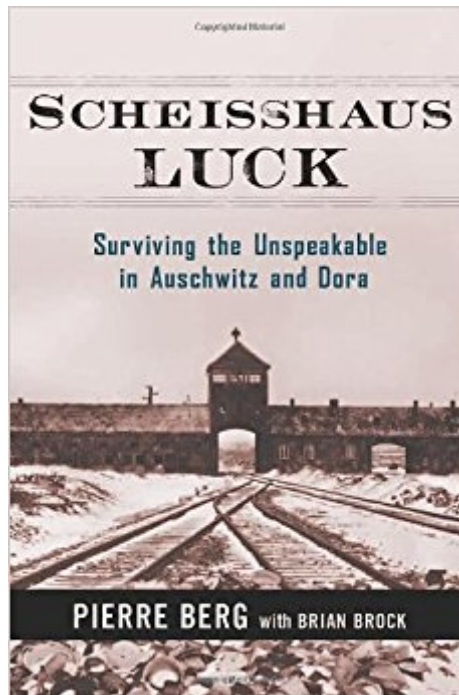




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Scheisshaus Luck: Surviving The Unspeakable In Auschwitz And Dora



Synopsis

In 1943, eighteen year old Pierre Berg picked the wrong time to visit a friend's house -- at the same time as the Gestapo. He was thrown into the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp. But through a mixture of savvy and chance, he managed to survive...and ultimately got out alive. "As far as I'm concerned," says Berg, "it was all shithouse luck, which is to say -- inelegantly -- that I kept landing on the right side of the randomness of life." Such begins the first memoir of a French gentile Holocaust survivor published in the U.S. Originally penned shortly after the war when memories were still fresh, Scheissshaus Luck recounts Berg's constant struggle in the camps, escaping death countless times while enduring inhumane conditions, exhaustive labor, and near starvation. The book takes readers through Berg's time in Auschwitz, his hair's breadth avoidance of Allied bombing raids, his harrowing "death march" out of Auschwitz to Dora, a slave labor camp (only to be placed in another forced labor camp manufacturing the Nazis' V1 & V2 rockets), and his eventual daring escape in the middle of a pitched battle between Nazi and Red Army forces. Utterly frank and tinged with irony, irreverence, and gallows humor, Scheissshaus Luck ranks in importance among the work of fellow survivors Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi. As we quickly approach the day when there will be no living eyewitnesses to the Nazi's "Final Solution," Berg's memoir stands as a searing reminder of how the Holocaust affected us all.

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Customer Reviews

"[A] harrowing story. A worthy supplement to the reports of Primo Levi and Elie

Wiesel." • Kirkus Reviews His memoir is one of the few available in English by a gentile

inmate of Auschwitz and an even rarer chronicle of experiences at the Dora plant. His insight into the workings of the Auschwitz black-market system and the relationship of the Kapos (camp trustees) to political and religious prisoners helps illuminate the corrupting effect of Nazi brutality on prisoners. Berg's personal journey from the emotional upheaval of being caught in a German sweep in Nice to the gradual deadening of his emotions as he struggled to survive among the worst concentration camps is compelling reading. Highly recommended. Library Journal "this is a fascinating story of survival against the worst of odds." --JT News

In 1943, eighteen year old Pierre Berg picked the wrong time to visit a friend's house at the same time as the Gestapo. He was thrown into the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp. But through a mixture of savvy and chance, he managed to survive...and ultimately got out alive. "As far as I'm concerned," says Berg, "it was all shithouse luck, which is to say inelegantly that I kept landing on the right side of the randomness of life." Such begins the first memoir of a French gentile Holocaust survivor published in the U.S. Originally penned shortly after the war when memories were still fresh, Scheisshaus Luck recounts Berg's constant struggle in the camps, escaping death countless times while enduring inhumane conditions, exhaustive labor, and near starvation. The book takes readers through Berg's time in Auschwitz, his hair's breadth avoidance of Allied bombing raids, his harrowing "death march" out of Auschwitz to Dora, a slave labor camp (only to be placed in another forced labor camp manufacturing the Nazis' V1 & V2 rockets), and his eventual daring escape in the middle of a pitched battle between Nazi and Red Army forces. Utterly frank and tinged with irony, irreverence, and gallows humor, Scheisshaus Luck ranks in importance among the work of fellow survivors Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi. As we quickly approach the day when there will be no living eyewitnesses to the Nazi's "Final Solution," Berg's memoir stands as a searing reminder of how the Holocaust affected us all.

