

Anna Stuart

(AUTHOR)

The Midwife of Auschwitz

(BOOK TITLE)

DATE

TIME

21 MAR 2023

8:00PM ET

Book Club

EST. 2019

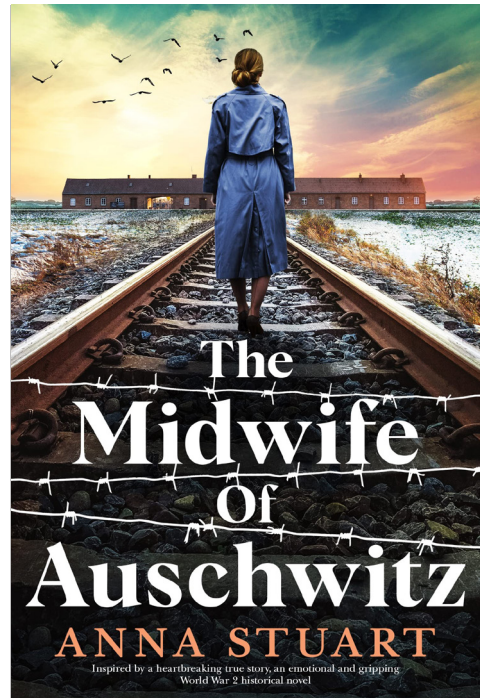
Club

HOLLY FURTICK
BOOK CLUB

Book Club

EST. 2019

HOLLY FURTICK
BOOK CLUB



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Wanted to be an author from a young age
- Author of a series of novels based on real events during WW2
- Also writes contemporary fiction under pseudonym Joanna Courtney
- Website: annastuart.com/about

ABOUT THE BOOK

- Inspired by an incredible true story
- Tells of one woman's fight for love, life, and hope during a time of unimaginable darkness

SETTING/LOCATION

- St. Stanislaus Cathedral - where Ester and Filip sit and meet
- Lodz - Pronounced "Wudge." Their city, where the Ghetto is
- Warsaw - Bartek and Bron move to
- Chelmno - Camp with gas vans and where Filip escapes from
- Mauthausen - Camp where Zander and Jakub were sent (Fun fact, this is where Dr Edith Eger ended up after the death marches in Auschwitz for a time)
- Kanada - All things taken from prisoners as they are being processed are sent here

CHARACTERS

- Ester Abrams Pasternak- Polish Jew. Trained as a nurse. 41400
- Ana Kaminski - In her 50s. Practicing midwife that starts working for the resistance. Gentile that can't get past the atrocities of what the Jewish people are experiencing. 41401
- Filip Pasternak - Ester's husband. Also, a Polish Jew.

- Bartek Kaminski- Ana's husband
- Bronislaw "Bron" Kaminski- Ana's oldest son - Doctor
- Alekzander "Zander" Kaminski- Ana's middle son - Doctor
- Jakub Kaminski- Ana's youngest son - A printer like his father
- Leah - Ester's younger sister who escapes the ghetto
- Benjamin Pasternak - Filip's father
- Sarah Pasternak- Filip's mother
- Ruth Abrams - Ester's mother
- Mordecai Abrams - Ester's father
- Tomasz - Friend of Filip. Filip's best man. Dies Auschwitz giving Ester word on her husband when he arrives at the camp
- Martha - Helped Ester ghetto deliver babies. Her and her family lived with Ester and her families. She leaves with her children.
- Noah - Martha's husband
- Rumkowski - the Elder of the Jews who ran the judenrat (Jewish ghetto police) and exploited his status
- Irma Grese - Aufseherin Camp SS guard over the women
- Marie Mandel - Laugerfuhrerin Camp SS guard over the women - Irma's boss
- Klara - Kapo - Political prisoner - Put over their cell block.
- Pfani - Works with Klara. Prostitute - Original baby tattooist.
- Naomi - Greek Jew. Had a relationship with an SS guard and had a baby in the camp that survived
- Mala - Escapes and is recaptured. Ana became very sad when was recaptured. She slit her wrist, and eventually, the guard shot her.
- Pippa - Ana's baby that was taken
- Oliwia - Zofia's baby and the first baby Ana tattooed. Ana and Filip adopt her.
- Wolf and Meyer - Would come and take the baby as part of the Lebensborn program.
- Joseph Mengele - Angel of death. Did medical experiments on prisoners.

THINGS I LOVED ABOUT THIS BOOK

- I loved how this book highlights heroic women.
- I loved how this book was about women helping women and surviving together.
- When I read a book like this, it makes me feel like there is nothing too hard for me to handle.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- This was our fourth WW2 book for book club, do you like WW2 fiction? We read *The Things We Cannot Say* and Dr. Edith Eger's book.
- Was there anything about WW2 that you learned from reading this book?
- Who was your favorite character in the book?

