



# HOLOCAUST LITERATURE CATALOGUE

Levels 9 – 12

The titles profiled in this catalogue are a select list recommended by the MHM Education team.



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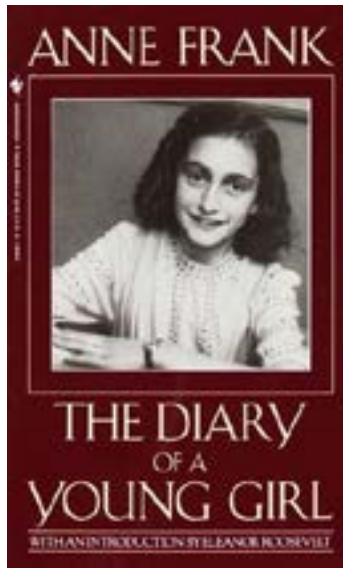
# About using Holocaust Classics

For generations, classic texts on the Holocaust have engaged, enlightened and challenged students. These enduring texts provide profound insights into the human consequences of prejudice, hatred and systemic violence. They not only illuminate history but foster empathy and critical thinking.

All are based on personal experience. In the case of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, younger students are transported into the intimate private world of a teenager in hiding.

In texts more suitable for older students, Elie Wiesel, Viktor Frankl and Primo Levi draw on their experiences as death camp survivors to pose deep moral and ethical questions and explore the human condition. More recently, Art Spiegelman's groundbreaking graphic novel *Maus* has engaged contemporary readers through highly sophisticated visual storytelling.

## The Classics



### Anne Frank – *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

**Recommended for strong readers age 11+ (Levels 6+) or EAL students**

Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* is a wonderful first book to encounter when studying the Holocaust. In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled their home in Amsterdam and went into hiding.

For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived cloistered in the "Secret Annexe" of an old office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom, the constant cruelties of living in confined quarters, and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences during this period. It is timeless in its appeal to students, but teachers might select extracts to use with their students.



### *Night* by Elie Wiesel

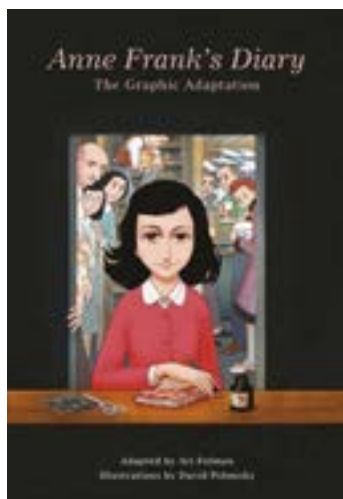
**Recommended for strong readers age 15+ (Levels 10-12)**

"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever."

This exceptionally written account is one of the most confronting, yet crucially important, Holocaust autobiographies ever written. Elie Wiesel tells his story about growing up in the small Hungarian town of Sighet, where towards the very end of the war, as a religious twelve-year-old, he saw Jews being rounded up and sent to their deaths. As Francois Mauriac wrote, we learn about, "the death of G-d in the soul of a child who suddenly discovers absolute evil."

This harrowing and heartbreaking memoir about Elie Wiesel's experiences in Auschwitz and Buchenwald is essential reading for older students studying the Holocaust.

## The Classics – Graphic Novels



### Anne Frank's Diary – The Graphic Adaptation

Recommended for age 10+ (Levels 5+)

“So, you are going to be the closest friend I never had in my life....and I'm going to call this friend Kitty.”

This first ever graphic edition of Anne Frank's story continues to capture the incredible spirit of this young girl. It contains extensive quotes from Anne's original edition and is accompanied by outstanding illustrations that help readers grasp this story, making it accessible to visual learners and reluctant readers.



### The Complete Maus by Art Spiegelman

This graphic novel contains some confronting content and is recommended for readers age 16+ (Levels 11-12)

This text is suitable for both senior History and English students in years 11 or 12 who have some basic knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. Although a graphic novel, *Maus* contains confronting content and themes and is not suitable for young students. If used with year 10 students, it is recommended that teachers select certain appropriate sections for discussion. *Maus* is sophisticated and allows for exploration on many different levels. It offers a deep insight into the horror of what Vladek and others suffered. It also examines how the Holocaust impacted the survivors but also on their children through trans-generational trauma. The use of the graphic novel to convey the complexities of the Holocaust is also worth investigating.

