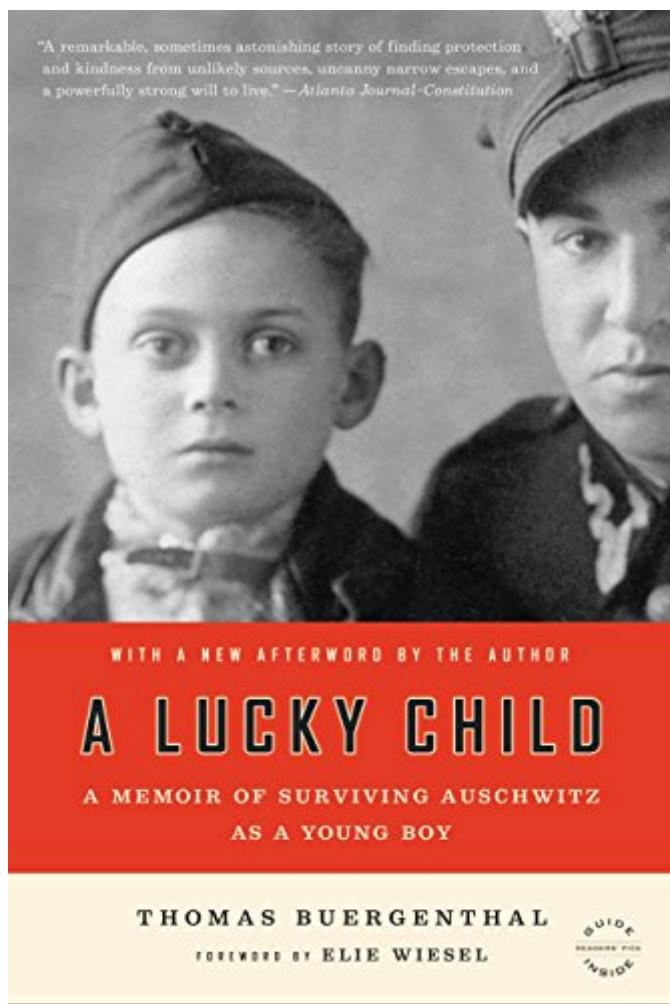


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# A Lucky Child: A Memoir Of Surviving Auschwitz As A Young Boy



## **Synopsis**

Thomas Buergenthal, now a Judge in the International Court of Justice in The Hague, tells his astonishing experiences as a young boy in his memoir *A LUCKY CHILD*. He arrived at Auschwitz at age 10 after surviving two ghettos and a labor camp. Separated first from his mother and then his father, Buergenthal managed by his wits and some remarkable strokes of luck to survive on his own. Almost two years after his liberation, Buergenthal was miraculously reunited with his mother and in 1951 arrived in the U.S. to start a new life. Now dedicated to helping those subjected to tyranny throughout the world, Buergenthal writes his story with a simple clarity that highlights the stark details of unimaginable hardship. *A LUCKY CHILD* is a book that demands to be read by all.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

As I have read and studied the Holocaust in great detail throughout my life... the first thought that came to my mind... before I even opened the cover of this book was... why would someone wait over sixty-years to write of his experiences? And then on the absolute first page... in the very first

sentences... was my answer... stated eloquently... and sparsely... yet with great strength. And this was a harbinger of the powerful yet "delicate" style that this entire masterpiece would be presented in. The forward written by NOBEL PEACE PRICE WINNER and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel states: "ARE THERE RULES TO HELP A SURVIVOR DECIDE THE BEST TIME TO BEAR WITNESS TO HISTORY? WHICH IS BETTER: TO DARE TO LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE BLINDING PRESENT, NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL, OR TO AWAIT THE DETACHMENT OF HINDSIGHT-WHICH, BEING LESS PAINFUL, IS MORE OBJECTIVE?" Before detailing the entire horrific journey of a boy who when he wasn't even six-years-old yet... was forced with his family from their home into a Jewish ghetto in Poland and saw all his childhood friends massacred by the Nazi's... before he even arrived at the reincarnation of hell itself... the actual concentration camps. By the time this young Jewish German child was ten-years-old he found himself in the infamous Auschwitz... one of the Nazi concentration camps. He was separated from his parents... his Father was murdered and his Mother he didn't see again... until a miraculous reunion years after the war. The question is how did this child survive? A combination of "luck"... protective parents in the beginning... and the guile of an abandoned animal with no alternative but to grow up quicker than nature had ever intended. But let's jump ahead to the present... and the knowledge of what type of man this "LUCKY-CHILD" became... and it is this knowledge that adds such an additional unrelenting luster to this incredible story. Thomas Buergenthal received law degrees from NYU and Harvard Law School and is currently the American judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. This former child Holocaust survivor... who actually spent years in a living hell... has risen from the literal ashes of the worst atrocities known to mankind... and become a shining beacon of light for all humanity to see. The author's writing uses a restraint that is almost hard to believe... yet he still pulls no punches. At his weakest times during his ordeal... when other prisoners collapsed... and laid down and died... or were mowed down with heartless Nazi bullets... he refused to quit and stated: "IF I GIVE UP, THEY WILL HAVE WON, I KEPT MUTTERING TO MYSELF. STAYING ALIVE HAD BECOME A GAME I PLAYED AGAINST HITLER, THE SS, AND THE NAZI KILLING MACHINE." The reader must remember that this story is being written sixty-years after the fact... and must acknowledge the lofty judicial position the author has attained... and so one time the reader is surprised... and speaking for myself... I don't know how he controlled even his internal emotions... then or now... when after the war and his liberation... a long and complicated road led him back to Germany in December 1946 at the age of twelve-and-a-half-years old... and he was living in the midst of town folk who most assuredly had been part of the Nazi war machine. "... ON SUNDAYS, WHEN ENTIRE GERMAN FAMILIES WOULD PASS OUR HOUSE ON THEIR WAY

