



Malka

Mirjam Pressler

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When the roundups start, Malka's mother knows she must get her daughters-seven- year-old Malka and sixteen-year-old Minna-across the Hungarian border to safety, a place where they hope Jews can live in peace. But escape proves harder than they could have imagined, with bleeding feet, bad weather, and homesickness, and little Malka falls ill. Left behind to be brought across when the threat has passed, Malka finds herself in a terrifying world full of strangers, starvation, and constant fear of Nazi roundups. As time passes, it becomes more and more apparent that the threat is far from over. Completely alone, Malka struggles to stay hidden, unaware that miles away, a brokenhearted mother is searching frantically for her lost little girl.

Malka Details

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From Reader Review Malka for online ebook

Alexis says

It was nice to read from a child's perspective. I don't always realize exactly how bad world war 2 was. Even the people who weren't in concentration camps had aged lives and the fact that this is partially true is heart wrenching...I LOVE IT!!

Bell says

I read this book when i was about 12 years old. Now I'm 14, and still love this book. I was always interested in History, and something about a Polish Girl living in WW2 is something so interesting for me, that i needed to read it. Yeah, it's very sad at some times, but the writing style and how she managed to write a Story just by some descriptions from the Real Life Girl is just Fascinating. For me it was just so great for me to have and read this book. It isn't one of your 500 pages stories, but it's enough to make you sucked into this book. I wouldn't recommend this for the Light-Hearted People out there, but i just love this story, and i hope you too! (Sorry if my English was bad, it's not my first language...)

Laura says

I ran out of books to read during a class so I picked a random one given to my class library by the district. This one won!

This book is going to haunt me. It's loosely based on a true story, possibly the scariest genre of all.

The mother is driven. I never did figure out if she was driven by ambition or fear. She mentions several times that she is unable to keep still. While her drive is admirable in a doctor, it's not an asset for her children or her family. They seem to frequently come in second place in her life. It's got to be rough on her family.

This book brings on some bleak decision-making. Who to save: the sick child who needs you or the healthy child who can be rescued? Heart-breaking!

Emily says

This book is based loosely on a true story, Malka Mai was taken from Poland by her mother during the war however being so young at the time she doesn't remember and has suppressed a lot of her memories.

The story alternates between Malka's point of view and her mothers. Malka doesn't understand what is going on around her but because she is young and pretty she does when the affections of some who take her in briefly. In the end however she is still left hungry and alone. Hannah on the other hand doesn't know what is the right thing to do. She has to make the right decisions to keep both her daughters safe but how can you do that when they have been separated. I really felt for her throughout the book, she was continually judged for

her work with the Germans and then her decision to leave her youngest daughter behind however she was trying to also keep her eldest daughter safe. The elder daughter frustrated me a little as she didn't seem at all grateful for what her mother had done and it was to keep her safe that she had given up everything.

It is really hard to rate books like this because you can't say you enjoy a story about suffering especially something so true. This wasn't a book I enjoyed but I did find it worth reading.

Linda says

* 3.5/5

1939, Nazi Germany invades and occupies Poland. Anti-Semitic laws wash over and take strong roots within the country. Those of Jewish ancestry are no longer regarded as Polish citizens. They become othered and are marked by the Star of David. 1942 – 1945, mass “operations”, “relocations”, and murder of the Jewish community begins. This is the period we find the Mai family in.

The story begins in 1943. It's about a mother's (Hannah Mai) difficult decision to leave her youngest daughter (Malka) behind, with another family. Hannah is a dedicated doctor no longer working because she is Jewish. Her eldest daughter Minna is strong-willed, denied access to education and forced to stay home. Little Malka, approximately seven, is ostracized because she is a “jew girl”. When Hannah witnesses Nazi atrocities with her own eyes she makes an important decision to take her daughters away from Poland. Their only chance is getting into Hungary, a safe haven for Jewish people. The walk is long and difficult. Decisions have to be made at the spur of the moment and the repercussion of one of them will hunt Hannah for the rest of her life.

The author does a great job creating and building tension. She provides two voices which creates two distinct perspectives. Hannah's internal dialogues offer insights into the struggles Polish Jews faced while fleeing from Nazi threat. She shows the difficulties of having to start over again in a foreign country. The reader sees little Malka's losing her innocence as she is forced to fend for herself in the Polish Ghettos. Her thoughts offer a glimpse into what happens to those who are caught crossing the Polish border and to children who are left behind because no one pays attention to them. Her mind re-paints the Polish Ghettos, showing Nazis attacking people living in the Ghettos and moving them into Concentration Camps.

It's a sad read but it's important to know what happened in the past. Over 3 million Polish Jews were killed and books like “Malka” remind us of what hate is capable of.

