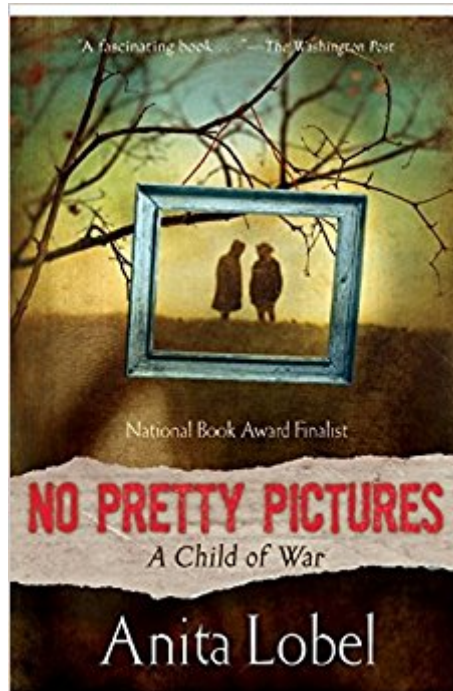




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# No Pretty Pictures: A Child Of War



## Synopsis

Anita Lobel was barely five years old when World War II began and the Nazis burst into her home in Kraków, Poland. Her life changed forever. She spent her childhood in hiding with her brother and their nanny, moving from countryside to ghetto to convent—where the Nazis finally caught up with them. Since coming to the United States as a teenager, Anita has spent her life making pictures. She has never gone back. She has never looked back. Until now.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nominated for a 1998 National Book Award for Young People's Literature, *No Pretty Pictures: A Child of War* is Anita Lobel's gripping memoir of surviving the Holocaust. A Caldecott-winning illustrator of such delightful picture books as *On Market Street*, it is difficult to believe Lobel endured the horrific childhood she did. From age 5 to age 10, Lobel spent what are supposed to be carefree years hiding from the Nazis, protecting her younger brother, being captured and marched from camp to camp, and surviving completely dehumanizing conditions. A terrifying story by any measure, Lobel's memoir is all the more haunting as told from the first-person, child's-eye view. Her girlhood voice tells it like it is, without irony or even complete understanding, but with matter-of-fact honesty and astonishing attention to detail. She carves vivid, enduring images into readers' minds. On hiding in the attic of the ghetto: "We were always told to be very quiet. The whispers of the trapped grown-ups sounded like the noise of insects rubbing their legs together." On being discovered while hiding in a convent: "They lined us up facing the wall. I looked at the dark red bricks in front of me and waited for the shots. When the shouting continued and the shots didn't

come, I noticed my breath hanging in thin puffs in the air." On trying not to draw the attention of the Nazis: "I wanted to shrink away. To fold into a small invisible thing that had no detectable smell. No breath. No flesh. No sound." It is a miracle that Lobel and her brother survived on their own in this world that any adult would find unbearable. Indeed, and appropriately, there are no pretty pictures here, and adults choosing to share this story with younger readers should make themselves readily available for explanations and comforting words. (The camps are full of excrement and death, all faithfully recorded in direct, unsparing language.) But this is a story that must be told, from the shocking beginning when a young girl watches the Nazis march into Krakow, to the final words of Lobel's epilogue: "My life has been good. I want more." (Ages 10 to 16) --Brangien Davis --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Few admirers of Lobel's sunny picture book art (On Market Street) would guess at the terrors of Lobel's own childhood. Here, in beautifully measured prose, she offers a memoir that begins in 1939, when the author was five, as German soldiers march into her native Krakow; Lobel's adored father, the owner of a chocolate factory and a religious Jew, flees soon after, in the middle of the night ("He had kissed me in the night, and I did not know it"). Deportations begin, and before long the author and her younger brother (who is dressed as a girl) are sent to the country, in the care of their Niania (nanny). Thus the two children embark on years of flight, on a turbulent course involving assumed identities, blackmailers, a dangerous stay in the Krakow ghetto, concealment in a convent, capture and concentration camps. In 1945 the children are liberated, in Ravensbruck, and brought to Sweden to recuperate from what turns out to be tuberculosis, and they are eventually reunited with both parents. Lobel brings to these dramatic experiences an artist's sensibility for the telling detail, a seemingly unvarnished memory and heartstopping candor. Focused on survival, the child narrator does not pity herself or express her terror: she observes everyone keenly and cannily sizes them up. This piercing and graceful account is rewarding for readers of all ages. It may prove especially valuable for children who have graduated from Lobel's picture books and who may therefore feel they "know" her; this memoir would help such readers build a personal connection to WWII and its tragic lessons. A 12-page inset of family photos is included. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

captivating story that's hard to put down ~

Very satisfied! Thanks

This book covers a very sad and controversial topic. It is a must read to better understand that not only did the Holocaust occur, but also that these people suffered horrible treatments. Mature readers only.

A sad but wonderful story! Mrs. Lobel's book captures the utter loss of humanity that proliferated in Europe during WWII at the hands of a group powerful political zealots (Nazis). More young people should read accounts that document the senselessness surrounding these atrocities. If we understand where we as a civilization have come from we can work together to ensure that we NEVER, never repeat such horrors in the future.

Completely satisfied.

Excellent read in excellent condition.

Although it is a true and tragic story, it was poorly written and, therefore, hard to follow.

I think this was a very good book and gave it five stars because it a very honest story of the experiences of a very young girl and her survival of this nightmare. Not many did survive. It is written in a very easy readable way and would be a good book for teens to read. It does not describe a lot of the more horrendous things occurring during this hellish period but anyone who reads it would understand what an evil, unfair and totally inhuman period this was for particularly the Jewish people and anyone who opposed Hitler and the Nazi's. Kids in high school should know about this. I have read many books on the subject and this was not one of the greatest but it was written in a simple direct way that should appeal to a lot of people.

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