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The Watcher



Synopsis

After Wendy is kidnapped, the only way she can survive World War II Germany is with the help of a special dog and the family she never knew she had in this historically accurate, standalone companion to *Shadows on the Sea* that Kirkus Reviews calls "a stimulating blend of suspense and history." 1942. Berlin, Germany. How did Wendy end up in such a place? Just a few months ago, she was enjoying her time in Maine, supporting the American war effort. But she was kidnapped, then betrayed by her own mother, who is actually a Nazi spy. As a new Berliner "and now a German" Wendy is expected to speak in a language she's never known and support a cause she doesn't believe in. There are allies, though, among the Germans. Allies who have been watching over Wendy since she arrived. And Wendy, along with her new German shepherd puppy, must confront them. If only she can find them. Her life depends on it.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 680 (What's this?)

Paperback: 304 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars "See all reviews" (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #336,259 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 in "Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust" #259 in "Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars" #290 in "Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe"

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Full review: I'm something of a World War II buff, so I was excited to read the synopsis for *The Watcher*. The idea of a girl who ends up on the wrong side of enemy lines in World War II - though, not without good reason - absolutely intrigued me beyond belief. Joan Harlow (re)introduces readers to Wendy Taylor*, a young fourteen-year-old American girl who finds out that her Aunt Adrie is

actually her mother. She agrees to return to Germany with her mother, without actually considering the full ramifications of that decision. But once she's there, Wendy quickly realizes that her decision may have been made in haste. She doesn't speak the language; she finds herself not agreeing with the decisions of the Nazi government; and she's also distressed to see how anyone who doesn't fit into the new Nazi belief system is bullied and persecuted by those who do. Harlow's premise is compelling, and it's easy for readers to immediately feel the challenges that Wendy experiences when adapting both to a new life, but also to a new ideology. Many of the opportunities that she once took for granted in the States - e.g. listening to whatever she wanted on the radio - are forbidden in her new country, and readers will undoubtedly sympathize with Wendy's frustrations as she tries to justify a new way of thinking. Readers will undoubtedly also appreciate Wendy's persistence at trying to fit in. While her attempts are partially driven from a desire to please her mother, Harlow makes it clear that Wendy's efforts are also spurred by her own curiosity. She's willing to take on new challenges and new opportunities, and it's this innate curiosity that helps open her eyes to the realities of what's going on in Germany.

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