



Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America

Hanna Perlstein Marcus

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Did you and your parent ever keep a secret that lasted a lifetime? When Hanna Perlstein and her mother, Sidonia, come to Springfield, Massachusetts from a displaced persons camp after World War II, they know no one in America. With no other family, except each other, they build a world that revolves around Sidonia's extraordinary talent with a needle and thread to create beautiful garments while Hanna serves as her dutiful model. As Sidonia becomes well-known in western Massachusetts and northern Connecticut for her remarkable sewing talent, she continues to keep her inner secrets about her past hidden not only from her daughter but from everyone else. Determined to craft a life of pride, self-reliance and perseverance, Sidonia teaches her daughter to "stand up straight" in fashion and in life. Sidonia's Thread uses sewing metaphors to tell the tale of these two women as though stitched together like a handmade garment. Why did Sidonia keep these significant life secrets, and why was Hanna so afraid to ask about them? When Sidonia moves to elderly housing, Hanna steals some of her old letters and photographs hoping to find clues to her paternity, her mother's reclusive behavior, and her heritage. Combined with a trip to her mother's Hungarian homeland and a phone conversation with her father, Hanna's surprising discoveries inspire a revised view of her life with her mother, replacing her conflicting emotions toward her mother with true reverence.

Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America Details

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From Reader Review Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America for online ebook

Wilhelmina says

This is such a poignant memoir, one I will be reading again! I have read a number of books by survivors of the holocaust, and this book is once again unique, even though "some" of the story is familiar.....how the family came to be in a concentration camp, how the whole family was lost except for the mother, and how she carried many of her secrets to her grave, and how her experiences as a prisoner of the concentration camp, as a holocaust survivor shaped not only her life, but the lives of her daughter and ultimately her daughter's family. Sidonia Perlstein was an extremely strong woman, a real survivor, and her one great love in her life was her daughter, born after the war, and raised without a father. Sidonia instilled great pride into Hanna, and the story of the love of a mother for her daughter is infused into every word of the book.

Betty says

Very good

I really enjoyed reading this account of a holocaust victims life after the holocaust. As always, these accounts are incredibly sad, how can they not be? Sidonia was an incredible woman. I'd say even a bit ahead of the times. Worth reading.

Sarah Whelan says

I read this book in one sitting - during a flight home from vacation. I enjoyed it and am grateful to know this story of a strong woman (Sidonia) who not only survived but successfully raised a daughter who shares her best traits.

Dinah says

This is the story of Sidonia as written by her daughter, Hannah. Hannah did not take a traditional approach in telling her mother's story. Sidonia had one skill that carried through life. She was an exemplary seamstress. In telling her story, Hannah used a sewing technique to organize each chapter. For example, when discussing fitting and fitting clothes, she also discussed how her mother fit into her new family especially after divorce.

Sidonia was the only member of her family to survive the concentration camps. Her daughter was born after liberation and before they immigrated to the USA. The details of her birth is something her mother never discusses. There are times when Hannah feels angry at her mother for this, but for many years they feel each is the only one the can depend on. So the anger is mixed with love and devotion.

I read this on my kindle, and the only issue I had was the pictures were not very clear.

Otherwise it was a very good book that was easy to read.

Donna says

I found Sidonia's Thread to be one of the most inspiring books I've ever had the pleasure of reading. I could identify with the author, as my own grandparents emmigrated from Germany in the 1920's and had to build a life, learn the language, and took great pride in becoming American citizens. The atrocities Sidonia faced before coming to America eventually received world wide recognition. The author does an excellent job in describing in detail how her mother came to be the person she was. I loved the 'sewing' them, as I can relate to that as well. I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway and would recommend it highly to one and all.

Carol says

There are so many lives that have forever been affected by World War II. For many, their stories ended in the German concentration camps. The survivors have stories to tell and we don't always want to hear them. Isn't one story the same as another? I think not.

As I read **Sidona's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America** I was reminded of the uniqueness of each individual who came through that time. Hanna Perlstein Marcus was born at the Bergen Belson displaced persons camp. Her mother, Sidonia, eventually makes her way to Springfield, Massachusetts and literally cuts out a living as a seamstress for both she and her daughter. As she grows up, Hanna has many unanswered questions about her mother's past, the primary one being the other half of her conception, the man who fathered her. When Sidonia moves to elderly housing in her later life, Hanna finds old letters and photographs in her mother's drawer. In secrecy, she takes these without her mother's knowledge and tries to put together the pieces of her mother's past and find the basis of her own.

