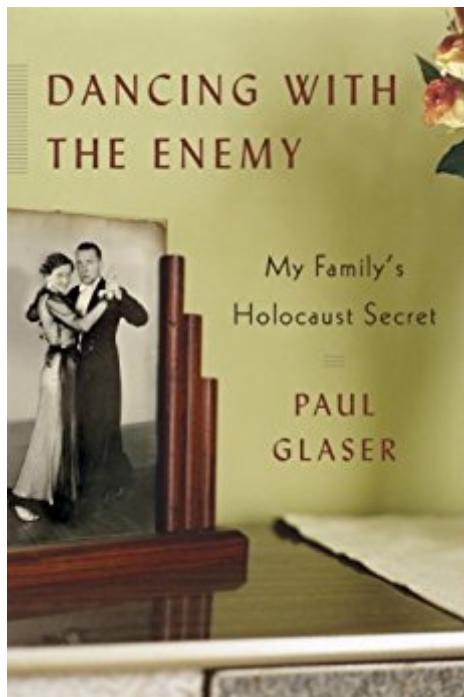


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Dancing With The Enemy: My Family's Holocaust Secret



Synopsis

The gripping story of the authorâ™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 authorâ™s own past and the key to discovering his Jewish roots.Â 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 fatherâ™s secrecy, Paul set out to discover what happened to his family during World War II and what hadÂ caused the long-standing rift between his father and his estranged aunt, Rosie, who moved to Sweden after the war. Piecing together his auntâ™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. Â Rosie Glaser was a magnetic force â“ 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,Â 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 parentsâ™ 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,Â 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.

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Customer Reviews

Dancing with the Enemy: My Family's Holocaust Secret, by Paul Glaser, is a must read. Gleaned from diaries, poetry, and letters of the author's estranged aunt, Glaser puts together a first person account of a survivor's story. There are many excellent books about Jewish survival during the Holocaust, but because this is truly a first person account, this is one of the most compelling. Brilliantly written, Glaser's account is a must read. Glaser, a Dutch citizen, had initial suspicions about his Jewish roots when he was first told by a colleague that his last name was a common Jewish name in Vienna. Glaser had been raised as a Catholic and had not known that his father was Jewish. He confirmed this suspicion after speaking to his grandmother. He basically ignored the fact as a curiosity until he took a somewhat unwilling side trip to visit Auschwitz as a historical excursion during a business meeting. There, amongst the piles of empty suitcases, he saw one that was noted as coming from Holland, with a tag that read 'Glaser.' Although he tried to speak to his father about this, his father was unwilling to talk about anything that happened during the war or about any Jewish connections in the family. Out of desperation, Glaser sought out his estranged aunt Rosie. After Rosie's death, Glaser was given Rosie's papers, and with them her diary. Using the Rosie's diaries, letters, and poems written before and after World War II, Glaser has pieced together an incredible and compelling portrait of Rosie. He traces her life from the glamorous days before WWII, to her rough days during the occupation of Holland, to her horrifying experiences as a fugitive and concentration camp victim, to her post war survival. Rosie's voice is unique.

There are two main stories being told in this book, and one told in shadow. One is the story of a man's surprising discovery about his family and his efforts to unravel the family's story in light of this discovery. The second main story is that of his aunt, Rosie Glaser. The shadow story is that of the

author's father who chooses to not revisit the horrors of that time, and has raised his children away from that sorrow. One cannot help but think of Anne Frank, another Dutch girl whose identity as a Jewish person led to her death. Rosie Glaser's story is quite different from Anne's. Whereas Anne was still very much a child in a nurturing family, protected for a time, Rosie was a young woman caught up in politics that she didn't understand or care about until it affected her hedonistic lifestyle. She was very much ahead of her time both in her way of thinking and her way of living. Her love of dancing and her skill in teaching it were the good things in her life, and her only way of earning a living. Her pursuit of dance in spite of the fact that it was forbidden to her because her grandmother was Jewish landed her in trouble with the Germans, and saved her life in the camps. This isn't a story of good triumphing over evil, but a story of a young woman who survived by her wits and wiles, doing what she had to do to make it through in spite of the tragedy all around her. Written partly from her wartime diaries, it is interesting that Rosie accepted the hardship of the camps and gave little voice to her personal suffering, treating what happened to her as a matter of course and never letting it get her down. It is fascinating as is the evolution of a man learning of a family past and how that learning changed his life forever.

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