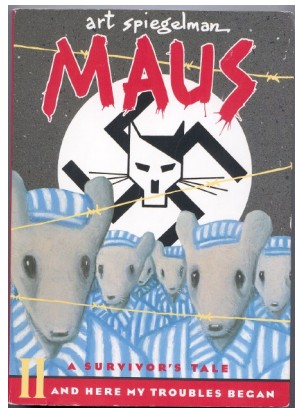


# Student Reviews

## Maus



Sarah Golub, Cold Spring Harbor High School

Before the February vacation this year, my English class had been reading the book *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, as we were studying the Holocaust. During one of our class discussions, my English teacher suggested that we read the book *Maus*, written by Art Spiegelman. This book was first described to me as a cartoon about the Holocaust; and this is, technically, what it appears to be. When I first heard this belittling description, I have to admit that I was not particularly inclined to read it. But when I began to read through each page and examine every detail of a survivor's life through the Holocaust, I was shocked.

In this story, Art Spiegelman has chosen an animal for each different culture of people in Europe at the time of the Holocaust. He has used mice for Jews, cats for the German Nazis, and pigs to represent the Poles. This is a very interesting way of revealing each person's significance and background in the story, and it only involves a quick glance at the illustration. In *Maus*, Art Spiegelman tells the story of his father's struggle during the Holocaust. Through his drawings and captions, he is able to convey the graveness of this tragic event in a way that no other author has done before. He shows the reader how truly horrible the Holocaust was as he really expresses the difficulties that lie with those who have known and felt the pain of family members who have endured it.

After reading this book, I feel that I now have a new perspective of the Holocaust and what it must feel like for someone special to you to have survived this terrible occurrence. I would strongly recommend *Maus* to anyone interested in a reading about the Holocaust from a new and unique point of view.

## Rose Blanche

Katie Basile, Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York

The children's book, *Rose Blanche* by Roberto Innocenti, is written at a very informative level for its age group. It shows a creative way of telling the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of a child. This perspective makes it easy for children reading the book to relate to it. A child who reads this book will have a good background for further learning of the Holocaust. It isn't too graphic or gory but is still truly informative. The illustrations are outstanding and show great detail. The reading is on an easy level and can be understood by many age groups.

This book is about a little girl named Rose Blanche. She lives in a town that becomes invaded with tanks. She talks about the loud noises and the diesel oil smell. These are simple concepts that children can relate to. When reading about the foul smell and noise, young readers would think about how they wouldn't like that to happen to them. This is easier for a child to relate to than the more complex concepts such as the invasions of countries or restriction laws. One day, Rose follows a little boy, and through the woods she comes across a concentration camp. All that she sees are people who are hungry. Since this is a child's book, the book does not mention the gas chambers or furnaces, but only shows the hunger. Rose Blanche tries to help the people and that is one reason why this book is important.



## To Life

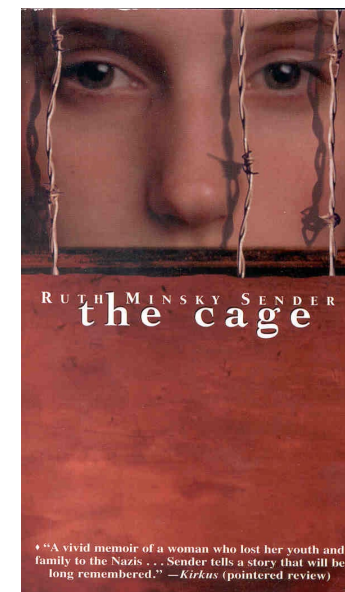
Lauren Iannucci, Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York

Ruth Minsky Sender, Aladdin Paperbacks, New York, March 2000, copyright 1988, ISBN 0-689-83282-6, 232 pages. Ruth "Riva" Sender, Holocaust survivor and author of *The Cage*, has written another unforgettable memoir about her experiences before, during and after Hitler's rule. *To Life* takes place after Riva was liberated from Grafenort by the Russians. She describes the pain and joy she experienced while trying to rebuild her life. Ruth Sender writes about the Holocaust so that we might never forget it.

While Riva was a prisoner in concentration camps, she and the other women dreamed about the day when they would be set free. They trusted that the world would welcome them. The reality was that although they had regained their freedom, they had nothing to return to--no home, no possessions, and little or no family. They were forced to live in Displaced Persons' Camps, many on the site of former concentration camps.

Riva was constantly searching for her family and friends, "...I study the faces of those around me. The pain and horror of the past, the bewilderment of the present are written in their forever-searching eyes. Will the pain ever subside?"

