

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) Der Melhamar hung over her youth like darkness, hovering and waiting to seep back into ...

By [Carole P. Romanon](#) March 18, 2018

Haunting and spare, *The Butcher's Daughter* is a riveting memoir of multi-generational survivors. Florence Grende was born in Europe at the close of World War 2. Her parents survived in the countryside as partisans. Her father lost his young wife and two daughters, her mother lost her father and brother, as well as many other family members.

Der Melhamar hung over her youth like darkness, hovering and waiting to seep back into her life. Long before Post Traumatic Stress, survivors ignored the past, moving forward as if nothing had happened. Silence was thick with the unsaid, the unimaginable, yet it was always there. Like a dark shadow, the impact of the war followed her family, shaping who they were, their happiness and despair and propelled them into the future. Their war-scarred life became a touchstone for every decision.

War creates victims, but the lasting damage travels down through the generations leaving its mark forever. Touching and poignant, Grende strips away artifice and writes a raw accounting of her existence with people who cannot explain why they are whom they are, and how the past damaged them irrevocably, preventing the peace they need so desperately.

Heartfelt and real, a lasting testimony of survival and the human spirit that that should not be forgotten.

[4.0 out of 5 stars](#) The Butcher's Daughter

By [BigAl](#) on December 23, 2017

I imagine memoir readers like reading about the experiences of others for different reasons. At least I know the appeal of a memoir can vary for me, depending on the author and what they have to say. In the case of *The Butcher's Daughter* I found a few things that appealed to me.

One is the obvious and the author's apparent primary goal, getting an understanding of what the author's parents went through as Jewish people hiding from the Nazis and how that experience impacted the next generation. But I also found comparing the author's experience to my own to be an interesting mental exercise. While a few years younger and living in a different area, I was impacted by many of the same historical events and cultural shifts. This helped me relate to the events on a more personal level.

Overall an enjoyable read. It should appeal to those who like to read the stories of "real" people (as opposed to the rich and/or famous).

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) [Roxie Reviews] | 'The Butcher's Daughter' by Florence Grende

By [\[Roxie Reviews\]](#) on October 7, 2017

I was given a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

This is a compelling and enlightening portrait of the life of those who lived through -- and those who came after -- one of the worst acts humanity has ever perpetrated. Grende shows us all how it's not just those who survived the Holocaust that were wounded forever but the children who followed. We take on our parents' trauma, and the trauma of

Holocaust survivors is unlike any other.

Grende's prose is sparse but beautiful, and it lends itself perfectly to her story. It's not flowery or superfluous. She tells you exactly what you need to know and makes you feel exactly what you need to feel, simply and perfectly.

Some of the stories included in this memoir are particularly hard on the heart, but I think that should probably be obvious given the lives these people were forced to lead. That being said, Grende tackles these stories with a tenderness that only someone who has lived them, even second-handedly through her parents, can do. It's obvious she loves her family, her history, and her beliefs very much.

I feel like a better person for having read this book, and I don't think that happens enough. Thank you for that, Florence Grende.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* This is a sensitively and beautifully written book that succeeds in making the author's personal ...

By [Rachel E Zelkind](#) on September 19, 2017

This is a sensitively and beautifully written book that succeeds in making the author's personal story both universal and applicable to each of us growing to grow away from parnts.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Five Stars

By [validesultanon](#) September 7, 2017

An unusually expressive memoir by the daughter of Holocaust-era survivors.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Important primary source and lovely memoir

By [Kathy Briccetti \(author of BLOOD STRANGERS: a memoir\)](#) on September 1, 2017

A moving, and hopeful, memoir about growing up a child of parents who fled the Holocaust but remained forever affected. An important primary source in order to document and remember.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* This is a beautifully written, heartbreaking book

By [Lisa C. Romeo](#) on July 30, 2017

This is a beautifully written, heartbreaking book, in which the daughter of Holocaust survivors, in sparse but telling details, portrays the long lasting effects of those horrors upon her American life, from childhood on. Watching this narrator, getting to know her family and its dynamics, would have been enough of a satisfying reading experience. But the author does so much more, bringing the reader into her New York world, into the house that shelters so many secrets and silences--and then, further back and back, to Poland and to relatives lost to Nazi slaughter, and the imprint of survival on her generation.

