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Hidden Child



Synopsis

A powerful story of survival, loss, and hope. Isaac was seven when the Germans invaded France and his life changed forever. First his father was taken away, and then, two years later, Isaac and his mother were arrested. Hoping to save Isaac's life, his mother bribed a guard to take him to safety at a nearby hospital, where he and many other children pretended to be sick, with help from the doctors and nurses. But this proved a temporary haven. As Isaac was shuttled from city to countryside, experiencing the kindness of strangers, and sometimes their cruelty, he had to shed his Jewish identity to become Jean Devolder. But he never forgot who he really was, and he held on to the hope that after the war he would be reunited with his parents. After more than fifty years of keeping his story to himself, Isaac Millman has broken his silence to tell it in spare prose, vivid composite paintings, and family photos that survived the war.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 15 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 4-8 Millman briefly describes his life in prewar Paris, the Nazi invasion when he was seven, and his father's arrest. Two years later, he and his mother made a daring attempt to escape from the city, but were apprehended. After a desperate exchange of jewels and money, Isaac's mother arranged to have him removed from the deportation line and sent to a hospital. Later, he was brought back to Paris, where he was abandoned. Confused and scared, he

was discovered by another Jew, who took him to gentile friends in the countryside, where he was hidden openly, living as a Christian with a new name. Millman tells his story in a straightforward, yet compelling voice, mindful of both the cruelty and kindness of the strangers he encountered. He never forgot his parents, yet was able to live as any child, making friends and attending school. Dense text pages are with occasional black-and-white photos alternate with double-page montage paintings in which Millman presents images that emphasize his fears, emotions, and reactions to the events he describes. Muted colors work together with bolder tints to highlight the intensity of life. Bright blues depict the prewar vitality of Paris versus dark reds for the German deportation roundups. Despite the horror of losing most of his family, the author expresses his gratitude for his salvation and his eventual adoption by an American Jewish family at age 15. An inspiring and powerful view of this tragic period in human history.

Rita Soltan, Youth Services Consultant, West Bloomfield, MI Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review Gr. 4-7. Like Poole's *Anne Frank*, below, this picture-book biography focuses on a young person hidden during the Holocaust--but this child survived. Children's author-illustrator Millman (born Isaac Sztrymfman), whose works include *Moses Goes to a Concert* (1998), tells his own story in a lengthy, straightforward narrative, illustrated with occasional black-and-white photos salvaged from the past and haunting line-and-watercolor pictures that reflect what Millman cannot forget. The author neither exploits the terror nor sentimentalizes the escape. Framed by the general history of persecution, the facts of his personal odyssey are astonishing. His family fled from Poland to France before the war, but after the German invasion, his parents were taken away. A woman, Hena, found him, then age nine, sitting on a Paris sidewalk. She took him in, concealed his Jewish identity (and her own), and watched over him while he hid in various homes, both kind and vicious, until after the war, when an American family adopted him. Millman's telling is quiet, but his understated art reveals terrible memories, including the wrenching images of Papa waving good-bye from behind barbed wire and Mama bribing a prison guard to take him away. This poignant account is a must for the Holocaust curriculum, and it will grab readers older than the target audience--including adults. Hazel Rochman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This book is great. I read it with my son each year for Holocaust Remembrance Day. The voice of the author really translates a child's perspective. It's full of small details that kids relate to, such as

presents received for holidays, and the small set of images that really stick in the child's mind. I highly recommend this book as an introduction or illustrative story about the Holocaust. It's quite serious, but not particularly graphic.

A very powerful and exquisite book. I recommend this book to all middle school educators. It would do well on a summer reading list. The book is moving and empowering. The hidden children are often an overlooked part of high school Holocaust studies. This book speaks volumes about human nature, from the couple who took him in, a Hidden Jewish child, to exploit a slave like labor, to the people who really helped him survive. Isaac Millman's description of the changes in his life from the perspective of the child that he was during the is moving and informative. This is a courageous book. I recommend it to All. Also, the artwork is stellar. Very moving on so many levels.

Hidden Child is a stirring and amazingly-illustrated Holocaust memoir by Isaac Millman. Isaac was born Isaac Sztrymfman, the only child of his parents, and when he was seven, his life altered irrevocably. The Nazis invaded France and the Jews began to feel the effects of Nazi persecution - their freedoms were taken away, and not long after Isaac's father is taken away and soon deported to Auschwitz (though at the time Isaac and his mom had no idea of this). Isaac's mom realizes that they too will soon be deported so she makes arrangements for Isaac to be taken to a hospital where sick children are treated, despite the fact that Isaac is perfectly healthy. This is the last time Isaac sees his mother. Thus begins Isaac's life as a hidden child - he gets shunted from one place to another, but luckily for Isaac there are kind people such as Hena and Madame Devore who look out for and after him. Isaac's story is not only told in the form of a narrative but also in beautiful watercolor pictures depicting the main scenes from each chapter, portraying pivotal moments of Isaac's life during the war years. This is an excellent educational resource for the classroom and a recommended title for library collections.

What a fascinating story - our youngest brought it home from grade school and - at first - we were concerned that the content may be too disturbing. However, for us at least, Millman writes and presents in a gentle style that seems to meet the grade-level where he/she is "at." Though the book is well written and illustrated, the merit of this work goes beyond; a sobering reminder that life can have cruelties far beyond our comforts. Millman writes without anger, without malice - he states his story in a voice that shows he understands the simplicity of a child's perception. Parents can be confident in this book, but it fairly demands some kind of interaction - be it discussion or reading the

book directly to the child. Lastly, though the book may be at-home in a school library, this is also a book to have for home in that I suspect it's one that would be read, re-read and re-read again over the years...Good book.

Isaac Millman tells the true story of his youth spent in hiding from the Nazis in a compelling memoir that features his outstanding artwork. We follow young Isaac as he and his parents enter the Free Zone of France, only to find that this is only a respite until the Nazis again intrude. Isaac's father is taken to a "camp", which he and his mother are allowed to visit once; then disaster falls as he and his mother are rounded up for deportation. How Isaac escapes and is placed in foster homes for the duration of the war is told through Millman's sparse writing and his vivid drawings. As with most Holocaust tales, there is no happy ending, but Millman survives and is able to share his journey with us, and that is all we can ask. This is a splendid book that shows how even the youngest victims of the Holocaust found inner strength. We are privileged to know their stories. Recommended.

During World War II over a million Jewish children were murdered by Nazis: survivors were often those who were in hiding. Author Isaac Millman was one of these children, and his story recounts the kindness of strangers, his move from city to countryside, and how he was forced to shed his Jewish identity to survive. After the war he kept his story to himself: fifty years later it's told, in Hidden Child's series of black and white photos and first-person memoir for grades 5-8.

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