

God's Miracles in Lives of Regular People

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Maria is only ten years old when her mother walks out of the house, leaving Maria's father to raise five children alone. Maria can still remember her mother's smell and the way she would sit on her bed at night and talk to her. Like most young girls, Maria dreams of one day marrying her handsome prince, raising a family, and living happily ever after. When she is college age, she visits her grandfather who predicts for her a life of sorrow but strength. Maria is frightened of this prediction and seeks to deny its reality in her life. The young college graduate has visions of a future filled with good things. Maria, however, is living in the Ukraine in 1941.

As the horrors of World War II and Nazi occupation are unveiled, readers follow Maria's life through the pages of her diary, as told by her daughter-in-law. Her capture and assignment to a concentration camp, her multiple escapes from execution, and the evidence of her protection from a supernatural God are all a part of this story.

Maria's miraculous rescue and reunion with her French fiancé, Alexander, are evidence of the goodness of others, even in the midst of war. Her story reminds readers that hardship comes to all and that perseverance and determination can bring you through the hardship and make you a stronger, better person. Essential to the story is the author's belief that a loving, caring Heavenly Father is watching over each of us and directing our paths through situations, relationships, and dreams.

The foreword of the book by German-born Michael Schaefer, a management consultant, reminds readers that younger generations still have the opportunity to learn about this period of European history from those who lived through it. He believes that each person should consider this a gift and take advantage of those memories for future generations.

The book's preface, dedication, and introduction are all written by the author, and some of these sections could have been combined. The language is a bit stilted, due in part to the author's translation from German to English. Subject-verb agreement is often missed, and sentence structure can be forfeited as a result of the language differences.

Although the experiences of Mother Maria are enlightening to a readership that is seeking to gain a "feel" for this time in history, the author's descriptions are simplistic and bland. When Maria and her fiancé narrowly escape the bombing of a hospital by driving away in a borrowed car, the description sounds more like they have just started out on a Sunday afternoon drive. Corrie Ten Boom's *Hiding Place* is a more riveting book about this type of story.

JOYCE RICE (April 15, 2009)

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