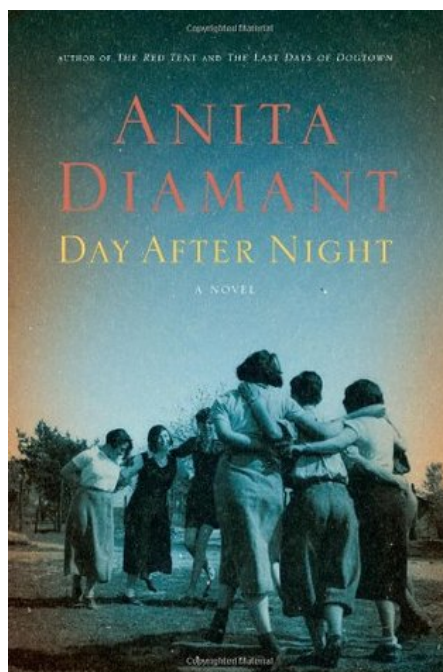




Day After Night

Anita Diamant

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Atlit is a holding camp for illegal immigrants in Israel in 1945. There about 270 men and women await their future and try to recover from their past. Diamant with infinite compassion and understanding tells the stories of the women gathered in this place. Shayndel is a Polish Zionist who fought the Germans with a band of partisans. Leonie is a Parisian beauty. Tedi is Dutch a strapping blond who wants only to forget. Zorah survived Auschwitz. Haunted by unspeakable memories and too many losses to bear these young women along with a stunning cast of supporting characters who work in or pass through Atlit begin to find salvation in the bonds of friendship and shared experience as they confront the challenge of re-creating themselves and discovering a way to live again.

Day After Night Details

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From Reader Review Day After Night for online ebook

Ellenh says

I had no idea that the Jews were interned as illegal immigrants in a British camp on their way to their promised land. Diamant tells a story of 5 women detained in the British camp Atlit, surrounded by barbed wire not too different looking than the concentration camps that some had been freed from. Although it was confusing to move to a different woman in each chapter, the story captured me and I read it quickly. As so often happens after reading a good historical novel, I am motivated to research more about the story of real women and their experiences trying to get to Israel.

Gary says

A beautifully written and hard to put down narrative of four remarkable Jewish girls each of whom survived the Holocaust in Europe in their own way. Imprisoned in Atlit internment camp, near Haifa, in 1945, by the British determined to stop Jewish immigration into the Land of Israel in order to appease Arab opinion and in line with the British government's betrayal of the Jewish national aspirations.

This was Britain's greatest hour of shame and certainly no British citizen today has the right to demonize or try to delegitimize Israel.

Imagine Holocaust survivors being reinterned behind barbed wire in concentration camps to prevent them settling in their own ancient homeland. That's what really happened.

Shayndel, the committed Polish Zionist who fought in the forests of Eastern Europe with partisans, the Blond and tall Tedi, a Dutch Jewess hidden during the war and who later was captured but escaped from the train to Auschwitz, the French beauty Leonie who had to sell her body to survive the Nazi death machine and the Auschwitz survivor Zorah. All these girls carry their own scars and have their own stories, as the narrative further develops in Atlit. Tirzah the cook, has a romantic relationship with a British officer and uses this to help her people.

(Spoiler Warning)

An former SS woman, is discovered hiding among the survivors, and is dealt with by the girls in their own way.

Eventually the four girls and other inmates at Atlit are broken out of the camp by the Palmach, based on true events of the time, in which this heroic rescue operation was undertaken. Future Israeli Yitzhach Rabin was involved in these events, a Palmach officer.

while we have a wealth of Holocaust literature, there is much less written about the internment of survivors heading for the Holy Land, after World War II.

An incredibly rewarding read, this tells part of their story.

Julie says

Life is a journey filled with people, places and events over which we often have no control. In spite of the circumstances that bring these young women together, they have all survived the Holocaust. They cautiously bond and create a family to replace the families they have lost and together find hope for the future.

