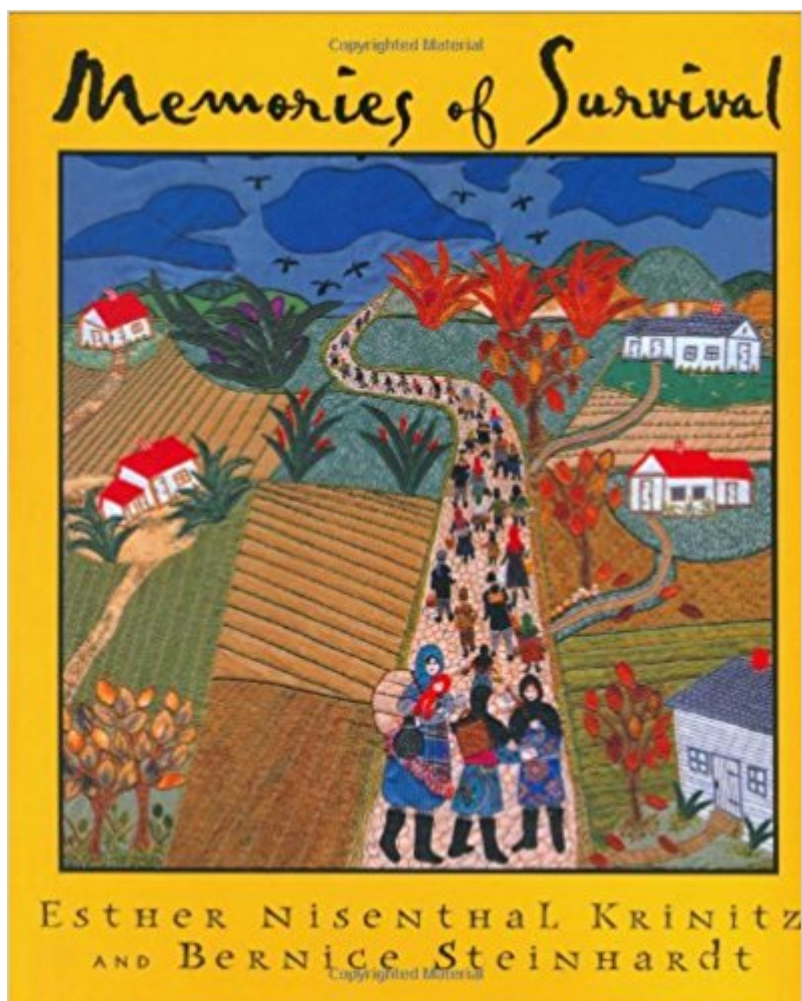


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# Memories Of Survival



## Synopsis

Esther Nisenthal Krinitz was a survivor of the Holocaust in Poland. At the age of 15, in October 1942, having lived under Nazi occupation for three years, she and her sister decided to separate from their family and disguise themselves as Catholic farmhands. Esther never saw her family again. In 1977, at the age of 50, having worked throughout her life as a dressmaker, she began hand-stitching embroidered fabric panels as a way of remembering, healing and sharing her childhood stories. She went on to create 36 pieces chronicling the key moments of her childhood story. Esther passed away in 2001 but lives on through her unforgettable tapestries of survival. Her daughter, Bernice Steinhardt, adds insightful narrative to each panel as she recounts her own recollections of the stories her mother shared with her.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 5 - 9 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 6-9 — Krinitz tells the story of her childhood in a small Polish village through a series of hand-stitched embroidered panels and captions. Done in various needlework techniques, different styles of embroidery, and fabric collage, the 34 panels depict with astonishing detail and complexity her childhood home and family before World War II, the Nazi invasion of her village, and the forced labor and death camps. They also show her escape and life in hiding, the end of the war, her visit to the Maidanek concentration camp where her family was likely exterminated, and her journey to America. Commentary by her daughter accompanies each image