If you enjoy memoir told in short narratives, and you are the kind of reader who likes the story that emerges between the lines as well as on the page, you'll enjoy this gem of a book. It does what I think every good book of any genre should do: teach us something about the world, especially letting us learn more about something we think we already know about, and doing so in a way that feels like the way we tell stories in life -- fragmented, naturally leaving some things to figure out ourselves, but poignantly.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* They felt like real people

By [Loretta Lynn](#) on July 25, 2017

A poetic tale of from the daughter of immigrants that escaped to the United States from war-torn Poland. Along with her parents, the author forges a new way of life in a new country. What's unique about this tale is that it includes some of the negative traits often neglected when talking about the survivors of a traumatic event. Animosity between family members, personal prejudices...everyone wasn't optimistic about things. They felt like real people, reacting in realistic, not romanticized, ways.

The narration is another good point about this novel. It's told with a very whimsical tone--as though the narrator was completely detached from everything around her. The way each segment was presented felt like a poetry book setup. Some chapters were half a page, others were ten. It aided the tone and pacing of the novel well. A nice aesthetic for such a somber subject.

All of it was very well-written. It was emotional where it needed to be, and flexible with tone. As the narrator grew older, her style changed, becoming more confident more self-aware. She highlighted the difficulties of tradition versus progress.

I really liked the way this was done. This was a very unique style that was executed very well.

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[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) A must read book !

By [Larry Winderbaum](#) on July 8, 2017

I was riveted while reading *The Butcher's Daughter, A Memoir*. Ms. Grende tells a very intimate and powerful tale about so many things...

family, WWII, the Nazis, survival, tragedy and triumph, emigration to a new country, and her family integrating to varying degrees to it.

Given the current state of the world, with the largest number of refugees since the War, their struggles, successes, failures and tragedies, I think our president should be sent a copy and hopefully he and his family will read it. Thank you Florence Grende for telling your story !

Larry NYC

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) like the shoe she takes from the Majdenak work camp ...

By [Mari Carlson](#) on May 25, 2017

In this memoir, Florence Grende traces her family's past, hiding in the Polish forests to escape Nazis, then finding brief reprieve in Heidelberg, Germany, and finally settling in the Bronx. Alongside her family's story, pieced together from memories, her imagination, as well as research at the Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw, she narrates her own struggles with the smoldering beasts, the dead ever present in her household, who inform her inner life. Her tale becomes a talisman, like the shoe she takes from the Majdenak work camp and donates to her synagogue for teaching purposes. She begins writing her story after attending a symposium sponsored by One by One which fosters dialogue between descendants of those on opposite sides of WWII. Speaking and writing allow her to encase the past in words. Reading this work, told in short chapters that jump back and forth in time, mirrors the jarring experience of growing up as the child of survivors. But through metaphors like the dragon who stands for Dee Melchombe [The War] and her vivid descriptions of her cleaver-wielding father, taciturn mother, non-violent brother and her

own freedom-seeking self, Grende invites us to see beauty and discover healing in her endeavor.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Heroic survival and it's aftermath  
By [Harold](#) on May 14, 2017

I was grabbed from the first page and I couldn't put it down. Finishing a book in 2 sittings doesn't happen very often. Not knowing anything about the Partisan resistance in the Polish forests, and having recently viewed the Daniel Craig film "Defiance" [recommended] about the Bielski brothers' fight for the survival of hundreds of WWII Jews fleeing imminent genocide, the book both completed this open subject in my mind while giving me an insight into the impact on other survivor's 2nd generation offspring. A number of unique writing techniques grabbed my attention and revealed the multi-level dynamics of the interaction between immigrant survivors and their children attempting to build a new life in a strange new land. This is a book that I shall not forget and will surely read again very soon. Thank you Florence Grende for letting us into your very personal superb memoir. I hope that you continue to write as you definitely have that special talent and spark.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* A beautiful and gripping journey into the delicate and yet so strong soul.  
By [Amazon Customer Sidse](#) on April 8, 2017

Thank you, Florence, for inviting me into the world of reality, for feeling and seeing and for not forgetting, and for exploring the depths of the soul. Your poetic writing is a page-turner, it moves and inspires me and I'm filled with gratitude and humility for your honesty and craft. For forty-four years I've lived with my beloved, the son of holocaust survivors, and I've come to know intimately of the matters you write so eloquently about, matters that became embedded in my own soul. Your exceptionally well-written book embraces the beauty and complexity of the soul. Thank you for the journey. PS I found your book while attending the San Miguel de Allende Writers Conference this year.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* A must-read memoir  
By [Bonnie Lee Black](#) on February 27, 2017

Twenty years in the crafting, Florence Grende's memoir is a sparkingly fresh, spare, and stunning account – filled with rich, sensory detail -- of growing up as a daughter of Holocaust survivors, a childhood marked by an ever-present atmosphere of guilt, rage, and silence. It is also the story of assimilation – a young girl's heroic (and at times humorous) efforts to fit into the post-World War II American experience, while still preserving the family's traditional Eastern European Jewish culture. This is a brilliant book, a must-read memoir. I highly recommend it.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Her voice breaks through the silence and pain  
By [Ellen Akerman](#) on February 20, 2017

Through beautiful prose Grende describes her vulnerability growing up in a family that has physically survived the Holocaust. Their trauma is so incomprehensible that as a child of survivors Grende had to find her own answers through the unspoken words as her parents could only move forward into survival. Her voice breaks through the silence and pain.

