

MY BROTHER'S SECRET BY DAN SMITH


SYNOPSIS


My Brother's Secret explores the moral dilemma faced by a young boy who is desperate to find into his nation's ideal of being a patriotic German.

Twelve year old Karl Friedmann is a proud member of the Deutsches Jungvolk, a group for German boys too young to join the Hitler Youth. They are trained to be fit and fearless so they can one day fight for the Fuhrer. At home, Karl's older brother Stefan, tells him that he does not have to wear a uniform to be a good German. Karl accuses Stefan of being a coward because he left school so he would not have to join the Hitler Youth. On his twelfth birthday, Karl's family receives a telegram informing them their father has died in action in Russia. Their mother, Hannah, collapses in shock. Stefan decides to go and get their grandparents, Opa and Oma. When Stefan puts on his jacket, Karl notices a white flower embroidered on the inside pocket. He questions Stefan about it, but Stefan tells Karl to forget about it. Oma and Opa bring everyone to their home in Cologne. Karl wants to join the local school and the town's Deutsches Jungvolk troop but Stefan tells him that Opa and Oma want to keep him home for some time. They want him to think about his involvement with the Nazi "stuff".

In Cologne, Karl meets a new friend, Lisa Herz, and she encourages Karl to think more deeply about the Deutsches Jungvolk, about Hitler, and about the war. Karl begins to see things differently, but his curiosity leads him to wonder about the white flower embroidered inside his brother's jacket. When he asks Oma and Opa about it, they refuse to tell him what it means, and they warn Stefan not to let anyone else see it. Karl is convinced that the flower means something, and that it is connected to the anti-Nazi graffiti on the walls in town. He is determined to find out more, but his curiosity leads him and his new friend, Lisa, towards a deadly confrontation with Gerhard Wolff, the local Gestapo officer.

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Children's Bookseller's Choice July 2013

Shortlisted for the Coventry Inspiration Book Award 2015

Shortlisted for Teach Primary New Children's Fiction Award 2015

USBBY Outstanding International Book 2016



'Rich in detail, this is a thought-provoking story.' JULIA ECCLESHARE

'GREAT READ – you won't be disappointed. I have read a Dan Smith book before and his detailed writing style continues into this book ... I would give this book 5 stars.' ROSE HEATHCOTE (AGE 15), LOVEREADING4KIDS

'What a wonderful book! It was exciting and very frightening in parts but I really enjoyed the adventure.' AMIE COFFMAN (AGE 10), LOVEREADING4KIDS

'My Brothers Secret is a gripping novel that will make you want to stay up late and finish it. Ten out of ten ... it was as though the book had sprouted arms and was never letting me put it down.' STUART PHILPOT (AGE 10), LOVEREADING4KIDS

'A perceptive book to make you think, which gives an excellent insight into life in Germany during the war and the way people felt and reacted.' PARENTS IN TOUCH ONLINE

'I really wasn't let down; it was a really enjoyable book, with lots of twists, and packed with emotion ... I really loved Dan Smith's writing. The plot was pretty unpredictable, and the last few chapters were so action-packed and shocking, I couldn't put the book down ... I'll definitely be looking out for Dan Smith's other title, My Friend the Enemy, now!' THE BIBLIOMANIAC blog

'My Brother's Secret by Dan Smith is a thought-provoking adventure that considers the German perspective. The Edelweiss Pirates were an anti-Nazi group whose views it is important for young people today to be aware of.' ARMADILLO MAGAZINE

'I really did enjoy following Karl and learning about his views, opinions and feelings throughout the book. I thought these were beautifully portrayed in the story. I could visualise the narrative and see what was happening through the character's eyes ... take a copy off the bookshelves to read as you will not be disappointed.' MR RIPLEY'S ENCHANTED BOOKS blog



'My Brother's Secret is a well-written page-turner and a must for both boys and girls aged 10 and over. Adult readers will learn something too. Highly recommended.' HISTORICAL NOVEL SOCIETY

'The quiet themes of patriotism, courage, and compassion are presented through believable characters, gripping suspense, and an un inching look at the lengths some will go to in order to retain control ... A heartfelt look at coming of age in a time of war.'
KIRKUS REVIEWS (USA)

'I thought that this was a really good book for someone who likes history. You really felt like you were in the middle of Nazi Germany.' TEEN TITLES

'An exciting novel with compelling characters for those interested in historical ction and Nazi Germany.' SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL (USA)

'My Brother's Secret weaves a heart-stopping tale that doesn't avoid the overt brutality and subtle coercion present in Nazi Germany. Young readers will learn a great deal from this up-close and personal story.' BOOK PAGE (USA)

'a well-written, well-researched, eye-opening, gripping novel with a lot of appeal.' The Children's War

