



The Green Sofa (Life Writing)

Natascha Würzbach, Raleigh Whiting

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Natascha Würzbach grew up an only child in an unconventional artistic household in wartime Germany. *The Green Sofa* covers her childhood and youth, from 1936 to 1956, offering a perspective on the everyday realities and historical developments in Germany through the war years and into the time of prosperity that followed.

Nazi political and racist policies deprived her scholarly father?cofounder of the German Nietzsche Society in 1919?of his livelihood in the culture division of Radio Bavaria. He took on the role of househusband and in so doing discovered the joys of caring for and educating his inquisitive preschool daughter. Her mother, an exponent of modern expressionist dance, supported the family through her work in an army service troupe that entertained German soldiers on the eastern front?a connection that probably saved the family from more than one nasty run-in with the Gestapo.

The eponymous green sofa is a cherished piece of furniture that accompanied the family from their home in Munich to their exile in the Bavarian countryside following the bombing of the city. Through carefree early days reading stories with her father and the years of family life in even the smallest of their refuges, it represents for the author a symbol of reassuring constancy amid change.

The book's epilogue presents a retrospective on Würzbach's father and his long-hidden struggle as an unrelenting anti-Nazi. To secure his family's precarious well-being through the Hitler years, he concealed, and even denied, his Jewish heritage.

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