This book is outstanding. The description of the horrors that Pierre had to endure are more than a miracle that he even survived. The strength that this young man possessed to enable him to survive is beyond description. I don't know the source from which he drew his strength and endurance. There are some descriptions of what happened in Auschwitz that the reader may find very disturbing. However, some of this material is written in the vernacular - just as it happened, so you

should be prepared for some off colored material. I'm sure the author did this to most realistically depict life in the camp. The descriptions of the kapos and how they took advantage of their own Jewish brethren is almost unbelievable. One might say that it was their own survival at stake. I've read numerous books on the holocaust and "the" most heart wrenching is the consistent attention to hunger. I personally appreciate the fact that in those instances where German is written, the author provides an English translation. It is inconceivable that any human being could even survive on the rations provided to these people. I challenge the readers to try to survive on these meager rations for just one week. And yet, these people endured it, with some help on the black market, for months and even years. I wholeheartedly recommend this book; well worth the read. E. A. Slanga

This is a brutal tale of the Holocaust told by an 18 year old French boy who was not Jewish but who was a courier in the resistance movement. Pierre was captured by the Gestapo because he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Simple as that. He is sent to Drancy to await sentencing and falls in love with Stella - who is Jewish. After they are separated the thought of finding her after the war ends keeps him going. That and the friendship he shares with an old classmate named Hubert when they reunite in Auschwitz. This story is not for the faint of heart. Pierre sees and experiences some truly horrific things. He has to help remove the body of a young Jehovah's Witness who committed suicide after being forced to work in the camp brothel. Someone is hanged in his place after he falls asleep on the job because the wrong number was written down. And his 1st job in prison was cleaning the toilets where the inmates threw feces at the walls and ceilings to get back at the Germans. After enduring prison, concentration camps, and a forced march during the middle of winter Pierre ascribes his survival not to God, not to love, but to *scheiss haus* luck. Just because. If you are looking for a happy ending then this isn't the book for you. If you want the full and unvarnished truth of life in the camps during WWII here it is.

This book seemed to me to be very much embellished in the telling. No one could possibly have remembered in such detail more than 60 years later. I stopped reading it at about 60%, which I rarely do. Most books I stick with until the end, but this one had one recurring "observation" that kept cropping up. It was that tiresome and juvenile description of various sexual accounts. These may or may not have actually happened, but they seemed so out of place in such vile and ruthless environments, almost sacrilegious. It read more like a novel than a survival memoir.

This book was simply riveting. As told from an 18 year old Atheist perspective, Pierre Berg's story is

fast paced and compelling. I could not put this book down. I have read many books by holocaust survivors but Pierre's story is different for several reasons. Pierre was not Jewish, he was a member of the French resistance and had pedaled his bike over to his Jewish classmates house for a quick friendly visit when the Gestapo burst into his friend's home and arrested all the occupants, poor Pierre had the "s***house" luck of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I had NO idea that 11 million people perished in the Holocaust, 6 million Jews and 5 million prisoners. Pierre had numerous coincidences that kept him alive, time and time again. Schesshaus (s***house) Luck is a book not to be missed. I had the good fortune of meeting Mr. Berg in person at our book group and he is as charming and witty today as he was when he was a teenager. I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to thank him in person for his important contribution to Holocaust literature.

The Devil, the Evil One, has many names. There is a sort of person in the world today who denies or seeks to minimize the Holocaust. They either deny the Holocaust altogether or they deny parts of it of relevance. This book by Berg and Brock, does neither of these things. It states the actuality of the Holocaust as an actual historical event and it plainly and baldly lays out the underlying evidence and foundation of evil...as it really happened, in time, in history. Berg gives the basic story of one person's narrative concerning day to day life in the Extermination Camp of Auschwitz and later on the Concentration Camp of Dora. The only exaggeration is in the plain description and non embellishment of the stark facts. This story is survival as it is experienced, one step at a time, one moment at a time, one breath at a time. Evil is a Reality and it lives in the real world. This book shows you the face of evil. And there are some in the world even now, even this day, who serve evil as their master...and deny that evil is right there before us all.... with a face. Berg's story would not have been told if it had not been for Brock. Berg was essential, But Brock was Necessary. Brock stands silently aside for the telling of the story (his face is not seen), but it is in his Silence that the truth (Brock's pure and determined Silence) that Silence is the foundation and witness of truth. Berg has the story only as an event. But it is Brock who raises event above Silence and makes it WORD. This is a remarkable book. It speaks the truth. There can be no higher praise among creative accomplishments.

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