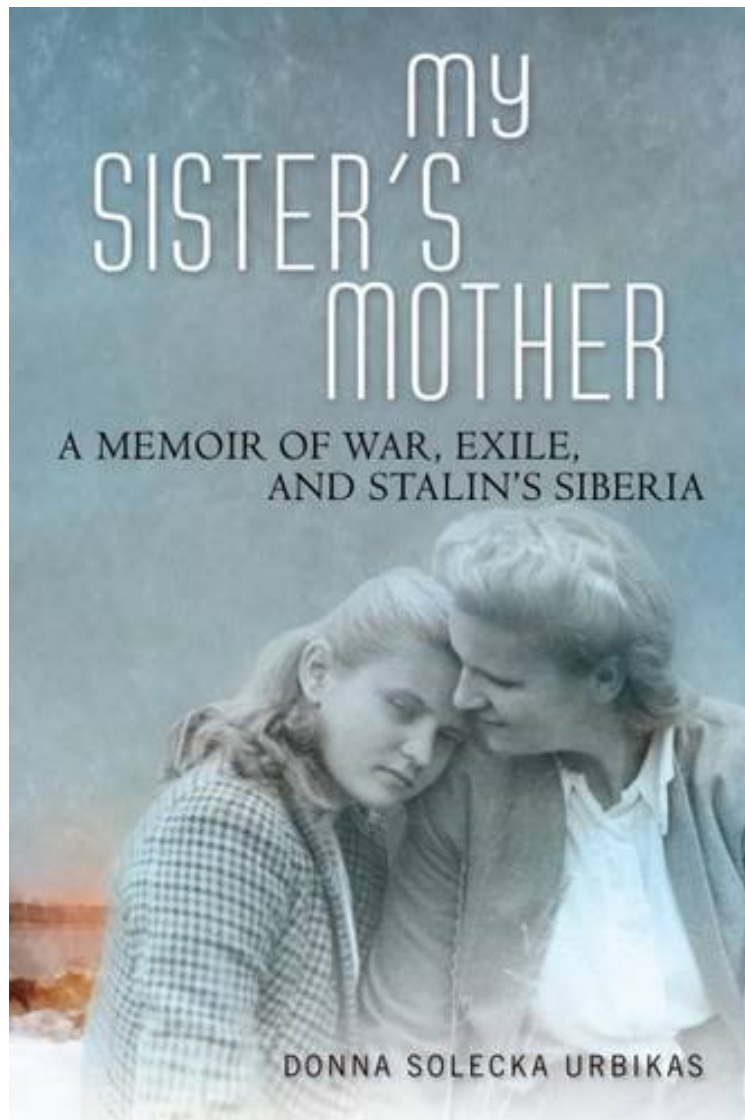


[Free download] My Sister's Mother: A Memoir of War, Exile, and Stalin's Siberia

My Sister's Mother: A Memoir of War, Exile, and Stalin's Siberia

Donna Solecka Urbikas

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#550769 in Books Donna Solecka Urbikas 2016-04-27Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.10 x 6.00l, #File Name: 0299308502312 pagesMy Sister s Mother A Memoir of War Exile and Stalin s Siberia | File size: 45.Mb

Donna Solecka Urbikas : My Sister's Mother: A Memoir of War, Exile, and Stalin's Siberia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Sister's Mother: A Memoir of War, Exile, and Stalin's Siberia:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This story is first a surprisingly touching story of a mother and two daughters; Stalin's Siberia is the near-impossible settingBy AZ canyonhikerThis book is exceptionally well-written

and held my attention, making it a surprising two-day read. Somehow I was expecting a tale of history, more academic in nature, since it's published by a university press. But the core of the book focuses on motherhood, the roots of relationships between a mother and her daughter, and how far a woman is willing to go to survive and protect her child in impossible circumstances. Exile to Siberia is the powerful setting that few outside the Polish community are fully aware of, which adds to the value of this story. The author's mother and her five-year-old daughter were two of hundreds of thousands of Poles forcibly evicted from their homes in February 1940 and then, well, no spoiler alerts here, except that they endure a tortuous journey together. A second key exploration in this book is the author's personal experience of a second-generation survivor of war trauma, as well as being a first-generation immigrant of Polish parents, who can never return to a communist Poland. Then, on top of this, in the second half of the book, the story turned surprisingly personal as she faced many simultaneous trials of being sandwiched between younger children with issues, and aging parents, which is a subject I completely relate to. I suspect I'll be still be thinking about this book in the weeks to come, especially for the first-hand view of deportation to Siberia.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Memorable Story of War, courage, and Love
By Sharon Voigt
I was very excited to read this book since I am researching my Polish family. I know I have relatives there, I just have to find them! This book gave me great insight into what it was like to live in Poland during this terrible time in history. Life, here, was not for the faint of heart and Donna's mother was one strong, courageous woman. The fact that she was able to save not only herself but her daughter, Donna's sister, was a miraculous feat. Donna's relationship with her mother and sister was hampered by the fact that she did not understand the history behind their relationship and difficult journey. As this story unravels it was easier for Donna to understand and I think to "like" her mother. Her love and admiration for her mother also grew and changed over the course of the story. Anyone who is interested in life during World War II or non-fiction stories about self-realization will enjoy this book. It is not a difficult read and will encourage the reader to reevaluate certain relationships and views on their private lives. Thank you, Donna, for sharing your family's story with us.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Refugee Experience Vividly Captured
By Gregory P Dreyer
This book is about the refugee experience of the author's mother, sister and father. It will deepen the reader's understanding of the refugee experience, which is so relevant today. What sets this book apart from other refugee tales is how this refugee experience affects the American-raised child of the refugees (the author). I appreciated the structure of the story, with the chapters going back and forth in time. One chapter is on their life in America, then the next chapter goes back to war-torn Europe. It's an effective tool that maintains the reader's interest and connects the two parts of the story. The author's descriptions of her mother's life experience are exceptionally vivid. I had no idea that any refugees traveled so far from Poland to various places in the vast former Soviet Union, to Iran, to India, to England and finally finding a home in the United States. It's an amazing story of survival.

Donna Solecka Urbikas grew up in the Midwest during the golden years of the American century. But her Polish-born mother and half sister had endured dehumanizing conditions during World War II, as slave laborers in Siberia. War and exile created a profound bond between mother and older daughter, one that Donna would struggle to find with either of them. In 1940, Janina Slarzynska and her five-year-old daughter Mira were taken by Soviet secret police (NKVD) from their small family farm in eastern Poland and sent to Siberia with hundreds of thousands of others. So began their odyssey of hunger, disease, cunning survival, desperate escape across a continent, and new love amidst terrible circumstances. But in the 1950s, baby boomer Donna yearns for a "normal" American family while Janina and Mira are haunted by the past. In this unforgettable memoir, Donna recounts her family history and her own survivor's story, finally understanding the damaged mother who had saved her sister. Finalist, Best Traditional Non-Fiction Book, Chicago Writers Association

"This stunning, heartfelt memoir looks unflinchingly at the scars borne by one Polish immigrant family as their daughter tries to become a normal American girl in Chicago. A gripping study of family dynamics, this is also a must-read for World War II history buffs."—Leonard Kniffel, author of *A Polish Son in the Motherland*