ForeWord Reviews

AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

To See You Again (Nova Audio Books)
Betty Schimmel Laural Merlington Reader
Brilliance Audio
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At the age of nine, Betty Markowitz already understood why her family had to leave their small hometown and move to the bigger city of Bratislava, Czechoslovakia-and then on to Budapest, Hungary: “I knew we had to leave because an evil man named Hitler was about to invade our country and my father, as an intelligence officer and a Jew, did not want to be here when it happened.”

For Betty, nicknamed “Baby” by her family, times were not so bad in Budapest after she was partnered in gymnastics class with a boy named Richie Kovacs. Over the next five years, they became friends and fell in love; daring even to look forward to becoming engaged on Betty’s sixteenth birthday despite the news that war continued to rage in nearby countries and throughout the world. Confident their love could survive anything, they continued planning their future even after Hitler invaded Hungary in March of 1944.

Their promises to love one another would be what kept Betty alive through the nightmares that followed the Nazi occupation: enforced curfews; required wearing of a yellow Star of David on all of their outerwear; relocation of Jews into crowded quarters in the ghetto districts of the city; and, finally, a forced, brutal march from Hungary to a concentration camp where unimaginable horrors were endured alongside her mother, sister and brother. Through Liberation and the years that followed-including her marriage to an Auschwitz survivor named Otto Schimmel and the raising of her two children-Betty kept hoping that Richie had survived as well. So strong was her hope that she had only married Otto on the condition that if Richie ever found her, she would leave Otto to be with him.

In 1975, Betty fulfilled a promise to her mother to return to Hungary and visit relatives and friends who had survived the war. One evening at dinner with friends, she saw a familiar figure across a crowded room. After this meeting, Betty would find that she had to make the most agonizing decision of her life: to throw away established values in order to go with Richie or to stay with Schimmel. Betty had endured so much loss and grief in her life already it seemed an impossible task to make a decision that would not add to that suffering. Betty, however,

discovers within herself a capacity for love and forgiveness that until this life-crisis arose, she did not realize she had.

Narrated with feeling and conviction, this remarkably true story of sacrifice, survival, love and forgiveness will be remembered by listeners for a long time.

Nelly Heitman