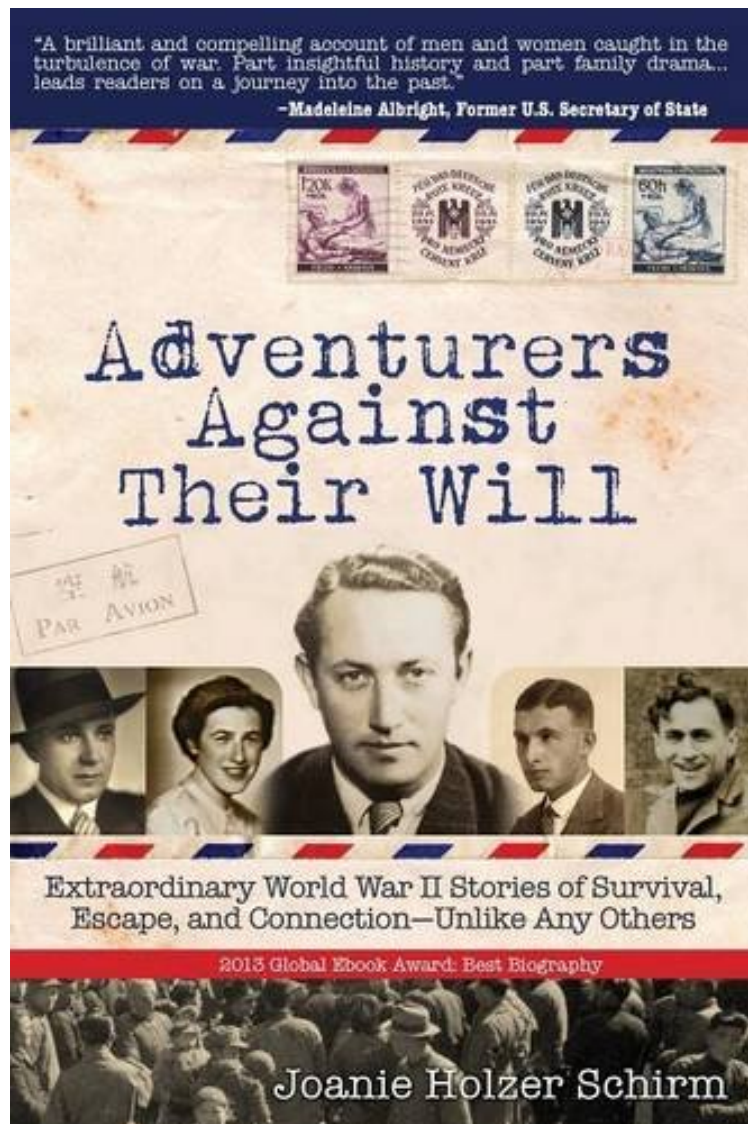


(Ebook pdf) Adventurers Against Their Will: Extraordinary World War II Stories of Survival, Escape, and Connection-Unlike Any Others

Adventurers Against Their Will: Extraordinary World War II Stories of Survival, Escape, and Connection-Unlike Any Others

Joanie Holzer Schirm

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Joanie Holzer Schirm : Adventurers Against Their Will: Extraordinary World War II Stories of Survival, Escape, and Connection-Unlike Any Others before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adventurers Against Their Will: Extraordinary World War II Stories of Survival, Escape, and Connection-Unlike Any Others:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Roger Pickar
By GoofyAmerica
The fact that this has become an award-winning book is no surprise. This is a fascinating page turner- a unique perspective of an escape from a horrendous event based on a trove of compelling letters and interviews. It illuminates the suffering, the will to survive and go on when so many didn't or couldn't. The horror of fleeing your country-friends, family, jobs and relocating in places such as Ecuador, China, the United States and never knowing whether you'd ever go back is just one of the appalling tragedies witnessed. The random post exit communications amongst family and friends, the basis of the book, illuminate the dread, dismay that the survivors went through and provide the persistent tension of the book. The fact that the author's parents eventually adjust and prosper in the United States is a wonderful example of survival. However, the sadness of losing so much in a myriad of ways again illuminates the horrors that befell the world and specifically, the Jews of Prague, Czechoslovakia.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Adventurers against their will
By Jan Schoenbaum
We are indebted to Joanie Schirm, the daughter of Valdik Holzer (the focal 'adventurer'), for sharing the wonderfully rich letters of her father and his friends with us. The book is more than a story of a group of friends, of their trials and survivals (or deaths): Joanie has created a micro-history of a time when Czech Jews and Gentiles were caught up in the expansion of the Third Reich, first into Sudetenland in October 1938 (with the agreement of France and Britain), then followed by the invasion and occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939. The Nuremberg laws limiting what Jews could do, or own, were applied progressively in the 'Protectorate'. How hard it must have been for those at threat (my parents included) to understand the murderous intent, and the ruthless efficiency with which it would be implemented. Who could have thought, who even now can comprehend, that organized theft would be followed by confinement, slave labour, and the gas chambers? Joanie's work, and it was work, involving unravelling the many threads that wound through more than four hundred letters of her father and the other 'adventurers', has resulted in a gripping tale of intertwined lives. The reader is helped through this complex of life stories by Dramatis Personae at the beginning of each chapter, and by Biographies and Timelines at the end of the book. We are moved and touched by the opportunities of escape seized or missed, and by the many photos of the protagonists and their families. A wonderful book. Thank you Joanie!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. WOW!
By RADD
Dr. Holzer was our family physician in the 1950s and 60s and early 70s. I went to school with Joanie Holzer Schirm, never knowing the doctors family history. I recently learned of this book and recently ordered it. What an inspirational accounting of her fathers early life. It allowed me to see another side of this strong man. It made me realize that our generation has it made. I found the book to well thought out and presented. I look forward to purchasing future writings from Joanie.

"The ornately painted Chinese Boxes loomed just out of reach throughout my childhood...but my brother and sister and I paid no attention. The twin, red boxes were part of the familiar-to-the-point-of-being-invisible landscape, like that big tree outside your window with a botanical name you never learn." Sorting through her parents belongings after their deaths, Joanie Holzer Schirm discovered an extraordinary lost world. Hand-written on faded and brittle stationary, stamped by censors and military authorities, and neatly filed in those two lacquered boxes, were 400 letters from 78 correspondents-along with carbon copies of the letters her Czech father had sent to them during World War II. "My father never mentioned that he planned to leave a magnificent gift," Schirm tells us, a "treasure trove" in which "I would come across the very souls of his cousins and friends. Many of the secrets cloistered by those bright and shiny Chinese boxes were ghastly. Lives lost, lives shattered. Friends abandoned. Lovers betrayed. The paths I followed beyond the letters made clear that guilt and grief continued to wound and sometimes cripple those who remained, long after the war was over." And yet the story that they ultimately add up to - a story that is as emotionally absorbing as a novel, as meticulously documented as the important work of history that it is - not one of mere survival, but inspiration.