

"Contrary to the prevailing tendency to oppose the puppet image of the beautiful sex, Mrs. Walter repeated that beauty is strength, because it allows you to mislead your opponent, make her become less vigilant, reveal, enable attack. She taught her pupils how to care for intellect as well as beauty She herself was the best example of the effectiveness of her methods. "

I really like reading books that have a historical thread interwoven in their story, associated with the turbulent period of World War II. And even better those that tell about these tragic times for our country. This period of history interests me and intrigues me for many years. Then a lot of evil and tragedy happened, but I think that you need to read about it, learn the story, not pretend that nothing happened. We must remember, at least for the sake of those who sacrificed their lives for Poland, sacrificed the most. And also about those who risking their lives and their loved ones, gave shelter to those who were threatened with annihilation. Among the Poles, there were many who helped Jews by hiding them in their homes. Undoubtedly, the time of World War II was more tragic for this population. Hitler decided the fate of millions of Jews. He sentenced everyone to death, except back, age or social status.

### **"Whoever saves one life saves the whole world"**

On February 27, 2019, the latest novel by Maria Paszynska, Fri. "Institute of Beauty" (Pascal Publishing House). The book is a kind of hold'em for a woman who saved doomed Jews. There is a doctor and a dietitian, Mada Walter (Walterowa, as she would prefer to be called), who during the German occupation, opened and ran the Institute of Beauty at Marszalkowska 137. It is there, practically under the Germans' nose (so not without risk), due to care and cosmetic procedures, she changed the appearance of Jewish women led out of the ghetto, masked their Semitic features. Walterowa, teaches them new names and surnames, makeup secrets, catechism, as well as Old Polish cuisine. Among them are: Sara (a beautiful, talented woman, once an author who hides under her veil a disgusting trace after the explosion of a bomb), Dalila (a strict orthodox Jewish woman, rabbi's wife), Zoja (a young poet, translator, wife of the famous professor) and Leila (a young the girl who almost took Walterowa from under the ghetto walls). Each woman has her own story, her own personal pain. They, too, found shelter in Mady's apartment, and they quickly joined friends. Will the doctor save the woman from extermination despite the doctor's efforts?

Maria Paszynska's book, at the beginning I was interested in its cover. First of all, the title itself seemed intriguing to me. Before I read the description of the story, it was he who drew my attention. The first thing that occurred to me was whether during the occupied Warsaw women were so vain that they thought about their beauty. However, a quick reflection came: maybe it was a way not to lose yourself in the chaos of war, not to go crazy and keep the remnants of humanity. Cover graphics drew my attention to their ambiguity. It consisted of extreme images: on top of half of the face, undoubtedly a beautiful woman, below - the ruins of a wounded city. I had enough of these guesses, so I quickly read the cover description. And I already knew that history would pull me along ...

It is worth mentioning that the novel was inspired by real events. The figure of Mady Walter and the Institute of Beauty really existed. The characters of the Jews are fictitious, however the author managed their lives so skillfully, she created the heroines so beautifully that, reading the novel, I was convinced that they were also real women. Those who have experienced terrible moments. I could easily imagine all the women to whom the author had assigned roles. It wasn't until reading the Afterword that it turned out that they were characters created for the needs of the book. I was shocked but so positive because it seemed so real.

Beautiful language, makes a book into a plastic whole. Exceptional descriptions, interesting threads that evoke mass of emotions are the undeniable advantages of the "Institute of Beauty". With each page, I have read the book more and more. I got to know the heroines, their fortunes, memories of the past and what they had to do to

survive. Many descriptions caused my emotion, smile, anger, but also disbelief or shock. I'm very impressed by the novel. The author does not color anything, shows how horrible the war is and what it can lead to. Shocking for me was the description of the "punishment" which Sara and Zoja imposed on one blackmailer. Unfortunately, in these difficult times there were also those who zeroed on the misfortune of others, they reported to the Germans not only Jews, but also Poles who helped them during the war. However, the Polish Underground (Sara belonged to the organization), managed to deal with such individuals skillfully ...

For a long time Maria Paszynska's novel will remain in my memory. It is possible that I will return to this story in a while. The author created a unique work that drew me completely, evoked a lot of emotions, prompted reflection. Although the topic was difficult and painful, reading was read very quickly. I liked how beautifully the author outlined the bonds connecting heroines, born friendships, but also different faces of love.

Final saddened me a little. Especially the fate of Zoja and Mrs. Walter. I did not expect such an end to her story and what the life of the latter looked like.

If you are interested in this type of literature - I highly recommend it. It's really worth reading this novel. It impressed me and moved me deeply. I believe that it will evoke similar feelings in you.