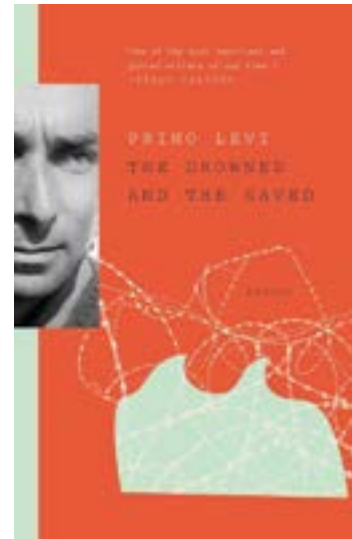
## The Classics - Advanced Students



### Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl

**Recommended for mature students age 16+ (Level 11+)**

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Based on his own experience and the stories of his patients, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. At the heart of his theory, known as logotherapy, is a conviction that the primary human drive is not pleasure but the pursuit of what we find meaningful. This powerful book is suitable for students who are interested in exploring themes of survival and resilience.



### 'The Grey Zone' in The Drowned and the Saved by Primo Levi

**Recommended for mature students age 16+ (Level 11+)**

This book is recommended for advanced students exploring how the Holocaust was humanly possible. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi tries to understand the rationale behind Auschwitz, Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen. Dismissing stereotyped images of brutal Nazi torturers and helpless victims, Levi draws extensively on his own experiences to delve into the minds and motives of oppressors and oppressed alike. In doing so, Levi warns readers about the 'human possibility' of Nazism (Cavell), and the circumstances that bear out this possibility when the line between good and evil in human beings is blurred. Describing the difficulty and shame of remembering, the exploitation of useless violence and the plight of the intellectual, Levi writes about the issues of power, mercy and guilt, and their effects on the lives of the ordinary people who suffered so incomprehensibly.



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# About using historical fiction

Historical fiction can provide a powerful and meaningful way for students to engage with the Holocaust. Age-appropriate fiction can evoke empathy and provide students with an understanding of some of the key themes and lessons from this period of history. Some of these are based on true stories; others are entirely fictitious but nevertheless authentic and enable exploration of deeper truths. MHM recommends only those texts that have been thoroughly researched and grounded in historical accuracy.

Some popular fictional texts are not recommended for the classroom because they are not historically accurate. These include *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas* and *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*.

## Historical Fiction



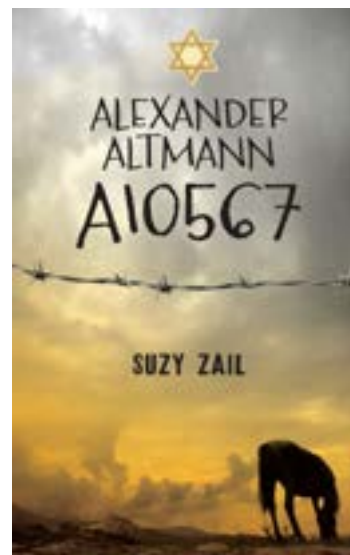
### I Am Sasha by Anita Selzer

**Recommended for age 13+ (Level 8+)**

This book is highly recommended for Level 9 students. *I am Sasha* is based on the incredible true story of what happened to Melbourne-based author Anita's father and grandmother during the Holocaust. It has real value for students trying to understand how this one family survived by going to extraordinary lengths.

Students will get a sense of how difficult and frightening it would have been. More than an amazing story of survival, Anita ensures that the story is placed in its historical context to provide a clear understanding of the events surrounding her father's survival. Students will read accurate historical details, which is important to get a clear understanding of the Holocaust.

