

# The Girl from Auschwitz

## Pigen fra Auschwitz

by Morten Vestergaard



#### SPECIFICATIONS

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Arlette Levy Andersen spent more than a year in the concentration camps of Birkenau and Auschwitz toward the end of the Second World War.

For four decades Arlette never told her own Jewish family what had happened to her when she was arrested by the Gestapo at a French university in the fall of 1943. In May 1945, terribly emaciated, she arrived back in her hometown of Paris on board a train and was met by her parents. For many years Arlette tried to forget the past, but in this book she opens the door to the gruesome experiences she endured because she feels a responsibility to recount her story. "Soon there will be no one left to tell what happened," as she says.

Arlette describes growing up in Paris, then how she was arrested and deported in a freight car, followed by her detainment in the concentration camps. But after returning home, how was she to survive as a former prisoner? She talks about her life afterwards, and why she felt the need to remain silent, keeping her memories to herself.

"In 1990 I began talking about what I had experienced during the war, and to date I've given 210 speeches about what happened. The first time I was asked to speak, I said no. I had no desire to dredge up old memories. But then I got to thinking that I might have made the wrong decision because some people think or even insist that Auschwitz never existed. One right-wing politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen, says that it was of no significance. That was why I started to talk about my experiences, and I hope to continue doing so for as long as I can, while there is still interest in the subject and I am asked to speak."

In the book Arlette also describes how she fell in love, and how that brought her to Denmark, where she raised a family and worked as a secondary-school teacher until her retirement.

*The Girl from Auschwitz* is the powerful account of a woman who has triumphed over the worst circumstances that any human being can endure. Her story will leave an indelible impression on her readers.

**Morten Vestergaard** was born in Varde in 1976. He holds a degree in journalism and history from Roskilde University, as well as a degree in Nordic languages and literature from Aarhus University. He has worked as a news reporter for Holbæk Amts Venstreblad and Nyhedsavisen. Since 2006, he has been a journalist for Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten.



# Reviews

- Berlingske Tidende