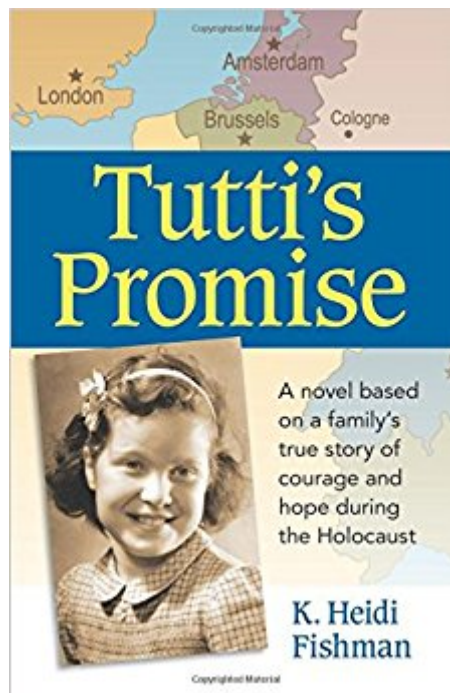




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# Tutti's Promise: A Novel Based On A Family's True Story Of Courage And Hope During The Holocaust



## Synopsis

A promise kept is like the twinkling stars in the night sky: a constant reminder of something important that makes you who you are. Can nine-year-old Tutti keep a promise--and a secret? Her family's life may depend on it. In the early 1930s, life for the Jews is on the brink of ruin: Hitler has come to power, and the golden memories of happy times are fading fast. One young couple, Margret and Heinz Lichtenstern, decide to flee Germany with their parents and daughter, Tutti. They move to Amsterdam, where Heinz is able to continue his work and where there seems to be hope for the future. Two years later, Tutti's brother is born, and the family is prospering. But then Germany invades the Netherlands. And in the pre-dawn hours of May 10, 1940, the Lichtensterns suddenly learn that they have not moved far enough. This is the true story of what the Lichtensterns endured under the Nazis. Told by Tutti's daughter, Heidi, and filled with historical documents and photos, it vividly recreates how one family conquered fear and heartbreak to survive. Theirs is a tale of both unimaginable devastation and lucky surprises--raids, sabotage, helpful friends and strangers, and a very special gift. One family. One remarkable story. And in the end, a promise kept. Tutti's Promise is based on the true story of what happened to my mother, uncle, and grandparents during the Holocaust. In order to write the book I did extensive research -- interviewing my mother, consulting my great-grandfather's diary, searching through archives and historical documents, visiting the places the family lived during the war, and interviewing friends of the family. The things that happen in this book are real. The conversations were created to capture the emotions and reflect the personalities of my family members as I knew them to be. Tutti's Promise is appropriate for ages 10 and older. While it might be a gentle introduction to the youngest readers, many adults have found it an inspiring story as well.

## Book Information

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: MB Publishing, LLC (March 1, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0990843017

ISBN-13: 978-0990843016

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #547,547 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in *Books > Children's*

Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

"Tutti's Promise is a compelling story for all readers about one family's remarkable tale of survival during the Holocaust. K. Heidi Fishman does a masterful job of weaving together Holocaust history with the account of Tutti and her family, while writing the manuscript in a style that is completely accessible for a middle-school audience. The book fills an important gap in the available literature on the subject and should reach a wide readership. Highly recommended." -- Avinoam Patt, PhD, the Philip D. Feltman Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford "Based on a true story, Tutti's Promise invites readers to experience one family's desperate struggle to stay together and retain their humanity during the Holocaust. Fishman's loving account is a remarkable story of luck, generosity, hope, and courage in the face of atrocity. Suitable for readers ages 10 to adult, this sensitively written and gently told novel illustrates how much the world has lost and continues to lose when targeted groups are marginalized as 'other.'"--Tom White, Coordinator of Educational Outreach, Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Keene, New Hampshire "I thoroughly enjoyed reading Tutti's Promise. It brought to life a terrible time that I also was part of. There can never be too many books on the Holocaust. Each story is a link in a broken chain. The author was very careful with her research and interviews to substantiate a family's odyssey and bring it to life. It is a true picture of the hell it was. Many pictures and documents punctuate the book like a beating drum whose voice insists to be heard. I highly recommend this book for any age." -- Inge Auerbacher: Child survivor of Terezin concentration camp. Author of I AM A STAR -- Child of the Holocaust and five other books. "This artfully cast two-hundred-page novel is a superb portrayal of one family's courage, resilience, and fortitude during the Holocaust. It is the true story of the Lichtensterns, a close-knit German-Jewish family, who settle in Amsterdam in the thirties, hoping to avoid Nazi persecution. . . . Indeed, the great virtue of Tutti's Promise is that author, K. Heidi Fishman (Tutti's daughter), does not linger on horror, but has presented the family overcoming these grave obstacles in the context of hope. That perfectly rendered balance makes this book a fine choice for fourth to eighth graders.--Mary Beth Klee, Core Virtues"Relevant and important . . . K. Heidi Fishman tells the true story of her family's struggle to stay together and stay alive during man's darkest

period in history. Every Holocaust story should be told, and this one is done well, with heart, and through the sweet innocence of a child's eyes. Tutti's Promise will linger long after you've put down the book."-- Rhonda Fink-Whitman, author of 94 Maidens, creator of The Mandate Video, and national Holocaust education advocate

