



## The Tattooist of Auschwitz

*Heather Morris*

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## **The Tattooist of Auschwitz** Heather Morris

This beautiful, illuminating tale of hope and courage is based on interviews that were conducted with Holocaust survivor and Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooist Ludwig (Lale) Sokolov—an unforgettable love story in the midst of atrocity.

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a Tätowierer (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners.

Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism—but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive.

One day in July 1942, Lale, prisoner 32407, comforts a trembling young woman waiting in line to have the number 34902 tattooed onto her arm. Her name is Gita, and in that first encounter, Lale vows to somehow survive the camp and marry her.

A vivid, harrowing, and ultimately hopeful re-creation of Lale Sokolov's experiences as the man who tattooed the arms of thousands of prisoners with what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* is also a testament to the endurance of love and humanity under the darkest possible conditions.

## **The Tattooist of Auschwitz Details**

Date : Published September 4th 2018 by Harper Paperbacks (first published January 27th 2018)

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Author : Heather Morris

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## From Reader Review The Tattooist of Auschwitz for online ebook

### abby says

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of Holocaust fiction books in the English language alone. This is not the one to read.

This kind of book is hard to rate. It's based on the true story of Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew who volunteered to go to Auschwitz to save his older brother and, through a combination of true grit and luck, he's able to survive and even fall in love. Who wants to give the story of a Holocaust survivor just two stars? Isn't that a bit heartless?

But it's not subject of the book I'm rating. This book isn't well written. I wasn't surprised to learn that Heather Morris is a screenwriter, because she relies heavily on dialogue here and really struggles with prose (although, to be honest, the dialog leaves a lot to be desired, as well). Scenes change in the matter of a sentence, the dialogue often seems only broken with stage directions. There's no atmospheric build up. There's no sense of tension or urgency or terror. It was all very one-note. The characters, even Lale himself, are flat and poorly developed. The whole book felt very amateurish, and I cannot recommend it.

I received an advance copy of this book courtesy of the publisher and NetGalley.

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### Maria Espadinha says

Armas sem Balas

O Holocausto legou-nos um conjunto inestimável de histórias da vida real, que merecem ser lidas!

São testemunhos de humanos como nós que, quando coagidos a explorar limites, revelaram um potencial ilimitado.

Suportaram fome, torturas, espancamentos,... e — pior que tudo — um amanhã incógnito. Numa época de tamanhos horrores, acordar para cada dia, era uma vitória sobre a morte!

São histórias didácticas, onde aprendemos sobre nós mesmos. Revelam a força anímica que albergamos quando confrontados com situações de alto risco, demonstrando como as ações e sentimentos nobres — a solidariedade, a união, a entre-ajuda, a compaixão, a esperança, o amor,... — são fontes de poder inesgotável quando se trata de sobrevivência.

Os sobreviventes do holocausto foram mestres na luta com armas sem balas! São testemunhos duma força de alcance incomensurável, que desconhecemos mas temos. Uma força capaz de concretizar incríveis e impossíveis, quando devidamente manipulada — reside e cresce em nós, almejando ser encontrada, usada, e abusada!...

As histórias do holocausto são uma viagem a um infinito que nos pertence, e que imerso, clama por emergir!...

E agora, eis chegado o instante de stop ? para aqueles que pretendem entregar-se a esta leitura num estado o mais tábua rasa possível, pois não resisto a falar-vos um pouco desta divina história de amor, que aconteceu em Auschwitz:

É verdade, sim!...

Uma história de amor que sucedeu num campo de concentração nazi!

Num local de torturas, espâncamentos e gente sub-subnutrida, o amor acontece!...

Este sentimento que já conta com milénios de existência, não se cansa de nos surpreender com a sua resistência e ousadia!...

Bem!... Adiante!...

Os protagonistas da história são Lale e Gita:

Lale é o Tatuador de Auschwitz — o prisioneiro judeu encarregado de tatuar os restantes prisioneiros do campo, com os números que os identificam.

Um dia, uma beldade judia de olhos castanhos ( Gita) encontrava-se na fila dos presos para tatuar, e... naquele instante em que o sedutor Lale se apercebeu da sua presença, foi amor espontâneo — Lale tatuava-lhe o braço, enquanto o olhar brilhante de Gita lhe tatava o coração!

