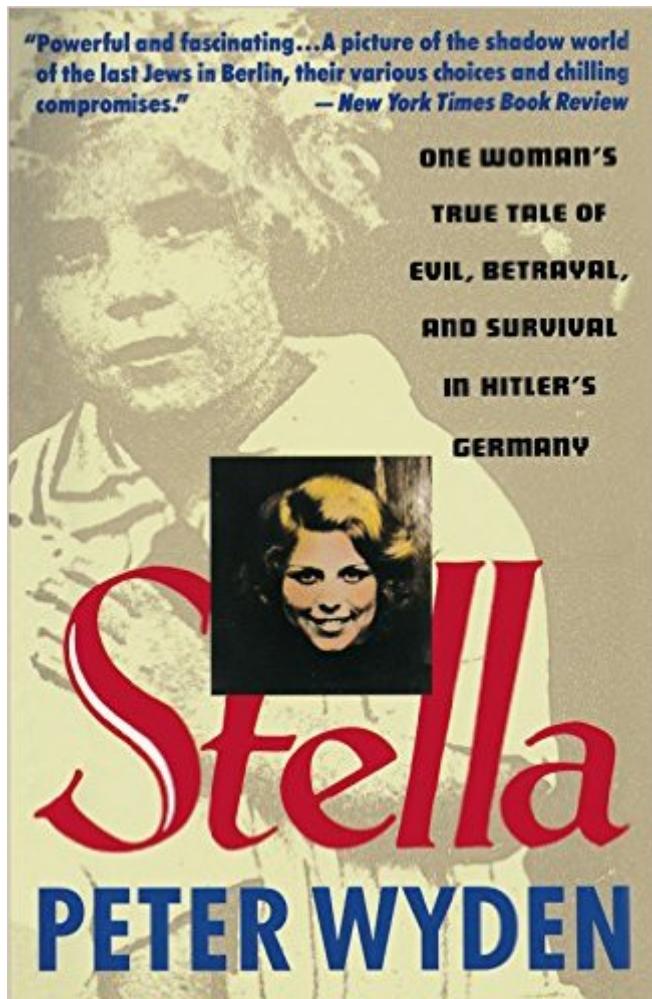


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Stella: One Woman's True Tale Of Evil, Betrayal, And Survival In Hitler's Germany



Synopsis

The story of Stella Goldschlag, whom Wyden knew as a child, and who later became notorious as a "catcher" in wartime Berlin, hunting down hundreds of hidden Jews for the Nazis. A harrowing chronicle of Stella's agonizing choice, her three murder trials, her reclusive existence, and the trauma inherited by her illegitimate daughter in Israel. 16 pages of B&W photographs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I do not wish to hurt anyone who has suffered from the holocaust by writing this review, nor do I want dishonor anyone who was destroyed by it. I am only making an observation about what happened to this woman named Stella. Stella was a beautiful blonde girl who reached early maturity during WWII in Berlin. She was Jewish, but with her blue eyes she could easily pass for a gentile. When Hitler started his personal war against Jews, he initiated the most horrible and beastly experience that could happen to human beings. With his henchmen, and their vicious attacks on Jews and other peoples, he pushed people into emotional dungeons, and it is at these dark, these lowest levels, that we discover what we are really capable of doing. In his painful memoir of his experiences of the holocaust, Elie Weisel, shows us in Night, that when the Nazis tossed tiny bits of bread to starving Jews, many of them killed for that one morsel of food, sometimes ending the lives of their loved ones for a chance to put something in their mouths. For me, this book was about survival. No one knows what they are capable of unless they are taken to that horrifying nightmare place of doom, and unless one has been there, there is absolutely no way of knowing what our

choices would be. Many would argue that Stella did not get to the extremes that occurred in the death camps. But we do know that she was beaten over and over and over again. And then she was offered a chance to have it all end by being a "catcher" for the Nazis. We know that other Jews committed suicide to avoid the beatings and the offer of becoming a catcher to stay alive. I can only thank God that I have never had to be in such a situation, because I don't know what I would do. How could I know?

I was prepared to loathe Stella. How could anyone turn in her friends to the Nazis, knowing they were going to be tortured and killed? How could anyone not see her as a horrific ogre, and damn her forever? Much to my surprise, as the book went along, I found I had more and more compassion for her. Let me be clear: what she did was wrong, to be condemned in the strongest terms. But, give this a quarter turn, and look at it through Stella's eyes: she was born in 1923, the only child of a well-to-do couple who doted on her. Stella was spoiled by her parents, self-centered, and in my opinion, a self-hating Jew. From 1918-22, Germany saw the assassinations of 376 bureaucrats and politicians, about one every four days. There were riots by right-wing thugs, and Jews were often attacked, all this before Hitler even came to power. Granted, a young, spoiled, self-centered child doesn't follow these things (or even many precocious nonself-absorbed children), but they are definitely noticed in one's subconscious. It sets the psychological stage. Mis en place. By 1935, Jews were fired from their jobs, or forced to sell out their businesses for a pittance. The Goldschlags went from well-to-do to barely scraping by. When she was 20, Stella's beloved parents were scheduled for transport. The Gestapo wanted Stella to turn in her friends (the "u-boaters", Jews in hiding). She said no. Then the Gestapo tortured her. She said yes. The author gives examples of those the Gestapo approached who refused to turn in their friends. Many said no. However, none of them was tortured. The reason I feel compassion for Stella (and obviously much, much more for her victims), is she lived an over-protected, sheltered life, and was psychologically unequipped to do anything else.

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