

Further Reading

Lilac Girls
Martha Hall Kelly (2016)
KELLY

The Ravensbruck Rabbits were seventy-four women prisoners in the Ravensbruck concentration camp. Using alternating first-person narratives, the characters relate their experiences from 1939 through 1959. More than a war story, this is a tale of how the strength of women's bonds can carry them through even the most difficult situations.

The Lost Wife
Alyson Richman (2011)
RICHMAN

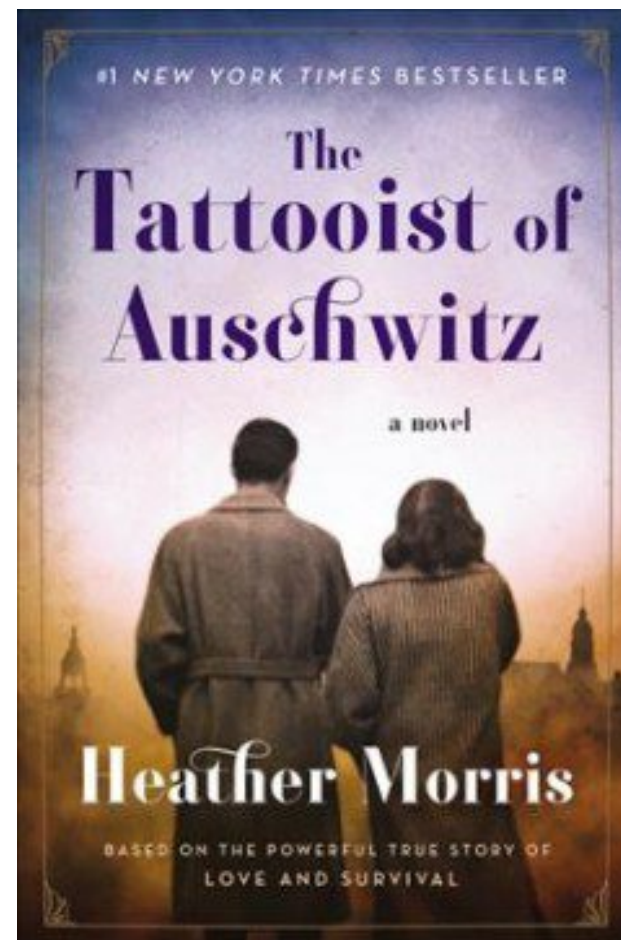
During the last moments of calm in prewar Prague, Lenka, a young art student, and Josef, who is studying medicine, fall in love. With the promise of a better future, they marry--only to have their dreams shattered by the imminent Nazi invasion. Like so many others, they are torn apart by the currents of war.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas
John Boyne (2007)
HISTORY TEEN BOYNE

Bored and lonely after his family moves from Berlin to a place called "Out-With" in 1942, Bruno, the son of a Nazi officer, befriends a boy in striped pajamas who lives behind a wire fence.

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Book Discussion Guide



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About the Book

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a *Tatowierer* (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners. Imprisoned for over two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism—but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive.

Discussion Questions

1. How did you feel about Lale when he was first introduced, as he arrived in Auschwitz? How did your understanding of him change throughout the novel?
2. What qualities did Lale have that influenced the way he was treated in the camp? Where did those qualities come from?
3. Survival in the camp depended on people doing deeds of questionable morality. Lale became the tattooist, but how did Gita's choices affect her survival? What about her friend who befriended a Nazi?
4. Inmates in the concentration camp had to make life-or-death decisions every day. Why did some make the "right" decisions and survive while others did not?
5. Discuss some of the small acts of humanity carried out by individuals in the novel. How did these small acts have greater impacts? Did it make you reconsider what you believe to be brave? Or reevaluate the impact of your own everyday actions?
6. The Tattooist of Auschwitz makes clear that there were also non-Jewish prisoners in the camp. How did the treatment of Jews differ from that of non-Jews? How did differences manifest themselves?
7. Had Gita and Lale met in a more conventional way, would they have developed the same kind of relationship? How did their circumstances change the course of their romance?
8. In what ways were the relationships between Gita and her friends different from the usual friendships between teenage girls? In what ways were they similar?
9. In what ways was Lale a hero? In what ways was he an ordinary man?
10. Lale faced danger even after the camp was liberated. How did his experiences immediately after liberation prepare him for the rest of his life?
11. How does *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* change your perceptions about the Holocaust in particular, and war in general? What implications does *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* this book hold for our own time?

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