Solomon,” the Swallow Man tells Anna, “That name isn’t safe. No name is. Names are ways for people to





find us.” (P. 45) Do you believe the Swallow Man is correct? If so, in what ways? In your opinion, do names have power? Why does Anna feel so conflicted about giving up her identity?

10. Compare and contrast the Swallow Man and Reb Hirschl. How does their sense of their realities capture the differences in their core belief systems? What is it that attracts Anna to each of them?
11. Throughout the novel, the Swallow Man uses his passion for birds to remain connected to the natural world. Do you see this behavior as a form of resistance to the Nazi occupation of Poland and Eastern Europe? If so, how?
12. Why do you think the Swallow Man chose to help save Anna’s life? What does she give to him in return? Do you believe the actions of a single person can make a difference? Why or why not?
13. The Swallow Man tells Reb Hirschl, “There are things about me that you don’t know. It is imperative they not find me, because if they do, they will take me, and if they have me, the entire world will become a taker of life, as you put it.” (P. 171) Why does the Swallow Man refuse to be an “instrument of death”? How

does this conversation between the two men foreshadow events to come?

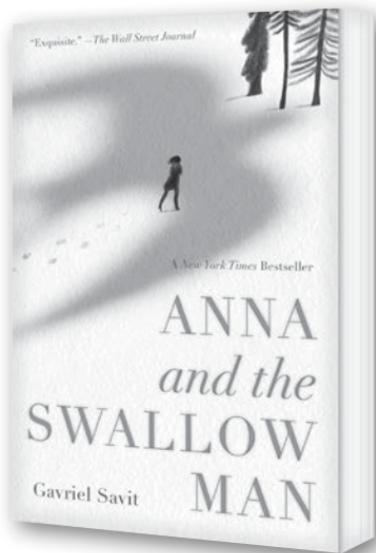
14. How does the absence of the Swallow Man’s medication change him? Do you think Anna makes the right decision regarding the pharmacist? In the end, do you believe the Swallow Man does the same for her? Why or why not?
15. The Swallow Man tells Anna, “Questions, Anna—questions are far more valuable than answers, and they do much less blowing up in your face as well. If you continue to seek questions, you cannot stray far off the proper road.” (P. 228) In what ways does a question hold “all the potential of the living universe within it”?



Praise for Anna and the Swallow Man

by Gavriel Savit

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
A PUBLISHERS WEEKLY BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR
A SHELF AWARENESS BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR
A BULLETIN BLUE RIBBON BOOK
WINNER OF THE INDIES CHOICE BOOK AWARD



“Chilling yet **tender.**” —*People Magazine*

“Written like a **love song for language—heartbreaking and entrancing** and filled with characters whose survival is intimately, sometimes tragically, tied to their love of words.” —*Bustle*

- ★ “A graceful story steeped in history, magic, myth, and archetype; comparisons to *The Book Thief* are apt.” —*The Horn Book*, Starred
- ★ “Savit’s **economical prose beautifully captures a child’s loss of innocence** and the spiritual challenges that emerge when a safe world suddenly becomes threatening.” —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred
- ★ “[A] quiet exploration of **love and its limits.**” —*The Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*, Starred
- “**Intelligent, confiding, and personable.**” —*The New York Times Book Review*
- “[An] **exquisite** debut novel.” —*The Wall Street Journal*
- “**Impossible not to love.**” —*The Guardian*
- “Though this is technically a book for young adults, **the message of the story is powerful enough to resonate with all ages.**” —*Mashable*
- “**Artful, original, insightful.**” —*Kirkus Reviews*
- “**Spare dialogue and elegant prose** are filled with subtleties.” —*School Library Journal*
- “**A moving, thought-provoking story** about coming-of-age in the midst of trauma.” —*Booklist*
- “**Richly imagined and beautifully written.** This is a book lover’s book—a quick read, but lyrical and engaging.” —*RT Book Reviews*