Nesse momento mágico, Lale soube que iria sobreviver e construir uma vida com Gita, porque o Amor é mesmo assim — profetiza certezas infundadas! Simplesmente sabe-se, e pronto!

E de facto assim foi — Lale e Gita sobreviveram e reencontraram-se, por obra, graça e magia desse nobre sentimento, que dá pelo nome de Amor!...

6 milhões de judeus pereceram no Holocausto!

Lale e Gita sobreviveram!

Em tempo de guerra, o Amor é arma sem balas!!!

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### **Elyse Walters says**

Audiobook....narrated by Richard Armitage....( done well):

Survivors guilt.....

a lifetime traumatic tattoo for a tattoo artist.....

Incapable of being apprehended by the mind of the senses.

Stories that need to be told....

This one sat for many years - decades - untold...

Shame - love - guilt - survival - Love ..... it's all here.

Thank you to the 'already' moving & thoughtful reviews which came before me. Sad - Beautiful- powerful - emotional - honest reviews.

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## Fran says

The German government needed workers for their labor camps. In 1942, all families in Slovakia were ordered to provide a child eighteen or older for work detail or risk having the entire family sent to concentration camp. Lale Sokolov hoped that by going to Prague to await these instructions his family would be safe. He did not expect to be forced into a cattle wagon and be transported to Auschwitz. He was determined to do as he was told, reveal little about himself and always be observant.

Lale's upbeat manner as well as deference to his capo helped him secure the job of "Tetovierer", the tattooist. Rules: Look down. Be quick and efficiently tattoo the five numbers written on each person's piece of paper. In order to survive, he had to defile innocent people. The job of "Tetovierer" did have some perks. Lale was given his own room and increased food rations which he hid under his sleeve to distribute to others when possible. One day, Lale saw a girl with the darkest brown eyes. Gita. He made a vow to himself. He will leave Auschwitz a free man. He has just met the love of his life!

Through cunning, luck and love, Lale is instrumental in setting up a barter system with paid bricklayers, Victor and Yuri. Food and medicine are exchanged for gems and currency smuggled out of the "Canada" building where some of Gita's friends work to empty the pockets of clothing from new arrivals at Auschwitz. Diamonds and chocolate entice an occasional guard or capo as well.

"The Tattooist of Auschwitz" by Heather Morris is based upon the harrowing experiences of Lale Sokolov in Auschwitz and Birkenau. The chilling accounts of total disregard for life are occasionally tempered by selfless goodness and sacrifice without which Lale and Gita's love story could not have been told. This slim tome documents less familiar aspects of Holocaust literature. A must read.

Thank you Bonnier Zaffre and Net Galley for the opportunity to read and review "The Tattooist of Auschwitz".

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## Cheri says

**"Based on an incredible true story"** as this states on the cover, this is the story of Lale Sokolov and Gita, the woman who he meets at Auschwitz, both prisoners there. At first Lale is working on a roof, and this is what he does for a while until his kapo says he needs a boy to do his bidding, run errands, bring him food and the like. Then fate intervenes somewhat again for Lale when he becomes the tattooist, the *Tätowierer* for both Auschwitz and Birkenau, a position under the Political Wing that answers only to Berlin.

He meets Gita, whom he only knows by the number he tattooed to her arm, no words exchanged of course. A slip of paper with the number that was to be permanently marked on her skin were the only words that accompanied her. Eventually, he manages to introduce himself through channels and messages passed. Eventually an infatuation turns to love.

**"Choosing to live is an act of defiance, a form of heroism."**

But love is not the only emotion he feels there, having to stand by as the likes of Mengele get pleasure from inflicting terror and humiliation on all, but especially the female prisoners. Impotent rage, horror, fear, sympathy and an overwhelming sense of powerlessness engulf him, not only for him, but for all those

prisoners subjected to the torture, abuse, humiliation.

***"The twinkling of stars overhead is no longer a comfort. They merely remind him of the chasm between what life can be and what it is now."***

I've never been to Auschwitz or Birkenau, but many years ago I went to Dachau when I was in Munich on business. A group of us went there together, even the memory it still makes it hard for me to breathe. Photographs of the conditions, of how it appeared for those who were held captive – not so much living, but barely existing there. Each had their own stories, but we don't often have access to an account such as this one, which makes it all the more important. That these people are more than just numbers to be totaled, they are people who loved, who were loved and had hopes and dreams.

