

The Zookeeper's Wife – Review

The Zookeeper's Wife is an incredible real-life story of one working wife and mother who became a hero to hundreds during World War II. In 1939 Poland, Antonina Żabińska (**portrayed** by two-time Academy Award nominee Jessica Chastain) and her husband, Dr. Jan Żabiński (Johan Heldenbergh), have the Warsaw Zoo **flourishing** under his **stewardship** and her care. When their country is invaded by the Germans, Jan and Antonina are stunned - and forced to report to the Reich's newly **appointed** chief zoologist, Lutz Heck (Daniel Brühl). To fight back on their own **terms**, Antonina and Jan **covertly** begin working with the Resistance - and put into action plans to save lives out of what has become the Warsaw **Ghetto**, with Antonina putting herself and even her children at great risk.



It might seem impossible for a film to find a fresh **angle** to portray about World War II after **countless** movies about the **conflict**. Detailing how this couple managed to save more than 300 Jews from certain Nazi **slaughter** by hiding them in their residence at the Warsaw Zoo, *The Zookeeper's Wife* manages to **craft** high drama, **atmospheric** tension and strong performances into a **tale** for our times that is both **riveting** and emotionally dynamic.



Director Niki Caro uses the familiar structure of survival and **rescue**, but her **focus** is on the mechanics of **cruelty** itself in an unlikely setting. It is powerful and gut-wrenching throughout without an **ounce** of melodrama, and will tug at your heartstrings reinstating your belief in **goodness** and love towards other living being - be it man or animal.