I read this book in 2 days. I could not put it down. At the end, I was sobbing! How can we not be touched

and appalled by the tragedy of this period of history? How can we not be inspired by the strength of those who courageously survived and endured the injustice? How can we not weep for their losses and and rejoice in their perseverance? How can we not count our blessings?

Read this book. It will change your life.

Connie says

Good historical audio....review to follow

I have had The Red Tent on my TBR list for a while and have wanted to read Anita Diamant for a while. When I was looking for a new audio they had this one and I grabbed it. So glad I did. The audio was done wonderfully and may have even brought this story to life for me more that reading it would have. I loved hearing the accents and the changes in voice and tone that the narrator did. Excellent.

I had not heard of Atlit, which was a camp for Jewish detainees at the end of WW2. These were Jewish people who had immigrated to Palestine for the hopes of beginning a new life and leaving the horrors of the war behind them. The paths these people took to get this far was horrific only to be "held" prisoner yet again. This was not a gruesome prison, but a camp, but it was still a prison for these people none the less. This is the story of the days leading up to and the actual escape that these detainees made to their freedom.

The story is told in four main voices of four young girls who have arrived here by very different paths. But once at Atlit, their secrets and their pasts bond them together. They are survivors, each in their own way. They have seen tragedy, experienced losses and yet somehow they still have hopes and dreams. They are each strong in their own way....some loudly, some very quietly. They are each unique and a wonderful depiction of the people you would meet in such a place. Each with their own story, their own strengths, their own demons, yet bound together by fate.

The story builds these women characters slowly, revealing pieces of their past a little at a time, showing the reader why they are who they are now. This is a sad story as they were heroes, yet no one seemed to know it. I will say I knew nothing of this piece of history and I was glad to learn something new as I imagined these women and their fight to continue hoping when all was lost to them. Diamant could have depicted much more of the horrors I am sure, yet instead she chose to focus on the characters. There were terrible scenes of all that happens in war, but the beauty of these characters is what I will carry away with me.

4.5 up to 5 for the wonderful audio narration.

Patricia Williams says

This is another really good story about happenings after World War II that were little known to the public. The people in this story were all in concentration camps during the war and when they were released that were taken to another "camp" by the British who did not know what to do with them. It was a better "camp" in that they had better food and places to sleep, etc, but they still could not leave. Then there was a night where it was arranged for everyone to escape. Then in the story we find out what happened to all the main characters. This is a group of strong women in this story. Excellent story. Definitely recommend.

Allyson Langston says

Okay, so I LOVED the Red Tent, by the same author. This one--not so much. It's about a group of women who are kept together in a "camp" in Palestine post WWII. While it's an interesting look at the relationship between the Jews and Palestinians pre-Israel, I never really "felt" any of the characters. The perspective shifts so much that I had difficulty feeling "close" to any of the characters. I was disappointed to not have loved this book, as my expectations were high from The Red Tent. Maybe if I hadn't read that first, I would have like this better?

Shana says

Although The Red Tent is her more famous novel, the first Anita Diamant book I've read is Day After Night. And that's really only because I saw it in the library the day after my mom realized the author had gone to the same Jewish camp (or youth group, or something).

Day After Night takes place in Israel after World War II at the Atlit internment camp where illegal immigrants here held. If you're like me, you're going, "Huh? Where?" That is precisely what made this book so interesting. There is already a lot of literature on the Holocaust and the plight of the Jews, but I can honestly say that I have never read anything about the Jews who then immigrated to Israel and were held by the British. I appreciated this new insight into that era and the aftermath of the horrific war.

Diamant uses several female characters to show the reader what it was like in Atlit. Through these women, we learn about how they managed to survive the war and how their attitudes about the future were formed. I did not find them particularly compelling as characters and truth be told, I had a really hard time keeping the characters straight.

The climax of the book is when the prisoners escape (rather, are rescued) from Atlit and are moved to various kibbutzim around Israel. Or at least, I think that was supposed to be the climax. I didn't find Diamant's conclusion to the book very creative. In fact, it was pretty cliché.

Since The Red Tent got so much hype, I figured I had to read that. But after finishing this novel, I'm not sure that Diamant and I click well as author and reader...

