

Although *The Midwife of Auschwitz* is a daunting title, the story that author Anna Stuart tells is thoughtful and inspiring. The novel is based on fact and Stuart's research provides interesting characters and plots. Ana is a Christian midwife living in Lodz, Poland with her husband and three adult sons. Ana has befriended many Jews and is especially fond of the young Jewish nurse Ester. Amid war and upheaval Ester and Filip meet and fall deeply in love. Ana attends Ester's marriage to Filip in November of 1939 and soon the newlyweds and their parents are forced to move into a small, shared space in the ghetto. Ana is arrested as a member of the resistance. She is about to be jailed when she voluntarily joins Ester and Ester's ailing mother on a train to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Upon arrival Ana presents her midwife documents and claims Ester as her assistant. Living conditions at Birkenau are atrocious and there are many sick and pregnant women for Ester and Ana to care for. Both women are devastated by the rules their superiors enforce regarding the babies they deliver. Only the blond-haired babies are allowed to live, and these newborns are stolen from their mothers and given to German families. How can there be hope among such despair? Ana and Ester never stop dreaming of their husbands and praying for a future with them. After a few months in the camp, it is obvious to Ana that Ester is pregnant. Ester endures thoughts of having her baby taken from her by devising a plan that could potentially reunite these mothers (and herself) with their abducted children. Ester and Ana never give up hope for returning to their loved ones. Remarkably, Ana successfully delivers over 3000 babies among the bleakest circumstances. *The Midwife of Auschwitz* is an incredible story of resilience, and it's Stuart's compassionate writing makes that makes this a remarkable novel.