*4.0 out of 5 stars* Story is deeply personal.  
By [Amazon Customer](#) on February 9, 2017

Not usual holocaust story. Is deeply personal .As a child of survivors, author is clearly impacted and honestly expresses her shame and upset. As she becomes an adult, she seeks resolution.

I recommend it.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Exceptional

By [AnAmazonCustomer](#) [VINE VOICE](#) on December 25, 2016

I was fortunate enough to receive an advanced reading copy of this book and must say, it is beautifully written. In an era of 140 character tweets and even shorter attention spans, this book is absolutely riveting. The author has obvious talent as a writer and even more talent as a storyteller...and what a story she tells. It is personal yet universal, intimate yet expansive, heart-wrenching yet inspiring....in short, everything a good book should be. Exceptionally well written.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Compelling Memoir

By [CheriRae Wrighton](#) December 18, 2016

The Butcher's Daughter is a courageous, intimate, haunting and exquisitely written memoir. Grende, the daughter of holocaust survivors, begins her life living with "Dee Melchome"; a monster she did not understand, a monster she could not talk about but, nonetheless, an ever present, very real monster of gigantic proportion. She writes, "I feel the terror of their war too, but it rides on the back of a phantom. How can my fears ever measure up to theirs?" I could not put this book down, I was relieved when it ended and I know I will be compelled to read it again. I hope to read more from Florence Grende.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Brilliant

By [J. Pogueon](#) December 16, 2016

Format: [Kindle Edition](#) | [Verified Purchase](#)

A quite brilliant book about one aspect of the Holocaust you seldom think about: the children of the survivors. Beautifully written and filled with both poignant and harrowing stories. My book club found it both provocative and inspiring.

*4.0 out of 5 stars* Surprising

By [Kyle A Hunker](#) on November 27, 2016

Honest, clear-eyed, sharp. I tend to like novels but a friend gave me this book as a gift and it's FANTASTIC. The legacy of the Holocaust is very well-handled, as is the narrator's relationship with her parents. Her father, the butcher, is a compelling figure, and Grende's conflicted feelings provide great tension to the story. A real page-turner, with the emphasis on the real: real history, real people...a really great book.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Should be required reading

By [Reader Con](#) on November 27, 2016

From the cover image of the woods in Poland where Grende's parents barely survived for two years during the Holocaust, and through each of the short chapters written in spare, unsentimental prose, this memoir will grab you and haunt you. It will force you to face -- in a very personal, rather than a universal, way -- the horrors visited upon Grende's parents and millions of others of their generation, and the resulting family dysfunction confounding and harming their off-spring. In this book, I learned for the first time of the One by One

program in Wannsee, Germany, which facilitates, among other things, "the interruption of the intergenerational transmission of trauma, prejudice and group hatred," and was glad of the knowledge. This is an extraordinary and shattering book that should be required reading, lest we forget. I know that I will read it again.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Not a book you can put down

By [Nan Steinley](#) on November 23, 2016

The prose is sparse, eloquent, rich. Florence Grende's memoir is a compelling and sometimes heartbreaking recounting of her life growing up in a family that cannot avoid including the Holocaust as an integral part of that family. The individual stories, many can be stand-alones, blend together as a whole piece. Read this memoir . . . it will stay with you.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* Graphic and compelling

By [Doug Erlandson](#) [TOP 500 REVIEWER](#) on November 18, 2016

"The Butcher's Daughter" is a beautifully written, gripping, and at times haunting memoir by Florence Grende, whose parents were Holocaust survivors. The first section of the book follows a mostly chronological track as it vividly recounts Florence's experiences growing up in the Bronx in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as her life as a young adult. Her experiences come alive as she describes in concrete, sensual, and graphic terms her parents, her daily life, and her experiences living in a world that preserved a part of the traditional European Jewish culture in the midst of a broader post-war American experience.

Part two of her memoir describes her attempt to gain an understanding of the experiences of her parents and their contemporaries in Poland during the terrible years of the Holocaust. For me, this was the most compelling part of all, as Grende describes the horrors of trying to survive during this time by living in the woods for months, even years at the time, every day and every night aware that this might be one's last before being captured or killed by the Nazis.

