

Aren't we forgetting something?

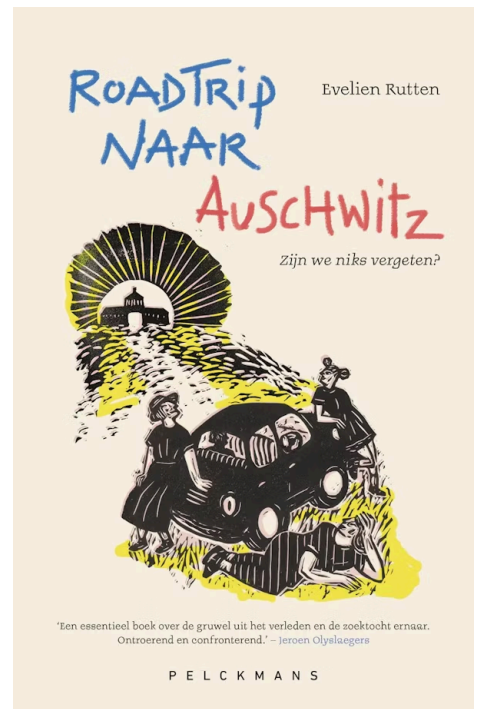
Road Trip to Auschwitz

EVELIEN RUTTEN

After the death of her mother, Evelien Rutten embarks on a pilgrimage to Auschwitz-Birkenau during the winter of 2004. For the first time, she visits the place where her Polish grandmother once stood face to face with Nazi doctor Josef Mengele. A choice made in 1943 determined the survival of an entire family line. In the biting cold, the author solemnly promises her late mother and grandmother that she will return one day, once she has a daughter of her own. By 2023, her teenage daughter is old enough, and it's time for a road trip: her daughter is about to receive the history lesson of a lifetime.

Three generations set out together: accompanying her teenage daughter are also her mother's two sisters. They visit all the key locations in Germany, Poland, and Austria that played a significant role in their extraordinary family history. With the help of historians, witnesses, scientists, journalists, and numerous experts, Evelien strives to fill in the gaps in her family's story. How did her grandparents end up in the camps? Does their family still carry the consequences of those events today? Who is the little girl in the photograph, and is she still alive?

'Road Trip to Auschwitz' is a moving account of how one family comes to terms with the traumas of the past. It's not just another book about visiting concentration camps but an original narrative about three generations seeking a shared history and exploring how that history continues to shape them today. Moreover, the journey connects them to the present, where the echoes of wartime rhetoric are once again alarmingly loud. The podcast created by the author alongside the book earned her the title of Master Storyteller 2024.



AUTHOR



Evelien Rutten (b. 1973) was born in Genk and grew up alongside her Polish grandparents. She studied journalism in Hasselt and has been writing for various newspapers and magazines for over twenty-five years. Her reports can be found in publications such as Feeling, De Standaard Magazine, HLN, and De Tijd. Photograph by Bas Bogaerts

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