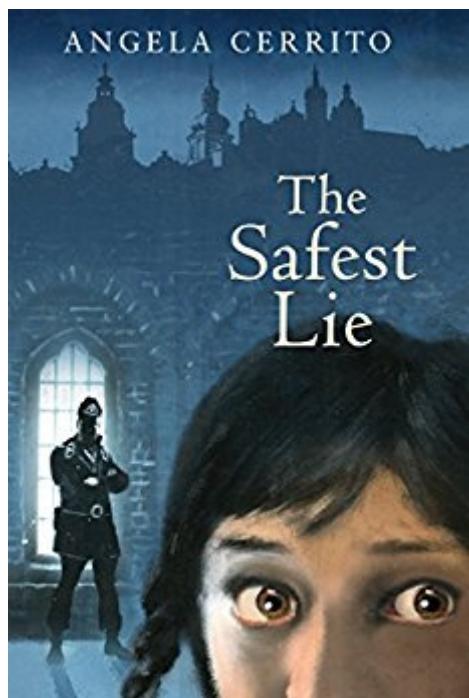


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The Safest Lie



Synopsis

Nine-year-old Anna Bauman is one of the Jewish children who Jolanta (code name for the real-life World War II Resistance spy Irena Sendler) smuggles out of the Warsaw ghetto. Anna, given a new name and false papers, must keep her true identity secret, first at a Catholic orphanage and then with a foster family. Ironically, she discovers that the most difficult part isn't remembering her new identity, but trying not to forget the old one. Anna's story, suspenseful and deeply moving, sheds light on yet another aspect of the Holocaust: rescued children who lost not only their loved ones, but their very identities and Jewish heritage.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Ever since I was 10 years old and I read the Diary of Anne Frank, I've not been able to stay away from Holocaust stories. I always prefer a survival story but I also realize that for every one of these, countless others have died. I learned about Angela's book many years ago when she won an SCBWI grant to conduct research in Poland on Irena Sendler.

Her story is woven into the fictional story of a young Jewish girl, Anna Bauman, who is smuggled out of the ghetto with a fake identity. She learns to behave like a good little Catholic girl, never forgetting that she is Jewish. THE SAFEST LIE is a fast-paced book (just look at that suspenseful cover), covering four years of Anna's life, from the time Jolanta (alias of Irena Sendler) meets with Anna's parents to the various safe houses and convent that Anna goes to, until she settles with a foster family who love her unreservedly. But danger lurks everywhere and it is a miracle her true identity is not discovered. The ending is heart-rending. Once the war is over, the children are returned to their families. Most do not survive the ghetto because they've been taken to death camps. For the children who were babies when they were smuggled out, all they know is the Catholic faith, so it is a shock to learn they are Jewish. Angela Cerrito is a powerful writer who bears witness to the trials of these children and the many people who took great risks to save them. Thank you so much for writing this book, Angela. This is the second book I've read that addresses the retention of religious identity during an adoption (the first was *Rory's Promise*). In the case of these Jewish children, it was impossible to place the children with Jewish families since they were all in the ghetto. So they had to learn how to behave like Catholics. Anna, being older (she is nine in the beginning of the book) remembers her parents and particularly her grandmother's Yiddish sayings. She embraces the Catholic faith and at the end, knows how easy it would be for her to forget the faith of her people, but she doesn't. She hangs on. Read and share THE SAFEST LIE with your children. A mature 8-year-old can handle this but I would wait until the child is 10 if the child is sensitive. But know that this book focuses more on the goodness of people's hearts rather than the evil.

This is an excellent book for preteens and teens. Actually, this is an excellent book for adults. Many books (fiction and nonfiction) about the holocaust focus on the horrors of war and the horrible crimes that were committed against the Jews and other marginalized groups. And, while Cerrito doesn't gloss over those horrors, she doesn't go into gory detail, making this book appropriate for younger readers than would normally be reading about such a sobering subject. Through Anna, Cerrito explores a little-known consequence of the holocaust—lost identities. Some Jewish children were able to live through that horrible time, hidden in plain sight, but their salvation came at a cost. Not only did they (often) lose their family members, they lost themselves. Though Anna is fictional, Cerrito did a wonderful job recreating what life must have been like for many of these children. As I read about

Anna's experience, I was overwhelmed by empathy and gratitude for everything I have.

I'm familiar with the courageous woman who, along with a vast network of resistance fighters, saved the lives of 2500+ Jewish children in Poland during WWII. This novel allows readers to experience the horrifying reality of those times through the life of a young Jewish girl. In doing so abstract numbers and reports are personalized, allowing readers to imagine living the same experiences. Young Anna's experience was less traumatic than some, but even so she lived with constant fear, loneliness, and secrecy. Combine this with countless other fiction and nonfiction titles of Europe in WWII to generate intense and reflective discussions, generate research, and inspire further reading.

We received our book "The Safest Lie" last night from . I have been waiting for our home school history unit to reach this point. I curled up on this cold wet morning and read the entire book. I have been chewing on some of the words all day. Auntie's words from page 41 resonate with layers of compassion, understanding, and wisdom. All over the world we see tragedy and aggression, but in this book we are gifted time and again with the heroes, the ordinary people who risked everything. This book was a heart safe read for my very tender hearted children and yet explored one of our darkest hours.

This story draws the reader in. It makes you cry and cheer and want to be with Anna through her journey. This complex story is told in a simple and easy to read fashion that pulls the reader into another time and place. The author allows the reader to see the war through the eyes of the innocent children, the families and the heroes who sacrificed so much. Great read filled with action, emotion and suspense.

I loved this story of a Polish child who was rescued from the Nazis during WWII. It's an easy read but I learned a lot and I couldn't put it down. Big thumbs up.

wonderful book; so glad I ordered it.

Excellent book

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