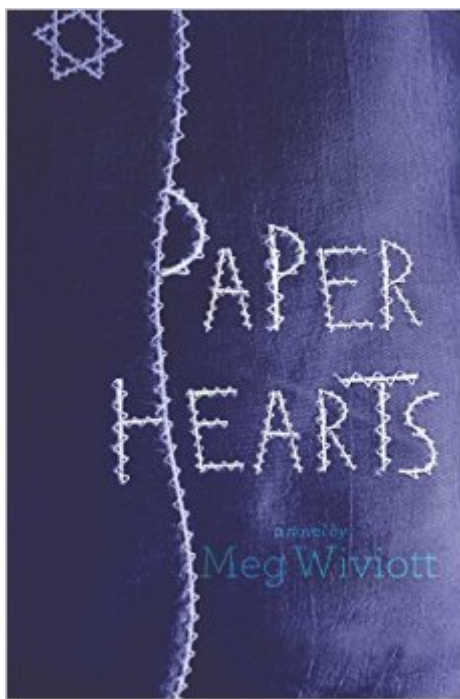


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# Paper Hearts



## Synopsis

A forbidden gift helps two teenage girls find hope, friendship, and the will to live in this beautifully told true story about brave young women who refused to be victims and walked out of Auschwitz with their heads unbowed • (School Library Journal). An act of defiance. A statement of hope. A crime punishable by death. Making a birthday card in Auschwitz was all of those things. But that is what Zlatka did, in 1944, for her best friend, Fania. She stole and bartered for paper and scissors, secretly creating an origami heart. Then she passed it to every girl at the work tables to sign with their hopes and wishes for happiness, for love, and most of all "for freedom. Fania knew what that heart meant, for herself and all the other girls. And she kept it hidden, through the bitter days in the camp and through the death marches. She kept it always. This novel is based on the true story of Fania and Zlatka, the story of the bond that helped them both to hope for the best in the face of the worst. Their heart is one of the few objects created in Auschwitz, and can be seen today in the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

## Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars • See all reviews • (17 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #117,757 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Religious > Jewish #34 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Religious Fiction > Jewish #43 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Holocaust

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

PAPER HEARTS, the first young adult novel of Meg Wiviott, tells the story of Zlatka and Fania, two Polish Jewish girls who meet in the concentration camp Auschwitz after becoming separated from their families during World War II. The girls eventually become best friends, along with Bronia, Guta and Giza. The girls look out for each other as they face the atrocities of Auschwitz and become a

family, sharing their measly portions of bread with each other and illegally bartering for medicine when Zlatka becomes ill. When Fania's 20th birthday nears, Zlatka secretly constructs a paper heart for her from smuggled supplies, representing everything the Nazis long to crush: hope, love and freedom. Based on the true story of Fania and Zlatka's friendship, PAPER HEARTS is a heart-wrenching read, told from the dual perspectives of Fania and Zlatka and written in poetry-like prose. The novel is especially tragic because it is based on a real story, including often gruesome details that the reader must acknowledge as true. Still, the friendship between Fania and Zlatka will lift the reader's spirits as they continue to care about each other and take risks for each other, even when they would be safer only looking out for themselves. Zlatka's strong-willed personality and bravery complements Fania's limitless kindness perfectly, making their friendship easily the best part of PAPER HEARTS. The sense of hope that persists throughout the novel reminds the reader that even in the darkest times, human compassion continues to exist, and even thrive. The novel is well researched, and although Wiviott fills in gaps with her imagination, the story of Fania and Zlatka feels intact.

Separate lives, same beliefs, separate cities, same destruction. Each girl's view of 1941 damaged their trust, leaving them fighting for their family, for a piece of themselves and for the life that they left behind. Zlatka, observed first-hand, the sudden rapid-changing invasion. Her home quickly becoming a lodge, her village a camp and then her family's journey inside the boxcars. Fania, her family worked at night. Soldier's boots meant hiding underground. Protect Leybl, her brother for he is young, smart and strong. Plans thwarted. Fania jailed. For you cannot hide being a Jew, Fania, even if it is for your brother. Inside Auschwitz, standing upright after they have chosen their destined lines, they notice each other. Shoes off. Clothes off. Hair shaven. Their shower awaits. Stripping off old identities, they are marked with new ones. Transported like cattle. Shorn like sheep. Branded like livestock. Housed in a stable. Lost inside these walls, the two have hope for the families they cannot see. A new family bond is created inside these walls. Their identities are never lost and hope exists. Their future is the question, it holds the question mark. Oh, how I love that an author can take a dreary subject matter and pull it together using verse. It's the flow of the words, the emotions that pours out, and the rhythm as you read that the author can achieve using specific words and the arrangement of those words to create a lasting impression. I can't forget to mention the energy that you feel as you read, I am amazed.

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