- Were you glad that they did not reunite with their baby?
- How did you feel about the ending?

MEMORABLE SCENES

- Pg 13- Filip and Ester's engagement - Invasion of Poland
- Pg 15- Filip and Ester's wedding - SS came to burn the synagogue down and almost did it with the people in it. Bartek spoke up, and they were allowed to watch it burn. He played to SS sick sense of duty, and killing the Jews was not in their orders.
- Pg 30- Pasternak and Kaminski displacement as the Jews are moved into the ghetto
- Pg 49- Ester delivered her first baby in the ghetto and then asked Ana for books on midwifery.
- Pg 52- Leah and the SS officer - The family then knew they had to get her out of the ghetto.
- Pg 57- Christmas Eve when the Kaminski's gave away their Christmas dinner.
- Pg 67- When Ester met Martha and asked her to help with delivering a baby and Martha and Noah moved in with them.
- Pg 87- When they smuggled Leah out and Ruth fell over in a fit to distract the guards. The guards beat Ruth, and she never really recovered.
- Pg 105- Ana and her sons get arrested by the SS
- Pg 115- Ester speaks up for her mother and is sent to Auschwitz with her mother. She sees Ana at the train station.
- Pg 120- Ester is then pushed on the train with Ana. Ester's mother dies in her arms on the train, and Ruth tells Ana before she dies that Ester is now her daughter.
- Pg 126- Ana and Ester get sent to the midwife Block 17 (later move to Block 24).
- Pg 132- Ana and Klara have a confrontation about drowning the babies. The SS doctor arrives and agrees with Ana.
- Pg 156- When the babies started being taken for the Lebensborn program and Ester began tattooing the babies.
- Pg 156- Ana also receives packages from Bartek with notes smuggled in the food
- Pg 163- Ester receives letter from Filip but it gets destroyed.
- Pg 180- Naomi saves Ana after a confrontation with the SS with a diamond
- Pg 219- Mala escapes and is captured
- Pg 239- They deliver Naomi's baby and hide him
- Pg 264- When they take everyone else on a death march out of Auschwitz. Ana and Ester stay and find a block with children that were left behind. The Soviets eventually rescue them.
- Pg 302- Ana is reunited with Jakub and then Xander and Bron. Bartek had died in Warsaw fighting to the resistance.
- Pg 308- When Ester sees Noah to find out Filip got out of Chelmno, but she still has not seen him. So she waits for him every day on the cathedral steps.
- Pg 315- Leah finds Ester on the Cathedral steps.

- Pg 321- Ana meets with the Rabbi Drucker trying to reunite Jewish children with their families
- Pg 333- Filip finds Ester on the Cathedral steps and recounts story of escape
- Pg 339- When Ana, Ester, and Filip find Oliwia, Ester and Filip adopt her.

MEMORABLE QUOTES

- Pg 55- 'If a new baby is such a miracle, then losing it must be the greatest tragedy of all.'
- Pg 55- 'Your God or mine?' Again the chuckle. He is the same figure, 'Both. He is the same figure, we just have different ways of listening to him.'
- Pg 64- 'If we join the Resistance, we may lose our lives.' 'And if we do not,' Bartek replied, 'we may lose our souls.'
- Pg 101- For what was a life without a generation to lead the way and another to come behind? What was anyone working for, save another few days in this miserable non-existence?
- Pg 218- Ana had chalked up around 2,000 births in Birkenau and had still not lost either a mother or a baby in the birthing itself.
- Pg 247- Why, Ana had wondered so many times over this last, vile year, was there no word for a mother who had lost her child? If you lost your husband, you were a widow, if you lost your wife you were a widower, but a parent who lost a child...?
- Pg 255- Ana had birthed nearing three thousand babies in here, and every one of them safely for both mother and baby.
- Pg 255- Six were still alive in the camp- five born in the last month to non-Jews and one hiding beneath Naomi's jumper - but over sixty had been taken to be 'Germanised.'
- Pg 258- I realized that killing babies was more lucrative than birthing them.
- Pg 326- The Nazis may have seemed to smother us with a blanket of hatred but as it is lifted, we are finding more and more examples of courage and kindness.
- Pg 341- But love cannot be ravaged by guns and tanks and evil ideologies. Love cannot be cut off by distance or absence, by hunger or cold, by beatings or degradations. And love can reach out across blood, whatever the Nazis believed, and make connections that are worth a million sick ideologies.