Riva was lucky and managed to be reunited with three of her siblings. She found joy from her husband and the new generation they were building. Despite its sadness, *To Life* is a book about hope. It is also a book to remember.



## The Cage

Marissa Prianti, Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York

In the front of this memoir there is a poem by Ruth Sender entitled "Why?" As I read the first ten chapters of this book I kept asking the same question. Why? How could human beings stand indifferently by as the same members of their own species were killed? In the fourth chapter the author gives a personal account of seeing a pregnant woman pulled from a group and pushed onto her stomach because a guard notices a man trying to help her stay on her feet. The man is killed instantly. Did that guard have any emotions? Had the Nazis really purged his mind of all kindness and pity? How? Why?

I have heard stories of people being beheaded in ancient times, and of how gladiators were forced to kill one another in ancient Greece. However, nothing seems to match the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews during the Holocaust. Perhaps this is because everything was premeditated. Hitler even outlined what he intended to do in his book *Mein Kampf*, which he wrote while in prison.

In the first forty-four pages of *The Cage*, people plead with the Nazis for their own lives as well as for the lives of their loved ones. Each time they are regarded as animals begging to have their lives spared at the hands of a slaughterer. Many are viewed scornfully for a moment before being marched to their deaths. Those who have pity bestowed upon them must undergo the torture of watching loved ones board trains that will carry them to certain death.

I read this and the same rhetorical question runs through my mind. Why? Why the Jews? How did the Nazis send helpless people to their deaths as though they were discarding rubbish? I read this book, and find many of the events to be incomprehensible, but I am also reading this as a fourteen year old girl who had never known true hardship and who lives in a society where it would be almost impossible for this to happen. However, ask a fourteen year old girl in Bosnia who has experienced the atrocities of war if she can see how the Holocaust happened. I am quite sure her answer would be very different from mine. She would probably tell you what I have just come to realize, that evil does not have to occur on a dark stormy day with a clap of thunder and a flash of lightning transforming the sky every few seconds.

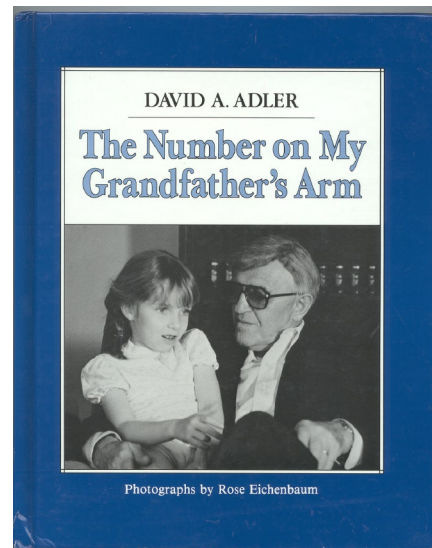
Bearers of evil are not always dressed in black. They don't always dash forward wielding menacing weapons and yelling. On the contrary, evil can penetrate a place on a warm spring day when the birds are singing and the sky is blue. For evil can be ordinary, and that is part of what makes it so horrid.

# The Number on My Grandfather's Arm

*Marci Block, Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York*

In this book, the author David A. Adler, lets reader try to understand what it was like for the Jews during the Holocaust. A survivor of the Holocaust tells granddaughter, for the first time, what took place during the terrible massacre of the Jewish people. He tried to describe to her how awful the conditions truly were for him and fellow Jews. This grandfather told his granddaughter that the Nazis and their leader Hitler planned to take over all Europe and that part of this plan included exterminating many Jewish people as possible. He told his granddaughter that the Nazis took the Jews out of their homes and put them in places called concentration camps. In the camps, numbers were printed on the Jews' arms. No longer were Jews considered to be actual people. They were dehumanized to such a great extent that now they were referred to by numbers.

This little girl learned much from her discussions with her grandfather about his past and painful life. Her grandpa went through agony, pain and sadness. Many close friends and relatives were killed during the Holocaust. She taught her a lot, but she taught him something as well. She let her grandpa know that he shouldn't be ashamed of the fact he had a number printed on his arm. She told him that it was the Nazis who really should be ashamed. The photographs in the book add to its realism.



