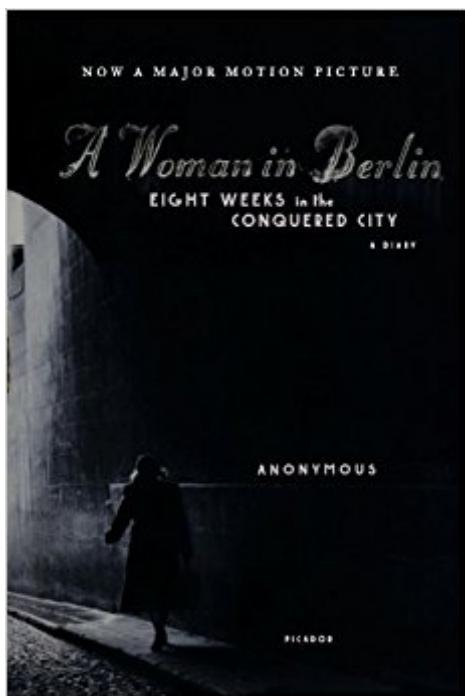


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# A Woman In Berlin: Eight Weeks In The Conquered City: A Diary



## Synopsis

A New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice For eight weeks in 1945, as Berlin fell to the Russian army, a young woman kept a daily record of life in her apartment building and among its residents. "With bald honesty and brutal lyricism" (Elle), the anonymous author depicts her fellow Berliners in all their humanity, as well as their cravenness, corrupted first by hunger and then by the Russians. "Spare and unpredictable, minutely observed and utterly free of self-pity" (The Plain Dealer, Cleveland), A Woman in Berlin tells of the complex relationship between civilians and an occupying army and the shameful indignities to which women in a conquered city are always subject--the mass rape suffered by all, regardless of age or infirmity. A Woman in Berlin stands as "one of the essential books for understanding war and life" (A. S. Byatt, author of Possession).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Anonymous, then a 34-year-old journalist, started this eight-week diary in April 1945, when the Russians were invading Berlin and the city's mostly female population was heading to its cellars to wait out the bombing. Anyone who was able looted abandoned buildings for food of any kind. Soon the Russians were everywhere; liquored-up Russian soldiers raped women indiscriminately. After being raped herself, Anonymous decided to "find a single wolf to keep away the pack." Thanks to a small series of Russian officers, she was better fed and better protected at night. Her story illustrates the horror war brings to the lives of women when the battles are waged near a home front (rather than a traditional battlefield). In retrospect, she advises women victimized by mass rape to talk to each other about it. Once the war was officially over, the real starvation

began; by the time the author's soldier boyfriend returned to Berlin, she was too hungry and hurt to deal with him. When the radio reported concentration camp horrors, she was pained but unable to quite take it in. The author, who died in 2001, has a fierce, uncompromising voice, and her book should become a classic of war literature. First published in 1954, it was probably too dark for postwar readers, German or Allied. Now, after witnessing Bosnia and Darfur, maybe we are finally ready. New translation includes previously untranslated portions. (Aug. 4) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The author of this diary was a 34-year-old journalist, now deceased, who consistently refused to reveal her identity publicly. She spoke some Russian and seemed liberal in outlook. Her chronicle was first published in 1953; after remaining dormant, it was republished 50 years later in Germany. This stunning account covers the period from late April to mid-June 1945, beginning with the massive Soviet bombardment of Berlin and ending with the opening weeks of the Soviet occupation. The author is a keen observer of the ironies, even the absurdities, of a collapsing society, but this is a work of great power. At times, one can virtually smell the fear as people cower in basements as the bombardment intensifies. When Russian troops arrive, they are, at first, comically playful as they seem intent on accumulating watches and bicycles. Then the rapes begin and there are scenes of casual but horrifying brutality. The author recounts her own rape with an unsettling detachment. This is a devastating and rare glimpse at ordinary people who struggle to survive. Jay FreemanCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This remarkable piece of writing brings history to life in vivid detail. The author - an anonymous 34 year old woman - really puts you in the moment. We follow her innermost thoughts as she navigates the momentous events of Berlin in 1945. As the city is overrun by rapacious Russian troops, Germany surrenders, and tentatively begins to rebuild, she documents with poignant observation the transformation of the city and its people. Against this backdrop, the authors own situation quickly degenerates into a matter of survival as she does whatever necessary to stay alive, while helping those around her.

If you want to understand history, this is a book for you. Many parts are deeply disturbing so I would recommend this book for adults. The introduction explains the author and why her name is not

published. As a person who grew up during the cold war and watched the Berlin War come down, this puts another perspective of what life like under the Soviet occupation of East Germany and what people went through to survive.

Told from one woman's experience in Russia occupied Berlin. Not a pretty tale but offered a human dimension to something I knew happened but had no insight into. I was a little surprised the Russians were not as brutal as I had been led to believe. They were angry and often sadistic but they were still human and often showed mercy and little kindnesses. Rape became so customary to these women they came to adopt a black humor and even joke about it. The Allied bombing sounds unbearable and I expect there is a lot of PTSD among the survivors. While I suspect other survivors might tell a very different tale it's still an interesting inside view into a historical event by a pragmatic woman who seemed to be able to charm her way out of some potentially lethal situations.

Really enjoyed reading this book. It takes place near the end of Hitler's reign, WWII, his death, and the aftermath the people who were left behind faced. It's something that I think everyone should read at least once. It's such a sad chain of events but fought with such bravery by ordinary people who weren't soldiers.

Damn sad and disturbing story about Post-WW2 Berlin. Forewarning anyone, there are many tales the author includes about her getting raped by Russian soldiers. It happened too frequently, that I couldn't finish the book. Midway through the book, I stopped. It's a telling story about the horrors of war on military and civilian lives.

Great read - amazing story and well written. The author gives you a very frank, direct look at life in an occupied city during WWII. The atrocities of war are not just what happens to the military - but also the civilians. This book will open your eyes and give you a pause about humanity.

I recommend reading this book before watching the motion picture of the same name, the motion picture does not do the subject matter justice.

Not just a woman in Berlin at the end of WWII, but in any city, at any time, under armed conflict, this book reminds us of the atrocities derived out of human incomprehension, irrationality, ambition, etc. as anonymous as the author is, the actors are too, given the fact, they're all gone today, but not so

their legacy... which has stayed with us (and hopefully with future generations). Interestingly, the way the author describes every infamous episode will make you notice the way things have changed too, for even physical abuse under war circumstances had certain brush of "decency" nonexistent among today's savagery. A just in time wake up call you can't afford to miss...

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