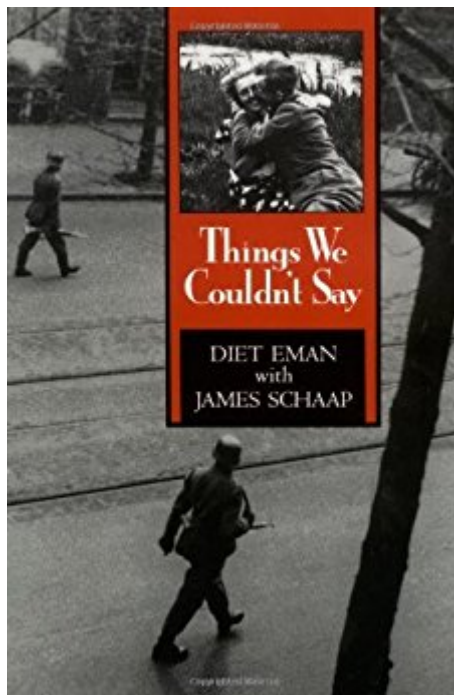


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Things We Couldn't Say



Synopsis

Things we couldn't say is the true story of Diet [pronounced Deet] Eman, a young Dutch woman who, with her fiancé, Hein Sietsma, risked everything to rescue Jews imperiled by Nazi persecution in occupied Holland during World War II. Throughout the years that Diet and Hein aided the Resistance - work that would cost Diet her freedom and Hein his life - their courageous effort ultimately saved the lives of hundreds of Dutch Jews. This book is Diet Eman's account of that tumultuous period. The first-person narrative vividly captures the events of her brave saga - from her initial engagement with Hein in the Resistance operation, to her eventual arrest and imprisonment at the Vught concentration camp, to the final grim toll of the war that devastated all of Europe. Diary entries that Diet and Hein logged during the war as well as excerpts from personal letters that passed between the two young lovers detail their thoughts and emotions during those years. Here is a story that has all the emotional impact of The Diary of Anne Frank and all the drama of The Hiding Place. Diet Eman's Things We Couldn't Say is an unforgettable story of heroism, faith, and - above all - love. It is also one of the great Christian stories of the twentieth century - the story of two people whose faith compelled them to stand up to the most sinister evil their generation has ever witnessed.

Book Information

File Size: 4151 KB

Print Length: 390 pages

Publisher: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing (June 30, 1994)

Publication Date: June 30, 1994

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B001ECQKIO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #317,274 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #69

in Books > History > Europe > Netherlands #350 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > World > Jewish > Holocaust #590 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs

Customer Reviews

I saw an interview of the writer on PBS and then looked up the book and found it was only a few dollars. But this book is truly amazing. It's hard to say positive things considering the subject. This book will take you through the events of this time in a way you've never been. It was riveting and page turning. My emotions were on a roller coaster. Her memory was recorded with dates and times through her detailed journaling all while it was happening. An incredibly brave and young Christian woman who felt she was doing God's work by working with the underground resistance proved that she was still as brave by sharing her story years later even though it was painful to relive. And at the heart of it all, this book is a love story. In the interview on PBS Diet Eman said the only reason she came forward with her journals is because she heard that there are people in America that don't believe the Holocaust existed. Her duty called her again to come forward with her story. I can't say enough about this book: I laughed, I cried, I was held in suspense- all from a biographical narrative. I bought this book a few times because I keep lending it to people and never getting it back, which is fine by me.

Diet Eman with James Schaap have written a marvelous account of her life in Holland from 1938 to the liberation in 1945 and after as "picking up the pieces". You might say "how can living under occupation be marvelous"? On the one hand, it was a horrible experience for both Christians and Jews but, on the other hand, it was marvelous. Diet Eman experienced the worse that man can offer and in spite of that reality in which she was immersed, she willingly and faithfully participated in a resistance movement - a movement unlike one would expect. This resistance movement, undertaken by Diet and her very dear Hein and others, is a willingness to face evil like lambs among wolves and turn to God for His wisdom, power and strength to do what He has called them to do for a time such as this - rescue the Jewish people of Holland - all He brought to her. In her own words: "But once we got fully involved in Underground activities, we often made mistakes when hiding Jews - especially in the early going. What did we know about it? Who did we ever have as teachers? We were really only a little older than the kids who had played at spying in our neighborhood in the Hague" - (pg 97). As a Christ follower, I was encouraged by Diet's story and testimony because it is really the testimony of God that He writes in the lives of those who put their trust in Him when they have nothing else to lean on and are called to do His work. It is a reminder that we are never able to do what He has asked outside of trusting in Him and leaning not on our own understanding. Diet

