



An Endless Struggle: Reminiscences and Refleacions

Paul Kuttner

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“Conscious of the propaganda value of displaying to the world how much he liked children, Hitler stooped and impulsively hugged me for a few moments...” This embrace, caught on camera at the German movie studio where Kuttner’s father worked as a doctor, was played on newsreels across the country the summer of 1933. Just a few months later, ten-year-old Kuttner watched helplessly as his non-Aryan father was literally thrown out of the same studio by the SS.

Kuttner, author of four fiction novels and the *Trickiest Questions* series, was born to baptized Christian parents and was baptized himself. His grandparents, however, though non-practicing Jews, had been born Jewish and were never baptized as Christians. According to Hitler’s race laws, a family needed to be three generations removed from any Jewish ancestors to be considered non-Jews. Kuttner’s family was deemed non-Aryan and faced the same persecution as Jews in Hitler’s Germany. While Kuttner was lucky enough to escape to England on a *Kindertransport*, he lost his parents to the concentration camps.

Escaping Germany was just the beginning of a long roller-coaster ride of events. In England, he was arrested as an enemy alien and sent to four different internment camps. Upon his release, Kuttner embarked on many different jobs, each allowing him to just squeak by, in England and the United States, before finding himself in Hollywood in 1948. There he met, interviewed, and dined with many of the top stars of the day, including Spencer Tracy, Lana Turner, and Charles Laughton.

Kuttner writes in a conversational tone as though reminiscing with a good friend. Though this biography is lengthy, it consists of 72 easy-to-digest chapters, each portraying a single event. While he chronicles his whole life, including his various careers and romances, the memories of life during World War II and his experiences meeting famous people in Hollywood and New York City will draw in many readers interested in those topics.

As the title suggests, Kuttner’s life has indeed been full of struggles that most people have been spared. However, the highs of his life are equally important to him and are enjoyed in this text. From his encounters with celebrities to the many unsung heroes who helped him along the way, Kuttner acknowledges how blessed he is to have survived “World War II, cancer, and a thousand odds year after year.” The love he has received is not taken for granted, and it translates into a love of life that remains with him into his 80s.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (September / October 2010)

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