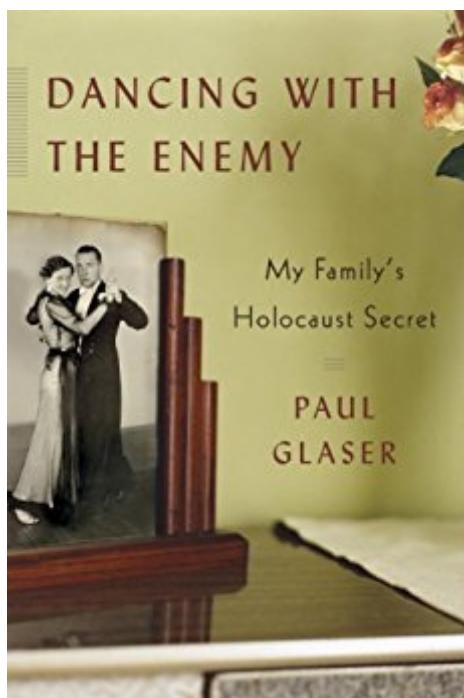


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# Dancing With The Enemy: My Family's Holocaust Secret



## Synopsis

The gripping story of the author's aunt, a Jewish dance instructor who was betrayed to the Nazis by the two men she loved, yet managed to survive WWII by teaching dance lessons to the SS at Auschwitz. Her epic life becomes a window into the author's own past and the key to discovering his Jewish roots. Raised in a devout Roman Catholic family in the Netherlands, Paul Glaser was shocked to learn as an adult of his father's Jewish heritage. Grappling with his newfound identity and stunned by his father's secrecy, Paul set out to discover what happened to his family during World War II and what had caused the long-standing rift between his father and his estranged aunt, Rosie, who moved to Sweden after the war. Piecing together his aunt's wartime diaries, photographs, and letters, Paul reconstructed the dramatic story of a woman who was caught up in the tragic sweep of World War II. Rosie Glaser was a magnetic force — hopeful, exuberant, and cunning. An emancipated woman who defied convention, she toured Western Europe teaching ballroom dancing to high acclaim, falling in love hard and often. By the age of twenty-five, she had lost the great love of her life in an aviation accident, married the wrong man, and sought consolation in the arms of yet another. Then the Nazis seized power. For Rosie, a nonpracticing Jew, this marked the beginning of an extremely dangerous ordeal. After operating an illegal dance school in her parents' attic, Rosie was betrayed by both her ex-husband and her lover, taken prisoner by the SS and sent to a series of concentration camps. But her enemies were unable to destroy her and, remarkably, she survived, in part by giving dance and etiquette lessons to her captors. Rosie was an entertainer at heart, and her vivacious spirit, her effervescent charm, and her incredible resourcefulness kept her alive amid horrendous tragedy. Of the twelve hundred people who arrived with her at Auschwitz, only eight survived. Illustrated with more than ninety photos, *Dancing with the Enemy* recalls an extraordinary life marked by love, betrayal, and fierce determination. It is being published in ten languages.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

A well written book about the Holocaust that was taken from the pages of his aunt's writings, poems, music and letters. The glimpse that was given was different and yet similar to other accounts of the Holocaust. Since we know the outcome it is easy to say his aunt was foolish. Why didn't she hide or leave? This is a question that many ask after the fact. She did what she had to do to survive. Even though she was a modern day woman she was betrayed by her husband and her lover. A part of the book that I liked was when she addressed those that helped and those that betrayed her. Very early on she was aware that not all Germans were bad as well as all Dutch were not good..

"Dancing with the enemy" is a different kind of Holocaust memoir and I am a collector. Rosie is a modern woman of her times. She asks for what she wants, and she usually gets it. She might be considered reckless but in the end she survives by grit, wit, sensuality and sheer will. Of course I wanted her to get out when she could and I could understand her brother being angry at her for staying but she had such high self esteem, maybe it could be called selfishness, she never thought bad things would happen to her. She was a star. However, bad things did happen but she survived and sometimes thrived. It seems she blamed the Dutch as much as she did the Germans and that might be her way of facing what she did to survive. But I didn't get the feeling she was ashamed of dancing or sleeping with the enemy. She was in need of comfort as well as food, and clothes so she wrote and danced and survived. I learned a lot about the treachery of the Dutch collaborators and the sad fact that Dutch Jews died at the highest rate. I loved that she pretended to be Scandinavian to get out, used different names and managed to have a good life in Sweden despite the suffering

she went through. This was a good story maybe not written as well as it could have been but I respect the writer for telling us about Rosie and adding to the truth about the Holocaust. I lost two great aunts who refused to leave their country despite my grandfather begging them to get out. I am glad Rosie's story is out there.