Though the war and all its horrors are a key player here, there is so much more. This is a story of perseverance, resiliency, spirit, family secrets, and mother-daughter relationships and at its core, familial love.

Hanna Perslstein Marcus learns so much with so little to go on. She pays tribute to her mother in this memoir that is told with sewing metaphors. Each chapter begins with a quote from *Coats and Clarks Sewing Book: newest Methods from A to Z*, the only sewing book her mother ever owned. These are well placed and relevant, weaved throughout the story seamlessly and making a good fit in the end.

I was thoroughly absorbed by Sidonia's and Hanna's story. Hanna Perlstein Marcus has gained my respect and gratitude for putting her heart on paper.

Sarah says

Goodreads book

Really enjoyed the book. Very sad what people went through during the war. Just because of religion or ethnicity. So so sad.

J. A. Lewis says

A great book about a survivor of the Holocaust and her daughter born out of wedlock. Sidonia's amazing survival is a story in and of itself. She was an incredibly strong woman and one to be admired. I cannot imagine the terror Sidonia suffered during her years in the concentration camps, but she came through it and lived a strong, independent life for many years after. Her gift of sewing kept she and her daughter fed, housed and clothed through tumultuous times. The only sad story here was her inability to tell her daughter about her father and their relationship. But, in the end, it seemed that Hanna was able to put all of her questions to rest and accept her mother for the great woman she was.

Sara says

I am from Massachusetts and live near this area. It was interesting to know more about the people from this area in a time when my mother was growing up in their neighborhood.

Chanda says

I really enjoyed this book. I loved how the author relates the theme of sewing to the stories in the book. It's a heartfelt memoir about a Mother-Daughter relationship strained by the events that took place early in her Mother's life during the holocaust. Most of the events take place in Springfield, MA and the east coast. It was really interesting how her mother kept so many secrets from her daughter.... mostly I believe it served as a protective shell for her to keep hidden away inside. Her daughter knew not to ask or pry to much because doing so would crack that protective shell or open "Pandora's Box" so to speak and prove to be too difficult for her Mother to handle. So she pretended not to know and kept the charade of secrecy. I was fortunate enough to meet the author at a speaking engagement. She's very sweet and charming in person as she comes across in the book. She should be proud of the story she has shared and I hope that someday she's able to uncover more of the mystery about her past and that of her family history.

Beth Sammons says

great book. The mom reminded me of my grandma - a woman that endures unbelievable hardship but just keeps on. Lives a thrifty life but never wanting for anything except to understand. I could relate to the daughters anger - you never know what your grandparents or parents have endured and how they try to insulate you from the pain and hardness of the world - in the meantime - if they could have told you more a little at a time when you should have been ready for it so that you have an understanding of why they are the way they are. I am shocked, horrified at what the jews endured during and after the war but it is the kind of story that you have to learn so as not to repeat.

Jane says

This is the memoir of a mother who survived the holocaust written by her daughter. Sidonia's amazing survival is one of an incredibly strong woman with an impeccable skill as a seamstress and a strong love for her daughter. I could hardly put this one down!

Rachel Horon says

I was blown away about this memoir of a mother who survived the Holocaust and her daughter who learned more, piece by piece, about the choices her mother had to make to ensure their life in America. For those who are interested in stories about Holocaust survivors as well as the next generation who were raised by them, this is a great read. Also, the writer organized it according to the chapters of her mother's favorite sewing book. I have already recommended it to my mother.

Stephen says

I had heard some of these stories but this book blew me away.

Marisa says

A friend with a connection to the author recommended this book for me to read.

I was surprised by how well written the book was. There was a construct of each chapter had stories that echoed a sewing technique or term, inspired by the 1 sewing book Sidonia received from a client. The first 2/3s of the book is very readable and quick, there is the mystery of who is the father of Sidonia's child (the author was that child), what happened to Sidonia in the period just after the war, and so many secrets that a daughter craved from a mother unwilling to share deeply hidden and (she felt) shameful secrets. The last third was a little slower, but that also echoes the gradual decline in health of Sidonia and how does the adult child assume the role of parent, as well as the grieving process.

Overall, this was an enjoyable story about a mother and a daughter, the secrets of the former and the unraveling of the thread by the daughter.
Good.
