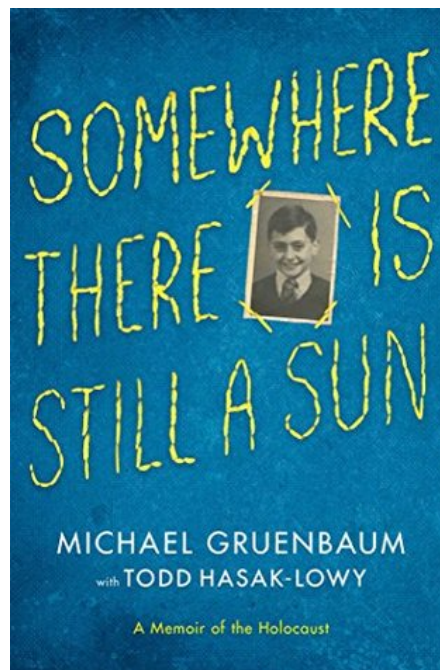




Somewhere There Is Still a Sun: A Memoir of the Holocaust

Michael Gruenbaum , Todd Hasak-Lowy (Contributor)

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Resilience shines throughout Michael Gruenbaum's "riveting memoir" (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review) about his time in the Terezin concentration camp during the Holocaust, in this National Jewish Book award finalist and Parents Choice Gold Medal Award-winning title, an ideal companion to the bestselling *Boy on the Wooden Box*.

Michael "Misha" Gruenbaum enjoyed a carefree childhood playing games and taking walks through Prague with his beloved father. All of that changed forever when the Nazis invaded Prague. The Gruenbaum family was forced to move into the Jewish Ghetto in Prague. Then, after a devastating loss, Michael, his mother and sister were deported to the Terezin concentration camp.

At Terezin, Misha roomed with forty other boys who became like brothers to him. Life in Terezin was a bizarre, surreal balance—some days were filled with friendship and soccer matches, while others brought mortal terror as the boys waited to hear the names on each new list of who was being sent "to the East."

Those trains were going to Auschwitz. When the day came that his family's name appeared on a transport list, their survival called for a miracle—one that tied Michael's fate to a carefully sewn teddy bear, and to his mother's unshakeable determination to keep her children safe.

Collaborating with acclaimed author Todd Hasak-Lowy, Michael Gruenbaum shares his inspiring story of hope in an unforgettable memoir that recreates his experiences with stunning immediacy. Michael's story, and the many original documents and photos included alongside it, offer an essential contribution to Holocaust literature.

Somewhere There Is Still a Sun: A Memoir of the Holocaust Details

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From Reader Review Somewhere There Is Still a Sun: A Memoir of the Holocaust for online ebook

Alan N says

This book is written in first person and in present tense. This book takes place in 1939-1945. It a ten year boy named Michael Gruenbaum he lives Prague, Czechoslovakia. During the time the book took place was in World War Two. He was Jewish so it was hard for him. His Dad was murder it was hard time him to get food or even a shelter. He lived with his mother and sister. The boy was sent to a prison camp. It was hard for him but some good things happen during his life.

Emily Zaslow Hourihan says

Well, everything is more intense when your friend recommends a book (this book) which was written by a friend of her father's. A Terezin survivor, a childhood friend, they were both in the same 'camp' together, in the room they called "Nesharim." Harrowing, but such a clear picture of a time and a place, through a young boys eyes. The ghost writer did a really good job of making this story fast paced and real, not looking back, but very much present tense. I believe this is a book for young adults, however, I read it, and found it very compelling. Like I said, when I found out an old girlfriend of mine's parents were still living, and I recalled from my childhood - they were both Holocaust survivors, I asked her if she knew their stories? And she recommended this book, as Michael Gruenbaum and her father, who was mentioned in the afterword, were lifelong friends, and survivors. The last of this generation to be able to still tell their histories.

