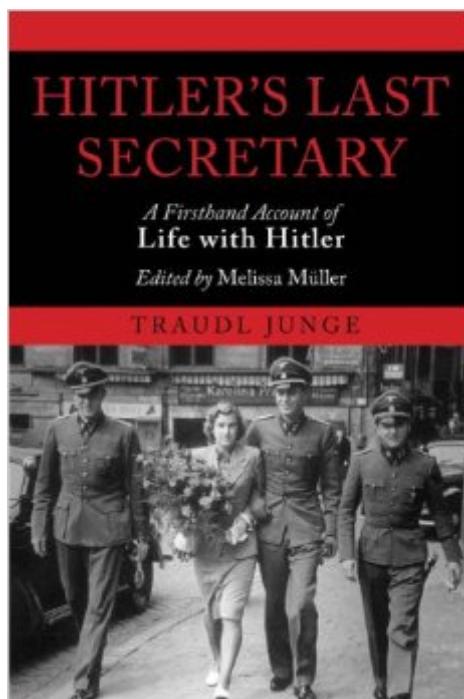


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Hitler's Last Secretary: A Firsthand Account Of Life With Hitler



Synopsis

In 1942 Germany, Traudl Junge was a young woman with dreams of becoming a ballerina when she was offered the chance of a lifetime. At the age of twenty-two she became private secretary to Adolf Hitler and served him for two and a half years, right up to the bitter end. Junge observed the intimate workings of Hitler's administration, she typed correspondence and speeches, including Hitler's public and private last will and testament; she ate her meals and spent evenings with him; and she was close enough to hear the bomb that was intended to assassinate Hitler in the Wolf's Lair, close enough to smell the bitter almond odor of Eva Braun's cyanide pill. In her intimate, detailed memoir, Junge invites readers to experience day-to-day life with the most horrible dictator of the twentieth century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first saw Traudl Junge in an interview embedded in the movie "Downfall". She was an elderly woman who appeared to be struggling with guilt for her association with Hitler. She appeared very sincere and admitted that even though things were not discussed in depth in the Bunker and other residences she visited, she could have found out more about the death and destruction spearheaded by Hitler. This 250 page paperback is a first hand account of Traudl Junge's association with the administration of the Third Reich as her job as secretary to Adolf Hitler. She was in her early 20's when she landed the job in Berlin in 1943. Germany was losing the war yet in her position she was sheltered from the world around her and by her account she was protected by Hitler; he seemed to be a father figure to her, very caring and interesting to talk to. She writes of her

time in the Reich's Chancellery, the Berghof, and the Bunker in East Prussia. She speaks of the many characters she came in contact with and how Hitler's personality garnered respect from all he commanded. She rarely saw Hitler's dark side; he was the consummate entertainer and host in his home, held lunches and dinner's for 25 people, and traveled to see heads of state, and she was part of the entourage. She was not an ardent Nazi, did not come close to the horrid SS women of Ravensbruck Concentration Camp, she simply was there for the job but admittedly in awe of the Führer. She liked the idea of a national community and everybody working together for a better Germany. She saw Hitler as a genial host on one hand and military supreme commander on the other and had a difficult time reconciling this dichotomy. She believed Hitler lived for his mission, for the ideology of national socialism for a greater Germany.

Hannah Arendt, while observing Adolf Eichmann during his trial for Nazi war crimes, was struck by how very ordinary and unsinister he appeared. This led to her calling him the embodiment of the "banality of evil", disputing the idea that most Nazis were sociopaths and very different from ordinary human beings. This book is a narrative illustrating that concept. Traudl Junge goes to work as a secretary for Hitler, not because of any burning ideological reasons, but simply because she wants to leave a job she dislikes. She wants to leave to become a dancer, but state regulations at the time require she do something that helps the state. Through a colleague related to Albert Bormann, she is invited to apply for the position of secretary for Hitler and is chosen from among several young women. Here is where the story becomes absolutely fascinating and this is why: Junge wrote her account in 1947, only 2 years after the end of the war. While Hitler already was seen as an evil man by the Allies, the full extent of what had happened was just beginning to be known. So Junge has the freedom to simply detail her daily life with Hitler, unencumbered by the weighty responsibility she might have felt later on to villify him. And so we see a Hitler who loves his German Shepherd, Blondi, and jokes with Eva Braun about how her two Scotch terriers are "nothing but a couple of dusting brushes"....a man who awkwardly tells young Traudl she should come to him if any of the young soldiers ever harass her... an wonderful conversationalist who loves to retell pranks he did as a young man....a father figure to Junge who made her feel protected. All in all, her experience was such that she decades later says, "I can still look back to that time with warm emotions.

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