



The Mermaid and the Messerschmitt: War Through a Woman's Eyes 1939-1940

Rulka Langer

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During the opening months of World War II, Vassar-educated career woman Rulka Langer (1906-1993) risked her life and relied on her wits to keep her two small children and elderly mother out of harm's way. "The Mermaid and the Messerschmitt" is a rare eyewitness account of the early, chaotic days of WWII -- the Nazi German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, the Siege of Warsaw and the first few months of the Occupation -- written by a young working mother. Langer's engaging, clear-eyed chronicle sparkles with fresh and lively storytelling and a brilliant eye for detail. Weaving her story with a masterful use of humor, an occasional bite of sarcasm and a large dose of honesty, Langer paints a vivid picture of this virtually unknown aspect of WWII -- and at the same time illuminates universal truths about average, ordinary people faced with war. More than 100 black & white photos, maps and illustrations; Afterword from author; Epilogue by author's son; contextualizing historical material; discussion questions; Lifetime TV interview. SELECTION of the BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, HISTORY BOOK CLUB and MILITARY BOOK CLUB. Audiobook available from Audible.com. "Absolutely one of the best eyewitness accounts of WWII Poland."--Alan Furst, bestselling author of "The Foreign Correspondent"; "Moving, laced with grim humor, accessible to a modern audience."--College & Research Libraries News; "Adrenalin charged...unsparing candour and flashes of humor."--The Ottawa Citizen; "A gripping, fast-paced narrative...takes you to the centre of the drama."--Cosmopolitan Review; "Must-read for anyone interested in World War II."--Lev Raphael, author of "My Country"; "I couldn't put the book down. Her story is riveting...utterly contemporary and compelling."--Fontayne Holmes, City Librarian, Los Angeles Public Library (2004-2008).

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