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Wartime Diary (The Beauvoir Series)

Simone de Beauvoir



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Written from September 1939 to January 1941, Simone de Beauvoir's Wartime Diary gives English readers unabridged access to one of the scandalous texts that threaten to overturn traditional views of Beauvoir's life and work. The account in Beauvoir's Wartime Diary of her clandestine affair with Jacques Bost and sexual relationships with various young women challenges the conventional picture of Beauvoir as the devoted companion of Jean-Paul Sartre, just as her account of completing her novel She Came to Stay at a time when Sartre's philosophy in Being and Nothingness was barely begun calls into question the traditional view of Beauvoir's novel as merely illustrating Sartre's philosophy. Most important, the Wartime Diary provides an exciting account of Beauvoir's philosophical transformation from the prewar solipsism of She Came to Stay to the postwar political engagement of The Second Sex. Cast in the crucible of the Nazi Occupation, Beauvoir's existentialist ethics reflects dramatic collective experiences, such as joining the tide of refugees fleeing the German invasion in June 1940, as well as the courageous reaffirmation of her individuality in constructing a humanist ethics of freedom and solidarity in January 1941. This edition also features previously unpublished material, including her musings about consciousness and order, recommended reading lists, and notes on labor unions. In providing new insights into Beauvoir's philosophical development, the Wartime Diary promises to rewrite a crucial chapter of Western philosophy and intellectual history.

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