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The Year Of Goodbyes: A True Story Of Friendship, Family And Farewells



Synopsis

Like other girls, Jutta Salzberg enjoyed playing with friends, going to school, and visiting relatives. In Germany in 1938, these everyday activities were dangerous for Jews. Jutta and her family tried to lead normal lives, but soon they knew they had to escape-if they could, before it was too late. Throughout 1938, Jutta had her friends and relatives fill her poesiealbum-her autograph book-with inscriptions. Her daughter, Debbie Levy, used these entries as a springboard for telling the story of the Salzberg family's last year in Germany. It was a year of change and chance, confusion and cruelty. It was a year of goodbyes. Praise for *The Year of Goodbyes* * "Artfully weaving together her mother's poesiealbum (autograph/poetry album), diary, and her own verse, Levy crafts a poignant portrait of her Jewish mother's life in 1938 Nazi Germany that crackles with adolescent vitality." -Publishers Weekly, starred review * "poignant and chilling . . . [a]n immensely powerful experience ." -Kirkus Reviews, starred review * "An outstanding and emotionally taut read for children...." -School Library Journal, starred review "This would work effectively as an introductory class readaloud to the era, and it would appeal to readers who like their friendship tales grounded in history and truth." -Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Told through the actual diary /autograph book entries of Levy's mother from 1938, *Year of Goodbyes* is a heartbreaking look through the eyes of a young Jewish girl at the days leading up to the Holocaust. The entries were touching enough; however, Levy's follow-up research concerning what happened to everyone else mentioned in the days after the entries is chilling and what really

hits the reader. A well-researched book that would be an excellent companion to Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl in the classroom, or a stand alone.

Very interesting and enjoyable in the words of a young lady; also sad as not all will survive the war. The maturity of these Jewish children under duress amazed me. Would we, could we as spoiled Americans do as well?

Debbie Levy's mother is the girl in this true story who, in the tradition of German girls in the 1930's, had a memory book in which she collected poems, wishes, and autographs of her classmates and family in the memorable year of 1938. Because of terrible events fast unfolding for Jews, Debbie's mother and family barely escaped from Germany hours before they would have been rounded up by the Gestapo. Debbie's mother kept her memory book all through the years and it is amplified with photos as well as a follow-up years later when she was able to be reunited with some of her friends who survived World War II. This is History in action.... girls of today will find that girls back in the 1930's would still have so much in common with one another.....this is a real way to understand History from a unique perspective.

I was fortunate to have attended the Annapolis Book Festival in April as a panelist on the subject: Young Adult: Keeping It Real. I was even more fortunate to be on the panel with Debbie Levy, author of The Year of Goodbyes, who explained how she decided to write the Year of Goodbyes using the format she did. The book is about her young Jewish mother living in Nazi Germany, but Levy tells the story through in verse, based on entries in her mother's "posiealbum," a book in which friends record thoughts, poems, and creative postings. Levy also used her mother's personal diary entries and interviews and research to create this real story. I found this book fascinating and her approach most interesting. Although the subject is difficult, Levy treats it with great dignity and respect. The author's choices of which entries to include paint a true picture of an 11-year-old's wonderings about things in life she doesn't completely understand at that age, and some that she does. And Levy helps the rest of us with a glimpse into a life that most of us, at all ages, will never comprehend. I highly recommend The Year of Goodbyes for people of all ages; Levy keeps it real through the generations.

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