

Prague Winter (Enhanced Edition): A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948

By Madeleine Albright

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Prague Winter, the enhanced e-book edition, gives readers exclusive access to ten video interviews and one audio clip with Madeleine Albright. In the enhanced e-book Albright reveals how this book is different from any other she's written and pores over personal photos, family documents, and even a Slovak costume that she wore as a young girl to tell you the stories that bring these artifacts to life.

Before Madeleine Albright turned twelve, her life was shaken by the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia—the country where she was born—the Battle of Britain, the near total destruction of European Jewry, the Allied victory in World War II, the rise of communism, and the onset of the Cold War.

Albright's experiences, and those of her family, provide a lens through which to view the most tumultuous dozen years in modern history. Drawing on her memory, her parents' written reflections, interviews with contemporaries, and newly available documents, Albright recounts a tale that is by turns harrowing and inspiring. *Prague Winter* is an exploration of the past with timeless dilemmas in mind and, simultaneously, a journey with universal lessons that is intensely personal.

The book takes readers from the Bohemian capital's thousand-year-old castle to the bomb shelters of London, from the desolate prison ghetto of Terezín to the highest councils of European and American government. Albright reflects on her discovery of her family's Jewish heritage many decades after the war, on her Czech homeland's tangled history, and on the stark moral choices faced by her parents and their generation. Often relying on eyewitness descriptions, she tells the story of how millions of ordinary citizens were ripped from familiar surroundings and forced into new roles as exiled leaders and freedom fighters, resistance organizers and collaborators, victims and killers. These events of enormous complexity are nevertheless shaped by concepts familiar to any growing child: fear, trust, adaptation, the search for identity, the pressure to

conform, the quest for independence, and the difference between right and wrong.

"No one who lived through the years of 1937 to 1948," Albright writes, "was a stranger to profound sadness. Millions of innocents did not survive, and their deaths must never be forgotten. Today we lack the power to reclaim lost lives, but we have a duty to learn all that we can about what happened and why." At once a deeply personal memoir and an incisive work of history, *Prague Winter* serves as a guide to the future through the lessons of the past—as seen through the eyes of one of the international community's most respected and fascinating figures.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Madeleine Albright on Writing *Prague Winter*



On the evening of February 4, 1997, I led the cabinet into the House of Representatives prior to the President's annual address—the first woman ever to do so. Exchanging greetings with senators and other dignitaries, my heart should have been joyful; instead, I was stunned. That morning's *Washington Post* headline had read: "Albright Family Tragedy Comes to Light."

I was 59 when I learned from a reporter and from certain letters I had received that my ancestral heritage was Jewish and that more than two dozen of my relatives had died in the Holocaust. The revelation shook my deeply ingrained sense of identity, and prompted me to seek answers to questions that I had never before thought to ask. That search began with visits to the small towns in Czechoslovakia where my parents had grown up and to the ancient synagogue where the names of Holocaust victims are enshrined. *Prague Winter* is a continuation of that personal journey, but also a much wider tale concerning a generation compelled to make painful moral choices amid the tumult of war.

In 1939, when efforts by British and French leaders to appease Hitler had backfired, the Nazis invaded my homeland. I was not yet two years old. My parents escaped with me to London where my father became head of broadcasting for the Czechoslovak government in exile. Strangers in an embattled land, we endured along with our new neighbors the terrible bombing of the Blitz. Back home, the German occupation quickly evolved into a reign of terror under the direction of Reinhard Heydrich, "The Butcher of Prague." As preparations were made to exterminate the country's Jews, Czechoslovak parachutists returned to their native soil with a mission: to kill Heydrich -- the only successful assassination of a senior Nazi during the war. In the months that followed that daring assault, Czechs suffered from Hitler's vengeance, while Jews confined to the infamous Terezin ghetto struggled to retain hope despite overcrowded conditions and the periodic departure of fellow inmates on trains to the east. In England, Czechoslovak leaders maneuvered to reclaim their country's independence; my mother and father agonized over the fate of loved ones who had remained behind.

From the day America entered the war, my parents and their friends were confident the Allies would win. As democrats from Central Europe, they prayed that the United States—not the Soviet Union—would wield the

decisive postwar influence in our region. It was not to be. When at last the Nazis were defeated, Czechoslovakia became again a battleground between democracy and totalitarianism; before long, my family was forced into exile for the second time, finding a permanent home in America.