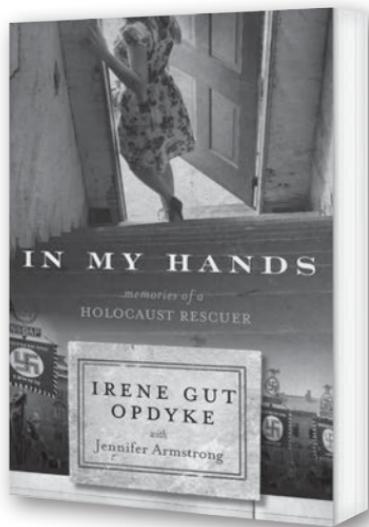


#AnnaAndTheSwallowMan

in my hands:

memories of a
holocaust rescuer

by
Irene Gut Opdyke
as told to Jennifer Armstrong



ABOUT THE BOOK

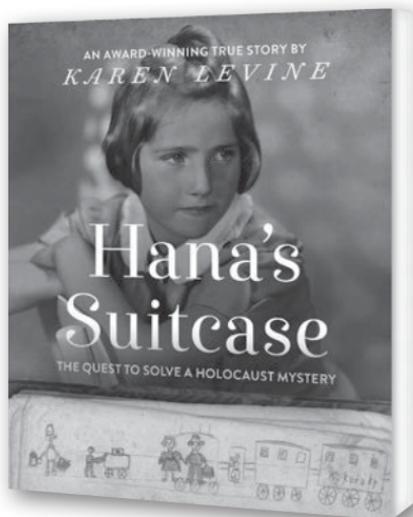
In the fall of 1939, the Nazis invaded Irene Gut's beloved Poland, ending her training as a nurse and thrusting the sixteen-year-old Catholic girl into a world of degradation that somehow gave her the strength to accomplish what amounted to miracles. Forced into the service of the German army, young Irene was able, due in part to her Aryan good looks, to use her position as a servant in an officers' club to steal food and supplies (and even information overheard at the officers' tables) for the Jews in the ghetto. She smuggled Jews out of the work camps, ultimately hiding a dozen people in the home of a Nazi major for whom she was housekeeper. An important addition to the literature of human survival and heroism, *In My Hands* is further proof of why, in spite of everything, we must believe in the goodness of people.

★ "No matter how many Holocaust stories one has read, this one is a must, for its impact is so powerful." —*School Library Journal*, Starred

Find Discussion Questions at RemembranceDayBooks.com

hana's suitcase:

the quest to solve a
holocaust mystery
by **Karen Levine**



ABOUT THE BOOK

In March 2000, Fumiko Ishioka, the curator of a small Holocaust education center in Tokyo, received an empty suitcase from the museum at Auschwitz. On the outside, in white paint, were the words “Hana Brady, May 16, 1931, Orphan.”

Fumiko and the children at the center were determined to find out who Hana was and what happened to her all those years ago, leading them to a startling and emotional discovery.

The dual narrative intertwines Fumiko’s international journey to find the truth about Hana Brady’s fate with Hana’s own compelling story of her life in a quiet Czech town, which is shattered by the arrival of the Nazis, tearing apart the family she loves. This suspense-filled work of investigative nonfiction draws in young readers and makes them active participants in the search for Hana’s identity.

“Part history, part suspenseful mystery . . . with an incredible climactic revelation.” —*Booklist*

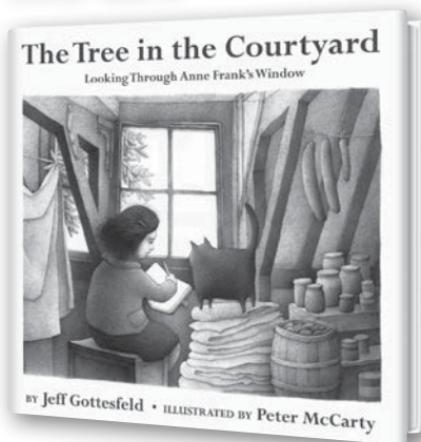
Find Discussion Questions at RemembranceDayBooks.com

the **tree** in the courtyard:

looking through
anne frank's window

by **Jeff Gottesfeld**

Illustrated by Peter McCarty



ABOUT THE BOOK

The tragic and poignant story of Anne Frank has been the subject of books, plays, and films and has been translated into many different languages, but it has never been told as uniquely as in *The Tree in the Courtyard: Looking Through Anne Frank's Window*. In this sad but lovely tale, readers learn Anne Frank's story through the “eyes” and “voice” of the horse chestnut tree that stood silent watch over her during her two-year confinement. Through powerful, moving brown-ink images, readers are introduced to the quiet strength and resilience of a young girl who found beauty and hope under the most dire of circumstances, and whose legacy continues to inspire people the world over.

