

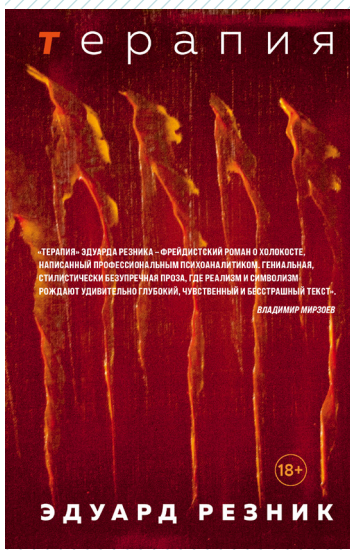


About the author:

EDWARD REZNIK (born in 1960) is a scriptwriter and a playwright with twenty feature films and TV series to his name, including the prizewinning German-Ukrainian-Russian coproduction feature *4 Days in May* (2011). Reznik writes for the theatre, radio and film industry. *Therapy* is his first attempt at fiction writing; the novel draws on his ten years of experience as a practicing counselor. Edward Reznik adapted *Therapy* into a feature script that was noted in the best script category at Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv and Chicago film festivals. Edward Reznik lives with his family in New York.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Therapy**, *novel*



Eksmo
 Novel, 2022
 480 pp

Therapy

The Sopranos meet Persian Lessons in this highly pitched Bildungsroman set against the horror of the Nazi past. A Jewish psychologist in pre-war Berlin saves a young German from suicide and offers free treatment to help the young man discover his new, self-confident self. After gaining the desired confidence, the young man becomes a member of the SS and ends up as a security guard in the same concentration camp where the psychologist and his family are being held. It is now up to the psychologist to test the effectiveness of his skills and will by helping his patient regain his mental health in the face of the hell of Shoah. Reznik calls on his ten years of experience as a practicing psychologist to speak about the challenges of a young person growing up in the apocalyptic times.

Berlin, 1933. Richard, 19 years old, is plodding through a dull lonely life, working shifts as a labourer in a fish factory and an assistant at a hospital morgue. While donating blood to earn some extra money, Richard meets Aida, who has the same rare blood type. The next day Richard visits psychoanalyst Joachim who happens to have recently prevented Richard from committing suicide. Joachim knows that Richard cannot afford to pay for his sessions but he feels a duty to helping suicidal patients and offers to treat Richard for free. Richard blames himself for his mother's suicide and feels an obligation to share his mother's fate. Joachim tries to help Richard release himself from the heavy psychological legacy of his mother and gain self-confidence.

At a therapy session, Richard meets Joachim's daughter by chance — she turns out to be Aida. Unbeknownst to her father, Richard takes Aida to a movie and then arranges a nocturnal excursion to the morgue where he works. However, self-doubt and an internal ban on happiness prevents Richard from developing a relationship with Aida — he breaks up with her.

Ulrich, an influential German official, brings his son Theo to Joachim's office for treatment: Theo displays a romantic interest in men, which is both a cause for criminal persecution and a threat to the father's career. Joachim agrees to help Theo, and he does: after reconfirming his sexual inclinations, Theo leaves for Hamburg and finds a lover. There, members from the youth wing of the SS burst into their hotel room, photograph the couple, and arrest them. The furious Ulrich blames the incident on the psychoanalyst; he will ensure Joachim is deprived of the right to practice in Germany. Prompted by Joachim during therapy, Richard seeks out his father, who turns out to be Ulrich. A high-ranked SS official promotes his illegitimate son in the Nazi hierarchy. Through his father's support, Richard seems to have gained what he needs: inclusion in a large and strong structure, good money, recognition, and a purpose in life. Richard no longer considers psychotherapy necessary so cancels his future appointments with Joachim but resumes his relationship with Aida. Together they move into a new apartment that Richard receives as an SS officer. In public, Aida, unlike her parents, refuses to act as a Jew — she does not wear a six-pointed yellow star, feeling shielded by Rich-

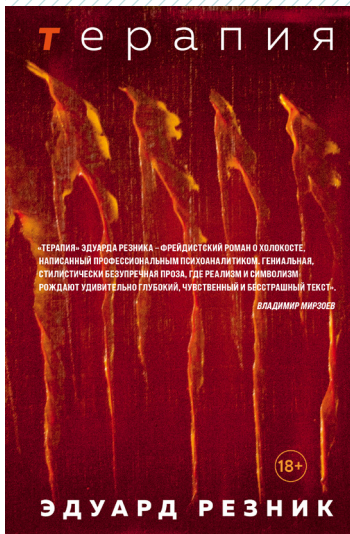
ard's status. At parties, she feels as German as other girls, enjoying the happiness of a young woman in love. Obviously, these relations threaten Richard's career as well as Ulrich's, and Ulrich demands that his son break up with the Jewish girl. Afraid of betraying his father's hopes and love, Richard obeys, and Aida returns to her parents.

Ulrich manages to hush up Theo's homosexual scandal, but now Theo must immediately marry. Ulrich makes sure Theo's boyfriend never gives evidence in court; the young man is found dead in a prison cell. When Theo learns of his lover's murder, he makes a suicide attempt but is saved by his brother. Theo explains his reasons for the attempt not with sorrow over the death of his boyfriend nor an impending marriage but jealousy of Richard, who is Ulrich's more successful son. Unaware that Richard overhears their conversation, Ulrich assures Theo that Richard was taken into the house only to stimulate Theo to act properly. Disillusioned and embittered with the betrayal of his newly gained father, Richard rapes his father's young wife and leaves the house hoping to reconnect with Aida. He finds Joachim's flat empty: Ulrich made sure the Jewish family was deported out of turn.

Ulrich sends Richard away from Berlin to serve as a guard in a concentration camp. In one of the prisoners, Richard recognizes Joachim. He searches for Aida and her mother in the female zone, where he is told that both have died. Richard will never know that Aida was not murdered in a gas chamber with her mother, but that she will survive through hardships, torture, sexual violence, and loss of a newborn child until her eventual liberation.

Severely mourning Aida's death and shaken by the beastly atrocities in the hellish camp, Richard pleads with Joachim to resume therapy. Joachim is desperate at the loss of his family and does not aspire to survive. But he cannot turn Richard down. In their journey to Richard's childhood and the young man's real self, Joachim gains the only reason to live — as a dying prisoner and a desperate old man, he is set to save this person.





Therapy

Selected quotes

Therapy is a Freudian novel about Holocaust, written by a practicing psychologist. This is a brilliantly written, stylistically impeccable text, where realism and symbolism blend in a profound, sensual, and fearless narrative.

Vladimir Mirzoev
a film director and producer

At first it seems the works lacks brave characters who can dare to challenge fate. People here try to survive, and by conforming they form their time. But then life sets the roles — one will be an executioner, the other will be a victim. And at this moment the choice has to be made, and the heroes begin to react, in accordance or confrontation with the imposed roles.

Alexander Gelman
a playwright

This is a story about a young man's personality getting destroyed after he entrusts the meaning of his life to someone or something else — to the state. Richard gets to learn he was made a part of the mechanism of destruction, but this realization will cost thousands of people their lives.

Alexei Guskov
an actor and producer

