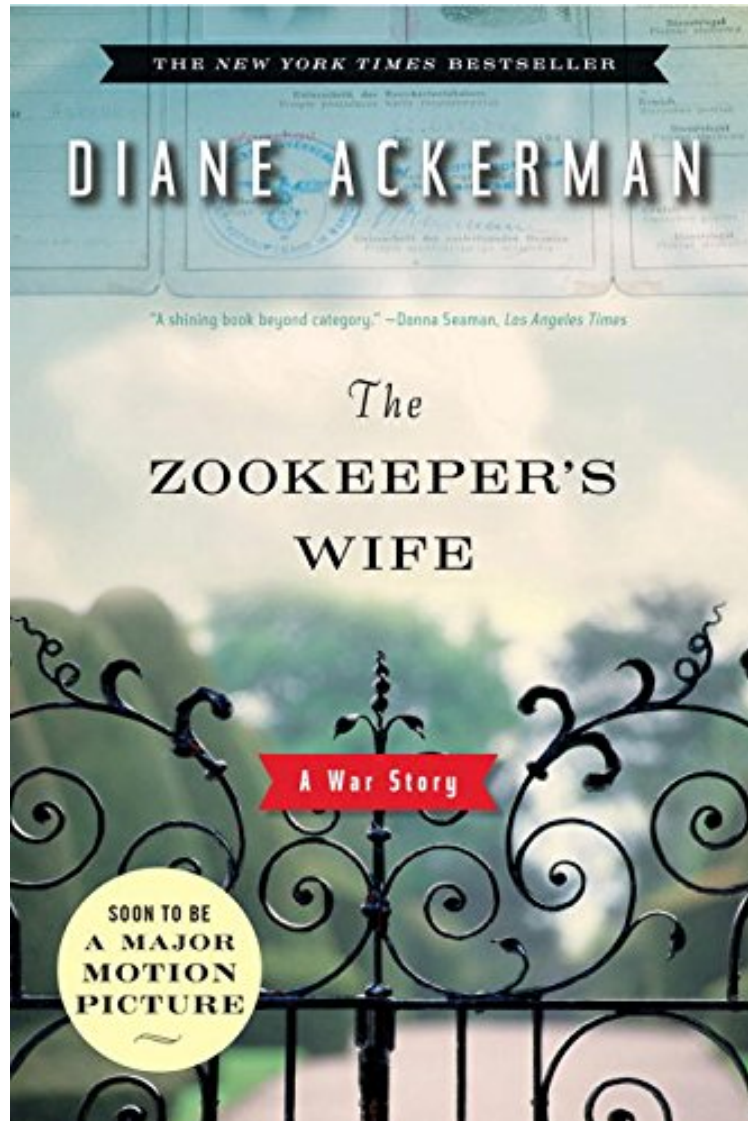


[FREE] The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story

The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story

Diane Ackerman

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Diane Ackerman : The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story:

168 of 177 people found the following review helpful. A WWII story both beautiful and horrifyingBy Mary FaganThe Zookeepers Wife, a true story set in Warsaw, Poland at the onset of WWII, is both horrifying and endearing on a scale Ive not experienced in years. Antonina lives with her husband and small son in a villa on the zoo grounds. They are extremely knowledgeable about the animals in their care; each one with their individual quirks, and all loved like

family. The zoo is well ahead of its time in providing natural habitats for its residents. Laid out like a lush garden, its a world famous showplace, a haven for both people and animals. Then the Nazis come with their tanks and bombs and total disregard for life. Drunken Gestapo agents shoot animals in their cages for sport. A pig the son is caring for is snatched away and butchered. But somehow the family manages, by one clever ploy after another, to remain at the villa where they daringly rescue Jews and work in the resistance. Yet through all the fear and deprivation, the spirit triumphs. Yes, at times Ackerman indulges in excessive scene-setting, eulogizing linden trees, for instance. Or she'll go off on a pages-long explanatory tangent - which, despite my impatient nature, nearly always proved fascinating. But all-in-all, I'd have to rank *The Zookeeper's Wife* right up there with Leon Uris' *Mila 18* for a story that will haunt you forever. 101 of 110 people found the following review helpful. Great premise, but just meh. By E.N. Fan I wanted to like this book. The premise is great and I like that the author tried to incorporate actual quotes from diaries and other historical sources into the story. Unfortunately, this is a case of an author who desperately needed a more assertive editor. There were very long and boring tangents that lost my attention. I put this book down/away multiple times and even considered not finishing it, but then forced myself to finish it because I was reading it for my book club. The thing that I despised most about the book was the changing voice in the writing. Sometimes it was told in first person and then it would suddenly shift to third person. In other words, it would say, "So and so did such and such", and then, "She probably felt X based on this passage" (that would then include a quote from her diary). I would have been OK with either writing style, but the constant switching back and forth was irritating. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating Account of Courage and Goodness During the Occupation of Warsaw. By Annie The Zookeeper's Wife is a remarkable account of the courage and selfless actions of the occupants of Warsaw during the Second World War who rescued and hid at great personal danger, the hundreds of Jews who were hunted and murdered by the Nazis. The story's focus is on the Warsaw Zoo and the Zabinskis who were the zoo's directors, in particular the courageous, gentle and wise wife, Antonina Zabinski. I found the story fascinating and well deserving of five stars for the remarkable research, excellent writing, and a story filled with page turning tension. Those of us who have never experienced such incredible hardship will find it impossible to relate to the experiences of the people of Warsaw, but this book does a great job of bringing those terrible times to light. I enjoyed every aspect of the book, from the animal stories to the 'guests' who were given safe harbour by the Zabinkis, to the everyday existence experienced by the Polish people under the brutal Nazi regime. I am very pleased that Diane Ackerman has brought this story to the attention of the reading public as it deserves to be told. I would recommend without reservation.