and provides additional details and background information. Aspects of Jewish culture, rituals, and holidays are prominently featured along with a strong sense of setting and season. The intricate, multifaceted artwork uniquely illustrates the horrors of the Holocaust alongside the natural beauty of Krinitz's surroundings, and the cherished relationships that she shared with her family. A detailed introduction, table of contents, and afterword are included. — Rachel Kamin, Temple Israel Libraries & Media Center, West Bloomfield, MI Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 6-9. During the many years before her death in 2000, Krinitz set down the story of her Holocaust survival in a series of 36 exquisite, hand-embroidered fabric collages and hand-stitched narrative captions. For this picture-book presentation, Steinhardt, Krinitz's daughter, reproduced those panels, adding eloquent commentary to fill in the facts and the history. The first panels show Esther, 10, with her loving family in a small Polish village in 1937 before the Nazis come. The soldiers arrive in 1939. When Esther is 15, they take her family away, and she never sees them again. She and her sister survive by hiding in the woods, and then, disguised as Polish Catholic farm girls, are taken in by a kind farmer. After the Russians come, Esther sees the death camps. The telling is quiet, and the hand-stitched pictures are incredibly detailed, with depth and color that will make readers look closely, whether at a scene of the communal baking before the war, a line of refugees and prisoners, or a picture of giant cabbages growing on human ashes in a corner of the death camps. Connect this to Jacqueline Woodson's *Show Way* (2005), about the quilts sewn by African American women from slavery times through today. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This is one of the most amazing books I've seen. The author tells her story of her and her sister's escape from the Holocaust in needlework. I was actually lucky enough to see the panels on display a few years ago in Atlanta. Absolutely fascinating. The book does a good job with the pictures and narration.

Beautifully done book. If you have a chance to see (in person) the actual works, please do so. It was a sponsored event at our local art museum several years ago. I'll never forget seeing them and have the book as a treasured reminder. My granddaughter, Rachel, went with me to the art museum and has the book as well. Also gave a copy away to my friend, Rebecca Soloman, a local newscaster who has gone on to larger and larger Tv stations. So had to buy one for me to keep.

After viewing the quilts that Esther Nisenthal Krinitz created at the Oceanside Art Gallery in Oceanside Ca, I was so moved, that I wanted to have something to reflect on. This book satisfies my need. The photographs of the quilts are very clear and the layout is exactly as the story is depicted in the exhibit. The quilts depict the life experiences of Mrs. Krinitz during the holocaust when she was a young girl. The story begins in Poland and it tells of her tenacity for survival. Esther's sister Mania survived the holocaust as well, but all the rest of her family was murdered by the Nazis. There are 34 quilts displayed. The exhibit has been traveling to Art Museums throughout the United States. Each quilt has an embroidered legend so you can follow her travels from 1937 where she lived an innocent idyllic farm girl life to 1939 (when she was 12 years old) and the Nazis arrived in her town. It ends with a tree in Brooklyn and her standing with her granddaughter. All of the quilts were done after she arrived in the United States and although she had no art education, she captures your heart and mind. She felt that this was her legacy to her children and grandchildren. I highly recommend the book even if

I saw Mrs. Krinitz's work at an exhibit near me. The fabric paintings are quite large and you don't really get that impression in the book. The paintings range in size from 20" X 24" to three feet by five feet. Many of the paintings are 3-D, and that doesn't come across, either. Nevertheless, the color and most of the texture can be seen in these photos of the paintings. My only regret is that there is no photo of Mrs. Krinitz in the book. I did see it in the exhibit and even as an old woman, she was beautiful. I'm always amazed at the courage and dignity we find among those who have suffered greatly. Mrs. Krinitz took her suffering and turned it into creative, majestic beauty that is breath-taking to behold. I thank her daughters for sharing their mother's work. Anyone interested in needlework will appreciate this book. Anyone interested in survival stories will be amazed at this one.

I saw the panels on which this book is based at the Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore and wished at the time that there was a book. When it came out I made a special effort to get it. Esther Krinitz spent years creating these works of art to illustrate the story of her experience, and the combination of her drive to communicate with her obvious enjoyment of creating surely makes hers a uniquely life-affirming voice recounting the terrible tragedy faced by her family and beyond them, her people, her country, and all humankind. For young people, the details are both strange and familiar, commonplace and unthinkable. They will relate to the young woman's independent streak as well as

her affection for her family and grief at losing almost all of them. I look forward to sharing it with the young people in my life.

I was fortunate to see the actual pieces at a recent exhibit -- they are incredibly touching and beautiful. The book faithfully represents them, bringing to the fore some of the same emotions I had when viewing them. What an amazing story. I'm so grateful for Esther's willingness to create and share her story.

Excellent exhibit. Excellent book. I highly recommend it to anyone who loves to see what really creative people can do when adversity slaps them in the face.

I saw this exhibit in St. Petersburg Florida. It was amazing. The book is an illustration of the mother of the author's needlework tapestries. It is a moving story with her artwork to enhance her memories of Surviving the Holocaust in Europe. Very touching with photos of the original needlework.

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