



Eleanor's Story: An American Girl in Hitler's Germany

By Eleanor Ramrath Garner

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A COMPELLING AND EVOCATIVE story that immerses readers in the daily struggles of surviving World War II. Eleanor's Story is the dramatic autobiography of Eleanor Ramrath Garner's youth, growing up as an American caught in World War II Berlin. It's a story of trying to maintain stability, hope, and identity in a world of terror and contrasts. During the Great Depression, when she is nine, Eleanor's family moves from her beloved America to Germany, where her father has been offered a good job. But war breaks out as her family is crossing the Atlantic, and they cannot return to the United States. Eleanor tries to maintain her American identity as she feels herself pulled into the turbulent life roiling around her. She fervently hopes for an Allied victory, yet for years she must try to survive the Allied bombs shattering her neighborhood. Her family faces separations, bombings, hunger, the final fierce battle for Berlin, the Russian invasion, and the terrors of Soviet occupancy. This compelling story immerses us in the daily struggles of surviving World War II as a civilian. It puts a very human face on the horrors of war and helps us understand that each casualty of war is a person, not a number.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 6-8-When the author was nine, her parents elected to return to their native Germany, where her father had been offered an attractive job. Though it was 1939 and Hitler had already invaded Czechoslovakia, her family saw only opportunity in their decision. While they were crossing the Atlantic, war was declared and their emigration became irrevocable. Garner was not to see America again until she was 16. The family members spent much of the war in Berlin and suffered hardships and privations and lived in fear. Yet, it is to Garner's credit that she does not make them out to be more heroic than they were. They escaped bombs, bullets, conscription, malnutrition, and molestation. Every member of her immediate family survived the war. This required considerable resourcefulness, occasional bravery, and an extraordinary amount of luck. It is curious that when the author was 13, she stumbled upon the concentration camp at Waldenburg, but didn't mention it to her mother. She says that she wondered, "What is this place?-A prison camp? Who are these people? Are they the ones who work in the factory?" Even as an adult writing this memoir, she doesn't confront the truth that this was a concentration camp. The writing is pedestrian and somewhat dry and the characters are memorable only for their ordinariness and pettiness. Still, this is a unique survival story that libraries may want to own.

Miriam Lang Budin, Chappaqua Public Library, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

One of Garner's haunting childhood memories is the sound of knocking coming from the rubble of newly bombed buildings in Berlin, where she and her family spent the war years. She feared the sound was from doomed victims signaling for help, which could not get to them in time. In this stunning memoir, Garner tells the survival story of civilians in Hitler's Germany, desperately hoping to avoid the wrath of the Gestapo during the war, then facing the cruelty of the postwar Russian occupation. On the eve of World War II, Garner's German-born parents went against the advice of family members and emigrated from New Jersey to Berlin with their two school-age children to enable Mr. Ramrath to take a tantalizing, two-year job offer. Readers follow Eleanor's difficult adjustment to German classrooms, her close and supportive relationship with her slightly older brother, Frank, and her loving but often strained relationship with her parents. As the political scene worsens, the family is plunged into horror, and two years stretches to seven. Not being supporters of Hitler or the Nazi Party, the Ramraths and non-Jewish citizens like them had to be constantly on guard against suspicions of disloyalty. They are dimly aware of the larger Holocaust unfolding around them. This powerful coming-of-age tale is told with intensity and also the freshness of teenage years remembered: there are repeated brutal bombings and countless brushes with death; there are also friends, holiday celebrations, and two babies born to the family during the war, who engage Eleanor's love and protection. There's also a much anticipated return to the U.S. It all coalesces into a must-have memoir about an aspect of wartime survival not often written about in children's literature. *Anne O'Malley*

Review

This powerful coming-of-age tale is told with intensity and also with the freshness of teenage years remembered: there are repeated brutal bombings and countless brushes with death; there are also friends, holiday celebrations, and two babies born to the family during the war, who engage Eleanor's love and protection. There's also a much anticipated return to the U. S. It all coalesces into a must-have memoir about an aspect of wartime survival not often written about in children's literature. - Booklist (starred review) --

Booklist

This memoir is outstanding. More than just a chronicle of dates and places, it shows the author to be a sensitive and intelligent woman with a gift for recalling her fears, childhood conflicts, triumphs, and losses. There is an immediacy and power in her recollections. Her exchanges with a harsh, sometimes cruel father are of particular interest. We can be thankful that she chose to relive painful memories and share this story. - VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) --VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Irma Kellner:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they undertaking activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing same thing every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the guide untitled Eleanor's Story: An American Girl in Hitler's Germany can be fine book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

James Buscher:

The actual book Eleanor's Story: An American Girl in Hitler's Germany has a lot info on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was authored by the very famous author. The author makes some research previous to write this book. This specific book very easy to read you will get the point easily after perusing this book.

Dwight Bailey:

This Eleanor's Story: An American Girl in Hitler's Germany is great reserve for you because the content which is full of information for you who else always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it details accurately using great coordinate word or we can point out no rambling sentences inside it. So if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but challenging core information with attractive delivering sentences. Having Eleanor's Story: An American Girl in Hitler's Germany in your hand like finding the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous 1. We can say that no e-book that offer you world inside ten or fifteen minute right but this book already do that. So , this is certainly good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt that?

Elmo Bragg:

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