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Something Remains



Synopsis

Erich Levi doesn't understand why his father is so gloomy when the Nazis are elected to power. He's too concerned with keeping his grades up, finding time to hang out by the river with his friends, and studying for his bar mitzvah, to worry about politics. But slowly, gradually, things begin to change for Erich. Some of the teachers begin to grade him unfairly "because he's Jewish." The Hitler Youth boys in his class bully him, and he's excluded from sporting events and celebrations. His whole world seems to be crumbling: at school, and at home, where money is tight because no one wants to do business with a Jewish family. Not everyone is so cruel, though, and many of the Levi's friends and neighbors remain fiercely loyal at great risk to themselves. With good people still around, Erich can't believe the situation will last, and stubbornly holds onto his dreams even as his homeland becomes a dangerous and alien place. Inge Barth-Grözinger has brilliantly recreated the life of a Jewish family in a small German town during the Nazi era. *Something Remains* provides, with terrible, everyday detail, an answer to the impossible question: how could the Holocaust have happened?

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

Customer Reviews

Ellwangen, Germany, 1933. Erich Levi is a normal 12-year-old boy. He's a good student, enjoys spending time at the local pool with his two best friends, and is looking forward to his bar mitzvah next year. Slowly, his life begins to change for the worse when the National Socialist Party under the

direction of Adolf Hitler is elected to power. His German teacher ridicules him and accuses him of cheating. The few classmates who will still talk to him, the ones who haven't joined the Hitler Youth, are often torn between what their families and school expect of them and their loyalty to Erich. At home, Erich's father is under a lot of stress from his job. People won't buy his products at the local market, and he worries about supporting his family. Friends are turning into enemies, and family members speak in hushed tones about what might become of the future. Though he faces oppression with determination, Erich's father knows that his beloved housekeeper Fanny speaks the truth: Things are going to get worse for the Jewish people of Germany before they get better. Using real-life events and people (some names have been changed), Inge Barth-Grozinger has recreated a coming-of-age novel that moves from normal to terrifying. The result is something that, if it happened today, might read like a diary. From our outsider's perspective more than 60 years after the end of World War II, it's almost easy for us to follow the progression of events that led to Erich having to sacrifice everything he knew and loved. But we must remember that Erich and his family could not predict the future. This story of a boy who tried to live an ordinary life in an extraordinary, terrible time is both hopeful and saddening.

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