



Yellow Star

Written by Jennifer Roy

Marshall Cavendish, 2006, 227 pp.

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Using free verse poetry, Jennifer Roy presents a remarkable story of childhood innocence, courage, and hope during the Holocaust. With a season by season timeline of World War II events and the Nazi Regime, this gripping retelling of Jewish survival is unforgettable.

Sylvia Perlmutter, Roy's aunt, is one of the twelve child survivors who emerge from the Lodz, Poland ghetto. Beginning each section with a brief synopsis of the new year's occurrences, Roy does an excellent job of revealing what is to come while simultaneously drawing the reader into

Sylvia's story. Sylvia is only four years old when German Nazis invades Poland, sending her family on a journey to Warsaw in search of refuge. Unsuccessful, Sylvia's family returns to Lodz. In February of 1940 the Perlmutter family is relocated from their apartment into the ghetto. With six years of worries ranging from getting shot with no reasonable explanation, being called to board a train headed towards "a better arrangement," starvation, freezing to death, and being buried alive, Sylvia's life is a true testament of courage.

As the war progresses so does the diminishing number of ghetto inhabitants. Isaac Perlmutter, Sylvia's father, is a quick witted man with acute observation skills. He outmaneuvers the Nazi guards and is the saving grace for several families. On January 19, 1945 Sylvia awakens her family because of bombing and they flee to the ghetto courtyard where they are met by others in hiding. As the smoke disperses, Russian soldiers on horseback ride in to greet the crowd. Due to the stars of David patched on their clothing, the Jewish Russian major who was ordered to demolish the entire camp abandons those orders to rescue the lone survivors. The Perlmutter family along with Isaac's brother, his wife, and their son were seven of approximately 800 Jewish survivors liberated from the Lodz ghetto.

As the niece of the narrator within the story, Jennifer Roy has the connection of being a Jew and the personal insights of Sylvia. The authenticity of this novel is supported with a timeline of events between 1939-1945— before, during, and after World War II. *Yellow Star* and *Daniel Half Human: and the Good Nazi* by David Chotjewitz (2004) note the same occurrences for each year. *Daniel Half Human* would be an excellent novel to pair with *Yellow Star* in a Holocaust study. Chotjewitz offers dual perspectives through a German Nazi soldier and his best friend who is half Jewish. Although many individuals revel in the retribution that Jews received after liberation when most of National Socialist (Nazi) Party were imprisoned, killed, or committed suicide, Chotjewitz made me debate whether to blame the German soldier in *Daniel Half Human* for treating his friend in that manner in order to save his life. How does one define selfishness and compassion? These two novels offer different outlooks on the Holocaust, one based on surviving as a Jew and the other surviving as a German.

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