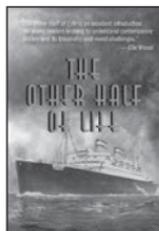
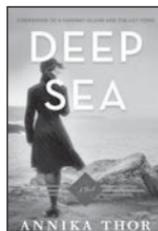
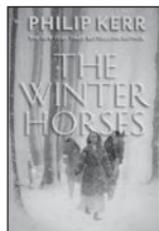
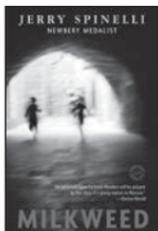
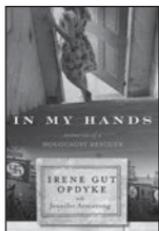
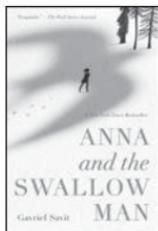
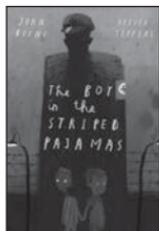
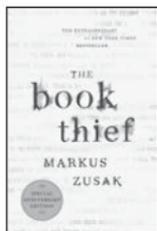
A *New York Times* Best Illustrated Children's Book

★ “The spare text and delicate illustrations create a moving and powerful ode to the tree that gave Anne comfort and hope during the years she and her family hid from the Nazis. . . . A noteworthy and highly recommended introduction to a difficult and significant topic.” —*School Library Journal*, Starred

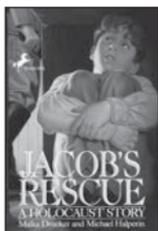
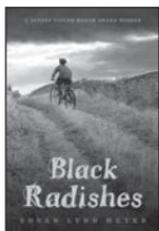
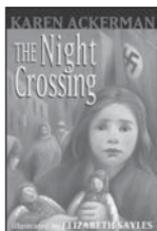
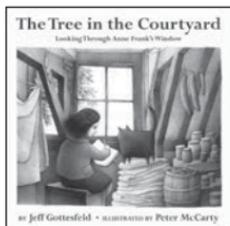
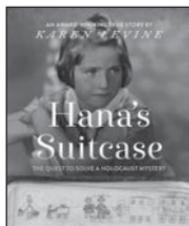
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More Books about the Holocaust from Random House Children's Books

For Adults and Teenagers



For Young Readers



INTERNET RESOURCES

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum—Resources for Educators
ushmm.org/education/foreducators
- The Alliance Against Genocide
againstgenocide.org
- Yad Vashem Holocaust Resource Center
yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource_center/index.asp
- Florida Center for Instructional Technology Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust
fcit.usf.edu/holocaust
- University of Minnesota Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies
Educational Resources
chgs.umn.edu/educational
- Simon Wiesenthal Center Library & Archives:
wiesenthal.com/site/pp.asp?c=IsKWLbPJLnF&b=4441267
- Southern Law Poverty Center Teaching Tolerance Project
tolerance.org/blog/southern-poverty-law-center-teaching-tolerance

PRIMARY SOURCES DOCUMENTING EVENTS OF THE HOLOCAUST CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT THE SITES ABOVE, AND AT:

- University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute
sfi.usc.edu
- US National Archives Holocaust-Era Assets
archives.gov/research/holocaust/index.html
- Internet Modern History Sourcebook: Holocaust Sources
fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook44.html
- Internet Jewish History Sourcebook: Jewish History Since the Enlightenment
fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/jewishshbook.html