

[The Tattooist of Auschwitz](#) by Heather Morris

Reviewed by A.H., Class of 2026

Book - Paper or Ebook - Historical Fiction

5 Stars ★★★★★

What made you interested in reading/watching/playing this media?

How did you hear about it or come across it?

A friend recommended this book to me. I love historical fiction books, especially those that take place in WWII, which is why I decided to read this book after it was recommended to me.

Setting:

This book takes place in a Nazi concentration camp during WWII. The author, Heather Morris, depicts the inhumane conditions of Auschwitz, one of the largest Nazi concentration camps. Although Morris does provide some context about the characters lives before and after the camps, she mainly focuses on how they try to survive inside the camp and the unimaginable challenges that they face there.

Protagonists:

The book follows Lale Sokolov and Gita Furman, two real survivors of the holocaust. Although Morris does take creative liberties at times, the story does attempt to follow their real-life experiences. Lale, born in 1916, was deported to Auschwitz in 1942, because he was a Slovakian Jew. Lale is depicted to be an incredibly courageous, clever, loyal, and resilient person. It is, arguably, these qualities that help him persevere through all of the hardship that he faces while at the camp. His lover, Gita, was born 1925, and arrived to Auschwitz in 1942, after Lale arrived. Gita and Lale form a deep connection after meeting at the camp, and are both determined and hopeful to protect their love amidst such tragedy.

Plotline:

When Lale arrives at the concentration camp, he was informed that he would be given the job of being a tattooer. The job of marking each prisoner brings Lale an unexpected amount of protection and power in the camp. It is also this job that brings him to Gita. One day, while Lale was marking a group of incoming women, he saw Gita, and was immediately struck by Gita's beauty. Although it was risky, Lale decided to pursue Gita once she entered the camp. The story follows how Lale and Gita managed to fall in love in during such a devastating time. Although the book is mainly about their love story, it also does describe other relationships that these characters built with other members of the camp. Morris talks about how Lale used his position as a tattooer to help others in need, and how Gita sacrificed for others as well. Even in the face of tremendous fear, these characters still managed to find courage and love. Although there are really heavy illustrations within the book, it is ultimately a really beautiful and moving story.

Reflection on the novel's strong points and weak points:

This book is incredibly engaging, as there truly is never a dull moment. Morris always leaves the reader hooked and wanting to read more as each chapter closes. The plot takes some unexpected turns, and keeps the reader on the edge of their seat. Furthermore, there is a strong emotional impact that this book leaves. Through the use of powerful imagery and character development, Morris ensures that nobody can walk away from this book without feeling connected to the story and to the lessons that it depicts. Lale and Gita are really likeable protagonists, and it's easy to feel connected to them as the story continues. Especially given that this book is based on a true story, it becomes even more meaningful. That said, it is unclear where Morris chooses to take creative liberties, which is a weaker point of this book. Even though it might not be a fully factual account of their story, it is still incredibly moving and engaging.

What are some themes that come across?

Some themes in this media include love and hope amidst horror, survival and resilience, courage and ethics, and humanity.

Do you feel that the cover art is true to what the media is about?

Yes, I do feel that the cover art is true to what this media is about. It's gloomy colors suggest a somber and intense tone, which is very present in this book. Furthermore, the image of a man and a woman linking arms demonstrates the connection that Lale and Gita share, even within such darkness.

Did you enjoy it? Would you recommend it?

Yes, I would highly recommend this book to anyone who loves historical fiction and holocaust stories. I think it was one of the most moving books I've ever read. However, I would warn people that it is a really heavy book, with a lot of upsetting images. It requires a mature audience, and someone who is willing to read harsh material.

Readalikes/Watchalikes are:

I think anyone who likes holocaust stories will love this book.

Final thoughts?

Even though it is a really sad story, I do recommend reading it. It is so emotionally moving and really memorable.

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