Lynn Edler says

Michael Gruenbaum's Holocaust memoir reminds us all that even when evil exists, hope persists. When Gruenbaum was 12, he was sent to Terezin concentration camp with his mother and sister for 3 1/2 years, and through luck, an enterprising mother, and endurance they all survived and he tells his harrowing story. His story sheds light on the truth of Terezin and the evil and dangers for all Jews in Nazi-occupied territories. This book was published in 2015 and is written for middle school students, and while it doesn't ignore the events, it is written, so the book appropriate for adolescents.

Joan says

Great piece of narrative nonfiction. Michael "Misha" Gruenbaum's memoir of growing up during the Holocaust enlightens readers on the horrors under Nazi occupied Europe. Misha's idyllic, somewhat privileged childhood turns suddenly into a nightmare when his father is taken from their family home and imprisoned. The nightmare continues as life becomes a daily struggle in one concentration camp after another. Misha, his mother, and his sister try to keep a positive attitude in spite of the inhumanity around them.

Lisa Nagel says

One of the most powerful books I have read in a long time. Todd Hasak-Lowy set out to work with Michael Gruenbaum and to write a different kind of Holocaust book. Not just a story like so many other Holocaust books, but a book that would "read like a person living through those events at that time." He succeeds beautifully. The fact that you can hear this voice of Michael so clearly, does make the reader connect in a way I have not seen before in a Holocaust memoir, other than perhaps the "Diary of Ann Frank." It feels real, hits you hard, and in this way will help educate readers about what happened in a more personal way. This kind of reader experience is important in the goal of preventing something like this from happening again. A beautiful book.

Meg says

Deeply affecting and moving memoir from a survivor of the Terezin concentration camp during the Holocaust. Crafted in the present tense, the events bring an immediacy and intimacy to this story, as if it is unfolding before the readers' very eyes. We too are unsure of what is about to happen, unaware of the horrors awaiting Michael and his family, hopeful - ever hopeful - that his story will never be repeated nor forgotten. Essential purchase, grades 6-9.

MC Bailey says

I bought Somewhere There Is Still a Sun from a @Scholastic Book flyer for my classroom. A memoir of the Holocaust by Michael Gruenbaum, I was hooked immediately. Michael "Misha" recollects living carefree in Prague under Nazi occupation with his parents and older sister and ultimately transport to Terezin Concentration Camp. Misha was 12 in 1942 when he, his mother and sister are transported to Terezin (his father was horrifically murdered prior to their deportation) where they would remain until the war's end. Misha tells us the story firsthand through his eyes and thoughts, as much as Michael was able to remember. The Michael has a co-author, Todd Hasak-Lowy, that terrifically fills in gaps from research and talking to survivors from the same time period. Yet, the majority of the fine details come from mementos, pictures, and documents that Michael's mother was able to save while in Terezin and then later kept in a scrapbook. Somewhere There is Still a Sun is not just another story of a Holocaust survivor, although each survivor has his own unique story and deserves to be told/read, it is a story of innocence and lost innocence, the love of a mother, perseverance, survival, and teamwork. Misha, upon arriving in Terezin, is kept in a boys dormitory, as all children are separated from their parents. Franta, the 19-year old that is in charge of 70 plus boys in room 7, teaches Misha and the others the meaning of cleanliness, respect, teamwork, and love. Misha attends school, plays soccer, even participates in a few plays while at Terezin. Through his eyes, we experience a visit from the Red Cross, friends being deported to Birkenau, constant hunger, and confusion. Once Russia has made its way through Poland and survivors make their way to Terezin, Misha and the rest of the camp realize how much worse off these refugees were/are. Misha shows real character while caring for the refugees, even though he is frightened by their emaciated bodies. Somewhere There is Still a Sun is a true tale of survivor and loss of innocence of many young people. I highly recommend this book for 5th grade and up.

