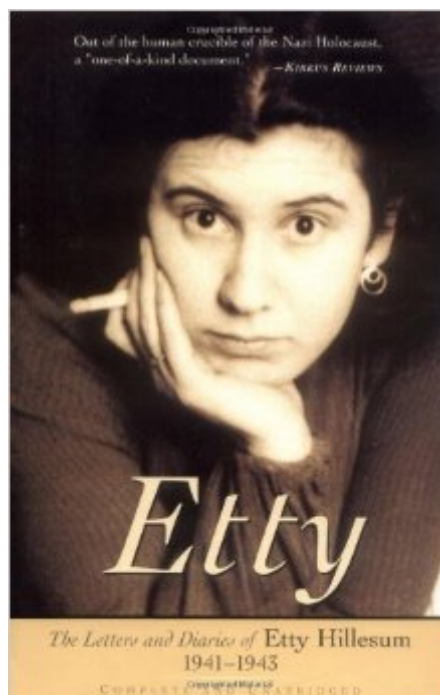


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Etty: The Letters And Diaries Of Etty Hillesum 1941-1943



Synopsis

Commissioned by the Etty Hillesum Foundation, Etty is the only complete, unabridged edition of the letters and diaries of a singular hero--and victim--of the Nazi Holocaust. This fascinating, profound, and often moving body of work reveals the interior life of a brilliant. Born in January 1914, Etty Hillesum began her diary in 1941, nine months after Hitler invaded her home country of the Netherlands. The record she kept for the next two years contains arresting personal reflections and chronicles her social, intellectual, and--most significantly--spiritual growth. In addition to her ongoing search for God and truth, one of the most noted and instructive features of Ettys development was her recognition of, and her struggle to overcome, the disorder within her own being. It was her success in finally transcending her own sense of captivity within that allowed her to rise above cruel and fearsome circumstances without. Indeed, in the midst of the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust, Ettys writings reveal a woman who celebrated life and remained an undaunted example of courage, sympathy, and compassion. Letters that she wrote to friends during her interment at the Westerbork transit camp poignantly describe the day-to-day horrors that the Jewish prisoners faced. Nevertheless, Ettys courage and determination remained strong, allowing her to rise above the hate around her and express her irrepressible faith in humanity. As she wrote in her last letter, thrown from the train that took her to her death at Auschwitz, We left the camp singing. Through this splendid edition of Ettys writing, edited by Klaas A.D. Smelik and translated by Arnold J. Pomerans, readers will resonate with the spirit of this remarkable woman.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Etty began life with the same silly angst and shallow aspirations that we endure each day. Then came the war and her experience as a Jew in Holland. The transformation of this young intellectual to a woman of great depth takes the reader on a soul journey of such transcendence that one's paradigms are forever changed. Add to the story a great and musical quality of writing and a brilliant mind. You have Etty, my heroine, my mentor.

A young woman who is running out of time writes about her experiences as a prisoner of the Nazis in a concentration camp in World War II in 1940s Europe. She responds to the demands of society and of life as she finds it in both its pedestrian and hopeful forms, while also musing about what a distracted God might be doing up in heaven as so many innocent people perish at the hands of so many cowardly and sadistic oppressors. Ultimately she converts to Catholicism and she dies in a concentration camp at the age of 29. Even with the crushing and depressing burden of a predatory society of captors constantly hovering over her, captors to whom she would soon succumb by her physical death, she wrote about life, social roles, her relationships with others and God prodigiously before her life was stolen from her in a dark place and a dark time by the human forces of evil. The strength she must have called upon to do this work while living in day to day oppression and unrelenting misery is stunning to imagine.

This book is one of the most touching and inspiring books I ever read. This book will touch the heart of anyone - whether Jew, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc. and even an atheist! The battle of a soul in those dark days (the German Occupation in the Second World War) trying to keep sane, asking herself how not to lose hope and remain human, avoiding hate, in spite of all that is going around her. This is a journey of a Soul from focusing in herself changing to focus in the world around her. I bought the book also for 3 friends of mine as a New Year present! P.S.: Since my English is NOT my mother tongue (I'm an Israeli), I'm apologizing in advance for spelling (and other mistakes). Thank you for understanding.

Because it's such a striking description (I could not say it better) I copy here the first part of the book description: "Commissioned by the Etty Hillesum Foundation, Etty is the only complete, unabridged edition of the letters and diaries of a singular hero--and victim--of the Nazi Holocaust. This fascinating, profound, and often moving body of work reveals the interior life of a brilliant. Born in January 1914, Etty Hillesum began her diary in 1941, nine months after Hitler invaded her home country of the Netherlands. The record she kept for the next two years contains arresting personal

reflections and chronicles her social, intellectual, and--most significantly--spiritual growth. In addition to her ongoing search for God and truth, one of the most noted and instructive features of Ettys development was her recognition of, and her struggle to overcome, the disorder within her own being. It was her success in finally transcending her own sense of captivity within that allowed her to rise above cruel and fearsome circumstances without."I read this book in Dutch, which is my native language. In the Netherlands many people are familiar with Anne Frank, and have read her diaries, but Etty Hillesum is not so well known. The way Etty writes Dutch feels amazingly fresh and modern. Her observations are often interesting and can be inspiring. She is Jewish but her Jewish identity is not prominent: it is her (universal) humanity which is prominent. As reader you feel that during the period she writes in her diary certain tensions/difficulties/challenges are confronted and more or less resolved. That is beautiful. She transcends the polarization between Jew and Nazi, between 'Nederlander' and 'Duitser'. She seeks and finds her way in a difficult time. People interested in honest accounts of personal/spiritual development and personal dealings with existential challenges will be pleased and inspired by 'Etty'. 'Etty' is an admirable authentic personal report of a gifted, young woman. I say this book deserves a firm place in the Dutch literary canon - but this is still an understatement. Etty Hillesum is a woman of all times and the value of this book is not confined to national borders. If you doubt whether to buy this book or 'An interrupted life' I very much advice to buy this one, because the latter is abridged and edited (around 1980) in such a way that it gives a distorted (idealized) image of Etty. Fortunately the complete 'Etty' is available in English since 2002.

This book is one of the most profound spiritual books. Etty shares herself in a most personal way in her diaries. I cannot imagine going through the horrors of the holocaust and staying as centered and sane as Etty. She did not only have a very high IQ (probably genius level), but she was a woman of wisdom. Etty struggled to not let the horrors affect her, but to still look up at the beauty of the sky or to smell the heather growing just outside the barbed wire fence. She looked at each German as an individual and did not become prejudiced against the German people. I have read this book many times since the 1980's and will read it again. Etty is a heroine. Although I only know her through this book, Etty is a like a sister; she is a friend. Sandra Nordgren

I read this book over twenty years ago and it remains one of the most inspirational books I've ever read. I lent it to a client who lost it so I must buy another. Thankfully it's still available.

THIS BOOK IS AMONG MY GREATEST TREASURES. WRITTEN DEEP DOWN - READING

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