Liza Perrat says

A heartbreaking true story, excellently narrated, but that ends on a note of hope. Another great book from master storyteller, Anita Diamant.

Kathy says

After the Ottoman empire lost WWI, the British governed Palestine/Israel. There were larger and larger influxes of European Jews to the area, trying to escape the pogroms and Nazis. To appease the upset Arabs

of the region, the British agreed to limit the number of Jewish immigrants. One of the ways they achieved this was to detain and confine these immigrants (expecting to deport those who were not claimed by family) in various internment camps in the land that was to become Israel. It is against this backdrop that the novel "Day After Night" tells the story of six Jewish women living in Atlit detention camp just after the liberation of Europe from the Nazis in 1945. Tirzah is a local woman from a nearby kibbutz who is the kitchen supervisor for the camp. The other five women (Tedi, Shayndel, Zorah, Leonie and Esther) are all survivors of the holocaust who have escaped Europe; they have arrived in Israel without papers, deemed illegal immigrants, and thus are thrown into Atlit. After escaping from concentration camps, they sought freedom in their spiritual homeland of Zion, only to face the barbed wire and armed guards of Atlit. Can you imagine that?

Their stories are not similar, yet have a thread that ties them all together: surviving the horrors of anti-Semitism and liberating themselves from oppression. Each woman deals with the past in a different way, but they cannot run from it. It's because of their shared history and in spite of their initial distrust of each other that these 6 women form a bond of friendship. For me, the novel was the strongest when it concentrated on the histories of the women: their stories. The book's weakest point was the climax of the story. There should have been a bigger build-up to it. Furthermore, the unfolding of the "high point" (I really don't want to say what it was...I don't want a spoiler here), I just did not get a sense of the events unfolding: the emotions, observations, and tensions that could have been so suspensefully described, but weren't. That part read like a retelling from a history book, rather than from eyewitness accounts. It could have been much, much more. All in all, I would recommend this book for its subject matter and length; I did enjoy it. The story just came up a little short for me. 3 stars.

Barbara says

In 1948, when I was a very young child, Israel was granted statehood. I remember the joy and the celebration among my family and community. Certainly much has been written about the Holocaust, about the efforts of traumatized Jews to reach Israel and the turmoil that has occurred since it became a recognized country (by some, not all). In this novel, many events have been either omitted or lacked much attention. Diamant has written an account of an internment camp for "illegals" in Israel in 1945, following WW II. This story is apparently gleaned from true events.

The story is told through the eyes of four young women who are imprisoned there. Each recounts her experience through the war. This camp, Atilit, was dreary, barren and depressing, completely enclosed by barbed wire. Can you imagine surviving the horrors and barbarism of a concentration camp, or spent in hiding with constant fears for safety, only to be caged again with armed guards surrounding you? To add further insult, the travel to Israel was grueling, miserable, difficult and protracted. The only redeeming factors of the camp were real beds, a semblance of clothing, food and the comfort of human relationships.

I had looked forward to reading this book because I had enjoyed Diamant's *The Red Tent* and I have an avid interest in literature of this period of history. However, much of this novel seemed superficial and did not stress many of the true painful and intense events that the characters endured. In some instances there were mere suggestions of occurrences and hardships. No mention was made of the difficult trials in travel to "The Promised Land". It was also difficult throughout this recounting to keep the characters straight, due to the style of shifting from one to another and trying to recall all of the foreign sounding names. More input regarding historical events surrounding this time would have added a greater dimension to the book.

Despite the aforementioned criticisms, Diamant capably developed most of her characters. A thread of

tension was present throughout, especially for the hope and expectation that these people would finally gain their freedom. The denouement was a further element of suspense for the reader, although I felt that the climax was rather hasty.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

At first sad, but ultimately hopeful. Life does go on, whether we want it to or not. We must join with others in making it meaningful, even after great loss.

We think a lot about the many millions who died in the Holocaust, perhaps less often about those who were left standing. They were told they were "lucky" to be alive. But how do you find joy again, or even the desire for joy, after you've lost every person and thing you loved? When you've witnessed and been subjected to incomprehensible atrocities and humiliations? How do you dare to hope and to trust again?

