

age, such parents may want tracts for their times rather than literature. Little's novel *is* literature, a gentle story that acknowledges complexity and pain in intercultural and family relationships but that celebrates connectedness rather than conflict.

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## REMEMBERING YOUTH IN THE HOLOCAUST

**A Friend Among Enemies: The Incredible Story of Arie van Mansum in the Holocaust.** Janet Keith. Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1991. 163 pp., cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55041-045-8, 1-55041-067-9. **Tell No One Who You Are: The Hidden Childhood of Régine Miller.** Walter Buchignani. Tundra, 1994. 186 pp., \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-286-7.

Fritz Freilich, "to me Arie was a hero without a gun; he knew no fear and did not shrink from work..."  
*A Friend Among Enemies* 51

*Tell no one who you are*, Régine said to herself and pressed her fingers tightly into her palms.  
*Tell No One Who You Are* 112

Remembering our youth is never a simple story. Remembering a war-torn youth during the Holocaust is particularly complex, but especially so when the memories belong to Hitler's victims. Although these two holocaust narratives are based on the complex life stories of people who were youths during the war, they are addressed to readers of all ages. Walter Buchignani's narrative is more controlled and unified than Janet Keith's; it may be the better story in the sense that it reads like a novel. Younger readers will appreciate the intense plot that has been constructed by Buchignani, a journalist who interviewed his subject, Régine Miller, for two and a half years. Keith's narrative is more anecdotal, and incorporates segments of letters from the correspondence of Jewish survivors who knew her subject, Arie van Mansum. Both narratives are, however, compelling and historically accurate accounts of the Holocaust and of everyday life during the German occupations. The meaning of "everyday life" is, in this context, unique, horrid and heroic.

Published three years apart, the books are told from completely different points of view whose narratives intersect in time and, occasionally, in place. *A Friend Among Enemies* is narrated from the point of view of a devout Calvinist resistance fighter in the Netherlands; *Tell No One Who You Are* is, on the other hand, told from the point of view of a Jewish child in Belgium, the beloved daughter of hard-working parents, Sana Moszek Miller and Zlata Miller. Similarly, however, the narratives are reported to Canadian writers by the children who have become the adults who have survived the war and concentration camps, and settled in Canada. Arie van Mansum, born in 1920 in Utrecht, grew up in Maastricht, close to the German border. Régine Miller was born in Brussels in 1932 of Polish immigrant parents. Van Mansum was reunited with his family in Maastricht in April, 1945; Miller's family died in Auschwitz, a fact that was not confirmed until 1982 when German SS files were published and the family's names (and numbers) became

public information. Régine Miller survived the war because her parents had arranged for her to be cared for by other families, and because she follows the edict on which the book is titled, "tell no one who you are" (112). Van Mansum survived partly because he was not Jewish and, in spite of his underground activities and subsequent imprisonment and incarceration in a transit camp, he always managed to escape the worst fate. Van Mansum now lives in Ottawa; Miller lives in Montreal. Although twelve years younger than van Mansum, Miller, like van Mansum, remembers childhood with both painful longing and enormous faith. Both survivors also acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of righteous individuals who risked their lives to protect Jewish children and others during the war, including the men and women in the Communist movements in both Holland and Belgium.

The sorrow in Régine Miller's narrative is, at so many moments, heartbreaking; there is such poignancy in the language, in the careful construction of chapters and in the sharp reconstruction of time and events, that it is difficult to read the book at one sitting. It is emotionally easier to read van Mansum's story, less constructed and, in the end, more joyous. But both *Tell No One Who You Are* and *A Friend Among Enemies* are crucially important books; as it is often said, it is we who must never forget. The narratives of survivors assist different generations in remembering our history, painful and cruel though it is.

The difficulty in recommending these books is in calculating at what age a young reader is subject to the injunction that we must not forget. At what age is the sorrow useful to the cultivation of a mind and soul? In the end, this must remain a personal decision for readers and their families. It seems almost trite to comment that, in addition, *Tell No One Who You Are* and *A Friend Among Enemies* are extremely compelling narratives, for which the writers to whom the heroes narrated deserve some of the credit.

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#### REMEMBERING THE UNIMAGINABLE

**Worse than War: The Halifax Explosion.** M. Pauline Murphy Sutow. Four East Publications, 1992. 42 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-920427-33-2. **Survivors: Children of the Halifax Explosion.** Janet Kitz. Nimbus, 1992. 144 pp., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 1-555109-034-1.

These two books, both presumably published in time for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Halifax Explosion of 1917, represent very different approaches to the event recognized as the largest man-made explosion before Hiroshima. There are presumably a wide variety of ways of approaching this fact and acquainting young readers with the event. These two authors have undertaken their tasks in two very different ways. Initially, adult readers might want