



# Paper Hearts

*Meg Wiviott*

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## **Paper Hearts** Meg Wiviott

A novel in verse, Paper Hearts is the story of survival, defiance, and friendship. Based on historical events about a group of girls who were slave laborers at the munitions factory in Auschwitz.

## **Paper Hearts Details**

Date : Published October 13th 2015 by Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster) (first published September 1st 2015)

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Author : Meg Wiviott

Format : 332 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, Poetry, World War II, Holocaust



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# From Reader Review Paper Hearts for online ebook

## Chesley Nichols says

This story of love and friendship in such miserable circumstances...is inspiring. I really can't describe how much I loved this book.

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## Autumn says

Simply powerful. The writing style is beautiful. The simplicity of the poem format oddly enough adds to the power of the subject. Auschwitz and the Holocaust are not light subjects. This book is dark and heavy, but the writing style makes it so easy to read. I read this in one sitting. I finished this within a few hours. Highly recommended to anyone who loves reading stories involving the Holocaust and German history.

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## ReadingAddict says

An absolutely heartbreaking story, told in verse, about a group of young women held captive in Auschwitz. I think this is an important book for everyone to read, especially now with the current political climate in the USA. As the book simply states, "Never again. Never again. Never again."

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## Courtney says

Paper Hearts was a touching story, and very sad. It walks you through the lives of young women who are taken to Auschwitz. The two in particular are Fania and Zlatka. You follow their journeys from the time they were taken to the camps all the way to the Red Army finding them and nursing them back to health.

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## Urt? Jakubauskait? says

"Survival is a balance  
between being good  
and bad  
between being strong  
and weak.  
You cannot be  
too much of  
anything"

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## **Christina Hanson says**

Paper.

Scissors.

Pencil.

Glue.

Simple things we didn't have.

Simple things once taken for granted.

Stolen.

Bartered.

Traded.

Simple things bright great risks.

•

Paper Hearts by Meg Wiviott is a Holocaust novel in verse based on true events. The story is told by Zlatka and Fania, best friends in the Auschwitz concentration camp. Zlatka wanted to make Fania a birthday card for her upcoming birthday. But Zlatka knew making something so positive and uplifting for her friend could come at a deadly cost. Even though Fania cherished that origami heart card, she had to keep it hidden while in the camp and during the death marches. Will Fania be able to keep the card a secret or will she and her friends be caught and pay the ultimate price? A touching story of hope and friendship in the midst of tragedy.

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## **Sarah Reads says**

This book is a beautiful story based on the true events of what happened in world war 2. The story was so well written and is just so sad....SO MANY TEARS!!!!!! Definitely a 5 out of 5 stars! Would really recommend it to anyone who likes historical fiction and likes to read books in verse form!

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## **Becca says**

All I can say is WOW. Great book, I hope you're ready to cry.

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## **Alex (not a dude) Baugh says**

When the Germans arrive in June 1941, life changed for the Jews living in Pružany, a small town in Belarus. For 17 year-old Zlatka Sznajderhauz and her family - mother, father, younger brothers Iser and Lázaró, younger sister Necha - life became more and more difficult. Restrictions meant no freedoms, no school, no jobs, little food and eventually life in a Nazi-created ghetto. Before long, daily lists began to be posted for transports to Auschwitz-Birkenau. On the third day, the Sznajderhauz family was on the list.

Separated from her father and brothers, when they arrive at Auschwitz, Zlatka and Necha are sent to the right of the selection, her mother and brother Lázaró to the left and immediate death.

As Zlatka's story unfolds, so does Fania's in alternate chapters. Fania, 18, is sent away from her home in Białystok by her family to Augustów in the hope of saving her life since she looked the most Aryan. Fania is

quickly arrested for being Jewish and sent first to Łódź Prison, later to Stutthof, where she learns that the Białystok Ghetto has been liquidated. Heartbroken, Fania realizes she has lost her entire family. Eventually, Fania, and the three friends she made in Łódź are transported to Auschwitz.

Finding themselves in the same barracks, at first Zlatka shuns Fania's offer of friendship, but after Necha's death, it is Fania who pulls Zlatka out of what could have been a fatal depression. The two become friends and family to each other, determined to survive the brutal treatment they are subjected to in Auschwitz.