Amanda says

I haven't read many books centered around WW2 in recent years, mainly I think because I read SO many years ago. Reading *Yellow Star* was a good way to dive back in, though, so I randomly pulled this one off the library shelf. I thought this was an excellent juvenile/young adult Holocaust memoir. Even though the book covers the author's life from age 8-15, I think it would be best suited for ages 12+. The content is always written from his perspective at the time and isn't gratuitous, but it is still heavy and disturbing at times.

An added bonus was an addendum by the co-author explaining how writing a memoir works and clarifying all the factual details. I thought that was a great insight into non-fiction writing for young readers. Also, the author's collection of Holocaust artifacts and papers were donated to the Holocaust Museum in D.C., so this would be a great read before a visit there.

Mary says

A memoir by Michael Gruenbaum of his experiences in Prague and the Terezin concentration camp. Although this is written for young people with accessible text, this is still an intense description of events. A powerful introduction for middle grade and young adult readers that is life-affirming.

Becki says

After having taught the Holocaust through literature to my 8th grade students for a couple of years, I have a keen interest in anything Holocaust and World War II related. So when I came across this book, I knew I wanted to read it.

In this first-hand account of the author's childhood in Prague and then in the concentration camp of Terezin, the reader is exposed to yet another grisly aspect of the Holocaust. While Terezin was not a death camp and not completely a work camp, it was a miserable experience nonetheless.

I appreciated the pictures of original documents and letters that were included along with the text. The narrative as told by a young boy kept much of the harshness and inhumanity at arms' length. In fact, the content aside, I believe this book was written on more of a juvenile level than a young adult one.

In the end, I don't believe I would use it as a whole class book for 7th or 8th graders. However, I think it would lend itself to be a great reading circle book for those reading at a lower level and help presents another facet of this historical tragedy.

I received this book as an Advanced Reader Copy via the publisher at Edelweiss in exchange for my honest review.

Pros:

- Looking at a different aspect of the Holocaust and its camps
- First person narrative
- Appealing to reluctant readers

Cons:

- Some grammatical errors
- Slow moving at times
- Some points of confusion in the timeline/events

My Rating: 2.5 out of 5 (average)

Natalie Hausknecht says

My 8 year old daughter couldn't put this book down. She was horrified by the beginning, but ultimately wouldn't stop talking about the journey of this child and family. It must be very difficult to write a memoir on the Holocaust that connects to such a young child. This one does so artfully and informs a young reader about the terrors and atrocities of the Nazis in a way to which they can relate, if not understand.

Kristen says

A view of the war I hadn't seen before. I had heard of the "nice" concentration camps Nazi's showed to the Red Cross so it was fascinating to hear about it from someone who lived through it. I am still amazed, no matter how many WWII books I read, about how these things happened. Like the co-author said, "these stories are about absolutely real things that happened to absolutely real people". That really hit me. What if their story was my story? It's almost terrifying to think about, as a person and a mother.

I think this is a great young adult novel, it makes it more real for teenagers because that was the age he was then and was written from that age's point of view. Will be keeping this book in mind for when my kiddos get older.

Shannon says

A powerful memoir of a young Jewish boy and his family during the Holocaust. We must never forget.

Beth says

An important book, and very well done.

Michelle says

I don't think I've read a Holocaust memoir about the Theresienstadt (Terezin) Concentration Camp. Very different in some respects. The people there were in horrible conditions but compared to other concentration camps such as Auschwitz or Birkenau they had "more" food and perhaps "slightly" better living areas. None of it was 'good' of course.

This book is geared towards middle school readers. There are a few scenes that are very detailed and can be upsetting to some. I put this book in my young adult section at work. I would say it's more for 8th grade readers and above.

I couldn't help thinking, as I read, that there aren't too many survivors still around and telling their story.

I also couldn't help thinking, as I read, some similarities to present day political issues going on with #45. He's an embarrassment.

Verdict: another memoir to be added to any school or public library collection.
