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Behind The Bedroom Wall (Historical Fiction For Young Readers)



Synopsis

It's 1942. Thirteen-year-old Korinna Rehme is an active member of her local Jungmadel, a Nazi youth group, along with many of her friends. She believes that Hitler is helping Germany by instituting a program to deal with what he calls the "Jewish problem," a program that she witnesses as her Jewish neighbors are attacked and taken from their homes. Korinna's parents, however, are members of a secret underground group providing a means of escape to the Jews of their city. Korinna is shocked to discover that they are hiding a refugee family behind the wall of her bedroom. But as she comes to know the family, her sympathies begin to turn. When someone tips off the Gestapo, loyalties are put to the test and Korinna must decide what she really believes and whom she really trusts. Filled with adventure, *Behind the Bedroom Wall* helps readers understand the forces that drove so many to turn on their neighbors and the courage that allowed some to resist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We've all read memoirs and accounts of Jewish suffering during World War 2...but do we know the thoughts and life-changing decisions faced by a "normal" German girl during that time? I would venture to say that many of us don't. Well, here is novel to remedy that situation. "Behind The Bedroom Wall" is the story of 13-year-old Korinna Rehme. Life is fairly simple for her-follow Hitler, hate the Jews, and turn in "traitors" to Germany. She loves her Hitler Youth Meetings, and is safe and secure in the fact that she is a "loyal" German and so are her parents and friends. But then she makes a shocking discovery. What she thought to be the sound of mice behind her bedroom wall is

really Jews, who her parents have decided to hide to keep safe. Korinna is outraged, confused, and afraid. How can "the enemy" be living right next to her? Are her parents evil? What will happen if anyone finds out? Korinna must make the decision-will she turn her parents in to the Nazis or will she take part in her parents' courageous rebellion....??? This book constantly had me asking myself, "What would I do in that situation?" "Would I be strong enough to face persecution and go against a popular view?" Korinna is convincing in her utter normalcy and frightens us into thinking, "Could that be me?" The novel is also suspenseful as we realize that danger faces Korinna no matter which way she chooses. "Behind The Bedroom Wall" is a must-read for any kid (adults might enjoy it, too)and really, really shows us how Hitler succeeded in carrying out the Holocaust.

Imagine that you are a thirteen-year-old girl living in Germany in the forties. This is exactly who Korinna Rehme is. She is a typical German-Hitler youth. She spits at and taunts the Jews and she thinks that Hitler is helping Germany out by getting rid of the "Jewish problem." She is an active member in her local Jungmadel and is brainwashed to think that whatever Hitler says or does is right. She hates Jews, or at least she thinks she does, until she finds out that her parents are hiding two Jews behind her own bedroom wall. Reporting traitors is what she should do, and that's what she is thinking about doing to her parents, until she starts to befriend one of the Jews and then she doesn't know what to do. I really like this book. It helps you to see what was going on in Germany during the reign of Hitler through a child's eye. So read this book and you will be mystified and amazed at how this thirteen-year-old girl handles this situation.

Behind the Bedroom Wall provides a clear view of what happened to the people who didn't have to suffer. All they had to do was be loyal to Germany, and they wouldn't be sent away. This is the story of the people who were brave enough to put their own lives in danger for justice. It is a story to help us all understand the madness and courage it took for these people to see beyond their own lives and to question and understand what was really going on during this horrible time-World War II. Korinna Rehme is a thirteen-year old girl who is a faithful German. She is part of a Nazi Youth group called the Jungmadel. She had been taught that when all the Jews had been gotten rid of, Hitler will make Germany once again a powerful country. And why shouldn't she believe him? The activities she does at their Youth Group involve helping the elderly and poor, going on hikes, and other fun things. All they have to do is be loyal and report anyone who was being the least bit un-German. This is Korinna's world, until she discovers that her own parents are hiding Jews behind her own bedroom wall. This knowledge sends Korinna's life spinning out of control and everything she ever

learned seen in a new light. What is Korinna to do? She faces serious internal conflicts as she debates whether or not to turn her parents in and who to trust. I thought this book was okay. It is easy to comprehend, but I liked *If I Should Die Before I Wake* and *The Devil's Arithmetic* much better and would recommend that you should read those books first.

Behind the Bedroom Wall AUTHOR: Williams, Laura E. PUB/DATE: Scholastic Inc., 1996
SUMMARY: Korinna, an eleven year old girl, who is also a loyal member of the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany, along with her two best friends, Eva and Rita. She is appalled to discover that her parents are hiding a Jewish family right there behind her own bedroom wall. Aren't Jews a disgrace to the Fatherland? What if the authorities find out? Should she report her parents as traitors, as she has been taught to do?
CHARACTERS: Korinna- loyal to Hitler, desensitized to hate and discrimination, conscious of right and wrong, seems confused in the beginning, but realizes the truth in the end. Rita- brainwashed by Hitler and her brother who is a member of the Gestapo, seems to have lost respect for other humans, insensitive towards acts of hate and prejudices. Eva- is reluctant to succumb to the ways and ideas of Hitler, sensitive and respectful toward all humans, isn't afraid to show and express her concern for the Jews. Frau Rheme (Korinna's mother)- unselfish, willing to help the Jews, a good role model for Mary Elizabeth, supports what is right.
SPECIAL NOTE FOR THE TEACHERS: This book would be an excellent resource as a supplemental aid for a history lesson. Junior high students could certainly relate to the feelings and attitude of Korinna. They will gain a greater appreciation for what the Jews experienced during the Holocaust. Teachers can also discuss hate and prejudices while reading the story.
ON A SPECIAL NOTE: I enjoyed this book for its realistic portrayal of the Jews during the Holocaust. I felt that Korinna's attitude and feelings were accurate as to how anyone would handle feeling betrayed by their parents. However in the end she becomes supportive of what is right and true.

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