

Swansong 1945: A Collective Diary of the Last Days of the Third Reich

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A monumental work of history that captures the last days of the Third Reich as never before.

Swansong 1945 chronicles the end of Nazi Germany and World War II in Europe through hundreds of letters, diaries, and autobiographical accounts covering four days that fateful spring: Hitler's birthday on April 20, American and Soviet troops meeting at the Elbe on April 25, Hitler's suicide on April 30, and finally the German surrender on May 8. Side by side, we encounter vivid, first-person accounts of civilians fleeing Berlin, ordinary German soldiers determined to fight to the bitter end, American POWs dreaming of home, concentration-camp survivors' first descriptions of their horrific experiences, as well as the intimate thoughts of figures such as Eisenhower, Churchill, Stalin, Joseph Goebbels, and Hitler himself.

These firsthand accounts, painstakingly collected and organized by renowned German author Walter Kempowski, provide the raw material of history and present a panoramic view of those tumultuous days. The more than 1,000 extracts include a British soldier writing to his parents to tell them there are no baths but plenty of eggs and chocolate, an American soldier describing "the tremendous burst of lilacs" as he approaches the Elbe, Mussolini wishing Hitler a happy birthday, Eva Braun bragging to a girlfriend about what a "crack shot" she's become, and much more.

An extraordinary account of suffering and survival, Swansong 1945 brings to life the end of Nazi Germany and the war in Europe.

Walter Kempowski

(1929-2007) was one of Germany's most important postwar writers. In the 1980s he began gathering diaries, letters, and memoirs of World War II, which he edited into ten volumes published in German. Swansong 1945 is the first portion to appear in English.

Shaun Whiteside

's translations from the German include classics by Freud, Musil, and Nietzsche.

"An emotionally immediate and multi-faceted perspective of the last days of the Third Reich... No mere anthology but an artful collage... Difficult to put down."

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Gerald Steinacher, Wall Street Journal

"A disturbing but compulsively readable slice of history."

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Christian Science Monitor

"From the absurd to the sublime, and everywhere heartbreaking: a collage of voices from the tail end of the world's conflagration... Raw [and] tremendously moving... Riveting."

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Kirkus (starred review)

"This is a book that can be read comfortably only page by page. Otherwise it will break your heart."

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Bill Marvel, Dallas Morning News

"Riveting... Kempowski's careful selection and sequencing convey the horror, misery, irony, and intensity of living through the last month of war in Germany. The work is noteworthy not just for its unique first-person perspective, but also for its breadth and depth... Essential."

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Publishers Weekly

"A treasure... [Swansong 1945] offer[s] powerful glimpses into otherwise lost history... The collection is a kaleidoscope of voices, revealing struggle of all kinds."

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Sarah Grant, Booklist (starred review)

"The power of [Swansong 1945] comes from the great variety and volume of the personal accounts, many of them eloquent and moving... This important book takes us beyond geography, statistics and battles and reveals the cost of war in very human terms."

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Roger Bishop, BookPage

"A unique and haunting insight into what it was like to live through the violent twilight of the Third Reich. Indispensable and, above all, unforgettable."

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Frederick Taylor, author of Dresden

"A remarkable collage of experiences and impressions of the catastrophic last days of the Second World War, which provides a unique panorama of the war and a very powerful impression of its impact on and the responses of those involved."

-

Jeremy Noakes, author of Nazism 1919-1945

"A bewitching, dramatic, utterly extraordinary range of voices and eyewitness testimony as Europe entered its year-zero moment."

-

David Kynaston, author of Austerity Britain

Other Books

Monster-Monster Rusak (Broken Monsters). Sudah banyak mayat yang dilihat Detektif Gabriella Versado, tapi yang satu ini unik, menurut standar Detroit sekalipun: setengah bocah, setengah rusa. Seiring ditemukannya mayat-mayat lain yang makin aneh dan meresahkan, bagaimana kota itu bisa tetap berpegang pada realitas yang saat ini pun telah nyaris hancur? Jika kau Layla, putri remaja Detektif Versado, kau "main-main" dengan orang yang bisa jadi merupakan predator online. Jika kau Jonno, jurnalis parowaktu yang putus asa, kau akan rela melakukan apa saja untuk mendapatkan akses eksklusif terhadap kisah yang mengerikan. Jika kau Thomas Keen, dikenal di jalanan sebagai TK, kau akan melakukan apa saja supaya keluarga tunawisma-mu tetap aman---dan menemukan monster yang terobsesi mimpi untuk menata ulang dunia dengan kejam. ? ? ? ? ? . Sudah banyak mayat yang dilihat Detektif Gabriella Versado, tapi yang satu ini unik, menurut standar Detroit sekalipun: setengah bocah, setengah rusa."