My deepest respect goes to the author for having the compassion and emotional stamina to hear these stories directly from Lale Sokolov, and bring these stories to us in such a truly lovely ode to love and the will to survive. Lale's story broke my heart into a hundred pieces and then you somehow managed to put it back together again in this poignant story of the saving grace of a love found even in the darkest of times.

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Many thanks for the ARC provided by Bonnier Publishing Australia / Echo

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### **Debra says**

I'll never hear Yiddish again....

I'll never go to the German Consulate with her again...

I'm gutted reading this book. To some I have shared that my family's "MA" was in Auschwitz (everyone called her MA - her daughters, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, her friends, etc.). She used to say "I have lost everything that can ever be lost" and "I have given everything can that ever be given". She passed away in 2017 at the age of 95. We just had her headstone unveiling. This was probably not the best book for me to read at this time - but then again maybe it was...In the last years of her life, I would go with her to the German Consulate to prove she was still alive, so she could continue receiving her reparation checks. She would get dressed in her best outfit and walk in proudly to announce she was still alive. There used to be a long line of survivors waiting to go in, the last time I went with her, we were the only ones in the waiting room. I used to dread going there with her. It was a production. Days before she would get her hair washed and set, the day of she would get up early and do her makeup and fuss over her outfit. I would always say "why do you dress up to go there?" She would always say "I am proud of who I am." and tell me not to embarrass her by wearing my "schmata" and would it kill me to put on a little red lipstick. Then she would announce to everyone in the room that I was her granddaughter. Now I will never go again. Last year we had our first Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and Christmas without her (I have a half Jewish - half Christian family). There are not many survivors left in the world which is why I am glad that books like this exist.

"To Save one is to save the world."

This book is based on a true story. I always love books based on true stories. In many ways, I think they are

the best kind. I also love the pictures of Lale and Gita Sokolov. Lale told his story over the course of three years to the Author. Lale became the Tatowierer "Tattooist" of Auschwitz and Birkenau. Being the tattooist gives him special perks - more rations, better sleeping conditions, ability to move around the camp more freely. He also was able to exchange the money and prized possessions of those who died in the gas chambers for food and medicine. He was generous and provided for many. He saved lives and I wonder how many survived due to him acquiring medicine and extra food for them.

While giving a tattoo, he meets Gita and feels an instant attraction to her. This book is not only a book about survival during the bleakest of times, it is about triumph of the human spirit, about being pushed to the breaking point but never breaking, about love, about compassion for others, about hope, about losing your faith and about never losing your faith. It also shows brutality, hatred, and evil but what I hope people take away is the compassion, strength, dignity and resilience that Lale and so many others named in this book showed. This book is about a lot of things but mainly one man's inner strength which allowed him to go on, to never give up, to have compassion for others, who risked his life many times to help others. During the darkest times, there will always be those who shine and Lale Sokolov was one of those.

Like many survivors, Lale and Gita moved around until they found their place in Australia, began a family and lead a happy and successful life. Lale proved to have "nine lives" and I was happy to see that he was able to prosper and be reconnected with Gita after the war.

I thought this book was well written and I was sucked me into Lale's world. Although there are scenes of violence and murder/killings, they are not incredibly graphic. With any book dealing with the Holocaust, you know it is going to be sad and scenes are going pull at your heartstrings. This one will as well. I think most will really enjoy this book and hopefully learn a few things. For instance, I always thought the tattoos were put on using crude tattoo machines/guns similar to the one used when I got a tattoo. I was wrong. My family member never talked about it. I wonder did Lale give Ma her tattoo? Who knows.?

I think reading the Author's note at the end of the book is beneficial. Again, there are pictures of Lale and Gita there. It was nice to put faces with the names. When reading books such as this, I think most readers will wonder, could they have survived. I believe most of us will never know what we are capable of until we are placed to the test. God willing, none of us are ever placed to this test.

4.5 stars

I received a copy of this book from Bonner Publishing Australia and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

See more of my reviews at [www.openbookpost.com](http://www.openbookpost.com)

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### **Angela M says**

Right after I started reading this book there was a story on the local news about a new exhibit at the Jewish Community Center in our area. The exhibit highlights the Holocaust survivors from this area. At kiosks you can click on a name, read a bio but what struck me the most was that you can also see a video of the survivor telling their story. The utmost importance of these stories is reflected at the beginning of this book by author Graeme Simsion: "It reminds us that every one of the unimaginably large number of Holocaust victims was

an individual with a unique story...." . It's really not possible to know what it was like in Auschwitz or the other camps no matter how much we read about the Holocaust, but it is through the stories of the survivors that we can try to understand, even if only a little . Heather Morris has retold the story of Lale Sokolov, a Jewish prisoner at Auschwitz who becomes the camp tattooist and while there finds the love of his life, Gita. This stared out as a screenplay she wrote as Lale told her his story and has been developed into this "novel".