wanted to put this experience behind her and forget the pain. She was able to do so for a number of years until she heard Corrie ten Boon speak in her town in 1978 of her experiences and God's faithfulness. "After that my conscience started to gnaw, and it seemed that every time I opened the Bible something like 'Tell the great things I have done' stared me in the face. Then in the early nineties, many things happened that convinced me the book should be written" (pg. 327). The book begins with Diet as a school girl, a tomboy who liked to ride her bike into the country outside of The Hague, - as her mother said: "just a girl who thought real adventure was running in the woods and jumping sloten and certainly not interested in boys" (pg 16). What a beginning and what a training for the task that was to come before her. Traveling all over Holland, by bike and more often by foot, with ration cards, ID Cards and news, for her fellow resistance workers and her dear Jews who she cared for as a mother hen until the end of the occupation. As Jesus promised, He would not lose any that the Father had sent to Him, neither did Diet. Every one sent to her and her group, survived. Yet, her deeply loved fiance, Hein died in a German Concentration Camp at Dachau sometime in January 1945. "When I had heard of all the suffering Hein had to go through, I wondered why. Lord, was that necessary ? Why didn't he just get an honest bullet and have it over with ? Why was that necessary?" She talked to God and shared her anger and pain with her whys. "I told Him I wished too I were dead, like Hein. I asked Him, over and over, why it was necessary for Hein to suffer much." God responded in love and mercy and grace. "Then I began to receive letters from people I'd never known - farmers, pastors, other men from the Underground. They said that they had met her fiance in this camp or that camp, and that in the deepest misery they faced, Hein had spoken of his faith in God's promises. He was the light in their darkness" (pg320-321). In reading this book, this account of God's mercy, may you experience His light in whatever darkness you face. He always uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things in ways no one can anticipate or expect.

I'll confess my bias here, this story almost perfectly mirrors the story of two of my aunts, right down to the place she was jailed and the same concentration camp. It was a powerful story, well told!

This book centers around a Dutch WWII resistance member's remembrances of the German occupation. Ms. Eman speaks straightforwardly and simply, including journal entries that reveal a heart deeply committed to Christ, yet one that struggled to reconcile that with the horrific events she found herself in. This is not a rigorously detailed account of what it was like to be in a concentration camp as much as it is a moving example of one who stood fast until the end while performing great deeds for the cause of Christ. If you are tired of fluffy, "easy-believism" Christianity as manifested in

thousands of narcissistic self-help books today, this is an excellent and sobering look into real life - where questions are desperately asked, answers from the Almighty are not always forthcoming, yet faith submits to His sovereignty even without fully understanding.

"Things We Couldn't Say" was very interesting and hard to put down. Diet was heavily involved in The Underground work during World War II. She and her fiancé and others hid many Jews and downed Allied pilots in Holland . It was also necessary for her to travel (mostly bike) all over Holland to distribute false ID's and food ration cards. It was extremely dangerous work in dangerous times. Her story gives a clear picture of the horror, bravery, commitment and cost of those who worked to save the persecuted. Her Christian testimony stood firm and I found her story very inspirational. I highly recommend this book!!!

A thorough and moving account of struggles, heartbreaks, small triumphs, and ultimate vindication. Akin to Corrie Ten Boom's "The Hiding Place", this account tells the story of a daring woman with everything to lose, finding herself in the thick of the Resistance. Through firsthand accounts, diary entries, poetry, and scripture, Eman reflects on her experiences with the voice of a woman who has faced the dogs at Hell's gate, and found her way back to the light of day to tell her story that no man need suffer what befell her and those close to her. A must-read for anyone desiring a personal perspective on this crucial and formative historical period.

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