The New York Times bestseller soon to be a major motion picture starring Jessica Chastain. A true story in which the keepers of the Warsaw Zoo saved hundreds of people from Nazi hands. After their zoo was bombed, Polish zookeepers Jan and Antonina Zabinski managed to save over three hundred people from the Nazis by hiding refugees in the empty animal cages. With animal names for these "guests," and human names for the animals, it's no wonder that the zoo's code name became "The House Under a Crazy Star." Best-selling naturalist and acclaimed storyteller Diane Ackerman combines extensive research and an exuberant writing style to re-create this fascinating, true-life story sharing Antonina's life as "the zookeeper's wife," while examining the disturbing obsessions at the core of Nazism. Winner of the 2008 Orion Award. 8 pages of illustrations

.com Significant Seven, September 2007: On the heels of Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us* I picked up Diane Ackerman's *The Zookeepers Wife*. Both books take you to Poland's forest primeval, the Bialowieza, and paint a richly textured portrait of a natural world that few of us would recognize. The similarities end there, however, as Ackerman explores how that sense of natural order imploded under the Nazi occupation of Poland. Jan and Antonina Zabinski--keepers of the Warsaw Zoo who sheltered Jews from the Warsaw ghetto--serve as Ackerman's lens to this moment in time, and she weaves their experiences and reflections so seamlessly into the story that it would be easy to read the book as Antonina's own miraculous memoir. Jan and Antonina's passion for life in all its diversity illustrates ever more powerfully just how narrow the Nazi worldview was, and what tragedy it wreaked. *The Zookeepers Wife* is a powerful testament to their courage and--like Irene Nemirovsky's *Suite Francaise*--brings this period of European history into intimate view. --Anne Bartholomew From Publishers Weekly Starred . Ackerman (*A Natural History of the Senses*) tells the remarkable WWII story of Jan Zabinski, the director of the Warsaw Zoo, and his wife, Antonina, who, with courage and coolheaded ingenuity, sheltered 300 Jews as well as Polish resisters in their villa and in animal cages and sheds. Using Antonina's diaries, other contemporary sources and her own research in Poland, Ackerman takes us into the Warsaw ghetto and the 1943 Jewish uprising and also describes the Poles' revolt against the Nazi occupiers in 1944. She introduces us to such varied figures as Lutz Heck, the duplicitous head of the Berlin zoo; Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, spiritual head of the ghetto; and the leaders of Zegota, the Polish organization that rescued Jews. Ackerman reveals other rescuers, like Dr. Mada Walter, who helped many Jews pass, giving lessons on how to appear Aryan and not attract notice. Ackerman's writing is viscerally evocative, as in her description of the effects of the German bombing of the zoo area: ...the sky broke open and whistling fire hurtled down, cages exploded, moats rained upward, iron bars squealed as they wrenched apart. This suspenseful beautifully crafted story deserves a wide

readership. 8 pages of illus. (Sept.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist*Starred * Jan Zabinski, the innovative director of the Warsaw Zoo, and Antonina, his empathic wife, lived joyfully on the zoo grounds during the 1930s with their young son, Ryszard (Polish for lynx), and a menagerie of animals needing special attention. The zoo was badly damaged by the Nazi blitzkrieg, and their bit of paradise would have been utterly destroyed but for the director of the Berlin Zoo, Lutz Heck, who wanted Jan's help in resurrecting extinct "pure-blooded species" in pursuit of Aryan perfection in the animal kingdom. Resourceful and courageous, the Zabinskis turned the decimated zoo into a refuge and saved the lives of several hundred imperiled Jews. Ackerman has written many stellar works, including *A Natural History of the Senses* (1990) and *An Alchemy of Mind* (2004), but this is the book she was born to write. Sharing the Zabinskis' knowledge of and reverence for the natural world and drawing on her poet's gift for dazzling metaphor, she captures with breathtaking precision and discernment our kinship with animals, the barbarity of war, Antonina's unbounded kindness and keen delight in "life's sensory bazaar," Jan's daring work with the Polish Underground, and the audacity of the Zabinskis' mission of mercy. An exemplary work of scholarship and an "ecstasy of imagining," Ackerman's affecting telling of the heroic Zabinskis' dramatic story illuminates the profound connection between humankind and nature, and celebrates life's beauty, mystery, and tenacity. Seaman, Donna