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And There Was Light: The Autobiography Of A Blind Hero In The French Resistance (Floris Classics)



Synopsis

'Light is in us even if we have no eyes.' It is a rare man who can maintain a love of life through the infirmity of blindness, the terrors of war, and the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. Such a man was Jacques Lusseyran, a French underground resistance leader during the Second World War. This book is his compelling and moving autobiography. Jacques Lusseyran lost his sight in an accident when he was eight years old. At the age of sixteen, he formed a resistance group with his schoolfriends in Nazi-occupied France. Gradually the small resistance circle of boys widened, cell by cell. In a fascinating scene, the author tells of interviewing prospective underground recruits, 'seeing' them by means of their voices, and in this way weeding out early the weak and the traitorous. Eventually Jacques and his comrades were betrayed to the Germans and interrogated by the Gestapo. After a fifteen month incarceration in Buchenwald, the author was one of thirty to survive from an initial shipment of two thousand.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The autobiographical book, *And There Was Light*, by Jacques Lusseyran, was to me, a must read for all people! I am in awe of Jacques Lusseyran. His courage through adversity was a beam of light! The quote by him, "Light is in us, even if we have no eyes," tells of a person, only physically was blind (age of 8 in 1932). In 1939 as a teenager, he founded a student resistance, The Volunteers of Liberty. When Dr. Lusseyran was asked, what is your reason for loving life, only then

did he find the real subject to write about his life. He said, "... since I have maintained this love of life through everything: through infirmity, the terrors of war and even in Nazi prison. Never did it fail me, not in misfortune nor in good times, which may seem much easier but is not".

This is one of the most beautiful and interesting books I've ever read. It's a story of an exuberant, sensitive and intelligent boy growing up and, incidentally, overcoming a handicap (of special interest to me was his sensory experiences -- how he felt and experienced space, colors, objects, movement, landscape, etc, after losing his sight). It is also a dramatic tale of resistance under occupied Paris, and surviving being interred in a death camp. And it is much more -- get it and have your own eyes opened.

A fascinating and, forgive the pun, an enlightening and revealing book. The author describes some harrowing wartime adventures, but, even more interesting to me was his description of the fascinating rediscovery of the world through his senses, which in some ways were sharper in "seeing" than his vision was. A really good read.

And *There Was Light* has been a major inspiration in my life and I have read it over several times. In addition to his astonishing discovery of his ability to "see" without eyes, there is the fact that the author and his friends were sixteen year old schoolboys when, with Jacques as their leader, they formed their own resistance movement to the Nazi occupation, risking their lives to fight the evil that had taken over their country. This book can serve as a powerful antidote, specifically for adolescents, to the apathy, narcissism, disconnection, and despair that currently plagues our culture. It is the most unique, surprising, and riveting "coming of age" memoir I have ever read. I used it as required reading for a senior English class I taught a few years back. The majority of students in this class were bright enough but unmotivated in the extreme. This was the first book I was able to find that engaged and inspired even the most reluctant of these students. Students who had stubbornly refused to read anything else of the literature I tried to tempt them with actually read and expressed real appreciation for this book. It engaged them right away, in the first chapter. No matter what age you are, read this book. If you have an adolescent child or friend, give them this book as a gift. If they don't read it on their own, read it aloud to them and talk with them about it. If you are a high school English or History teacher, first read it and then consider including this book in your syllabus. Young people need to hear this amazing story, and get to know this amazing human being. As do we all.

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