When my mother speaks to school groups about her experiences during the Holocaust, I watch the children. They are captivated. Often, they have tears in their eyes. Some have read *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. Others have read *Night* by Elie Wiesel. They are studying World War II and the Holocaust in school, but the woman who is standing in front of their class lived through it. The students listen quietly, without fidgeting. They are respectful and truly honored to have her as a guest speaker. I wonder to myself how many more times she will do this. She is healthy and strong for her age, but how much longer will she be willing and able to tell her story? The students in these classes are among the last generation that will hear survivors or witnesses of the Holocaust. The children ask many questions, and she answers them all carefully and thoughtfully. They ask about the small details: what were the mattresses made of? They ask spiritual questions: did her faith help her through? And they ask deeper questions: what did she miss the most? I believe the most important question is this: What does "never forget" mean? It is the reason that my mother continues to tell her story and teachers continue to invite her to come to their classrooms. Never forget. People say it when they talk about the Holocaust, and it can take on many meanings. Some say that it means we have to remember the victims. Some say we need to honor the survivors. And others say we need to fight anti-Semitism. All of that is true. For me, "never forget" means we need to learn from history. We need to understand that prejudice hurts: it injures the people who are discriminated against, and it damages the people who hold the biased views. Emphasizing differences between people and using those disparities to demean or intimidate others is insensitive and cruel. Instead, we need to notice our similarities as human beings and find ways to bridge the gaps that divide us in order to move forward toward positive human relations. "Never forget" reminds us that seven billion people need to find a way to live peacefully on this one small planet. In 2007, at the age of seventy-two, my mother began speaking to school groups about her experiences. Since then, well over 1,000 students have listened to her presentation. This book will ensure that her story is never forgotten.

Engagingly told true story of a very young girl's survival of the Holocaust, Tutti's Promise is enriched by photos and original documents. Although I learned much as an adult reader, this book is

especially appropriate for middle and early high school readers. It introduces vocabulary and explains the historical context of the events. At turns inspiring, harrowing, authentic, and uplifting, this story stays with you after you turn the final page and look at the last photograph. With an ending that is more triumph than tragedy, it sheds light on a dark period of history with an affirming message of how the bonds of family can be strengthened during the most difficult of journeys. Teachers wanting to introduce their students to the Holocaust should consider adding this book to their reading list. LLF

I'm pleased to say that I know both Tutti and her daughter Heidi who wrote this wonderful story about their family's survival during the Holocaust. The story is factual but gentle enough for middle school readers. The story however, is interesting enough to engage adult readers. The family's story has elements of Anne Frank, and "Schindler's List". A must read.

A moving fictionalized account of the author's mother's experiences during the Holocaust. While appropriate for middle school students, the book includes realistic details of life in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam and the Westerbork and Theresienstadt camps. The wealth of family photographs and images of actual documents that accompany the narrative, such as the picture of Tutti leaving for her "date" with her uncle and the transport list to Auschwitz that includes her maternal grandparents, make the story real in a way that few other books have been able to. The comparison of her family tree before and after the war is especially poignant. The book should be on every recommended reading list for teaching older children about the Holocaust.

This is an important book. It is well written with clear voices and honest descriptions of a family who perseveres.

Well done Heidi. Your mother is a remarkable woman! I am proud to be her friend!

Trying to escape the horrors awaiting for Jews in Germany, a middle-class Jewish family run to Amsterdam shortly before The Netherlands are occupied by the Nazis. In this novel based on a personal story of the Lichtenstern family, the main voice belongs to Ruth Lichtenstern aka Tutti born in 1935 in Cologne, Germany, a little girl at the time of the war. As many of the kids growing up this time, she grew up faster, learning to cope with human cruelty, discrimination and the urge to find food and give comfort and support to the parents. They are children assuming from a very small age

adults' responsibilities. For the parents the pain is even bigger, as they should see how powerless they are to save their children from the daily nightmare. Through her, we are introduced to the daily life of Jews in the Netherlands during the war, many of them, similarly with Tutti's family, trying to run from the German horrors. Every day is a test of survival and an effort to trick with the destiny. It is a terrible fight for survival taking place and once in a while, good people - although only a few - are appearing in the life of the characters, including from the top of the establishment. For few months, the Lichtenstern family is able to stay away from the death camps, together with other Jews, by working at the Westerbork camp, trying to sell and buy scrap metal. But this chance is short-lived and they will be transferred to Theresienstadt where they will be liberated. The family starts the journey back, but the scars of those times remain deeply inscribed in the story of everyone's life. But there is also a promise, Tutti's promise, to refuse to give up hope and aim at making the world a better place. It is a promise that the reader too could take it. The story is well written, accompanied by a dictionary of words in German and Dutch and explaining various terms used in the book, with vivid dialogues and in an attractive way that may keep the reader interested. Documents are inserted in to the text, offering the proof of authenticity of various episodes told in the story. The book can be used in middle schools to teach about Shoah and it offers to the reader the chance to learn something about Jews in Amsterdam and Shoah in The Netherlands and Europe in general. The episodes of life at the Theresienstadt concentration camp are also relevant for documenting this period. Disclaimer: Book offered by the publisher in exchange for an honest review

Although this book may be targeted toward a younger reading audience, I thoroughly enjoyed it. It's considered a novel, but the author used numerous family photographs and documents to tell her mother's family's story during World War II. The family was extremely lucky to survive the war with their nuclear family intact, especially considering it included two small children. The ingenuity of the family was remarkable. Holocaust survivor stories become more precious and cherished as each day passes since their numbers are so sparse. Thanks to NetGalley for the ARC.

Heidi Fishman's painstaking research of her family's experience pays off in this powerful story of her mother, uncle, and grandparents' survival of World War Two and the Holocaust. Heidi's grandfather uses his business brilliance and connections to keep his family safe, and quite possibly contribute to the German's building unsafe military airplanes and land vehicles. Her grandmother's instincts and wit keeps her

family safe as she tries to keep their fears at bay. However, it is Tutti's ability to keep her brother safe and her father's secret at such a young age that truly touched my heart.

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