The story of *Prague Winter* is often as intensely personal as a mother's letter, a father's hidden sorrow, and the earnest artwork of an imprisoned ten-year-old cousin. The themes, however, are universal: loyalty and betrayal, respect and bigotry, accommodating evil or fighting back. What fascinates me is why we make the choices we do. What prompts one person to act boldly in a moment of crisis and a second to seek shelter in the crowd? Why do some people become stronger in the face of adversity while others quickly lose heart? What drives many of us to look down on neighbors based on the flimsy pretexts of nationality and creed? Is it education, spiritual belief, parental guidance, traumatic events, or more likely some combination that causes us to follow the paths that we do? My search for answers compelled me to look back—to the time of harshest winter in the city of my birth.

Review

"A gripping account of World War II. . . . In taut prose, Albright weaves a powerful narrative that wraps her family's story into the larger political drama unfolding in Europe." (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

"In the crowded field of memoirs written by former secretaries of state, Madeleine Albright's books stand out. . . . Albright is a charming and entertaining storyteller." (*The New York Review of Books*)

"Albright has supplemented a deeply researched history of World War II-era Czechoslovakia with a moving family narrative." (*The Daily*)

"*Prague Winter* is not only a family story—a proud and moving one—but a brilliant and multilayered account of how Czechoslovakia was formed along the most idealistic lines in the aftermath of World War I. An altogether fascinating and inspiring read." (**Michael Korda**, *The Daily Beast*)

"Showing us villainy, heroism, and agonizing moral dilemmas, Albright's vivid storytelling and measured analysis bring this tragic era to life." (*Publishers Weekly* (starred review))

"A genuinely admirable book. Albright skillfully returns us to some of the darkest years of modern times. Spring eventually came to Prague, but in much of the world it is still winter. The love of democracy fills every one of these instructive and stirring pages." (**Leon Wieseltier**)

"I was totally blown away by this book. It is a breathtaking combination of the historical and the personal. Albright confronts the brutal realities of the Holocaust and the conflicted moral choices it led to. An unforgettable tale of fascism and communism, courage and realism, families and heartache and love." (**Walter Isaacson**)

"A remarkable story of adventure and passion, tragedy and courage set against the backdrop of occupied Czechoslovakia and World War II. Albright provides fresh insights into the events that shaped her career and challenges us to think deeply about the moral dilemmas that arise in our own lives." (**Vaclav Havel**)

"A riveting tale of her family's experience in Europe during World War II [and] a well-wrought political history of the region, told with great authority. . . . More than a memoir, this is a book of facts and action." (*The Los Angeles Times*)

"A compelling personal exploration of [Albright's] family's Jewish roots as well as an excellent history of

Czechoslovakia from 1937 to 1948. . . . Highly informative and insightful. . . . I can't recommend *Prague Winter* highly enough." (*The Washington Post Book World*)

"Albright's book is a sprightly historical narrative of this long decade. . . . Her account of the destruction of inter-war Czechoslovakia, both as a geographical entity and as an idea of democracy, first by the Nazis and then by the Communists, is balanced and vivid." (*The Economist*)

"A blend of history and memoir that reveals in rich, poignant and often heartbreaking detail a story that had been hidden from her by her own parents. . . . The beating heart of the book is Albright's searing account of her intimate family saga." (*The Jewish Journal*)

"An extraordinary book. . . . Albright artfully presents a wrenching tale of horror and darkness, but also one in which decent and brave people again and again had their say." (István Deák, *The New Republic*)

From the Back Cover

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Users Review

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Janice Saucier:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until adult are different content. To be

sure that book is very important usually. The book Prague Winter (Enhanced Edition): A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948 seemed to be making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is very advantages for you. The e-book Prague Winter (Enhanced Edition): A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948 is not only giving you more new information but also to get your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship using the book Prague Winter (Enhanced Edition): A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948. You never really feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

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Earnest Koontz:

Spent a free the perfect time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or all their friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book is usually option to fill your totally free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of reserve that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the reserve untitled Prague Winter (Enhanced Edition): A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948 can be good book to read. May be it may be best activity to you.

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