



# Helga's Diary: A Young Girl's Account of Life in a Concentration Camp

*Helga Weiss*

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**“A sacred reminder of what so many millions suffered, and only a few survived.”—Adam Kirsch, *New Republic***

In 1939, Helga Weiss was a young Jewish schoolgirl in Prague. Along with some 45,000 Jews living in the city, Helga’s family endured the first wave of the Nazi invasion: her father was denied work; she was forbidden from attending regular school. As Helga witnessed the increasing Nazi brutality, she began documenting her experiences in a diary.

In 1941, Helga and her parents were sent to the concentration camp of Terezín. There, Helga continued to write with astonishing insight about her daily life: the squalid living quarters, the cruel rationing of food, and the executions—as well as the moments of joy and hope that persisted in even the worst conditions. In 1944, Helga and her family were sent to Auschwitz. Before she left, Helga’s uncle, who worked in the Terezín records department, hid her diary and drawings in a brick wall. Miraculously, he was able to reclaim them for her after the war.

Of the 15,000 children brought to Terezín and later deported to Auschwitz, only 100 survived. Helga was one of them. Reconstructed from her original notebooks, the diary is presented here in its entirety. With an introduction by Francine Prose, a revealing interview between translator Neil Bermel and Helga, and the artwork Helga made during her time at Terezín, *Helga's Diary* stands as a vivid and utterly unique historical document.

16 color paintings; 12 photographs

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