For Fania's 20th birthday, Zlatka decides to make her an origami birthday heart, an act of defiance that could cost them their lives. Zlatka does whatever she needs to - stealing, bartering, swapping - to get the materials for the heart. When it was done, it was passed to every girl at their work table, 15 in all, to sign and add their wishes for Fania. Even those girls who didn't speak Polish understand the importance of signing the heart.

Fania, Zlatka and the birthday heart survived Auschwitz, survived the death marches they were sent on at the end of the war, and survived the war.

Paper Hearts is a novel based on a true story. It is written in free verse and I feel that the form and content of the story coalesce so beautifully that the reader can almost feel as though they are travelling side by side with Zlatka and Fania through everything.

Meg Wiviott got the idea for this novel after seeing a 2010 documentary film called A Heart in Auschwitz. The film chronicles the filmmakers quest to find Zlatka and Fania and bring them together again. Intrigued, Wiviott began her own research, which included hearing Zlatka and Fania's Shoah testimonies (Zlatka's in Spanish, Fania's in Yiddish) and a visit to the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre to see the actual heart, which is on display there.

This is a heartbreaking yet beautiful story of friendship, hope and love in the midst of so much brutality, death and hate.

This book is recommended for readers age 12+

This book was borrowed from the NYPL

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### **Nicole says**

Written completely in verse, Paper Hearts is a heart breaking account of what occurred before, during, and after Auschwitz and what it means to survive such horrifying experiences told by two young Jewish girls. These accounts were based on a true story and as close to historically accurate as the author could manage, which made it all the more devastating to read. I didn't expect to read it so fast, but this quickly became a book I couldn't have put down even if I'd wanted to.

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### **Chelsea says**

Paper Hearts by Meg Wiviott is beautifully haunting, inside and out.

The story follows two Jewish girls who have been taken to Auschwitz during the Holocaust, and their

incredible will to survive. Although they've lost everything, friendship becomes weapon against oppression and hatred. Zlatka and Fania's story feels real, and then your stomach drops because you realize they are, and it is. It is all true, and it hurts.

It has been a long time since I read a novel written in verse, but *Paper Hearts* renewed my love for it.

*Remember.*

*Remember.*

*Remember.*

*Knowing there were worse things than death*

*took away the fear.*

*Surviving was the best revenge.*

*Survive.*

*Survive.*

*Survive.*

The language used in this novel is *beautiful* and it kept me glued into the story. The faster I turned the pages the more desperate I was for Fania and Zlatka. Their verse is sharp and searing. Heartbreaking and hopeful. The quick fast-paced nature of this style makes *Paper Hearts* compulsively readable, and stays with you long after you've finished.

**Highly recommended.**

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**Jennifer says**

wow.

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**Ari Q says**

"It would take longer

To learn to live

Again"

Okay, so I have an obsession with historical fiction novels, but more specifically, with books dealing with World War Two, the effects it had and events that took place in different parts of the world. I believe this fascination stems from a combination of many things. Mostly, it is the beauty that I find the darkness of this era can produce, as in, the way that humanity surpasses incredible suffering and retaliates in astounding and awe inspiring ways. This book is a clear and very strong example of that. Another factor would be the fact that my grandfather survived the Soviet Union's genocide in the Baltic states by escaping Latvia during the war, which made me appreciate Ruta Sepetys's work much more than I already did. *Paper Hearts* is a wonderful example of everything that I wish for in a historical fiction book, beautifully crafted, somber but radiant, and creating an immense sense of respect for itself and the people it represents.

I have, as well, come to appreciate the use of verse in novels, and after this novel, am certainly looking forward to continue reading in this style. Especially in dealing with such solemn voices and poignant subject, poetry served as a much more intimate, personal, and emotional style that reached through and fully delivered the intended message. I absolutely loved it.

The book is based on a true story, which was different in my experience with historical fiction, and I look forward to reading more on the lives of the amazing women that this book focuses on.

I have to say there were many, many quotes I adored in the book, and many things I have to go back and revisit, but the book was so good I couldn't help breezing through it.

I would highly recommend *Paper Hearts* to anyone, whether you are interested in history or not, or at least to give historical fiction a chance, because I can assure that it pays off. It is and always will be important to know about our past and the horrors that have occurred in our history in order to learn from them. I know that it's been well said already that history repeats itself, and while I don't think, and certainly hope, that the Holocaust will never be recreated in its magnitude and cruelty, I think that humanity is definitely far from perfect, and knowing about the struggles of others in the past can only help fix the mistakes we make as a community today.

