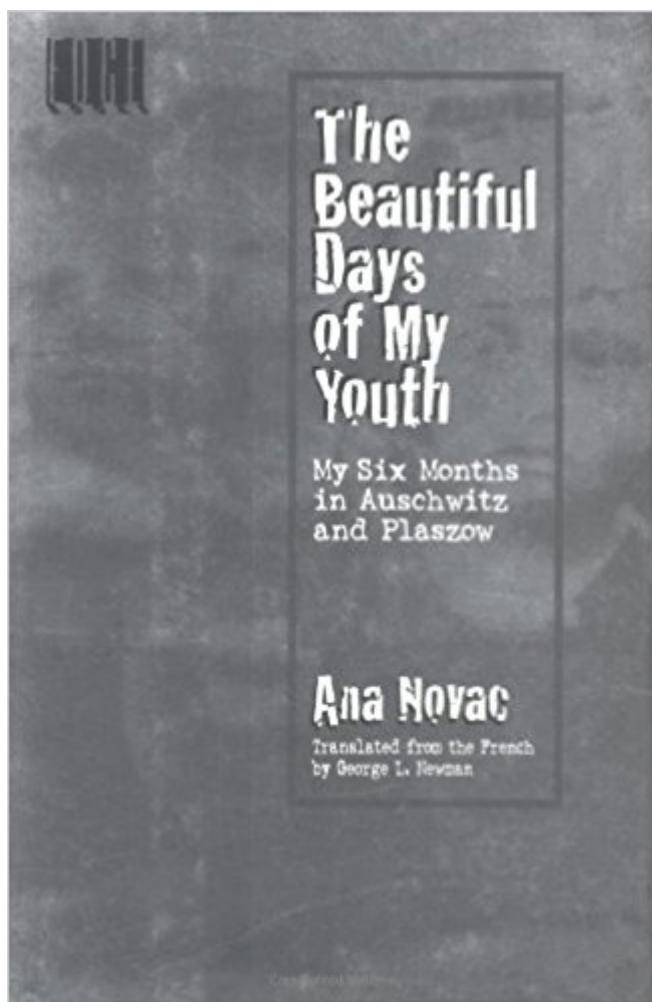


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The Beautiful Days Of My Youth: My Six Months In Auschwitz And Plaszow



Synopsis

On scraps of paper hidden by friends and strangers until their dying moments, young Ana Novac kept a diary in Auschwitz, a testimony that deserves to become one of the most treasured books of our time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up. A brilliant, literary memoir. At the age of 15, Ana Novac (nee Zimra Harsanyi) recorded these impressions during six harrowing months in Auschwitz and Plaszow concentration camps, from June to November 1944. Of the eight camps Ana passed through, she remembers only these two. She wrote on strips of German propaganda posters torn from the walls and on sheets of toilet paper. She hid the pages in her shoes and memorized them when they grew too bulky, summarizing them with a few key phrases. In each camp, she angled to get the top sleeping platform to take advantage of the dim ceiling light. Sophie, her camp "sister," thought she was crazy, but nevertheless helped her conceal the scraps of paper. Ana wrote about the horrors, the narrow escapes from death, the ludicrousness of the situation. She described her camp "family" in hilariously on target, if "sick," metaphors. She wrote about the "angel-makers," the women who saved pregnant women from the gas by aborting their fetuses or by delivering their babies and then disposing of them. She observed, she thought, she wrote, she existed. Like Gerty Spies, an older woman who also found her salvation in writing (My Years in Theresienstadt [Prometheus, 1997]), Novac's will to write was stronger than her body's will to die and so she survived. We are gifted with this work of art, this word tribute to the human spirit. Marcia W. Posner, Holocaust Memorial and

"This memoir of the Holocaust is remarkable on at least two counts: the high caliber of its prose, and its extraordinary provenance as a document originally drafted in Auschwitz and other concentration camps.... It deserves the attention of any reader who wishes to understand life, death and survival in Hitler's camps." --Publisher's Weekly, Boxed, Starred Review

This is not my type of book. To say the least, the author seems very observant and very intelligent the way she writes. However, this is the type of writing I find difficult to follow. There isn't enough of a story to really hold my interest, though I did make it through the whole book.

I found this book quite amazing. The horrors that she went through were described with amazing detail, and to me, I felt as if I were in her place. The vocabulary she uses to depict each seen seemed so carefully chosen, and extremely high level for her age. I also found it incredible that she was able to right this amazing book, just off of notes that she wrote when she was young. How terrible a position she must have been in. There is one quote that I found fascinating. "Fever! Isn't it a sign of life, proof that I'm persevering, hanging on? Thank God, because after all is said and done, wouldn't it be stupid, wouldn't it be madness, to let go of a life where there are such nights, and such creatures?" These words hit me like a brick wall. Thinking back to all the times myself, and everyone around me as well, has complained about life, I felt so ungrateful. How can anyone do this, when there are people that have had such terrible catastrophes in their life, so bad that they are grateful to get sick and have a fever, just to feel alive?

I came upon this book in my local library and promptly checked it out. Yes, it does seem confusing but then again, when we look at the context within which this was written, the confusing aspect of the work seems natural. The author went through living hell during her period in the work and death camps, and it was a miracle that her attempts to keep a diary, however fragmented the entries may seem, was successful. This work is such a valuable documentation of a teenager's experience of the Holocaust...reading her entries, one gets an intimate glimpse of the unimaginable horror she went through, things we could not fathom or imagine, yet very real. I rank this work right up there with the Diary of Anne Frank, and other memoirs of the Holocaust period, like A Jump for Life by Ruth Cyprys.

The Beautiful Days Of My Youth by Ana Novac is a book based on Ana's diary she kept while at Auschwitz and Plaszow. This is not the most well written book but not many 15 year olds could even write while going through the horrendous conditions at Auschwitz and Plaszow. We follow her life through the concentration camps as she is worked nearly to death and fights sickness after sickness until Britain soldiers liberate her camp. Overall the book is a bit confusing at times and a tad boring at times but a book that describes the life of a teenage girl at a concentration camp pretty well.

I had to do a biography and I picked this one, but it was really actually hard to understand and explain to the class the requirements of my book report. I could say it was very well done for a fourteen year old, but still, there were too many ideas taking place and that started to get confusing. I recommend this for any that wants to know more of the events of Aushwitz and Plasow, but for something for school, I highly recommend you to not read it. It is very hard to prepare a speech for the class on this one meeting all the requirements.

I suppose this would be considered a good historical account and I suppose it is. But the book doesn't make much sense. It was hard to follow. Obviously, as a diary written in a concentration camp by a teenager, it wasn't meant to be a book.

I thought reading this book was an important experience

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