

What is most interesting, to me, is Nelly's development throughout the novel. She evolves from a self-centred teenager who argues with her father, who cannot comprehend a life beyond her friends and her school, into a mature and spunky young woman able to gather the courage to give up all that is important to her, to enter a classroom full of students who refuse to view her as anything other than an immigrant, a "stinking DP" (165). And it is here that the duality that defines Nelly is at its most apparent. The further that Nelly gets away from Hungary, the further that she also she gets away from the person that she has always believed herself to be: "The Hungarian Nelly was always laughing, always doing something important with her friends. This Nelly in the window, this stranger Nelly I had become, felt as if she were floating anchorless, with no school, no friends, no belongings, no home" (107). Strangely, while the reader recognizes Nelly as a stronger individual, Nelly sees herself with much less confidence, much less certainty — her eyes become the Canadian eyes she longs for, and yet that vision allows her only to see herself as different and strange. The novel does end with hope, however. Nelly has a friend and "Canadian clothes" — she has begun a new journey into self-acceptance, into security, and, finally, into a new adolescence.

In *A Place Not Home*, Eva Wiseman draws a strong, vibrant character who demands the Canadian child's understanding of the difficulties that accompany an immigrant's journey into a stigmatized status. It is a learning experience for young readers — to broaden their perspective, to understand what newcomers had to achieve to endure a life of purpose and freedom, and to come to a place where those words mean different things. And yet, while Nelly's emergence into a Canadian adolescent is represented as a personal victory for the character, it must also be regarded as a loss. As readers, we have been taught to love the Hungarian Nelly, and to hope fervently that the spirit and strength that defined her will continue to do so as she begins a life in a place that is finally home.

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A Holocaust Play

Goodbye Marianne. Irene Kirsten Watts. Scirocco Drama, J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1994. 48 pp. ISBN 1-896239-03-X.

This is a moving and evocative one-act play that offers seven brief scenes from the life of a young girl living in Berlin right before World War II. Hitler is

in power, and he has started the discrimination against the Jews. Marianne is about ten years old, and she doesn't really understand why she is not allowed to do things that she has done all her life. We are carried with her, as she learns the consequences of small things like sitting on a bench in the park, or big things like not going to school. Her peers treat her like a dirty animal, and people spit at her in the street. She is told to look at the ground and act invisible when she is in public places.

Her father is in a concentration camp but she does not know it. She believes he is away doing work for his book-selling business. Her mother is very protective because she wants Marianne to stay out of trouble. Marianne thinks her mother is just being a pest. She does meet one boy called Ernst. He is visiting from the country and staying with his aunt (Marianne's landlord). They share a lot of the same interests such as reading and acting out plays. Marianne does not tell him that she is Jewish because she fears that he will not want to be friends with her if he knows. The play closes with sadness when her mother figures that this is no way for a little girl to grow up, so she sends Marianne off to Canada. The story suggests that the Gestapo picks up her mother and we presume that she dies in a concentration camp because Marianne never sees her parents again.

Overall, we really liked the story line. The reader gets to know Marianne and what she cares and thinks about but because the play is short, there is not enough character development of Marianne as a person, in the sense that we never know what her past has been like, and there is little background information about what was at the time going on in Germany and why everyone hated Jews.

The play's author, Irene Kirsten Watts, is not only a playwright but also a storyteller and director, having served as the first Program Director of the very successful Vancouver International Children's Festival. She provides a background to the play, which draws on her own experiences in Germany, and a glossary that offers its own encapsulated history of book-burning and Nuremberg Laws. So while putting on this engaging play would present a powerful experience for actors, student or professional, and audience, the book also offers something more as a reading experience, once the young are encouraged to give "reading" a play a try. It is certainly worth it.

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