Many of the Jews who survived World War II found themselves entirely alone in the world. Families completely obliterated, no home to return to. Some of them fled to Palestine hoping for a new start far from the scenes of their nightmares. At that time their presence in Palestine was illegal, so they were immediately transported to the British-run Atlit detainment camp. They were well cared for, not abused. But they were still prisoners, not free to move ahead---still "unwelcome."

This story follows a group of young women from all over Europe who are thrown together in the Atlit barracks in 1945. At first they are mistrustful, bitter, and hiding their guilty secrets. Slowly they begin to forge new bonds and rely on each other. As they act on their impulses to nurture others who have suffered, they find they are able to begin healing the broken places within themselves.

Judy says

I don't generally give a book five stars, but this book really touched me. I enjoyed the two previous books by Anita Diamant that I have read--The Red Tent and The Last Days of Dogtown, but this book moved me in a different way. The story is about the growing friendship between four Jewish women from different parts of Europe who meet in a British detention camp for illegal Jewish refugees in Palestine. The story takes place between August and October 1945 as the world is trying to come to terms with the horrors of the camps in Nazi Germany and the responsibility of the Allies toward the Jews in light of the Balfour Declaration and the White Paper both issued by Great Britain. In Atlit, an actual camp and based on a true incident, "Not one of the women in Barrack C is 21, but all of them are orphans." In October 1945, Jewish partisans help over 200 refugees escape into the territory that will become Israel in 1948. This book deals with the painful memories each woman carries, but focuses on the hope that can follow some of life's most horrible cruelties. The essence of the story is the redemptive power of humans to help each other heal and the belief in the future that kept each of these women alive. A powerful book and one that I will not soon forget.

Anya Yankelevich says

This is Diamant's second book that I've read. I enjoyed The Red Tent, and also this one. The Red Tent had a broader sense of place and history, and I think better language and character. Then again, having just finished this one, I may appreciate it more as I reflect on it. I think the strength of this novel lies in the

concise and honest portrayal of the characters in how they mask and express their experiences. I got the sense that had she revealed more about the character's backstory (and really any novel about the Holocaust survivor is about the backstory), it would have added the pathos and schmaltz that no Holocaust novel should have. She was terse in the dialogue, while giving a sense of how these fictional survivors were trying to normalize while dealing with pain, guilt, doubt and deep sorrow. This novel (as I think all historical fiction should) helped me place myself in their experience and gain some human understanding of a place and time far away (or not so far away) from my own experience.

Sara says

It is 1945 and the war has just ended. Those released from the concentration camps must now decide what the remainder of their lives, devoid of loved ones and homes, will be. This is the story of some of those displaced women who opt to go to Israel, which is being governed by the British. They find themselves in another camp, and although this one is not the cruel and deadly ilk of the ones they have already known, it is still ringed with barbed wire and it still feels like a prison.

The story centers on four of the women and explores their backstories as well as their experiences in adjusting to a new life in Zion. It is the best Diamant I have found since falling in love with *The Red Tent*, which I count as her signature work. I did feel involved with each of the women, mourn their losses, and care about their futures. It was a quick read with a satisfying ending. What you want most for these women is a chance to live a life of happiness that will negate some of the pain and horror that they have experienced in their young lives. The first step for them is being able to connect with one another and those connections are believable in Diamant's hands.

Erika says

Anita Diamant's *Day After Night* is a fictionalized account of the 1945 rescue of the prisoners being held in the Atlit internment camp near Hafia, close to the Mediterranean coast. Fresh from their memories of Nazi concentration camps, illegal immigrants crossing the borders, most often in their attempt to reach Palestine and Israel, have been taken into custody by the British military and placed in eerily similar surroundings: barbed wire fences, barracks separating men from women, delousing stations, showers. The only difference, as our protagonists insist upon the frightened and bewildered newcomers arriving almost every day, is that here, all will be fed and taken care of; the showers are real showers.

But the prisoners are angry, angry because they survived one war only to become pawns in another power struggle where one nation seeks to impose authority on another and they'll risk everything they have to be free.