TO AND FROM THEIR WALKS. I WOULD OBSERVE THEM FROM OUR BALCONY WITH ENVY AND HATRED. HERE WERE FATHERS AND MOTHERS, GRANDFATHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS, WALKING WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN - PEOPLE WHO, FOR ALL I KNEW, HAD KILLED MY FATHER AND GRANDPARENTS! AS I CONTEMPLATED THESE SCENES OF HAPPY GERMANS ENJOYING THEIR LIVES AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST, I LONGED TO HAVE A MACHINE GUN MOUNTED ON THE BALCONY SO I COULD DO TO THEM WHAT THEY HAD DONE TO MY FAMILY. IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO GET OVER THESE SENTIMENTS AND TO RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH INDISCRIMINATE ACTS OF VENGEANCE WOULD NOT BRING MY FATHER OR GRANDPARENTS BACK TO LIFE. IT TOOK ME MUCH LONGER TO REALIZE THAT ONE CANNOT HOPE TO PROTECT MANKIND FROM CRIMES SUCH AS THOSE THAT WERE VISITED UPON US UNLESS ONE STRUGGLES TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE THAT INVARIABLY LEADS TO EVER MORE SUFFERING BY INNOCENT HUMAN BEINGS."A remarkable story... and a remarkable man!

Luck definitely played part in Thomas Buergenthal's survival of the Holocaust. For a young child to go through events that Thomas experienced was too much for most, and were crippled for life physically and emotionally. He witnessed terrible cruelties in the ghettos, survived separation and loss of parents, inhumane treatments in the camps, hunger and cold, seeing and fearing death at every turn. Unschooled until age ten, waiting, hoping for his parents to find him in an orphanage, he never lost hope for life to change, and it did. His courage, humility, and true humaneness made it not only possible for Thomas Buergenthal to survive the horrific experiences and their memories, but made it possible for him to become an outstanding citizen of the world, and to be able to tell us his story.

A great memoir by Thomas Buergenthal. Very easy to read and entertaining. I wanted to keep reading and not put the book down in order to find out what would happen next. The memoir definitely met my expectations (and was a bit eerie at times since I recently visited Sachsenhausen). Buergenthal's journey is an inspirational real life story about the human spirit and its strengths in difficult times, family ties, forgiveness, and beating the odds trying to make a difference in the world. Truly an example to follow. No matter what barriers are set before someone, Buergenthal demonstrates that anything can be overcome with determination, hard work, and a little bit of luck.

exellant

It was a wonderful, true story. I couldn't put it down.

A superb book by a Shoah survivor who dedicated his life to enforcing human rights around the globe , as a judge at the World court in the Hague, and to teaching law to generations of students in the United States and at George Washington International School of Law.Odd Nansen wrote a hit novel , " Tommy - en sannferdig fortelling (in Norwegian)--- about Thomas Buergenthal , the boy who survived the death camps .

Profoundly affected by this book. I had the pleasure of meeting the man as well and have been deeply touched forever. This should be required reading around the world. Phil Bolton

I have read many memories on the holocaust. This one brings to light thoughts and information others have not. The last epilogue of his speech is sometime all schools should think about and teach. Read for the information. Read for the learning. Read for the insight.

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