



# Childhood

By Jona Oberski

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## Childhood By Jona Oberski

**A rediscovered masterpiece: an unblinking view of the Holocaust through a child's eyes**

Told from the perspective of a child slowly awakening to the atrocities surrounding him, *Childhood* is a searing story of the Holocaust that no reader will soon forget. As five-year-old Jona waits with his mother and father to emigrate from Nazi-occupied Amsterdam to Palestine, they are awakened at night, put on a train, and eventually interred in the camps at Bergen-Belsen. There, what at first seems to be a merely dreary existence soon reveals itself to be one of the worst horrors humanity has ever created. A triumph of heartrending clarity and dispassionate amazement, *Childhood* stands tall alongside such monuments of Holocaust literature as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Elie Wiesel's *Night*, and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*.

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## Childhood By Jona Oberski Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“A book which will shock every reader with a heart.” —**Isaac Bashevis Singer, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature**

"Simple... terse... shattering." —**Harold Pinter, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature**

"A dark fairy tale ... of the fears and anguish of a child, based on experiences that could not be grasped by reason, irrational yet truly real." —**Heinrich Böll, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature**

“An astonishing book—memorable, piercing. It reaches to the very soul.” —**Chaim Potok**

“Deserves to be widely read.” —***The New York Times Book Review***

“A haunting jewel of a memoir that takes the holocaust a step beyond the tragic.” —***Christian Science Monitor***

"A haunting Holocaust autobiography."—***Atlanta Jewish Times***

“A child sees the barbarities of an event such as the Holocaust not in terms of race and politics, but in the way a Martian would see them, as amazing and stupefying instances of the cruelty of man. Jona Oberski conveys this amazement in an unembroidered and memorable way.” —**Thomas Keneally, author of *Schindler's List***

“This is a book that matters. There is a purity in it which leaves you speechless, a humanity which gives you no rest.” —***Die Zeit***

“This is not the book of the year, but the book of this damned century. *Childhood* is going to reach everyone and go on reaching people for generations to come.” —**Allan Sillitoe, author of *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner***

“It will shock, move you to tears. . . . Admirably understated . . . haunting.” —***Daily Mail***

“Singular and powerful . . . There is no mawkish sentimentality here. . . . *Childhood* punches well above its weight, and everyone should read it.” —***Historical Novel Society***

“A rare achievement and a delight . . . It approaches perfection.” —***Asylum***

### Language Notes

Text: English, Dutch (translation)

### About the Author

**Jona Oberski** is a Dutch nuclear and particle physicist. He was born in 1938 and lives in Amsterdam.

**Jim Shepard** is the author of *The Book of Aron*, a novel narrated by a child in a Warsaw Ghetto orphanage, as well as several other novels and collections of short stories, including *Like You'd Understand, Anyway*,

which won The Story Prize and was a finalist for the National Book Award. He teaches at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

**Ralph Manheim** (1907–1992) was a noted translator. The PEN/Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation is named in his honor.

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