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### Alexander Altmann A10567 by Suzy Zail

**Recommended for strong readers age 13+ (Level 8+)**

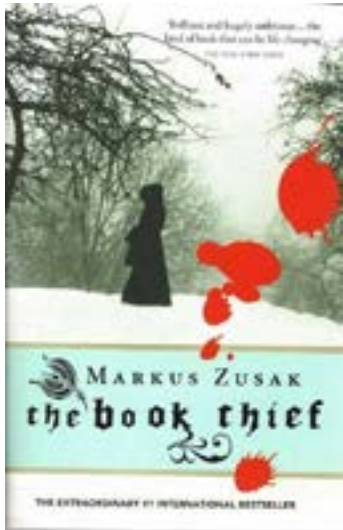
Suzy Zail's story about fourteen-year-old Alexander Altmann was inspired by the true story of Fred Steiner, an Auschwitz survivor she met at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum (previously Jewish Holocaust Centre) in Melbourne. It is an excellent example of Holocaust fiction.

"Alexander doesn't need to look at the number tattooed on his arm; he knows it by heart. And he hates it."

This carefully researched, moving novel will appeal to readers who want to make a personal connection to a teenage protagonist who defies the odds by working for the Nazi commander of the camp. The descriptive language is powerful and the reality that confronts Alexander is palpable. Suzy Zail is aware of her young audience and ensures that she takes her readers 'safely in and safely out' of the Holocaust.

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## Historical Fiction



### The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Recommended for readers age 15+  
(Levels 9-12)

*The Book Thief* is an exceptional story that takes place in 1939 in Nazi Germany. It is a story about the power of words and a young girl's passion for reading. The characters are extraordinary and demonstrate to the reader the impact the war had upon the lives of people living in Germany at this time. Interestingly, this novel is narrated by Death, itself a difficult concept to comprehend. This beautifully written story is a wonderful journey for students who are learning about World War Two. It introduces them to several concepts about the war that are cleverly woven throughout.

This book will grab the attention of readers from the very beginning. Marcus Zusak has written an outstanding and superbly crafted novel. This could be read by readers of all ages from 15 years and above.



### Inkflower by Suzy Zail

Recommended for readers age 14+  
(Levels 9+)

*Inkflower* is a powerful novel for Levels 9 and 10 that explores the lasting impact of the Holocaust on survivors and their families. It is based on Suzy Zail's own father, a Melbourne-based Holocaust survivor. The story follows Lisa, whose father only begins to speak about his Holocaust experience after being diagnosed with motor neurone disease. The novel challenges the assumption that life returned to normal after the Holocaust, showing how silence and trauma shaped both Lisa's father and Lisa herself. Lisa also struggles with her Jewish identity, fearing it may affect her friendships. The story's emotional ending highlights the healing power of vulnerability. *Inkflower* stands out for its authentic exploration of Holocaust-related themes, making it an excellent choice for classroom study.

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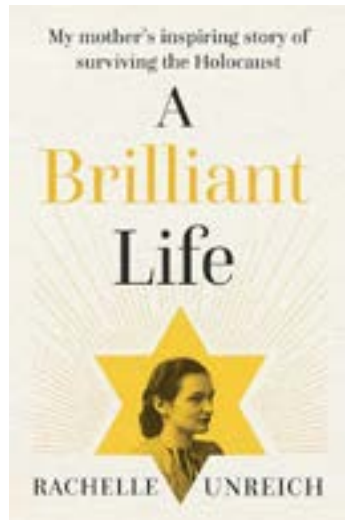


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# About Text Resources for Teachers

Some outstanding texts on the Holocaust have been published in recent years. In certain cases, these make exceptional resources for teachers without necessarily being appropriate for secondary students to read in their entirety. By judiciously selecting extracts, teachers can use these texts in their classrooms to explore key themes and lessons from the Holocaust.

## Text Resources for Teachers



### A Brilliant Life by Rachele Unreich

*A Brilliant Life* by renowned journalist Rachele Unreich traces the life of Melbourne-based Holocaust survivor and mother of Rachele, Mira Unreich. The text captures Mira's "inspiring story of surviving the Holocaust" through a series of questions posed by Rachele, which give shape and substance to the "brilliant life" her mother has led up to this point. Underlying Rachele's questions is the need to understand the extraordinary optimism, dignity and resilience she finds in her mother, as captured in Mira's comment that during the Holocaust, she "...learned about the goodness of people."

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Teachers need to be mindful that the details of Mira's survival, in this place where one million Jews were murdered, include numerous episodes, details and images that may upset some students. This is an inevitable consequence of writing such an authentically accurate account of one of the darkest events in human history.