Lale from the first day he arrives in Auschwitz by cattle car, makes a vow to himself that he would survive this and after falling in love with Gita, he makes a promise to her that they will have a life together when they are out . That he can speak multiple languages saves Lale multiple times as well as connections made with other people imprisoned, with workers from the outside and even a German guard. With jewelry and cash gotten from the women who work in the building where belongings are sorted, Lale with his savvy, his courage and with some luck barters for time with Gita for the price of chocolate, a piece of sausage , a hunk of bread, a diamond or ruby. But he also provides as much food as he can to others. He helps many people along the way putting himself in danger each day as each day he tattoos numbers onto the arms of the new inhabitants. He does seem to have an existence in some ways better than most in the camp and better than when he first arrived until he is caught with the jewels. It is obvious that he survives, so there's no spoiler here that Lale continues to have the capacity for hope and love that seems impossible as he endures.

This is a story told with love about courage in the face of the horrors of the camps and loss of family, courage sustained by the strength of the human spirit and it's a love story that I'll never forget. There is not much more I can say other than what Lale himself tells Morris - that he wanted his story recorded so "It would never happen again."

I received an advanced copy of this book from Bonnie Zaffre through NetGalley.

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### **Charlotte May says**

*"If you wake up in the morning, it is a good day."*

This was a really tough novel to read - I mean obviously, it is set in Auschwtiz - it was hardly going to be a walk in the park!

I don't think I quite prepared myself, or wasn't able to entirely remove myself from the novel, so became completely invested and because of this, it absolutely tore me apart.

Based on a true story - Lale uses his education and knowledge of languages to get himself a job as the Tatowierer after each Jewish family must volunteer one young male for 'work'. This 'work' turns out to be the concentration camps on Auschwitz and Birkenau.

We witness first hand the atrocities Lale sees happen, and also the cruelty and torture he endures at the hands of the Nazi's. Despite knowing this was a 'memoir' of sorts, and that Lale would eventually escape, I was still terrified when reading this. Books like this need to be published and read, as I think that despite everyone knowing what the Holocaust was, I think people might be in danger of forgetting just how truly horrifying it was, and the lowest depths of humanity.

Though not always 100% gripping, I feel that it added to storytelling. Not everyday was filled with violence, some days nothing happened at all - and the prisoners whiled away the days, too starved or beaten to really do anything. Non-fiction books aren't always designed to be enthralling, and for me this story's purpose was

more for education and the sharing of someone's past, rather than to simply entertain the reader.

I've seen a few reviews commenting on the writing style, how it is written quite factually rather than emotionally, and to be honest I do agree. It is written more as a timeline, than a novel. There is a lot of focus on the romance, where I would have rather had more info on the other prisoners/conditions etc. But I understand it was done this way because it is the couple's story to tell; I just would have preferred more detail in other places. (view spoiler)

3.5 stars

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*"Politics will help you understand the world until you don't understand it anymore, and then it will get you thrown into a prison camp. Politics and religion both."*

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### **jessica says**

what a comfort it is to know that, even in the most desperate and tragically unfathomable of circumstances, love and hope are possible and can be found.

this was a truly touching story about lale and gita and how the love they found for each other in auschwitz helped them survive. the story is based on true events, information gathered from lales interviews with the author. lale waited until after the death of gita to open up about his experiences due to fear of being perceived as a nazi sympathiser. but goodness, this was a story that needed to be told.

and i feel rather heartless giving a book with that sort of gravity anything less than 5 stars, but i was very let down when it came to the writing and the way the story was told. i would have much rather heard the story told from lale himself, as i dont think heather morris did his story justice. the writing was very flat and didnt evoke the sense of emotion i would have hoped for from a story as memorable as this.

regardless, i am still grateful i read this, for there were so many valuable lessons within this book. lessons on what it means to be human, how far one would go to survive, how love can be found anywhere, and most importantly, the power of hope.