Told primarily from the point of view of four women, Tedi, Zorah, Shayndel, and Leonie (with a fifth, Tirzah, thrown in for the contrasting perspective), *Day After Night* explores what it could mean to be happy in a place like Atlit, so incongruous in appearance with what really goes on behind the enclosure. As much a jail as a safehouse, these women struggle through their personal demons in the weeks leading up to the October rescue. Diamant imagines Atlit being something like a therapeutic nightmare in which the women find solace in each other, getting to know one another as much as they try to keep their distance, too hurt by their own haunting pasts to confide their true stories to one another.

Together, the women remain strong and support one another, finding spirit in the small miracles of the everyday: fresh fruit, full meals, showers, clean clothes, pillows and blankets at night, doctors that are there to be doctors and not experiment, burgeoning romance, scandalous affairs. In the limbo of Atlit, Tedi is reminded that "...everything was coming back to her in Palestine" (p. 7), even her sense of smell long thought lost, another victim of the war. Ironically, her imprisonment, like the other women, has turned into a type of healing in the between of being frightened before the end of the war, and true freedom after it.

In Atlit, the women are "in the land of milk and honey..." (p. 90), a type of heaven where they are allowed a chance to heal their scars in preparation for the real world, a beautiful nightmare slumber, a peaceful and restful night before the day of their true freedom. I thought the prologue was particularly lovely, setting the mood for the story like an overture, touching the title and bringing it back to us as much as the epilogue brought the story to reality and back to fiction again.

Day After Night is a novel of hope, wishful thinking on the part of the author in like-minded sentiment with Gershon, "I hope she was happy. I hope all of them were" (p. 292). If the narrative at times made me forget the seriousness of the women's situation, it only serves to remind me the intent of the author to wish this same feeling on the women who did stay there, who were forced to relive the phantom reminders of their past at the same time as they were trying to move forward. In the context of the novel, the women found a kind of peace in Atlit, smothering their hated pasts in the sheets of their nightmare, tossing the pillow aside as they walked outside, never to return.

I thought *Day After Night* was a good book. Diamant has a lot of talent in writing about dynamic women and their relationships to one another. If you're a fan of her work, I recommend this one. If you've never read anything by her, I still recommend it. Overall, it was a touching, powerful read.

Jackie says

This book deals with a handful of women at Atlit "displaced persons" camp in Palestine just after World War II. A quota had been set for how many Jews could immigrate to the new Eretz Yisrael, but of course hundreds of thousands more were trying to get in. They got rounded up and sent to these camps, run by the British, which were heartbreakingly similar in appearance to the concentration camps that many of them had just gotten out of. The treatment was far better, but they were still prisoners held behind barbed wire and sleeping in huge dormitories with separate men and women's areas. One particularly jarring moment was when a woman became hysterical at the sight of that barbed wire as she stepped off the bus--that really just cut me to the bone. These people have to stay at the camps until their paperwork is found or created and space on a kibbutz is made for them or family already in the country come to get them.

The women that Diamant introduces us to are varied in personality and life experience, how they coped with the war and who they are trying to be in its aftermath. Survivors' guilt and a fierce will to live, starting over yet again, grief like a new appendage for most and so much more make this a rich tapestry of humanity in a situation I had never heard a word about until now. With Israel so much in the news today, I think this is a thoughtful and timely book that will open new areas of understanding--knowing what happened at the beginning helps to inform the now. These women will linger in your head for long after you finish this book. Diamant is truly a master at writing memorable and amazing female characters who resonate in the minds of her readers.

Louise says

I suppose since this novel was compared to Diamant's bestselling 'THE RED TENT', which to this very day remains my favourite book of all time, I might have unknowingly set myself up for disappointment. This story was not at all what I expected, nor did I feel Diamant's writing was on par with THE RED TENT. However, having said that, I did enjoy it for the most part, but felt it just went on and on and on a little too much. It was like she was stalling for time so she could figure out where and with whom the story was going next.

From dust jacket:

Just as she gave voice to the silent women of the Old Testament in the THE RED TENT, Anita Diamant creates a cast of heartbreakingly vivid characters - young women who escaped to Israel from Nazi Europe - in this intensely dramatic novel.

