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My Family For The War



Synopsis

Winner of the Mildred L. Batchelder medal for most outstanding children's book in translation. Escaping Nazi Germany on the kindertransport changes one girl's life forever. At the start of World War II, ten-year-old Franziska Mangold is torn from her family when she boards the kindertransport in Berlin, the train that secretly took nearly 10,000 children out of Nazi territory to safety in England. Taken in by strangers who soon become more like family than her real parents, Frances (as she is now known) courageously pieces together a new life for herself because she doesn't know when or if she'll see her true family again. Against the backdrop of war-torn London, Frances struggles with questions of identity, family, and love, and these experiences shape her into a dauntless, charming young woman. Originally published in Germany, Anne Voorhoeve's award-winning novel is filled with humor, danger, and romance.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

A 2013 ALSC Notable Children's Book • ALSC Kids' Indie Next List, Spring 2012 • Recommendations for Kids from Indie Booksellers* "With the personal Kindertransport history, the intense drama about family, faith, guilt, love, and loyalty in wartime makes this an important addition

to the Holocaust curriculum." *Booklist*, starred review* "Events and facts are expertly woven into the girl's emotional growth, and changing relationships . . . provide a rich exploration of identity and self. With a compelling main character and taut and insightful story line, this novel is sure to find no shortage of readers, and it adds a valuable perspective to collections of World War II fiction." *School Library Journal*, starred review "[An] engaging and often moving coming-of-age story. A poignant, thoughtful work." *Kirkus* "This multilayered story [which] cogently explores themes of motherhood and adoptive families is gracefully portrayed." *Publishers Weekly* "My Family for the War is a must-have for young adults. The novel is simultaneously beautiful, touching, and heart wrenching." *VOYA* "This is a solid addition to Holocaust collections, life on the home front during the war, and for discussions of what is a family." *Library Media Connection* review

Anne C. Voorhoeve is an award-winning German novelist and screenwriter. She lives in Berlin, Germany. Tammi Reichel is an instructor of German at the University of Richmond and lives with her family in Virginia.

This book, a great historical/coming-of-age novel for readers of all ages, starts out innocently enough. Ten-year-old Ziska and her friend Bekka, best friends living with their Jewish families in Berlin, are practicing their 'survival plan,' part of which involves jumping from Ziska's third-floor bedroom window into the branches of a tree. The tone darkens quickly, with the hateful words of a downstairs neighbor woman, who has no love for Jews. Ziska also endures a savage attack by bullies, but not without giving a little back, then later she watches in horror as the Nazis kick in her family's door, beat her father bloody, and try to apprehend her. She escapes by jumping from her window into the tree. And that's only the beginning. I will not give away more of the plot, except to echo other reviewers who mentioned that the story does not settle for easy answers or pat, happy endings. That said, the book's undercurrent of hope, and Ziska's own unbreakable spirit, will have readers cheering for her.

This is a wonderful, heart -warming book. Set during the time of WWII, it is an accurate depiction of the situation of many Jews at the time. Of course there are tragedies, but there are many joys as well. My entire book group loved this book.

You ride the highs and the lows of this wartime story with the characters. While you know historically

it doesn't end well for many, this story brings to light some of the complicated relationships and happier nuances. A very good read.

A good book reflecting the impact of WW II on families.

This is a very good historical novel, set during the beginning of WWII. Ziska and her family are Christians living in Germany. Her ancestors were Jewish, but her family converted to Christianity 3 generations before. But, when Hitler comes into power and Jews are being rounded up, Ziska and her family are considered Jews and are in danger. Ziska is sent to England at age 11 as part of the Kindertransport program, to live with an English family and escape capture by the Nazis. Her family is in hiding in Germany for quite awhile, and finally escape to Holland. Ziska's foster parents are observant Jews, and she gains a respect for their beliefs and ceremonies. She hopes her family will be able to leave Holland join her in England, or that she will be sent for and join them in Holland. But, she ends up growing up in England, becoming a part of her foster family, and loving them deeply. I won't give details of her story in England, or the circumstances of her reunion with her family. The book is so well-written, I didn't realize it was a YA novel until I was over 2/3 of the way through it! I learned a lot about some programs during WWII that I had been unaware of, and was able to gain perspective from several points of view. Highly recommended!

Preteen Ziska Mangold and her best friend Bekka practice their survival plans - the routes they will take to escape bullies, embolded by the increasingly anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany. Ziska's family is more Christian than Jewish, but that doesn't matter when the persecution begins. As Jews seek safe havens, the Mangolds must decide whether to split up or stay together. "Ziskele" secures a place on a Kindertransport, and the greater part of this well-written book details Ziska (now re-christened Frances) as she adjusts to her life in a London, and her subsequent evacuation to the countryside. I had expected a straightforward story, perhaps with a feel good "happily united" ending, but Voorhoeve didn't take that route. Ziska/Frances does a few things she isn't overly proud of, and the adults aren't perfect either. Her adoptive family is loving, and Frances matures under their care, torn between the new family and friends she comes to love, and her parents and dear Bekka, left behind to an unknown fate. The book is not in any way a "downer" but neither does it take the easy narrative for Ziska/Frances. Suggest to intelligent readers, grades 8 and up. Note: MY FAMILY FOR THE WAR won the ALA's Batchelder Award, awarded to the most outstanding children's book originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and

subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States. About me: I'm a middle school/high school librarian How I got this book: purchased for the library

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