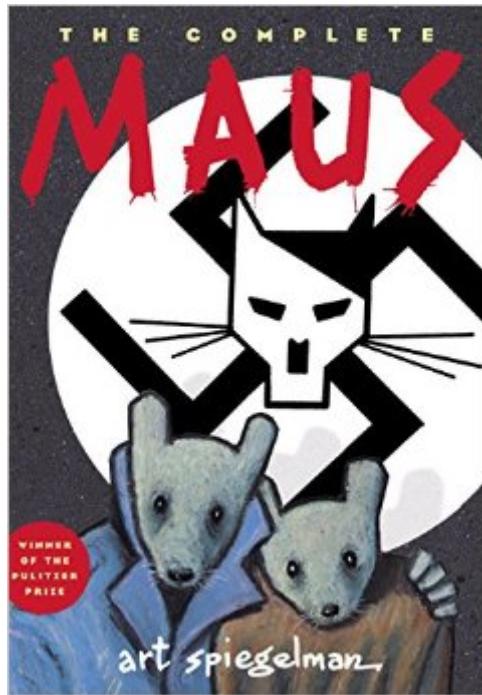


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Maus: A Survivor's Tale



Synopsis

"The Complete Maus" by Art Spiegelman - the Pulitzer prize-winning Holocaust survivor story. "The most affecting and successful narrative ever done about the Holocaust". ("Wall Street Journal"). "The first masterpiece in comic book history". ("The New Yorker"). "The Pulitzer Prize-winning "Maus" tells the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and his son, a cartoonist coming to terms with his father's story. "Maus" approaches the unspeakable through the diminutive. Its form, the cartoon (the Nazis are cats, the Jews mice), shocks us out of any lingering sense of familiarity and succeeds in 'drawing us closer to the bleak heart of the Holocaust'. ("The New York Times"). "Maus" is a haunting tale within a tale. Vladek's harrowing story of survival is woven into the author's account of his tortured relationship with his aging father. Against the backdrop of guilt brought by survival, they stage a normal life of small arguments and unhappy visits. This astonishing retelling of our century's grisliest news is a story of survival, not only of Vladek but of the children who survive even the survivors. "Maus" studies the bloody pawprints of history and tracks its meaning for all of us. This combined, definitive edition includes "Maus I: A Survivor's Tale" and "Maus II". Art Spiegelman is a contributing editor and artist for the "New Yorker". His drawings and prints have been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. He won the Pulitzer Prize for "Maus", and a Guggenheim fellowship. It was also nominated for the National Book Critics Award. His other books include: "Breakdowns: From Maus to Now, an Anthology of Strips"; "The Wild Party"; "Open Me, I'm A Dog"; "Jack Cole and Plastic Man: Forms Stretched to Their Limits"; "In the Shadow of No Towers"; "Breakdowns: Portrait of the Artist as a Young!"; "Be a Nose"; "Jack and the Box" and "MetaMaus". He lives in New York.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yes, it's a comic book about the Holocaust. With mice as the main characters. Of course, it's not a comic book in the traditional sense, although it's written and illustrated in that format. The first volume of Art Spiegelman's "Maus: A Survivor's Tale" was one of the works that helped popularize the term "graphic novel" in the 1980s, dignifying what had been considered a rather cheap and childish form of entertainment as a medium of genuine literary potential. Then again, "Maus" isn't exactly a novel, either, since it's a basically faithful retelling of the history of Spiegelman's own parents, Polish Jews who came to America after surviving Auschwitz. Cartoonist Jules Feiffer found it hard to put into words what, exactly, his fellow artist had done: his review of "Maus" describes it as "at one and the same time a novel, a documentary, a memoir, and a comic book." When it came to his opinion, however, he didn't have to struggle at all: "Brilliant, just brilliant." To any reader with even the slightest acquaintance with Holocaust literature, the story of Vladek and Anja Spiegelman will be all too familiar: a happy home life marred by the looming specter of war, a struggle to survive as homes and businesses are confiscated, individual acts of betrayal and heroism, the weeks in hiding, the eventual deportation, separations and reunions, liberation at last. (These aren't spoilers, by the way - Spiegelman sets out for us pretty clearly from the beginning how his parents' story is going to unfold.) Somehow, though, it all feels painfully new, freshly intimate.

As the child of a Holocaust survivor, Art Spiegelman has grown up hearing the terrors of WWII and seen the effects buried deep in his parents' everyday lives. Now, as a grown man, he decides to record the story of his father's survival from Poland to Auschwitz and recreate it in graphic novel form. His father, Vladek, recounts his years in Poland, the meeting his wife, Anja, and the growing tension in his town until finally, all the Jews are removed from the city and into work camps. Art learns that often his father's survival can be attributed to luck more than anything else. As he becomes more involved with his father's story and thoughts of the Holocaust, Art finds it increasingly difficult to recreate such awful events and falls into depression. In this way, Maus tells two simultaneous stories: the survival of Vladek, and Art coming to terms with the horrors of what his father experienced. As simultaneously a memoir and an autobiography, Spiegelman covers two stories: his own and his father's. He mixes the two wonderfully, and I was equally invested in both sides of the story. Since we see Art approaching his dad, years after the war, to collect his

survival story, we already know the ending: Vladek survives. Because of this, the story is not concerned with fear for Vladek's life; rather, we are more concerned with the journey he took to survive. Learning about the Holocaust from the view of a survivor is especially emotional, since most people today have only heard about that part of WWII through history class and documentaries. Actual survivor stories from people who saw many different sides of the war forces a reader to imagine themselves in the same situation. Overall Spiegelman did a wonderful job portraying the story of his father and all the characters involved.

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