The last part describes the years after her father died and her ongoing relation with her mother, who to the end remained reticent about talking about living through the Holocaust. This section also details Grende's week in Wannsee, Germany with other descendants of survivors and perpetrators of the Third Reich, as she seeks "to confront the past and lay demons to rest."

"The Butcher's Daughter" is one of the most compelling memoirs I have read and one that I highly recommend.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* beautifully

By [Stephanie Blumenthal](#) on November 9, 2016

Format: [Paperback](#) | [Verified Purchase](#)

moving book, beautifully written

*5.0 out of 5 stars* An Unforgettable Memoir With Exquisite Prose

By [Marcia Lon](#) on November 5, 2016

Format: [Paperback](#)

The Butcher's Daughter is a poignant story of a girl growing up in New York as the daughter of two holocaust survivors. Their traumatic past hangs like an anvil over their lives and hers.

Written in the most exquisite prose, the memoir will make you cry and laugh. It's truly unforgettable. Don't miss a chance to read it.

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) Five Stars For "The Butcher's Daughyter"  
By [Mike D. Landfair](#) on November 5, 2016

She was a child who grew up with parents who were Holocaust survivors. Their experiences cast an evil cloud over all her life. Florence Grande who has a beautiful way with words writes a memoir of her life

"In my parents' home the air hung dense with suffering. History bore down on them like a hammer, driving home deep sighs, cries in the night, liquid eyes. Even as a child, I knew the cause. I knew about that thing, Der Melchomeh, The War, a monster lurking in our home, curled in shadow. Ever present. Dangerous."

She pieced together fragments of their lives, of the darkness, the deeds that were done to them, the manner in which they survived, and the horror. Then everything fell into place when she found her father's words in the Aaron Grende, File 310/110 Story of a Jewish Partisan, in Poland. "Eight single-spaced pages in which my father outlined his acts of heroism: blowing up Nazi trains, attacking Nazi outposts, providing food and medicine for the forest families, whose numbers swelled to the hundreds."

I learned so much from Florence Grande about her parents. I didn't know there were self-help groups for the children of holocaust survivors. What it was like to live with that monster in the corner? How did it affect her life and the lives around her?

Florence Grande is a skilled writer with writing that stops you in your steps and forces you to reread passages and relive the images she paints with words.

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) Five Stars  
By [Amazon Customer](#) on November 3, 2016

Beautifully written and emotionally compelling, with evocative imagery of growing up in the shadow of the Holocaust.

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) A story that illuminates with courage and integrity  
By [Christina Johnson](#) on October 29, 2016

The storytelling in Florence Grende's book is as if it is within the shifting light at twilight, where what was shadowed comes into a bright light for just a few seconds before dusk. In the elegant and spare way she uses words, her characters and story briefly illuminate a path darkened by fear and peril. The Holocaust was a time of such immense dehumanization and evil; this book lifts a veil from the readers' eyes and provides a keener lens into the heart of a Jewish family. This is a book to remind us that family is precious, our ancestral blood can be surprisingly resistant and wise, and that hope is a resource to value and protect.

[5.0 out of 5 stars](#) An important book for a generation removed  
By [cabecou](#) on October 22, 2016

A beautiful story of survival, loss and what comes next. Grende's book takes you into the lives of first and second generation holocaust survivors trying to start new life with a dark

shadow looming behind them. She paints an ominous picture of a community with one foot in 1930s Poland and the other in 1950s Bronx. Reading about their attempt to assimilate, while their wounds from the war are still fresh gives you a chilling picture of life as a refugee, and feels especially poignant in today's political climate.

I don't usually read memoir, but as a Millennial Jew, I felt like this was an important part of my history that is fading from popular culture. This book serves as an important reminder not just of the horrors of the Holocaust, but of the ripples that it created for the generation that came next, and of how close we still are to the horrors that they witnessed.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* History is best revealed in the life experience of individuals  
By [Radio Daze](#) on October 22, 2016

Florence Grende's memoir of growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors is an important book. She is of a generation that is now passing away, and as such she is the custodian of a bit of history that needs to be added to our knowledge of one of the darkest periods of the European narrative.

History is best revealed in the life experience of individuals, and that is what works so well in this book. The writing is elegant and precise, the moral and ethical nuances are unsparingly confronted, and the resolution affirms a core of humanity surviving in a set of unspeakable events.

I received a free copy of this book to do an honest review.

*5.0 out of 5 stars* A must READ! You will be inspired and touched!  
By [Cynthia Miller](#) on October 21, 2016

An amazing tale of survival, masterfully written, with beautiful glimpses into the family life of outliving the Holocaust. I could touch, feel and sense Grende's characters with her refined details. I highly recommend this incredibly moving masterpiece.