ForeWord Reviews

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Kinderlager
Milton J. Nieuwsma
Holiday House Publishing
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Oral history becomes an art form as freelance writer and photojournalist, Milton J. Nieuwsma, records the memories of three women who survived Kinderlager, the children's camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Tova Friedman, Frieda Tenenbaum and Rachel Hyams, childhood acquaintances who were separated by the war, found each other in the Kinderlager. Half a century later, each relives her years before the war, in the ghetto, the labor camps and Auschwitz, then the years after the liberation, in Europe and America. The stories and the culture belong to these women. The unique perspective of each survivor gives a subtle significance to the horror, tragedy and lasting effects of her experience.

For young people, this book brings an immediate insight to Holocaust events, a part of history often left unexplained to them because of our collective guilt and shame. The author became interested in the subject as a child when he met Holocaust survivors his Dutch Reformed minister father helped relocate to America.

Nieuwsma, who has visited Auschwitz and spoken with the people of Tomasz, does not attempt to explain why the Holocaust happened, but states in his short epilogue that listening to the stories "is to confront the monster that lurks deep in the human soul."

Nieuwsma has taught writing and journalism at several universities, wisely retains the simple, short sentences and direct style of his narrators. He has the journalist's careful ear for the telling detail.

Kinderlager is a compelling one-sitting read for mature readers ten and up. Photographs, maps, glossary and bibliography are included.

Shirley Murray