### The Stable boy of Auschwitz By Henry Oster

*The Stable Boy of Auschwitz* is a memoir written by Henry Oster (then Heinz Adolf Oster). He was one of 2011 Jews deported from the German city of Cologne to the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. By the end of World War Two, only 23 were still alive, Henry among them. The memoir documents key phases of his life until his admission to optometry school in the 1950s in California.

This memoir contains confronting details that would make it unsuitable as a curriculum text or for a school library. These include descriptions of violence, including sexual violence in Auschwitz. It does, however, provide invaluable first-person testimony about five aspects essential to any educational Holocaust unit:

1. The removal of rights for Jews in Nazi Germany
2. Ghetto life
3. Death and labour camps
4. Liberation
5. Return to life

MHM recommends using teacher-selected extracts to explore these themes in detail.



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# About using memoirs

MHM recommends using memoirs as a reliable, humanising and powerful method of teaching the Holocaust. Memoirs complement traditional historical teaching by focusing on individual experiences, rather than abstract numbers and overwhelming statistics. Personal stories reveal the human consequences of prejudice, hatred and systemic violence.

They allow students to explore key themes of the Holocaust in a relatable way and develop a deeper understanding of its impact on individuals and their communities, and how people responded.

Inevitably, some of the content in Holocaust survivor memoirs is confronting and might not be appropriate for some student cohorts. When using memoirs, teachers should carefully select extracts to ensure their suitability for their classroom.

## Learning Through Memoir Project

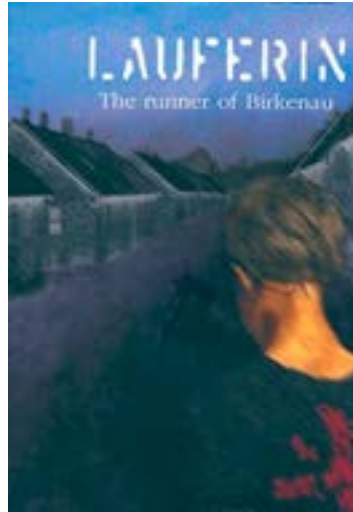
This free classroom resource is based on the memoirs of eight Melbourne-based Holocaust survivors. It is designed to complement traditional teaching by focusing on individual experiences, providing a relatable and humanising way of teaching the Holocaust. Extracts from each of the memoirs have been curated by MHM Holocaust educators to focus on key themes aligned with the Victorian curriculum. They are supported by scaffolded questions designed to extend student thinking and a suggested lesson plan.

[VIEW LEARNING THROUGH MEMOIRS PROJECT HERE >](#)

# Learning Through Memoir Project



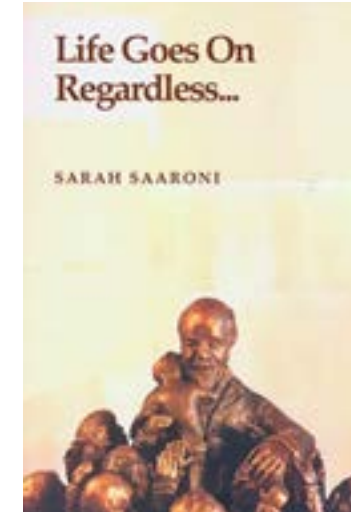
'There will be Tomorrow'  
Guta Goldstein  
[Click here to purchase](#)



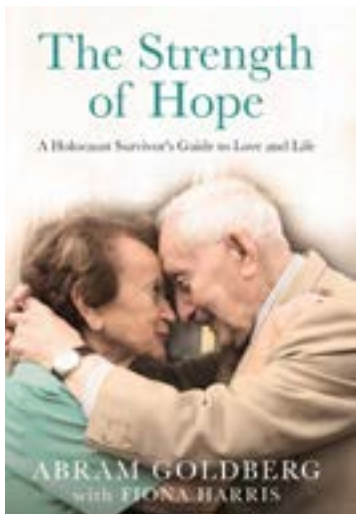
'Lauferin: The Runner of Birkenau'  
Lusia Habersfeld  
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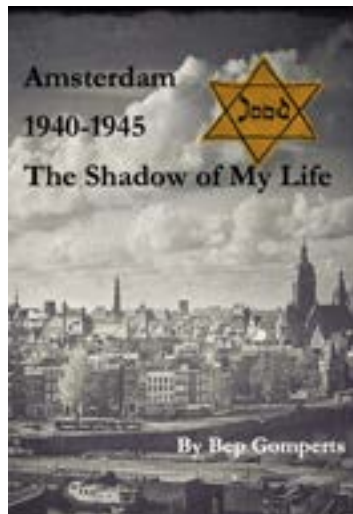
'Saviours: The Story of a Jewish Altar Boy'  
Henri Korn  
[Click here to purchase](#)



