



# Resistance

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## **Resistance** Jennifer A. Nielsen

Chaya Lindner is a teenager living in Nazi-occupied Poland. Simply being Jewish places her in danger of being killed or sent to the camps. After her little sister is taken away, her younger brother disappears, and her parents all but give up hope, Chaya is determined to make a difference. Using forged papers and her fair features, Chaya becomes a courier and travels between the Jewish ghettos of Poland, smuggling food, papers, and even people.

Soon Chaya joins a resistance cell that runs raids on the Nazis' supplies. But after a mission goes terribly wrong, Chaya's network shatters. She is alone and unsure of where to go, until Esther, a member of her cell, finds her and delivers a message that chills Chaya to her core, and sends her on a journey toward an even larger uprising in the works — in the Warsaw Ghetto.

**Though the Jewish resistance never had much of a chance against the Nazis, they were determined to save as many lives as possible, and to live — or die — with honor.**

## **Resistance Details**

Date : Published August 28th 2018 by Scholastic Inc.

ISBN :

Author : Jennifer A. Nielsen

Format : ebook 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, War, World War II, Childrens, Middle Grade, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Resistance for online ebook

### Mikayla says

I was very excited to be the first to get this from my library only a few days after it released.

I love the point of view this book took. I loved zooming into the eyes of Chaya, seeing how hard it would be to watch her world crumbling out from beneath her. The loneliness that was portrayed was so deep rooted I felt it for the characters. I rooted for them all and was hit by the realistic flow of relationships.

I was on the edge of my seat through the last part and feared for all the characters lives.

The only thing that I didn't like was Chaya's rather apathetic view on her beliefs. She is standing for the Jews, but she doesn't really care about her faith. I was expecting this from a secular author, but it was still sad to watch her just brush off everything with a "God will understand."

That conclusion was bittersweet but really good.

Overall, a very good book, but a little weak in her faith.

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### Heidi says

Jennifer Nielsen is one of my favorite authors and she's proved her skill once again. Both her fantasy novels and her historical fiction have provided me with hours of great reading. This book is the story of a young Polish Jewish girl who joins the resistance when she's forced to leave her family. At first the Jewish Resistance's work revolves around saving their people. But eventually they turn to fighting the Nazis through sabotage and theft. But when things go wrong, Chaya ends up on her own with a girl she isn't sure she can trust, on what seems to be a suicide mission. But she's determined not to give in to the Nazis use of fear and pain, even if it means she dies fighting. The story is detailed and compelling and it's clear that Nielsen has done her homework. I can't help but cheer Chaya on, even when she's forced to do unpleasant things that a sixteen-year-old should never have to do. But are all her efforts for naught? After all she's living in an occupied country where even many of her own countrymen/women don't want her around. This story of courage in the face of fear and pain makes for a powerful read.

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### Ms. Yingling says

E ARC from Edelweiss Plus

After Chaya's brother and sister fall victim to the Nazis in the Tarnow Ghetto in Poland in 1942, her parents resign themselves to their fate. Chaya, however, decides to go down fighting and joins a Resistance group called Akiva. This group is comprised of former leaders and children in a scouting group. At first, she is a courier, taking food and sometimes weapons into the ghetto. She does not "look Jewish" with her fair hair, so it is somewhat easier for her to move around with her forged papers claiming she is Helena Nowak. It is not so easy for Esther, a timid girl who joins the group. Eventually, realizing the situation in Poland is getting worse and worse, the group starts to plan sabotage activities, including bombing a cafe. After that, Akiva sustains many casualties, and Chaya fears she is the only one left. She starts out on her own and

eventually runs into Esther, who claims she is on a mission from a former Akiva leader to deliver items to the Lodz ghetto. Things are exceedingly grim when they get there, but the girls decide to travel on to Warsaw. Along the way, they find some of their former cohorts who are trying to get more Resistance members to help in whatever way they can. It is clear that the Resistance is not going to "win", but the hope is that the Nazis can be slowed down, and that some lives can be saved. Chaya and Esther eventually end up taking part in the particularly brutal fighting in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Chaya becomes badly injured, but still tries her best to do the right thing in the face of evil.

Strengths: Nielsen is one of the best writers of fight scenes in middle grade literature today. They are my favorite thing, but many young readers like the excitement and adrenalin they provide. Nielsen has great attention to detail, with sights, sounds, and movement in these scenes. She doesn't neglect the more niggling, scrounging aspects of survival either, with details about clothing, food, and the desperate measures people were driven to to survive. There's a bit of philosophy thrown in from time to time (why just die when you could make a difference, if you know that death is inevitable?), as well as politics and history concerning the war as it affected Poland. Another fantastic book to have about World War II, and a nice mix of fighting (which has die-hard fans) and tie-ins with the Holocaust (required reading for my 8th graders).

Weaknesses: This has a ton of information and detail. There were a couple of times when I had to stop and figure out what was going on, and I have read fairly widely about WWII. Because of this, *Resistance* isn't a great first book about the Holocaust to hand to readers who know nothing about it, but it will be popular with readers who have a decent background knowledge.

What I really think: Definitely purchasing. Love the cover.

