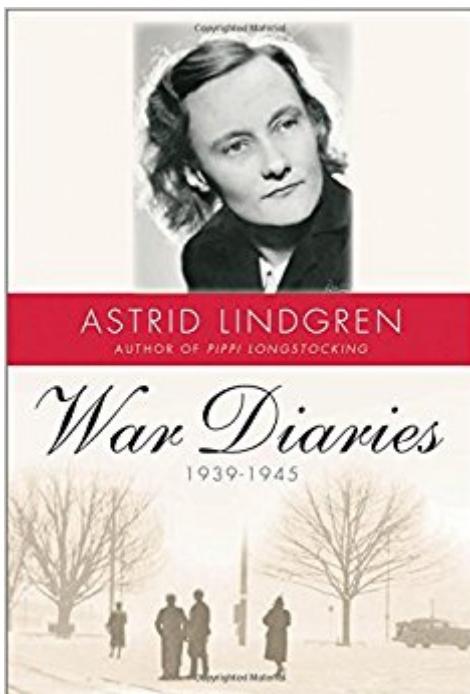


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War Diaries, 1939–1945



Synopsis

These personal diaries kept by Astrid Lindgren, author of the world famous Pippi Longstocking books, chronicle the horrors of World War II. Before she became internationally known for her Pippi Longstocking books, Astrid Lindgren was an aspiring author living in Stockholm with her family at the outbreak of the Second World War. The diaries she kept throughout the hostilities offer a civilian's, a mother's, and an aspiring writer's unique account of the devastating conflict. She emerges as a morally courageous critic of violence and war, as well as a deeply sensitive and astute observer of world affairs. We hear her thoughts about rationing, blackouts, the Soviet invasion of Finland, and the nature of evil, as well as of her personal heartbreaks, financial struggles, and trials as a mother and writer. Posthumously published in Sweden to great international acclaim, these diaries were called in the Swedish press an "unparalleled war narrative," "unprecedented," and a "shocking history lesson." Illustrated with family photographs, newspaper clippings, and facsimile pages, Lindgren's diaries provide an intensely personal and vivid account of Europe during the war.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Yale University Press (November 22, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0300220049

ISBN-13: 978-0300220049

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #719,195 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > History > Europe > Scandinavia > Sweden #273 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Diaries & Journals #4085 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors

Customer Reviews

"Laden with sadness and dismay, the diaries show everything from Lindgren's horror at the deportation of 1,000 Norwegian Jews to Poland—it is diabolical!—to her personal heartbreak after a marriage crisis." *The Guardian* "As a writer, Lindgren was no navel-gazer given to mooning about her feelings, nor as a

civilian was she proximate to powerful people pulling the levers of history. She was, however, a vivid observer of domestic affairs and geopolitics who, as her books for children would prove, was keenly alive to life's vagaries. . . . Sensitive and wide-ranging, the diaries of the future author of the "Pippi Longstocking" books offer a rare Scandinavian perspective on the catastrophe. . . . Fresh and intelligent." •Meghan Cox Gurdon, *Wall Street Journal*"A compelling and well-researched narrative full of passion and a constant yearning for peace and change.

Lindgren's diary is detailed, informative, and incredibly engaging, revealing the realities of neutrality in times of war." •Gricel Dominguez, *Library Journal* (starred review)"A bystander's unillusioned record of a war-ravaged, refugee-strewn world resonates these days. And Lindgren's bracing testimony sheds unexpected light on outlandish Pippi after all. . . . As a child born of a war-haunted imagination, Pippi and her zany gumption make perfect sense." •Ann Hulbert, *The Atlantic*"This is a fascinating, engrossing, and wholly unique account of a young writer's attempts to make sense of World War II, from the local concerns of food rationing and the well-being of her children to the larger theatre of war unfolding in Europe, Africa, and Asia." •Morten Høj Jensen"The newly published 1939-1945 diaries of the globally acclaimed children's book author offer fresh insights into war-time Sweden and into the life of the not-yet-famous Astrid Lindgren." •Radio Sweden"A fascinating time-machine. 'Then' becomes 'now.' " •Per Svensson, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*"This is a breath-taking read." •Barbara Mäfälä, *Die Welt*

Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002) was a Swedish writer best known for her *Pippi Longstocking* series. Her books have been translated into 97 languages and have sold approximately 150,000,000 copies worldwide.

