



Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp

By Helga Weiss

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“A sacred reminder of what so many millions suffered, and only a few survived.”—Adam Kirsch, *New Republic*

In 1939, Helga Weiss was a young Jewish schoolgirl in Prague. Along with some 45,000 Jews living in the city, Helga’s family endured the first wave of the Nazi invasion: her father was denied work; she was forbidden from attending regular school. As Helga witnessed the increasing Nazi brutality, she began documenting her experiences in a diary.

In 1941, Helga and her parents were sent to the concentration camp of Terezín. There, Helga continued to write with astonishing insight about her daily life: the squalid living quarters, the cruel rationing of food, and the executions—as well as the moments of joy and hope that persisted in even the worst conditions. In 1944, Helga and her family were sent to Auschwitz. Before she left, Helga’s uncle, who worked in the Terezín records department, hid her diary and drawings in a brick wall. Miraculously, he was able to reclaim them for her after the war.

Of the 15,000 children brought to Terezín and later deported to Auschwitz, only 100 survived. Helga was one of them. Reconstructed from her original notebooks, the diary is presented here in its entirety. With an introduction by Francine Prose, a revealing interview between translator Neil Bermel and Helga, and the artwork Helga made during her time at Terezín, *Helga's Diary* stands as a vivid and utterly unique historical document.

16 color paintings; 12 photographs

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Editorial Review

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As the number of Holocaust survivors dwindles dramatically, the potency of firsthand accounts increases with each passing year. Weiss' adolescent diary begins in Prague in 1938 with the Nazi occupation and ends shortly before her deportation from the Terezin concentration camp to Auschwitz in September 1944. Preserved by her uncle, who bricked it into a barracks wall at Terezin, her diary was completed after the war by her recording of later experiences at the Auschwitz, Freiberg, and Mauthausen camps. Illustrated with family photographs and her own paintings and drawings, *Helga's Diary* serves as a remarkable testament to her horrific journey and the ultimate resiliency of youth. Since so few of the approximately 15,000 children interred in Terezin survived, *Helga's Diary*, like the collective reminiscences in Hannelore Brenner's *The Girls of Room 28* (2009), must speak for all the young voices that were prematurely stifled. --Margaret Flanagan

Review

"The most moving Holocaust diary published since Anne Frank." (The Telegraph)

"Written in spare prose and infused with a touching mixture of a child's drive for discovery and an adult's dread of a wartime future, *Helga's Diary* touches raw nerves and contains the potential to send shock waves through the oeuvre of Holocaust memoirs." (Linda F. Burghardt - Jewish Book World)

"Resounds with a ferocious will to endure conditions of astonishing cruelty." (David Casarani - New Statesman)

"A breathtaking account...a chilling testament to the tragedy of the Holocaust." (Publishers Weekly)

"What's startling, throughout, is the resilience with which her buoyant spirit keeps bobbing up past the hardships, indignities, and cruelties of her captors." (Francine Prose)

"At times the struggle of this young girl in the face of evil becomes so real that you'll notice yourself adjusting your blanket and thermostat right along with her as she shivers in the worst of conditions." (The Daily Beast)

About the Author

Helga Weiss was born in Prague in 1929. After surviving the Holocaust and the Second World War, Helga returned to Prague, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, and became an artist. She has two children, three grandchildren, and lives to this day in the apartment where she was born.

Francine Prose is the author of sixteen books of fiction, including *Blue Angel*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award. Among her most recent works of nonfiction is the highly acclaimed *Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife*. A former president of PEN American Center, she lives in New York City.

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Tara Thornton:

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Carmen Vasquez:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that can give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world could share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their very own reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the storyplot that share in the guides. But also they write about the ability about something that you need example of this. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write on their book. One of them is this Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp.

Ralph Rodriguez:

Why? Because this Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will distress you with the secret this inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who write the book in such incredible way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of gains than the other book possess such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking way. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Robert Denney:

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