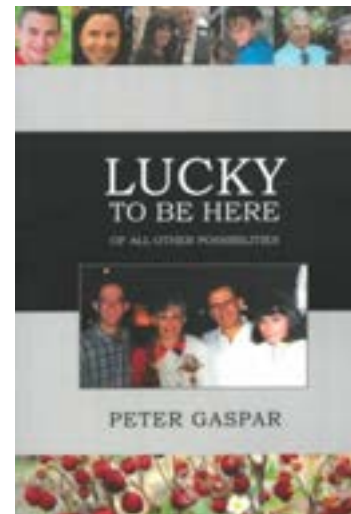
'Life Goes on Regardless...'  
Sarah Saaroni  
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'The Strength of Hope'  
Abram Goldberg  
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'Amsterdam 1940 - 1945: The Shadow of My Life'  
Bep Gomperts  
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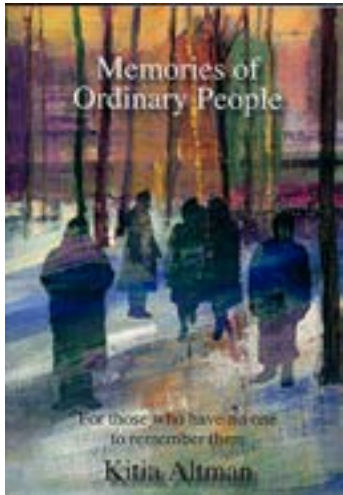


'Lucky To Be Here'  
Peter Gaspar  
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'Tell it to the Squirrels'  
Judy Kolt  
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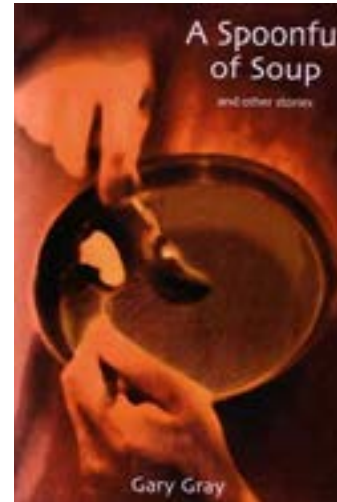
## Survivor Memoirs



### Memories of Ordinary People: For those who have no one to remember them by Kitia Altman OAM

This is a beautifully written memoir by Melbourne-based survivor Kitia Altman. Kitia paints a vivid picture of the ordinary people in her life who did not survive the Holocaust. The memoir is written in the form of vignettes as she chronologically moves through her happy childhood to the war years, liberation and creating a life in Australia. Although a long memoir, the vignettes are short. Teachers could allocate vignettes to students to read. Students could also complement this memoir by listening to Kitia's testimony.

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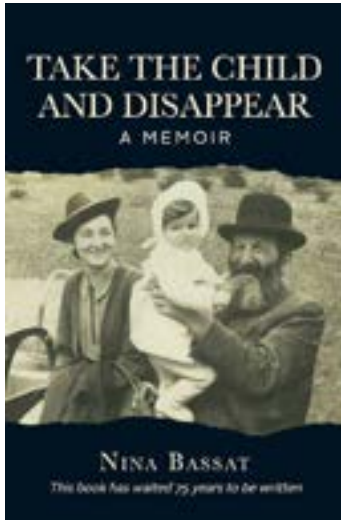
### A Spoonful of Soup and Other Stories by Gary Gray

Gary Gray was born in Sosnowiec, Poland. In April 1942, aged 13, he was incarcerated for three years in a number of slave labour concentration camps. During this time, he discovered that his parents and younger sister had died in Auschwitz in 1943. In 1958, in a remarkable sequence of events, two aunts living in Melbourne tracked him down and a year later he came to join them.