**? 3.5 stars**

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### **Kylie D says**

A unsettling but gripping novel, based on the true story of Lale, a Slovakian Jew caught up in the horrors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp during WW2. He speaks several languages, so soon finds himself employed in the camp as the tattooist, the man responsible for inscribing prisoners numbers on their arms. He soon meets and falls in love with Gita, a fellow inmate., but can their love survive the horrors of life inside a concentration camp?

This is a beautifully told tale, Helen Morris captures the essence of the camp well. I visited Auschwitz-Birkenau earlier this year and found it to be chilling and disturbing. One can only speculate at the deranged minds of those that caused such suffering. I read through this book it quickly in one sitting, and though it

outlines the horrors of war, it shows the strength of the human spirit, and that there is always something to hope for. Highly recommended, this is one that will stay with you for a long time.

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### **Mary Beth \*Traveling Sister\* says**

4.5 stars!!

This is a historical fiction novel based on a true story. Lale Sokolov tells his story based on true events. He became the main tattooist of Auschwitz and falls in love at first sight with Gita who he first met tattooing her arm. He tattoos all the new prisoners with their identification numbers. Lale is a Jew. He is on the first transport of men from Slovakia to Auschwitz in 1942. The concentration camp was very horrifying. Lale did have some special privileges, since he was the tattooist. He had lots of freedom than the other prisoners. He was so brave and had lots of courage. He would exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep others alive. If he was caught he would of been killed. Many prisoners owed him their survival. He was a leader among the other prisoners.

Their are some graphic scenes that are a little dark. This book stands out from other Holocaust related novels. It is an emotional read. The Nazi guards are monsters, they kill and hurt human beings. Lale was determined to survive. This is a terrible story but it also is a story of hope and courage.

I really did love this story. It was almost like reading a memoir, but a little different than a memoir. This story is an emotional read, but I also found it uplifting at times.

The Holocaust was horrific and couldn't believe all the awful things that happened in the concentration camp. I would say this is a safer read than other Holocaust novels.

I really loved Lale's true story. I am so happy that the author spent a lot of time with him, to tell his story.

She really did an amazing job on his character. All the characters were very well done and made this novel come alive. I loved the love story between Lale and Gita and how they fall in love at first sight. I love a romance in a novel only when there is lots of suspense. Its always the suspense that I am looking for and this one has ok plenty of it.

I felt so sad for Cilka, and everything she went through. I also felt sad for Leon. There are some scenes that are graphic but this is the Holocaust, a horrifying time and as I mentioned before this is a safer read than other Holocaust books.

I could not put this book down. It was a page turner. I loved the writing style. I am really loving historical novels more and more because I think they are needed because we need to remember what happened so that history isn't forgotten.

This was a Traveling Sister read and I loved reading this with them and it was a wonderful discussion. This is a great book to do as a group read.

I want to thank Netgalley, the publisher and Heather Morris for a copy of this book in exchange for a honest review.

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## Natalie Manuel says

What a waste of an amazing story on an incapable writer. There is no 'prose', there is really just "he did this, and then he did that". No depth of emotion, no depth of characters, heck - no characters! I couldn't tell you ONE personality trait of Gita's. Lale also, is so thinly drawn I know nothing about him other than he is supposedly charming.

The dialogue between characters is ridiculously empty and the whole thing feels like the most superficial experience of Auschwitz possible.

The love story, which I'm sure had depth and feeling in real life, is like a disney retelling.

A sad sad waste :(

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## Sean Barrs the Bookdragon says

### This is an incredible book with a story that demands to be heard.

The year is 2018 and it gladdens me that books like this are still being written. It's important that we never forget Auschwitz and that we never forget the war crimes Nazi Germany committed. Why? Because we need to know and understand what humanity is capable of, we need to know what extreme hate looks like so we can work towards building a world free from it. This is one of our darkest hours, and we need to remember it.

This is a true story. The characters were real people. They were plucked from the mind of a dying old man (who is also the protagonist) who wanted his story to be heard by the world. It took him over seventy years to muster the courage to tell it, Morris is the instrument of his words. So this isn't a book that dramatises the events or capitalises on the situation in order to sell a thrilling piece of fiction; it simply portrays the horrors as they were: it doesn't need to be exaggerated because it is in itself so horrifyingly real. We all know about Auschwitz, though there is something intimate about this particular story.

