



And the Rat Laughed

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And the Rat Laughed is a unique book. Unlike other Holocaust-related books that focus on the historical horrific events, this novel deals with the act of remembering them. It resembles a relay race in which the characters transfer memory from one another, while traveling on the axis of time.

The book begins in the last day of 1999, when a survivor grandmother in Tel Aviv shares her tragic life story as a hidden child in a pit, with only a rat for company with her granddaughter. The day after ? 2000 already ? the granddaughter tells the legend of ?Girl and Rat" to her teacher and in 2009 those who heard it through her classmates establish an internet website with poems. From now on this memory is spread all over the world and becomes a myth. In 2099 the future anthropologist Y-Mee Prana discovers it and tries to uncover its mysterious roots. In her research, she reveals the first man who created this myth in the past. Father Stanislaw, a Catholic priest, saved that little Jewish girl (who later became the grandmother in Tel Aviv) and returned her after the war to her Jewish people. In his personal journal he documented everything, to make sure the world would never forget. The chain of "Remembearers", therefore, moves from the present to the future and back to the past.

The novel is written in five genres: story, legend, poems, science fiction and diary, creating a cycle of 150 years. And the Rat Laughed got acclaim for its use of unconventional and original literary devices and became a ground breaker for exploring the act of memory itself. How do we tell our painful story? Does it change while we recall it? How will our next recipient recall it in their own individual way? Is Art the only way to transfer emotional memory?

The novel was enthusiastically received by both the Israeli public and the critics. It was adapted for the stage and became a very successful opera, composed by Ella Milch-Sheriff and performed by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv and the Israeli Chamber Orchestra for the last four years, representing Israel at the Theatre Festivals in Warsaw in Poland, Sibiu in Romania and Bucharest National Theatre.

Nava Semel:

And the Rat Laughed. An Israeli acclaimed novel on the memory of the Holocaust.

Translated from the Hebrew by Miriam Shlesinger.

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