Caitlin Demuynck says

12 jaar geleden gelezen en is me altijd bijgebleven! Staat nog altijd op mijn boekenplank tussen mijn favoriete boeken :)

Esther says

Wow. This book was everything and more. I have always been interested in the history of the Holocaust, but this book really expressed the fear of the Jews during that time, specifically through the eyes of a 7-year-old girl, Malka Mai.

Pressler wrote this book after speaking to Malka Mai (a real individual) about her childhood experience, though she mentions that many fictional details were added. In the book, Malka lives with her mother, Hannah, and older sister, Minna. They receive warnings saying the Germans are coming to town to raid the Jews out. Upon hearing this news, Hannah plans to escape with her daughters to Hungary. It's not until Hannah notices that Malka is struggling with restlessness and sickness during the escape journey that she decides to leave Malka with a family. Hannah plans for Malka to be sent back to her via train after her journey is completed.

I appreciated this book so much in that I realized how grateful I should be on a daily basis, for something as little as water. The word "hungry" is mentioned in the book quite a lot, and I felt heartbroken every time Malka had to scrounge around for food without knowing where she was or whether she would ever see her family again. In addition, though I am not a mother, the book really expressed a mother's love for her daughter. The ending was sorrowful to say the least, but I can definitely see that Hannah never meant to hurt Malka. The narration switches from both Hannah and Malka, so I liked that I was able to read the minds of two different characters.

"Malka" is an appropriate read for all ages, and I personally think elementary/middle/high school students learning about the Holocaust would benefit much from this book. Thank you Mirjam Pressler, for writing not only an eye-opening book, but also a story that I will remember for the rest of my life.

LH Johnson says

Hannah Mai and her two daughters, Minna and Malka, live in Lawoczne in Poland. It's 1943, life for Jews is becoming precarious and so Hannah takes the difficult decision to leave their home and escape over the mountains to the refuge of Hungary. On the journey, Malka, the youngest daughter, becomes separated from the others and it's from that point that the book splits into two separate narratives - the story of Malka, and the story of her mother and Minna.

Written originally in German and translated into English by Brian Murdoch, this is a book full of broken glass. It's written in a very precise manner that tends to avoid the great elaborate metaphor, but in doing so creates a story that is painfully acute. There are many many moments which are intensely moving but one in particular struck me. It is when two characters are picking a berry from a bush and one shares it with the other. I'll edit the names out in this quote so it's spoiler free:

"He opened his mouth without taking his eyes off her, and she put in the berry. [She] looked so strange, so different, as if she had no connection with the child she had once been. Embarrassed, [Different Character] turned away. She felt as if she'd been watching something that was nothing to do with her."

If there is a more subtle, beautiful way to describe that moment when you fall in love with somebody, I am yet to read it.

This is a story of survival and of love, and of the way your stomach turns in on itself after weeks of hunger.

What I will acknowledge is that this isn't going to be a book for everyone. The ending's not quite what I expected. There are long periods where 'nothing' overt happens. There's a lot of quietness which I appreciate is ironic in a wartime book but that's the best way to describe it.

But I think, in a way, that's what makes it great as well. This is a book where we see the best and worst of people, and we see it in a peculiarly graceful manner. The way it's almost underwritten at points forces the reader to absorb some of the tension Malka and her family are feeling. You reach out, pulling cues in from the wider story, to understand how you should read these pages - and it's unbearable because you start picking up on the clues, the surroundings, and become as closely embroiled in it as the protagonists are.

Malka left me breathless at the end of it. I am impressed at Pressler's skill, and the afterword (which I urge you to read *after* you've read the book) left me in tears. This is a very graceful, painful and important book.

Juliusmoore Moore says

Well let's start from the beginning malka is probably a thirteen year old girl yet this was based of a true story so we really don't know what her real age was at that time anyway she is a Jew (and i pray that she does not get captured). She has a mother and two sisters the father is spending time with the other far from malka's two sisters .

Let's cut to the chase when she goes to her friends house she gets kicked out but the German mom she was nice though , when she walks home ukrainian and Poland kids shout out JEW GIRL JEW GIRL ! She has to travel somewhere else because the Germans were few miles down from their house so they traveled to polize I'm not sure how to pronounce or spell it but that's where i think we should leave off to great book 10 out of 10 would read it again .

Elina says

[7-year old Malka was a Polish Jew that had lived during the second world war. She was at her friend's house when her mother, Hannah, heard that the Nazi were conducting an 'operation' in their German-occupied town. Her mother, her teenage sister, Minna, and herself traveled past the Polish border to Hungary. Their journey was horrible and dangerous. They had to avoid everyone that could be a possible threat. When they entered Hungary, Hannah noticed that Malka was really sick. Th

Isabel says

Als 12-Jährige war ich absolut gefesselt von dem Buch. Mittlerweile finde ich, dass Pressler mehr aus der Geschichte hätte machen können.

