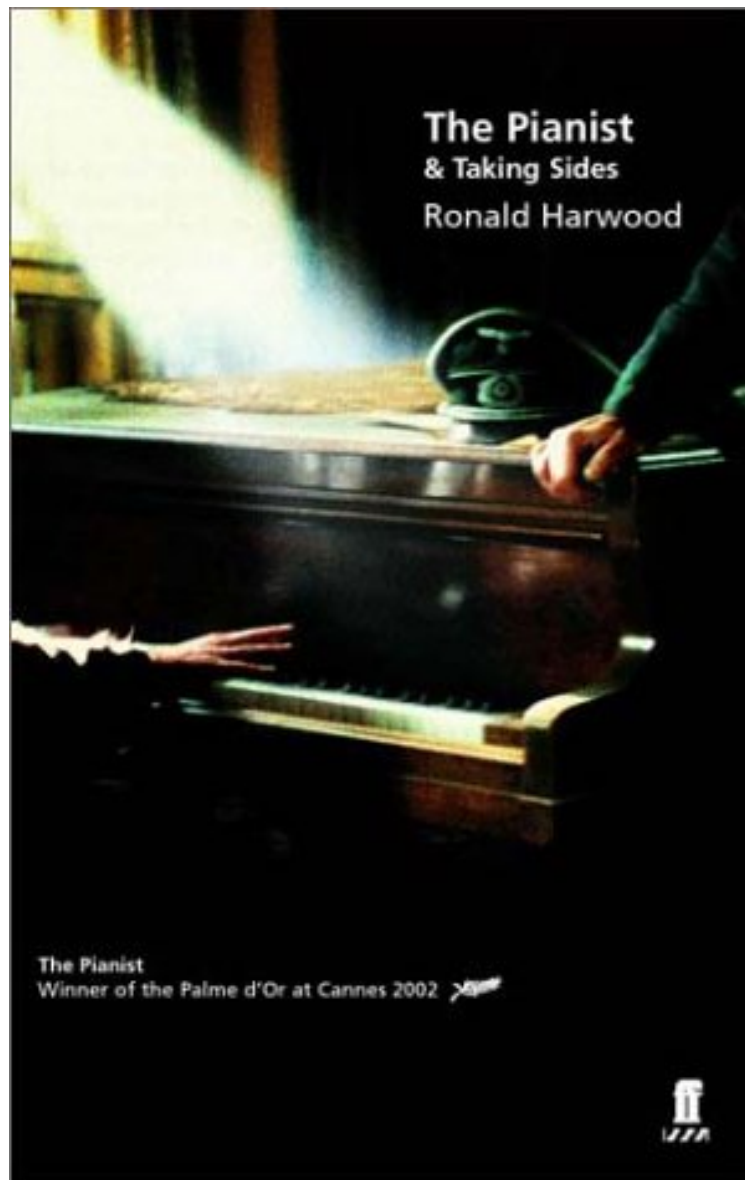


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The Pianist and Taking Sides

Ronald Harwood

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Ronald Harwood : The Pianist and Taking Sides before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pianist and Taking Sides:

The screenplays for two new films that examine guilt, innocence, and survival under Nazi rule in Poland and

Germany Adapted from the acclaimed memoir and directed by Roman Polanski, *The Pianist* charts the extraordinary but true story of Poland's most promising young pianist, Wladyslaw Szpilman, the only member of his family to survive the Nazi occupation. Through a bizarre chain of events and helped by family, friends, strangers, and even enemies, Szpilman meets the Marxist underground press, is sheltered by the proprietor of the cafe where he once performed, and, after the liberation, narrowly escapes death at the hands of his fellow survivors. *Taking Sides*, which stars Harvey Keitel and Stellan Skarsgard (*Breaking the Waves*), depicts the post-war investigation of famed German conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler, who was suspected of having been a Nazi sympathizer. Was Furtwangler a criminal or a victim? Did he heroically uphold the principle that art is above politics or did he cravenly use his status as a shield to hide behind? At what point does neutrality become complicity and naivete and cowardice no excuse for not opposing evil? Set in the American Zone of occupied Berlin in 1946, *Taking Sides* raises many questions, but ultimately the answers depend on which side you take. With these two screenplays, Ronald Harwood reveals the shocking depths and the heartbreaking heights to which the human character can adhere in extreme conditions.

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