In 1986, Gary Gray began recording his war experiences in the form of short stories as a legacy for his three daughters. *A Spoonful of Soup* brings together all these stories. This memoir does not give a chronological account of Gary's experiences during the Holocaust, but allows teachers to select chapters as stand-alone vignettes, which explore the hardship and experiences Gary faced. It is written in a factual manner, although Gary injects humour into his recount, reflecting his warm personality.

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## Survivor Memoirs



### Take the Child and Disappear – A Memoir by Nina Bassat AM

This memoir of Melbourne-based survivor Nina Bassat allows students to engage and explore the Shoah (Holocaust) from multiple perspectives – before, during and after. As the author recounts her experiences and those of her family members, she contemplates the many ways being a child survivor has shaped her life, both consciously and unconsciously. There has always been a sense of dislocation, and some unresolved questions remain, the most troubling of which is: ‘Who am I and where do I belong?’ The book is also about Hadassa, Nina’s courageous and wise mother.

Nina Bassat was born in Lwów, Poland in 1939. The time and place has influenced much of her life and provides the background to her memoir.

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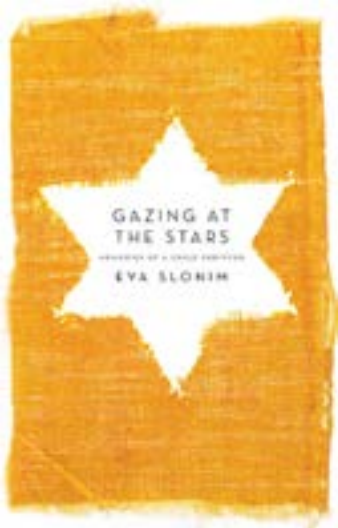


### Come Spring: an autobiographical novel by Maria Lewitt OAM

Maria Lewitt is a Melbourne-based Holocaust survivor who has written a powerful autobiographical novel based on her experiences of being a teenage girl during the Holocaust. Outside the concentration camps and mostly outside the ghetto, the adolescent heroine and her family experience the war as civilians with a secret. It is beautifully written, exploring many themes and ethical issues that occurred during the Holocaust. It is highly recommended for strong readers.

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## Survivor Memoirs

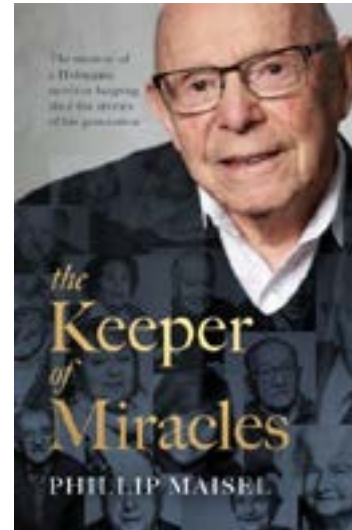


### **Gazing at the Stars by Eva Slonim OAM**

Narrated with the heartbreaking innocence of a young girl and the wisdom of an 83-year-old woman, *Gazing at the Stars* is a record of survival in the face of unimaginable evil. It is the culmination of Melbourne-based survivor Eva Slonim's lifelong commitment to educating the world about the Holocaust, and to keeping alive the memory of the many who perished.

This beautifully written and confronting memoir could be used in conjunction with *Night* by Elie Wiesel or on its own.

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### **The Keeper of Miracles by Phillip Maisel OAM**

In his memoir, Phillip advises us, 'Once you begin to look for the miracles in your life, you cannot stop to find them.' Phillip's optimism shines through the book, even as it details his darkest days.

This unique perspective is highlighted through the darkness of the Holocaust. Born in Vilna, modern Lithuania, in August 1922, Phillip was incarcerated in the Vilna Ghetto, and worked as a slave labourer in a number of camps. Despite experiencing cruelty and starvation Phillip does not hate or lose his hope for humanity. An inspirational memoir.

[Click here to purchase](#)



# THANK YOU

We appreciate your time in considering our recommendations. We are passionate about supporting meaningful and appropriate literature for your students.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with our educators if you have any questions.

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