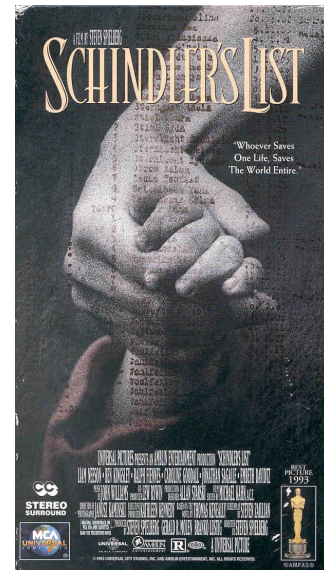
# Schindler's List

*Ryan Crowl, The International School of Bangkok, Thailand*

When I first saw this movie, it was shocking in a way because of the graphic and realistic content that it contained. I didn't think I would be able to watch it, but when I did, I felt like I had learned something. It's a very good movie, and it is one of the most realistic movies I have ever seen. The acting was very good and the atmosphere that the movie created was superb.

I think that what was done to the Jews was horrible, and no people deserve to die and be treated so poorly. Although I am not of Jewish descent, I have always been interested in the Holocaust. In the film it was interesting to see how the Jewish people came together and tried to follow their religion even though it was not permitted.

I thought Steven Spielberg did an excellent job at directing this movie and bring the emotions to life. Although I would definitely recommend this to high school audiences for educational purposes, I would not recommend this to smaller children. The film might be hard for some to watch; it gives a real view of what happened to the Jewish culture. In the end, the Jewish people pulled through and won the moral respect they deserve.



# Holocaust Web Site Reviews

**The Auschwitz Alphabet**  
<http://www.spectacle.org/695/ausch.html>

This site contains many interesting and widely unknown facts about the reality of Auschwitz. With topics ranging from the iron gates bearing the phrase, "Arbeit Macht Frei" to the use of Zyklon B, this site covers literally everything "from A to Z."

The home page includes a 26 item alphabetical table of contents along with other topics such as "epitaphs," "What I learned from Auschwitz," and "A Letter from my uncle." The site also features recommended books and links to other Holocaust related sites.

Overall, this is a good resource for students and teachers interested in the cruelty of one of the most famous concentration camps. Teachers and students alike will find the pictures or information they need here. Even if you are just browsing, "The Auschwitz Alphabet" is excellent web site for anyone.

*Jenny Klein and Lindsay Bregman*  
*Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York*

**The Cybrary of the Holocaust**  
<http://www.remember.org>

After reviewing and researching the contents of this informative site, we were provided with accurate depictions, photographs, books, poems, current events, and links to other related sites. This currently updated site consists of documents to help students learn all the aspects of the Holocaust and to choose a specific topic they wish to explore by including subject headings within the site.

If one wishes to discuss topics relating to the Holocaust, provided in the site are discussion forums. The "teacher's guide," enables teachers to remain well informed and updated on Holocaust information. For one to obtain facts regarding the Holocaust, a useful section entitled "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ's) is available. Little commentary or opinion is added so the reader can retrieve solely factual information.

There is not only factual information provided in this site, but poems, stories, and information about children of survivors as well. By reading stories, one's emotional side is touched; people are actually able to feel the pain endured by those in captivity against their will.

*Morgan Gold, Deva Roberts, Marci Block*  
*Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York*

**To Save a Life--Stories of Jewish Rescues**  
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~rescuers/>

This site is very beneficial for students who desire to learn about rescues made during the Holocaust. The home page describes a book that gives general description of the Holocaust. The background is a creamy color, and there is an orange and black Star of David. The star stands out with Hebrew writing on it. Under the star, there is a quote which says, "To save one life is as if you have saved the world." At the bottom of the page there is a link to the table of contents page.

The next part of the site contains many rescuers' stories from Holland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Included with some of the stories are maps of the area where rescuers lived and pictures of those. This web-site also includes numerous links to other sites. Holocaust Learning Links, Yad Vashem, Cybrary of the Holocaust, and Women and the Holocaust are a few of the about twenty sites. This site is very resourceful.

*Molly Condon and Sarah Goldman*  
*Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York*

**Two Web Sites in Spanish for information about the Holocaust:**

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/resource/36spques.htm>

This link is part of the large Simon Wiesenthal web site and is geared towards answering 36 questions that are commonly asked about the Holocaust. Spanish-speaking teachers and students can find such questions as: How was the "Final Solution" implemented? What is the significance of the "Final Solution"? What was the difference between the persecution of the Jews and other groups by the Nazis? These and other general questions on this web site would be useful for those who are just beginning to learn about the Holocaust.

<http://www.swissbankclaims.com>

This site gives Swiss Bank information concerning the aftermath of the bank's involvement in World War II. This site describes the victims' assets and litigations and is available in twenty languages, including Spanish. This site also provides a question and answer section available for downloading.

*Ryan Baker, Natalia Quirk and Katie Solinger; Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York*