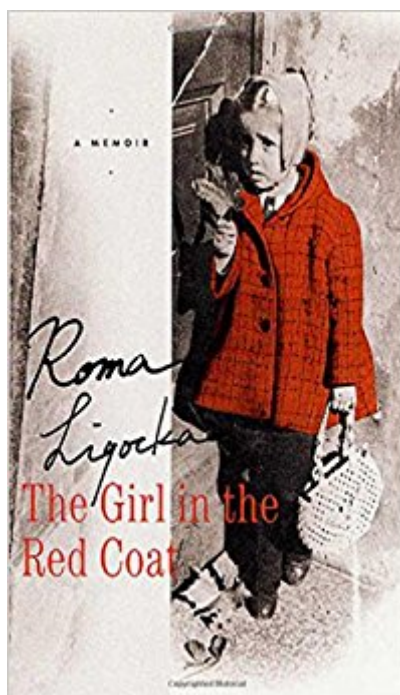


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# The Girl In The Red Coat: A Memoir



## Synopsis

When she first saw Schindler's List--to whose premiere in Germany she was invited--Roma Ligocka suddenly realized she was witnessing a part of her own life. She felt instinctively that the little girl in the red coat--the only spot of color in the film--was her. When she had lived in the Krakow ghetto during the Second World War she had worn a strawberry-red coat given to her by her grandmother. Unlike the girl in Spielberg's film, however, Roma survived the war. Startled by this eerie conjunction of art and reality, Ligocka determined to write the story of her own life, to find out what had become of the little girl, and to measure who she now was. From a harrowing childhood under the Nazis, described with a simplicity and innocence that lends it even greater power, through the trials of living in Communist Poland, to a career in the theater and film (an artistic struggle paralleling that of her cousin, Roman Polanski), Ligocka traces her struggle for self-definition and happiness. *The Girl in the Red Coat* is a courageous and moving story of survival and triumph.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a young child, in the Krakow ghetto, Ligocka was known to everyone by the strawberry-red coat she always wore--an image that Steven Spielberg would use in *Schindler's List*, without knowing anything about Ligocka herself. Determined to tell her own story, Ligocka gives a harrowing, impressionistic account of her early memories of the ghetto: the men in shiny black boots with snarling dogs, the endless waiting in lines, people shot indiscriminately and her grandmother's seizure by SS officers while Ligocka hides under a table. Ligocka and her mother sneak out of the ghetto and are taken in by a Polish family; her father, taken to Auschwitz, escapes several years

later. In a poignant episode, the little girl doesn't recognize this haggard specter who wants to embrace her. The memoir also describes Ligocka's youth in Communist Krakow: her career as an actress in theater and films, her struggle as an adult to confront her frightful memories and the weathering of new crises, from the passing of her parents to political turmoil in Poland. Though Ligocka's rendering of her early childhood voice isn't quite seamless (it sometimes sounds forced and too knowing), this doesn't take away from the power of her narrative, and readers may be particularly interested in her experiences as one of a tiny handful of Jewish survivors in Communist Poland. 30 b&w photos. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Seeing herself as the "girl in the red coat" in the film *Schindler's List* inspired the author to undertake this painful journey into her past. In a fascinating work that reads like a novel, Ligocka, an acclaimed artist, set and costume designer, and cousin of Roman Polanski, confronts her memories as a young Polish Jew during World War II. Although Ligocka only spends about one-third of the book on her traumatic experiences "hiding in the open" between the ages of three and seven, her experiences obviously affected her entire life, leading to depression, addiction, and an existence of constant fear. As in Julia Collins's memoir, *My Father's War*, Ligocka's work is a testament to both the frailty and the strength of very young children who have experienced trauma. The remaining two-thirds of this work chronicle Ligocka's life as a career woman, wife, and mother and her struggle to come to terms with her past in the artistic culture of postwar Europe. This work, already a best seller abroad, should be purchased for both public and academic libraries. Maria C. Bagshaw, Lake Erie Coll., Painesville, OH Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Roma's story shot straight to my heart and reminded me once more that after seeing *Schindler's List*, I walked to my car, climbed in and sobbed uncontrollably. No film before or since has shaken me to my core like it did. Too brazenly and too realistically, like this story, it revealed the awful horrors of that time. Roma's brave memoir remembers it, first-hand, and reminds us once more that Man must Never Forget. I thank her for putting her pain in words and telling her point of view. Mostly, I want to apologize for the fear and pain she and her family suffered, as I'm sure not many said they were sorry back then. She is a Survivor. And was saved so that her story could have a voice. I thank her for sharing it with us.

I read this book right after it was published and as the grandchild of those who escaped The Holocaust, I can relate to the psychological damage Ms. Ligocka refers to many times in her

memoir. This is one of the most interesting and heart wrenching books I have ever read. I suggest it to anyone who comes from similar roots and also to anyone who wants to know about the psychology of WWII history. Beautifully written and straight from the heart.

Such a well crafted memoir. A telling of the Holocaust from a Polish child's perspective, the horror of which was compounded by Communist take over.

after watching and reading about the making of Schindler's list, this book had special meaning. I wonder how many people realize there really was a girl in the Warsaw ghetto during WWII who wore a red coat. Thank you.

First book I have read that shows the affects of the holocaust through a child's eyes. It is interesting and eye opening on how it affects the survivors after the war, especially the children.

This book is wonderful, very touching and lends a personal twist to a terrible story which must never be forgotten.

Wonderful reading

I got this book from the library after reading another Holocaust survivor story. It is so real and heartbreaking, but even in its honesty it brings a nostalgia for home and family and an understanding of what people go through to protect and love each other. I bought it here for my mother, who was born here in Tennessee the same year the Girl in the Red Coat was born in Germany. She will really love it.

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