*"How can someone do this to another human being? He wonders if for the rest of his life, be it short or long, he will be defined by this moment, this irregular number: 32407."*

Lale was the man responsible for tattooing identity numbers onto new entries into Auschwitz. It's a role he hated, one where he felt like a collaborator as he defiled the bodies of innocent with the ink of the enemy, though it is also a role that afforded him many benefits. He was given a position of trust and was able to move around the camps at will. As such he smuggled in extra food rations for those that needed it most. He brought them medicine and aid whenever he could, consolation for living apart from those that suffered the most.

The narrative was incredibly tense because death was never far away. All it took was one annoyed guard to raise his rifle and pull his trigger, and that's it: it's all over. Death came randomly. There was no system, just merciless killing at the whim of the oppressors. Doctor Mendel (Doctor Death) was the best example. He was an evil man, cold and fear inducing. Whenever he entered a scene the trepidation of the characters was palpable. It's like the temperature dropped. Morris did wonders to capture the presence of such a callous

man.

With all darkness, there comes light. In the depths of the death camp there is also life, love and family: three things we all need to stay alive. Despite how cruelly the Jews were treated, despite how far they were objectified and made to feel less than human, they still managed to cling onto their identities and the very things that make them who they are. Hope endured for some, hope that they would some day be liberated and have the opportunity to begin a new life. And that's exactly what makes the hero of the novel so compelling. He never loses his optimism. He never stops trying to help people.

***"To save one is to save the world."***

His love for his wife Gita kept him from dropping dead. And it wasn't until she died in real life, many years later, that he released their story. And it's very powerful one.

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### **Tammy says**

I recall, as a child, accompanying one or the other of my parents to our family jeweler countless times. It seemed as if some piece always needed to be repaired or purchased for one occasion or another. For my tenth birthday I received a small sapphire and diamond ring which was too large and needed to be resized. One day after school off we went to see Marty and Irv. It was an unseasonably warm fall day and Irv had his shirtsleeves rolled up. When he placed his arm on the glass countertop, I saw the tattooed numbers on his arm for the very first time. I felt, also for the first time, a cold clenching my stomach. That very day, at the age of ten, I had watched *Night and Fog* as part of my fifth grade curriculum and my physical reaction was the painful shock of recognition. It was disturbing to me that this kind and gentle man had been subjected to and survived the death camps. I was raised to be a polite child so I didn't say anything but I do remember having a serious conversation with my mother about it on our way home.

This experience, which is still so vivid to me, is one of the many reasons I find it difficult to rate 'based on true' accounts about the holocaust. What I will say about this book is that it tells a story of hope amid horror. I will also say that the writing is sophomoric. However, I do think this is a book that is well suited for young teens as an introduction to this very dark part of history.

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### **Miriam Smith says**

Considering "The Tattooist of Auschwitz" is a harrowing true story, it was truly compelling and utterly unputdownable. It's without a doubt one of only a few books that will stay with me a very long time, it's that unforgettable and one that keeps you thinking about the story well after you've put it down. Lale Sokolov is a well dressed, charming ladies' man - however he is also a Jew. On arrival at Auschwitz in 1942 he immediately stands out to his fellow prisoners who save his life when he takes ill. In the camp he is put to work in the privileged position of the 'Tatowierer' - the tattooist - to mark his fellow prisoners as they arrive in camp. One of them is a girl called Gita who captures his heart immediately. Given a reason to survive Lale uses his position for the greater good even through struggles and extreme suffering, with the hope of one day being with Gita forever, outside of the camp.

Although upsetting, saddening and at times quite unimaginable, there is such a beautiful love story at the heart of the tale that you can't help smiling at. I immediately took to all the real life characters, they were excellently portrayed whether good or bad and could imagine the whole true scenario with such clarity. The author Heather Morris took several years to write Lale's story in her book with the input of the main protagonist himself and even becoming a very good friend with him. She has ultimately written a story Lale would be very proud of and which tells of his and Gita's tale of wanting to be together through one of the worst and sickening periods of our history with the utmost care and consideration. Compassionately written with sensitivity, its emotive, thought provoking, awe inspiring and certainly puts your own everyday problems into perspective.

This book wasn't as brutal and as hard hitting as some holocaust books I've read although equally saddening, therefore I feel this could be read by slightly younger readers without offending or upsetting.

I really can't recommend this stunning book highly enough, it a definite must read for 2018 and it gets a fantastic 5 stars for a heart wrenching unforgettable read.

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