Haley Craig says

This is by far one of the best books I have read this year and there have been quite a few. I loved every minute of reading this and would happily read it again.

The only thing that annoyed me, and it's trivial really, was the language used regarding toileting. It just didn't fit with the tone of the story and was quite.. vulgar.. in a sense..

Apart from that I would highly recommend this book to everyone! It was a brilliant story of how children were left behind during the war, how rife illnesses were and how the times of 1943-45 changed families forever more.

Zoë says

This book was so incredible, but it was heartbreaking to watch Malka lose her childhood.

Martine Letterie says

Van het lezen van dit boek kreeg ik buikpijn. Zo dichtbij komt het aangrijpende waargebeurde verhaal van Malka Mai, een joods Pools meisje dat met haar moeder en zus naar Hongarije vlucht. Omdat ze ziek is, laat haar moeder haar achter bij een familie die belooft haar na te zullen brengen. Die belofte wordt niet nagekomen. Malka Mai komt in het getto van een nabijgelegen Poolse stad, waar ze uiteindelijk het in haar eentje moet zien te redden.

Presser vertelt het verhaal vanuit twee perspectieven, dat van de zevenjarige Malka Mai en dat van haar moeder Hanna, die verscheurd wordt door schuldgevoelens omdat ze haar dochter heeft achtergelaten.

Ally the brain says

Kleien Kämpferin

„Malka Mai“ ein packender Roman über eine verlorene Kindheit, der Autorin Mirjam Pressler.

Mit dem Verlust ihrer Puppe Liesel beginnt für Malka der Kampf um das Überleben und das Erwachsenwerden.

Die jüdische Ärztin Hanna Mai lebt, im September 1943, zusammen mit ihrer älteren Tochter Minna und der 7-jährigen Malka an der polnisch-ungarischen Grenze und flüchtet in letzter Minute über die Berge nach Ungarn. Auf dem Weg erkrankt Malka und kann nicht mehr weiter, weshalb Hanna sich entscheidet bei Bauern zurückzulassen. Der Bauer verspricht, die gesunde Malka später mit dem Zug zu Hanna und Minna zu bringen. Allerdings bricht dieser die Vereinbarung aus Angst vor den Deutschen und Malka gerät in die Hände der ungarischen Grenzpolizei, welche sie zurück über die Grenze zu den Deutschen bringen. Dort wird sie von einem Soldaten gerettet. Allerdings wird es für die Familie zu gefährlich sie bei ihnen zu

verstecken und Malka wird in ein Ghetto gebracht. Von da an ist sie auf sich selbst gestellt und überlebt Kälte und Hunger.

Das schwierige Thema, welches schon so oft zuvor in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur aufgearbeitet wurde, wird in diesem Roman so ehrlich beschrieben, dass man unglaublich mitfühlt. Wie beispielsweise die Szene, als Malka nach einer Aktion durch die Straßen geht: „Es war seltsam still, unheimlich still.[...] Erschrocken riss Malka die Augen auf und da war sie wieder, diese unheimliche Stille. Noch nicht einmal ein Vogel war zu hören, gar nichts.“ Diese Sprache ist einfach und nüchtern, aber löst viele Emotionen beim Leser aus und geht bis zur Schmerzgrenze, manchmal auch drüber, wenn man sensibel ist.

Obwohl diese Geschichte so spezifisch ist, kann sie einfache als Exempel für so viele Kinder dieser Zeit stehend. Vielleicht erkennt man sogar Ähnlichkeiten mit den Geschichten und Erzählungen seiner eigenen Familie.

Familie ist auch einer der wichtigsten Handlungsstränge in dem Roman. Durch die Vielfalt der Charakter erstreckt sich ein breites Spektrum an Verhaltensweisen, die mit dieser Notsituation klarkommen müssen, jedoch ohne das Verhalten zu bewerten. Diese Strapazen werden nicht nur aus Maltas Sicht erzählt, sondern auch aus der Perspektive von Hanna Mai, wodurch Entscheidungen und verschiedene Charakter besser zu erschließen sind. Das dramatisiert so manche Situation, wie die Flucht über die Karpaten.

Mirjam Pressler schreibt hier so authentisch, dass diese Geschichte so wahrhaftig erscheint, was sie zum Teil auch ist. Denn „Malka Mai“ ist eine reale Person, welche aber einen Großteil ihrer Erlebnisse verdrängt und vergessen hat, so basiert die erschütternde Handlung auf wahren Begebenheiten, wie dem Nachwort zu entnehmen ist.

So eröffnet die Autorin dem Leser einen Zugang in die Vergangenheit und lässt sie erinnern.

Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden, dass dieses Buch einen packt und auch nach einiger Zeit nicht mehr verlässt. Es geht an Herz und Niere, ist jedoch niemals mitleidserregend. Ein Großartiges Werk mit Bildern, die sich einbrennen.
