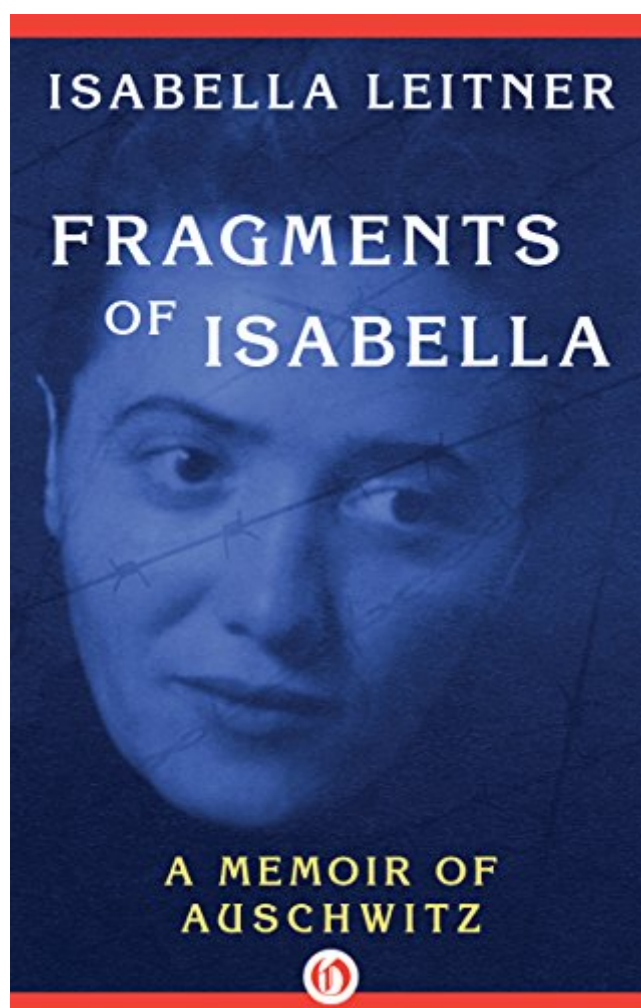


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# Fragments Of Isabella: A Memoir Of Auschwitz



## Synopsis

The deeply moving true account of a young Jewish woman's imprisonment by the Nazis at the Auschwitz death camp. On May 29, 1944, the day after Isabella Katz's twenty-third birthday, she, her family, and all the Jews in the ghetto in Kisvrda, Hungary, were rounded up by Nazi storm troopers, packed into cattle cars, and deported to Auschwitz. There, Dr. Josef Mengele, the so-called Angel of Death, scrutinized the family and decided who would live "for a time" and who would die. Isabella and three of her sisters waged a daily battle to survive, giving one another strength, courage, and love, promising themselves that they would cheat the crematoriums and end each day alive. Thirty years after she escaped from the Nazis, Isabella wrote this powerful and luminous memoir. Hailed by Publishers Weekly as "a celebration of the strength of the human spirit as it passes through fire," *Fragments of Isabella* has become a classic of Holocaust literature and human survival. This ebook features rare images from the author's estate.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I was asked if I would like to read *Fragments of Isabella*, I agreed. Auschwitz was one of the worst concentration camps of the Holocaust, so to be able to read a memoir from someone who was there would be, I knew, raw and emotional. It is a short read, with short chapters, and even for

the most part, short and concise sentences. This makes for a one-day read that is overall, powerful and touching. Josef Mengele is mentioned a few times, and I was astonished that the author actually came into contact with him. Of course it wouldn't be impossible, I just haven't read a memoir yet where the author spoke about actually being in close proximity with Mengele. There was just such indifference towards him, which was odd considering how he was notorious for being truly awful "even nicknamed the "Angel of Death." • Leitner was one tough cookie. Irma Grese was also briefly talked about and how she would choose specific women to be punished, mainly based on how attractive they were to her. Because the chapters are so short, sometimes the book confused me as to where the characters were physically at, and the events take place so quickly that it's hard to wrap your head around what exactly is going on all the time. Most of the time you can regain your footing, brush yourself off, and realize what it is Leitner is describing. But a few times, you're still left lost. I admit, Isabella Leitner's writing was a bit hard for me to read at first. I was enjoying the story, but not her too-short sentences or what seemed to me like almost apathetic emotional responses to the situations at hand.

Like so many others, I've been thinking about Elie Wiesel with the news of his recent death. Thinking about what he endured and how he turned the horrific experience of the concentration camps into a lifetime of standing up for the oppressed by teaching us that we cannot forget. I thought I might reread *Night* in tribute to him and I know that I will read it again one day. What I decided to do now was to read this memoir that I was fortunate enough to obtain from Open Road Media because we need all the reminders we can get that the holocaust never should have happened and should never happen again. Beautifully written. I was hesitant to say that. How can one write so beautifully about unspeakable loss, horrendous treatment, hatred, about the death of millions of innocent people? I can say this because the writing is almost poetic in these brief "fragments" of the horror, the hunger, the death, the depth of sorrow and yet fragments of hope in this diary like memoir by Isabella Leitner. Isabella, her mother and five siblings were among the Jews who were evacuated on May 29, 1944 from a small town in Hungary to Auschwitz. Her father was in America seeking papers to bring his family there. Like other memoirs of holocaust survivors, this is a difficult read, taking the reader to this unimaginable place in the camps but also the unimaginable place in her heart and soul. This is short in length and I could have read it in one sitting but I found myself stopping at times because it is gut wrenching, heartbreaking (cliche terms, I know but I can't find other words). Isabella and her sisters sustained themselves with their mother's belief in humanity despite the hatred. "And when this is over ....

This book is slimmer than the volume which came out in 1994, combining and somewhat updating this and the sequel 'Saving the Fragments,' but in a way it has more of an emotional impact, even considering a lot of the powerful vignettes of Isabella and her by then two remaining sisters after the liberation are completely left out. Because it's so short, it has more room to leave a deeper emotional impact; it didn't really dawn on me until rather recently that this, the most powerful book I've ever read, offers up relatively little details about daily life in the camps or seemingly important events and rituals the then-four remaining sisters would have gone through, like mealtime, beatings, the superiors in their barracks, the type of "work" they were forced to do, and their boarding of and ride in the icy halftrack from Auschwitz to Birnbaumel in November 1944. We get some events that took place in both camps, but not, as in other Shoah memoirs, long detailed passages and chapters accounting for every day, week, or even month spent there. What has made this book so powerful to me over the years aren't the details but rather the truly touching and genuine bond between Isabella and her sisters, how they stayed alive and together for one another, because of one another, even when it would have been easier, particularly for the youngest remaining sister Regina (called "Rachel" in this book because she wouldn't let Isabella use her real name in print at the time), to go the way of the smoke.

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