Achingly human account of the holocaust based on personal correspondence written by a relative of the author. It's a story about survivors and the many paths one can take to escape persecution. Rosie Glaser is a woman ahead of her time. Daring, rebellious, and unconventional, her very nature serves to protect and propel her to safety during one of the blackest periods of humanity. I knew many survivors, and each story is a miracle in itself. We have an obligation to record them. Many have passed, and the fact that Paul Glaser took the time to recount his family's history is a miracle in itself. You can feel his resentment and horror as he realizes he is not who he thinks he is. The fact that the story survives though him is the greatest part of it all. He must bury his impulses and bravely research his own unknown past, embracing a part of him his father both hid and rejected long ago. With mounting panic, he learns first of a family he never knew, and then is devastated by their murder at the hands of the Nazi's. This is a story about survival in many different forms; Rosy's fierce battle to claw her way through the dangerous times she was born into, her proud rebellion and moxie when she snubs her nose at her tormentors and the unknown DNA that appears in the author when he courageously forges forward risking his own personal persecution to tell the world a story that must be told.

I have read a great deal about the Holocaust, but mostly about what happened to the German and Polish Jews. (Obviously, I've read about Anne Frank, but she was a German-born Jew living in the Netherlands, so again from the German Jew standpoint.) Most recently I read Bo Lidegaard's *Countrymen*, which describes the incredible Danish commitment to their Jewish citizens. This and Lidegaard's book describe, in very different ways, the plight of other Jews.\*The Nazis were running the show in the Netherlands, while the Dutch queen and her ministers - living in relative luxury in London - hypocritically urged resistance and heroism over the radio. More and more Dutch people were benefiting from the new order. Unemployment had declined, trade was better than ever, and the indecision of democracy had been replaced by something more effective. New social laws had been implemented. Everyone had health insurance. Labor conditions had improved in the factories. A family allowance was introduced, and benefits for the elderly, widows, orphans, and invalids had been increased.\*Not a single government was willing to help; no one was interested. Not only the

Dutch, but the British, the Americans, and the French, the so-called Allies, failed to intervene. We were completely alone. The Allies knew about the gas chambers in Auschwitz. They flew over them, bombed half of Germany, but not the gas chambers, despite repeated requests. The Americans and the English were both guilty of turning back ships full of Jewish refugees. Glaser's book tells the story of his discovery of his Jewish ancestry in the 1980s, which comes as a bit of a shock to someone who was raised as a Roman Catholic. Struggling to understand why this was kept a secret, Glaser begins to do some research, which leads him to his estranged Aunt Rosie (she is sister to Glaser's father.) Rosie, her journals, and her photographs fill in the blanks for Glaser. Rosie, a non-practicing Jew, was a dance instructor before the restrictions on the Jews began. Her ex-husband and his brother turned her in for running a business, which was illegal for Jews. She was then sent to different concentration camps, where she was able to use her abilities to dance and entertain to survive.\* Going to bed with a German was certainly wrong. But you had to know what it was really like in a concentration camp. If you wanted to survive you needed more than a little luck. You had to lie, steal, and cheat, most of the time at the cost of other prisoners. If you stole someone's bread, you survived, the other died... Anne Frank might have survived were it not for the fact that a fellow prisoner stole her bread a few days before the liberation of the camp. That was the raw truth. Unlike the Danish people as related in Lidegaard's book, the Dutch were eager to assist their German occupiers.\* Ruthless manhunts were organized, and Jewish game was hunted down without mercy, driven from the hollows and smoked out by Dutch policemen, Dutch civil servants, Dutch mayors, Dutch SS officers, Dutch bounty hunters and traitors. They were so effective that the Germans only had to round it up and dispose of it. The Dutch's discrimination against the Jews did not end once World War II was over.\* Lack of cooperation and concern on the part of the Dutch authorities intensified my decision (to remain in Sweden.) I had recently received a bill for a warm winter coat that the embassy had sent in May, immediately after our liberation. They wanted to me pay for it. The Swedish authorities had provided clothing, housing, food, and medical care for free, and the Dutch wanted me to pay for a coat.\* My brother served his country when it could have killed him. He almost died a hero, and for nothing. Shortly after the war, the same grateful homeland demanded that he pay taxes for my father, a man the authorities had imprisoned and murdered, and they even included interest.\* My brother had already informed them that our mother and father were dead, but it now appeared that they wanted us to pay up, and with interest, because there was no civil registration of their death. Our house, our stolen property, and the jewelry we handed over at the beginning of the war were not returned. The money that the government forced my parents to deposit with Lippmann, Rosenthal & Co. was also not returned.\* Shortly after the liberation, the

Dutch government had actually crafted legislation that intentionally prevented the return of stolen money and property. The Danes demonstrated that it was possible to resist the Nazi-driven deportation and extermination of the Jewish population. However, many countries participated enthusiastically.\*According to the official numbers provided by the Dutch authorities, 72 percent of the Jewish population of 140,000 perished during the occupation, an unusually high percentage compared with other occupied countries: in Denmark it was less than 1 percent; Germany 24 percent; Belgium 44 percent; and France 22 percent.I could understand (to a small degree) the Dutch being complicit with the Germans during the war. But not returning property after the war? Charging for a coat? Asking for taxes on a dead person? Unfathomable. Unforgivable.As Lidegaard's book shows, a bully, whether a person or a country, can be defeated if people are willing to stand up to it.Highly recommend.

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