DAY AFTER DAY is based on the extraordinary true story of the October 1945 rescue of more than two hundred prisoners from the Atlit internment camp, a prison for "illegal" immigrants run by the British military near the Mediterranean coast north of Haifa. The story is told through the eyes of four young women at the camp with profoundly different stories. All of them survived the Holocaust: Shayndel, a Polish Zionist; Leonia, a Parisian beauty; Tedi, a hidden Dutch Jew; and Zorah a concentration camp survivor. Haunted by unspeakable memories and loss, afraid to begin to hope, Shayndel, Leonie, Tedi, and Zorah find salvation in the bonds of friendship and shared experience even as they confront the challenge of re-creating themselves in a strange new country.

This is an unforgettable story of tragedy and redemption, a novel that reimagines a moment in history with such stunning eloquence that we are haunted and moved by every devastating detail. DAY AFTER NIGHT is a triumphant work of fiction."

Carrie says

Just finished this book and loved it! It was at various times touching, brutal and raw. I have read other memoirs about The Holocaust but this one was different. I had no idea that such a thing as Illegal Immigrant camps existed for survivors of the concentration camps in Israel after the war. It was disturbing to read of the conditions those poor people were exposed to after having just survived the greatest atrocity in history. Diamant's writing is vivid and prosaic. The women of the narrative jump off the page and the reader grows to love and hate them at various points in the story, but ultimately respecting them and their sacrifices in the end. The story weaves historical detail within a tapestry of survivorship and loss. Great read!

Denise says

I have spent much of 2009 reading excellent novels that relate different perspectives of the horror that was WW II and the effects of the Holocaust on people from different countries. In Sarah's Key, I read what happened at the Vélodrome d'Hiver in France, in The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (Random House Reader's Circle), I discovered what happened during the war on an island I'd never heard of, in Skeletons at the Feast: A Novel, I accompanied a family fleeing westward ahead of the advancing

Russians, in *Those Who Save Us*, I read what desperate men and women did in occupied Germany. This novel is another wonderful testament to the strength of the human spirit in the face of unspeakable guilt -- the guilt of being a survivor of the ravages of the Nazis and the Final Solution.

This story takes place in Atlit -- the internment camp south of Hafia, Israel, after the war is over when thousands of Jews escaped Europe for their promised land, only to be imprisoned and held by the British military instead of being allowed to join the kibbutzes established there. Four remarkable young women from different backgrounds meet there and attempt to adjust to life and to deal with the consequences of what they did to survive the fates that claimed the lives of their friends and families.

I loved the women -- Shayndel, a Polish Zionist with a heroine's reputation; Zorah, the concentration camp survivor who hides the tattoo on her arm; Tedi, a Dutch girl who escaped most of the ravages of war by being hidden; and Leonie, from France, who avoided the roundup due to her looks and her wartime occupation. The experiences that the girls had during the war are revealed in vignettes as we get to know each one and her secrets very slowly as they suffer a day to day existence in the camp. The jobs they do, the contacts they have, and the relationships that manage to thrive despite the collective horror are heartwarming and inspiring. Both realistic and desperately hopeful, the girls do whatever they can to find some explanation or reason why they did not perish.

Anita Diamant is a superb writer whose prose rings true in every sense. This is a wonderful book and I highly recommend it. (ARC)

Colleen says

When pondering the horrors of the Holocaust, it is not often that one considers what occurred after the Germans lost the war. I may envision families reuniting, people starting over, or at the least relief over sudden freedom. In truth however, many Jewish citizens became "illegal" immigrants and were imprisoned in internment camps run by the British military.

Much like a concentration camp, Atlit prison was surrounded by barbed wire fences. This vision alone was enough to remind many prisoners of their time spent in horrible places such as Auschwitz.

This is the true story of an escape of over 200 prisoners, planned with the help of four young Holocaust survivors. Four women, seeking freedom, true freedom not only from their haunting memories, but freedom from being other another human beings orders. Freedom they would eventually find.