"Wheels screamed at the  
wreckage, at the  
ruin. Eleven  
million dead.  
Never again.  
Never again.

Never again."

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## **Cathy says**

Generally I am a huge fan of novels in verse. *Paper Hearts* is not my favorite one. Maybe Holocaust stories just aren't meant to be told in verse. Zlatka and Fania's stories deserved to be told in full. I loved the courage of these two girls and their friends, but I just felt there were missing pieces in the story that simply don't lend themselves to this genre. The book was HIGHLY recommended to me by several students, but having read it myself now, I am wondering if they really understood the full impact of what the story was. Maybe that is the benefit of putting this story in verse -- it softens the blow and makes the troubles easier to bear, easier to read about. I don't know. It disappointed me. I feel there is a story here that deserves much more than it was given in this book.

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## **Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says**

MY BLOG: [Melissa Martin's Reading List](#)

**THIS BOOK, I HAVE CRIED AND CRIED**

\*\*\*\*SOME SPOILERS\*\*\*\*

This is based on the true story of Zlatka and Fania who were in Auschwitz together, they had lost their families, they had lost everything, but they found each other. And they survived! They had some friends named Giza, Guta and Bronia that survived with them. They all took care of each other the best they could in such a horrible place!

### *Rules*

*Mama's good girl  
Followed the rules.  
At home.  
At school.  
in synagogue.  
Even when the Germans came.  
With their signs that read:  
JUDEN VERBOTEN,  
Jews Forbidden.  
I did as I was told.*

*But in a world  
Where girls were tattooed  
With numbers.  
And bodies were tossed away  
Like garbage.*

*There were no rules.*

They watched as people were taken to the furnaces, who were beaten to death, who died of starvation, so many atrocities, but they pushed on.. they had each other.

*Eyes lowered  
hands clasped before her.  
Eta spoke just above a whisper  
in German  
to a boy in uniform  
who looked no older than she  
who might have smiled at her  
on a street in Berlin  
just a year or two ago.*

*His anger was harder than the crust of bread  
harder than the boulders*



*harder than his fists.*

*Eta collapsed.*

*Jackboots stomped.*

*Fists clobbered.*

*Riding crops whipped.*

*Rifle butts smashed.*

*Billy clubs crushed.*

*Then the dogs.*

and you just had to keep going or the same would happen to you.

The author tells at the end of the book that she got all of her information through family interviews, documentaries, etc. She also gave a wonderful glossary so we would know each thing that was put into the book.

*The girl replied,  
They are no more monster  
than you.*

*My brother  
was selected  
for the Sonderkommando  
when we first arrived.  
I used to meet him  
here at the fence  
so he could unburden  
his soul.*

*Yes,  
he helped the Germans.  
He led the people,  
innocent people  
children,  
to their deaths.*

*He whispered  
assurances to them,  
Calmed them  
so their last moments  
were not filled with terror.*

*He spread their ashes  
with respect  
due to humans,  
He said Kaddish for them*

*mourned them.*

*His first assignment  
fresh off the transport  
was to gas  
the Sonderkommando  
he replaced.*

*His last assignment  
just three months later  
was to walk  
with dignity  
into the gas chamber  
so the new Sonderkommando  
could replace him.*

*The Sonderkommando  
are not monsters.*

There were so many other things, I can't even say, but a lot of you know already from reading different things. I think the strength of these women are remarkable.

Here is the birthday card Zlatka made for Fania. She went through whatever she had to make this for her friend. This picture below is a picture of Fania with the heart that is still on display at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

### *The Heart*

*A treasure.*

*Cut into four hearts  
Like four-leaf clovers.  
Folded  
Into one heart.  
Opening  
Like origami.  
Covered  
With pretty purple cloth.  
Embroidered  
With my initial.  
Small enough  
To fit in the palm of my hand.  
Big enough  
To restore my faith  
Friends replacing  
The family I'd lost.*

*A reason to take risks.*  
*A reason to keep living.*

Here is a link to the interview with Zlatka on making the heart.

Interview With Zlatka After clicking on the link and it takes you to the page click on the floating heart on the page at the top and it will take you to her interview.

I recommend this book to EVERYONE!

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