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My Crazy Century: A Memoir

Ivan Klíma



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In his intimate autobiography, spanning six decades that included war, totalitarianism, censorship, and the fight for democracy, acclaimed Czech writer Ivan Klíma reflects back on his remarkable life and this critical period of twentieth-century history.

Klíma's story begins in the 1930s on the outskirts of Prague where he grew up unaware of his concealed Jewish heritage. It came as a surprise when his family was transported to the Terezín concentration camp—and an even greater surprise when most of them survived. They returned home to a city in economic turmoil and falling into the grip of Communism. Against this tumultuous backdrop, Klíma discovered his love of literature and matured as a writer. But as the regime further encroached on daily life, arresting his father and censoring his work, Klíma recognized the party for what it was: a deplorable, colossal lie. The true nature of oppression became clear to him and many of his peers, among them Josef Škvorecký, Milan Kundera, and Václav Havel. From the brief hope of freedom during the Prague Spring of 1968 to Charter 77 and the eventual collapse of the regime in 1989's Velvet Revolution, Klíma's revelatory account provides a profoundly rich personal and national history.

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