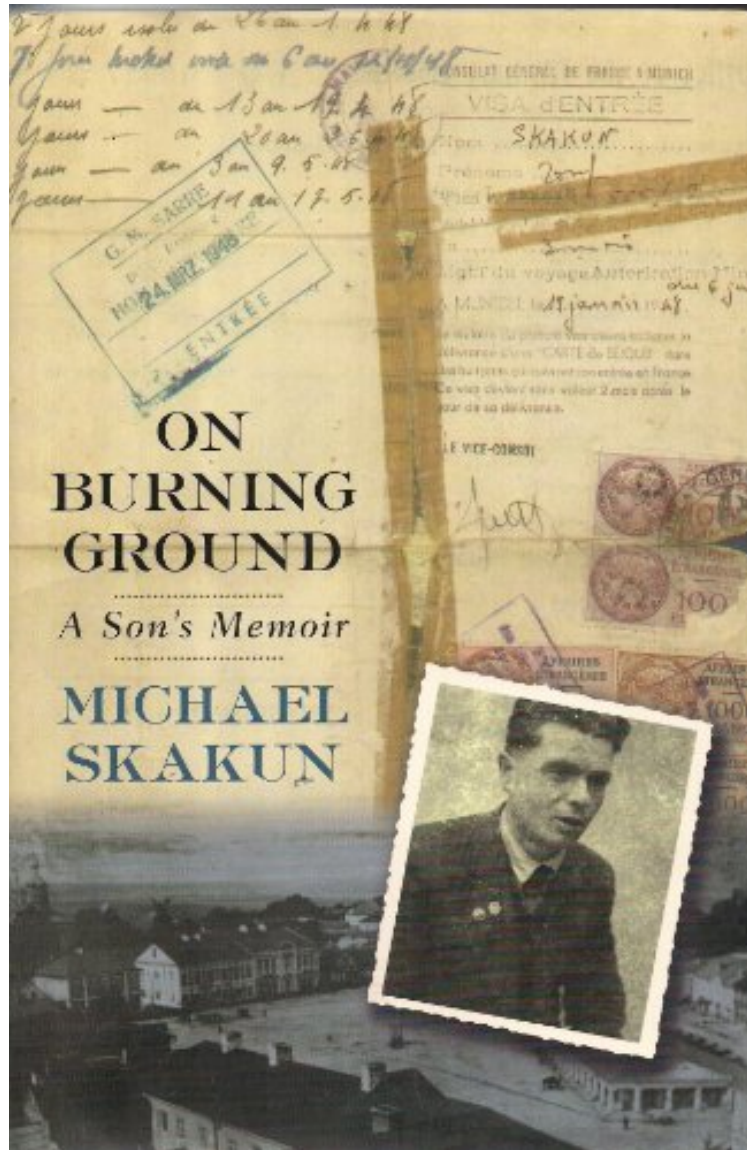


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## On Burning Ground: A Son's Memoir (English Edition)

Von Michael Skakun

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**Von Michael Skakun : On Burning Ground: A Son's Memoir (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Burning Ground: A Son's Memoir (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A suspenseful narrative of survival by wits in the HolocaustVon Ein KundeSkakun's experiences are comparable to those of Yehuda Nir in "The Lost Childhood" and Moshe Perlman in "Europa, Europa". The crowning irony is Skakun's

(almost) joining the Waffen SS in order to hide his Jewish identity, and to survive. However, there are just a few errors of background historical fact which mar "On Burning Ground". E.g., on page 203 Julius Streicher is named as the founder of the Nazi paper "Volkische Beobachter". This is wrong. Streicher founded "Der Sturmer". Volkische Beobachter was an outgrowth of "Munchener Beobachter", a paper purchased and re-founded by Dietrich Eckart. This is the sort of mistake that better editing might have caught. But "On Burning Ground" still stands as a riveting account of survival through quick thinking and a lot of luck.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Powerful, gripping, resourceful, amazing, yet true.Von Ein KundeWhat can I add to the above? Not much. I rarely read Holocaust memoirs, but this one was amazing. Michael's father, Joseph, a Talmudic scholar with blue eyes and blond hair, who tried to save his mother in Navaredok/Novogrudek Poland, failed, and fled to the forests and to Vilna. As a circumcised male in Vilna, Joseph took on the identity of a Muslim Tatar, studied Islam, and became a foreign laborer in Berlin. A hidden Jew pretending to be a Muslim living in the Nazi capital during the War. And then he enlisted in the SS!

KurzbeschreibungOn Burning Ground is the tale of one desperate and brilliant man's ultimate choice: at the eve of the Nazi purging of Poland, to disguise his Jewish origin and pose first as a Christian, then to join the Nazi SS. Living in constant fear, Michael Skakun's father, Joseph, not only assumed a dangerous array of identities in order to survive, but subsequently compromised his very spirit. On Burning Ground is a brave and revelatory tale of a son's father who risked it all, and through his amazing odyssey, was keenly aware of the price of such deceptions..deThe "burning ground" of the title is not just the blasted landscape of Holocaust-era Europe but also the existential anguish of its protagonist, rabbinical student Joseph Skakun, so seared by the evils he has witnessed that at one desperate moment suicide seems the only possible response. Joseph was one of very few Jews in his northern Polish village to escape extermination at the end of 1941, and his odyssey of survival took him into the very "maw of the beast." Assuming the identity of a Muslim Tatar (to account for his circumcision), he traveled to Germany as a foreign laborer. Later, fleeing the suspicions of a fellow worker, he enlisted in the Waffen SS, an act of crushing ethical ambiguity for a young man steeped in the Jewish tradition of Mussar, which stressed moral self-examination. After the war, consumed by the need to convey and come to grips with his experiences, Joseph made a confidant of his son, the author of this galvanizing biography and memoir. Retelling his father's story, Michael Skakun pens a drama of biblical breadth and Dostoyevskian depth, scanting neither the visceral horror of his father's ordeal nor the resourcefulness and resolve that enabled Joseph to endure. --Wendy SmithPressestimmen"I read every word with terror, with pity, with wonder . . . What a great deed Michael Skakun has performed . . . His book is a permanent marker."--Cynthia Ozick"What a life! This is a story that must be told."--Elie Wiesel""On Burning Ground" is an extraordinary story . . . a harrowing story . . . Nor can one help marveling at this chronicle of endurance."--Wendy Law-Yone, "The Washington Post Book World""The book is a startling achievement, one that gives new meaning to the concept of filial piety."--Gabriel Sanders, "The Forward""Distinguished by both outstanding writing and a profound sense of moral complexity, this son's memoir of his father's incredible survival stands out among Holocaust memoirs . . . An unusual and gripping account of resourcefulness, narrow escapes, and moral improvisation."--"Publishers Weekly" (starred review)"Stirring and provocative . . . A unique Holocaust memoir for its second-generation authorship, its erudition (Skakun displays an easy familiarity with a wide range of European and Jewish writers), and its traditional Jewish sensibility."--"Kirkus s""From the first pages the book has an urgent quality to it, as though it had to be written . . . The story is gripping, and Skakun tells it well."--Sandee Brawarsky, "New York Jewish Week""Extraordinary . . . A brilliant account . . . Overwhelming."--"London Daily Mail"