If you enjoy diaries this is an excellent one!

My daughter was thrilled to get this. She loves Astrid and is looking forward to learning more about her life.

"War Diaries, 1939-1945" by Astrid Lindgren documents the horror of World War II. For six years, Lindgren chronicled the devastation using newspaper clippings and personal insights gleaned from her state security work as a censor of military and private mail sent to, and coming from, other countries. Her ruminations about wartime conditions in occupied countries were meant to help her

understand the terrible world conflict. Although Sweden was in a perpetual state of "readiness", the Swedes lived peacefully as a result of allowing trains of German soldiers to travel through Sweden to Finland. Norwegians were hostile as a result. Swedes helped their Scandinavian neighbors by sponsoring children from Norway and Finland and donating clothes, money, ambulances and anti-aircraft equipment. Astrid Lindgren was in a unique position. As a censor, she commanded an excellent salary as did her husband in his job as director at the Swedish Motorist Association. Despite these advantages, the family had to deal with rationing, blackouts, lack of heat and price gouging. Astrid contrasted the shining sun and budding flowers with death by firing squad and round-ups to concentration camps. Thousands of people died of hunger. Starving Swedish sailors searched waste bins for potato peelings to eat. Astrid was appalled by the war and wondered whether Armageddon was coming. The diaries painted a picture of Sweden as an island surrounded by warring factions. The future looked menacing and hopeless but the Lindgrens tried to maintain a degree of normalcy for the sake of their children while planning for evacuation if necessary. "War Diaries, 1939-1945" gives us insight into a time when the world went mad. This was an unsettling, upsetting but necessary tome. It is hoped that history will not continue to repeat itself and wreck additional havoc upon humanity.

A great read!

A unique perspective of World War II. Astrid Lindgren kept diaries of her perspective of the war while at home in Sweden, with her own personal thoughts/ feelings and newspaper clippings. Sweden did its best to stay neutral during the war, but even they had to deal with rationing and preparing for evacuation if war did strike, even if it meant being looked down on by neighboring countries. Lindgren's views are very personal and draws the reader to feel what she is feeling while she is writing or the clippings placed in the journal. I received a digital ARC from Yale University Press and NetGalley for an honest review. I feel that not having the full clippings and excerpts from censor letters, only having slight description, led to not getting the full feeling of what Astrid was trying to portray, but for an ARC it was amazing! I am also fairly sure that when making the diaries, she was not thinking about having them published.

"Human sadism seems capable of going to any lengths." By 1942's end the summation of war's effect on the population changed from its terrible onslaught to how it was affecting them personally due to lack of food and their ability to heat their homes. Astrid acknowledged that Sweden knew of

the horrific acts of Nazi Germany, including their extermination of populations it trampled for the sake of the Reich including the knowledge that Jews were surely being singled out and murdered. Additionally they allowed troops transit through their own country, writing in January 1943: "April 1940 ... how could we have let troops through? I don't believe it. But we did let trains through with troops on leave after the fighting stopped, and still are doing; I wish we'd stop."November 3, 1942" And now the real war readiness is setting in: people are so tired of the war that they simply don't know what to do, it's all so depressing".January 24, 1943"Poor people, I can't help feeling sorry for the German soldiers having to suffer so terribly, no matter how much I detest Nazism and all the acts of violence the Germans have committed in the countries they occupied. "April 16, 1944"The Allies are cross with us and other neutral states for supplying things to Germany. And send us stern memos about it. But we don't care."After 2 plus years I find it morally reprehensible that a country, Sweden, could sit back and refuse to take a stand one way or another. ALTHOUGH, IT IS INTERESTING THAT TODAY EUROPE, AFRICA THE MIDDLE EAST, ETC INCLUDING SOME IN THE USA ARE REFUSING TO STAND UP AGAINST RADICAL ISLAM. On my moral soapbox I imagine that this diary could have been similar to any family far apart from the fighting. As wars have continued it seems that only the soldiers and their families are making sacrifices. This book was marginally interesting and forced myself to finish when the pattern of the narrative was about her knowledge of WWII, menus for holidays, and her children's school activities and birthday presents.

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