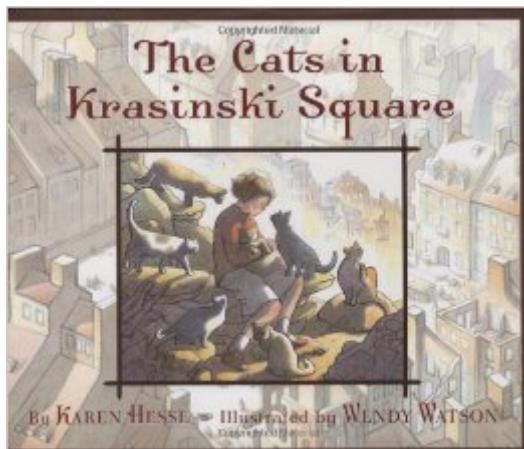


The book was found

The Cats In Krasinski Square



Synopsis

Newbery medalist Karen Hesse tells a harrowing, true story about life in the Warsaw Ghetto during WWII. When Karen Hesse came upon a short article about cats out-foxing the Gestapo at the train station in Warsaw during WWII, she couldn't get the story out of her mind. The result is this stirring account of a Jewish girl's involvement in the Resistance. At once terrifying and soulful, this fictional account, borne of meticulous research, is a testament to history and to our passionate will to survive, as only Newbery Medalist Karen Hesse can write it.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 990L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Press; First Edition edition (September 1, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439435404

ISBN-13: 978-0439435406

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 12.2 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (31 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #245,183 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust

Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

Customer Reviews

I've always been a bit skittish about fictionalizing events from WWII in children's picture books. When done well (as with Roberto Innocenti's, "Rose Blanche") it can be a heartfelt way of teaching children about horrific events. When done poorly (as with Carmen Agra Deedy's magnificently insulting/patronizing, "The Yellow Star") it can turn you off of historical picture book fiction completely. Now in the case of Karen Hesse's, "The Cats In Krasinski Square", the story is based on real events the author read in a short article. After researching the event and meticulously making sure she would cite what she changed and what she didn't, Hesse wrote this one-of-a-kind book. It tells the tale of a Jewish girl during WWII and the ways in which stray cats became heroes in their own right. A girl sits on a heap of rubble surrounded by cats. It's Warsaw and the girl has escaped the Jewish ghetto to live hidden in plain sight with her sister. So many Jews had to leave

their homes and abandon their pets, that the cats have no one to love them anymore. Says the girl, " 'I have no food to spare'. The cats don't care". She loves them and that's all that they need at this time. Heading home again, the girl and her older sister are to participate in a plan to smuggle food to the people of the ghetto. Yet before they do they're told that the supplies coming in on the next train are in danger. Somehow the Gestapo have discovered the plan and are waiting with dogs at the station to sniff out the smugglers. It's the little girl who comes up with a way to lead the dogs astray and give the smugglers the chance they'll need to escape. And all thanks to a basketload of cats. As an author, Hesse is probably better known for her verse novels than her picture books.

They know I can offer only a gentle hand, a tender voice. They have no choice but to come. They belonged once to someone. They slept on sofa cushions and ate from crystal dishes. They purred, furrowing the chest, nuzzling the chins of their beloveds. Thus begins this amazing work by Karen Hess and illustrated by Wendy Watson. This story was taken from a small article the author read concerning the cats of the Warsaw Ghetto during the take-over by the German Army, April 1943. A young Jewish Girl and her sister have escaped the fate suffered by so many, only because they could pass for "Polish," and were able to avoid being confined to this area in Warsaw. They were able to smuggle food to those trapped on the other side. Having problems finding food for themselves, a plan was made to bring food in from outside the city. Somehow the Gestapo found out about these plans and made their own plans to capture those who were trying to bring the food in. The young girl, her sister, and others gathered the now stray cats from Krasinski Square, secreted them in bundles and were waiting at the station when the smugglers brought the bundles of food into the station. At just the moment when the Gestapo closed in with their dogs, the people released the cats and in the pandemonium which followed the people were able to escape with their food bundles. My goodness, what a lovely work, used to tell of such a horrible even in our history. The author's flawless use of simple free verse is most effective in this case. The artist's light, almost glowing use of the brush and color adds almost a surrealistic feel to such a dark event. To be frank, I cannot remember reading anything quite like this work.

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