Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust by Ms. Nechama Tec

In this, Nechama Tec’s fifth book on the Holocaust, vivid individual stories blend effortlessly with detailed comparisons of wartime experiences of women and men. The result is a captivating account of how the coping strategies and the ultimate fate of each sex differed. Tec, as always, listens to the voices of the oppressed, voices that originated in wartime diaries, postwar memoirs, archival materials, and her own interviews with survivors and rescuers. Concentrating on life under extreme conditions, Tec’s research uncovers the previously overlooked significance of mutual cooperation and compassion that operated across gender lines.

My Personal Review:
What can I say about Resilience and Courage that the nominating committees for the Pulitzer and National Book Award have not already said? This is an amazing book -- and perhaps its most astonishing achievement is to show inherently depressing historical incidents through a series of admittedly small, but powerfully meaningful, everyday acts of resistance.

Ultimately, Tec’s most impressive achievement within this elegantly written and extensively researched book is that she manages to weave literally hundreds of first-person accounts of individual suffering into a book that feels empowering to read. The courage of the women (and men as well) whose stories Tec tells is so beautifully human, even under the worst possible circumstances.

Tec’s undeniable skill as a storyteller (and as a researcher -- the extent of the background research here is vast) draw the reader into her subjects' lives, in an intimate manner that leaves an indelible impression upon the reader. This is not a book you will soon forget, if ever.
Some readers may find the introductory chapter's description of research methodology a bit dry (it would have perhaps been better placed into an appendix), but once the case studies begin, the pace is swift and the stories devastating.

A bravura performance by one of the world's leading Holocaust scholars!

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