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## Seshat says

*"All people are equal brothers; Brown, White, Black and Yellow. To separate peoples, colors, races, Is but an act of cheating!"*

(Also on my blog )

I just finished this book, and I still feel overwhelmed (there will be typos). *Resistance* is about the final stand of many Polish Jewish resistors as they refused to be swept away by the final solution without a fight. I've read a lot of books about "Aryan" or Polish rescuers, and Jewish survival, I've read about fighting for your country, and your beliefs, but there is a unique twinge to *Resistance*— in it's futility.

*"Even I found myself smiling more than usual, sometimes laughing as I worked among other resistance members.*

*And eventually, I understood why.*

*It was because the ending our story was already written."*

This book changed the way I thought about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and the way I think about victory.

*"Ultimately, the Warsaw Ghetto fighters held out longer than the entire country of Poland did against the initial German invasion."*

Chaya is a teenage Jewish girl who's radiant youth and been destroyed by not just the war, but by facing the brunt of discrimination. From the Nazis and her countrymen alike, her innocence is ripped away as she discovers that the people who used to show her respect, kindness, walk the streets with her, travel in the same train cars, now spurned them and surrendered her people to the Nazi's monstrosity.

She is confronted with force of the most nefarious hate that world perhaps has ever scene and turns her convictions to resistance, not in the hopes of victory over the invaders, but the impenetrable wall of death. This book does more than show the dangers of resististing Nazism, but the near hopelessness of it. Success for these Jewish rebels becomes not about dispelling the German forces, but spitting in the face of evil.

That to me made reading this book very special— the tone echos the rage of one kind hearted Jewish girl, who just wanted to live a good life with her family.

*"I wanted to tell her everything if the world would only give me a chance."*

This book is hard, no denying it. But it also is strangely satisfying. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which before I had only regarded with pity at a failed resistance attempt, now seems superhumanly heroic.

Resistance more than the story of good, but the story of strength. It doesn't fall back on the old "Love is stronger than hate" motif, which naïvely implies a guarantee of morality, but asserts a rallying cry. If we want love to be stronger than hate, we must make it that way.

*"It was a reminder that hatred runs deeper and wider than a single race or nationality, and if love was not stronger, hatred would run through the generations. I intended to be stronger."*

Just typing this sends a surge of emotion through me. That passage summarizes so much why books like this touch me so deeply. Of course I loved this book; there were moments in the story I sometimes found cliché and plot twists I thought too manufactured, but the driving message through this book overruled all of that.

I particularly appreciated the homage to the historical Jewish heroes; I've always held a special reverence for Mordechai Anielewicz and Mira Fuchrer and it's wonderful to finally see them eulogized.

Spoiler Discussion([view spoiler](#))

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## Julie Kirchner says

I had heard so many great things about this book from friends, and I loved *A Night Divided*, so I was excited to see the ARC on the swag table at NERDCampMI! I didn't have to think twice about what to choose!

This is a HF novel that takes place in Poland during WWII. I'm always interested in reading about this time period as my father served in the war and I feel like I know more about this war than other wars, yet I'm always learning more. This book was no different. It is the story of Chaya, a Jewish teenager passing as a Christian courier able to smuggle food, documents, weapons and even people in and out of the Jewish ghettos. The story features actual events that happened during the Jewish Resistance in a fictional story. There is suspense along the way that made it challenging to stop reading. It is heartbreaking to read about the harsh realities faced by the Jewish families, but it also serves as an important reminder that we must stand up and speak out when atrocities such as these happen.

This will be a book I will definitely hand off to my older students who are interested in WWII history. It will show them another angle of the war that hasn't been addressed as often in middle grade books.

The author has included great back matter on actual heroes from the resistance movement, too!

Favorite quotes:

"We'll all die one day, no one escapes that fate. Our only decision is how we live before that day comes. Our

path requires courage, but so does theirs. Both paths are ways to resist.”

“It was a reminder that hatred runs deeper and wider than a single race or nationality, and if love was not stronger, hatred would run through the generations. I intended to be stronger.”

And in the author’s note:

“Love is the resistance.”

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## **Anna says**

One of the best books I've ever read

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## **Jenna Iden says**

In many ways, this book was awesome. Jewish resistance fighters! Kids! Accurate descriptions of how little help the Allied forces were when atrocities were being committed against Jews and they described zero Jewish refugees as "too many!"

But something felt off to me. Maybe it's because I was raised Jewish, but I didn't find this book particularly Jewish. The mentions of the Shema seemed like they were written by an outsider (perhaps because I've only heard it as the Shema and not the Shema Yisrael as Nielsen writes). The Shema is also almost always sung and, though the tune was in my head whenever I heard it mentioned, I don't know if Nielsen meant all of the iterations to be sung. The frequent mention of a meal as The Last Supper was cute, but an obviously Christian reference point. To use that term without any nod to the fact that Jews don't really care about the Last Supper felt like an oversight. It was also odd that Yiddish was mentioned often, but rarely if ever included.

I will also admit: I'm scared that people will read this book and look down upon those who were killed without a fight. I have relatives who died at the hands of civilians during peak anti-Semitism in Europe. I'm sure I have relatives who died by Nazi hands. I'm happy to see a book with so many Jewish characters with agency, but I don't want to think of my ancestors as any less brave because they didn't become Akiva resistance fighters.

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## **Angela says**

Video review to come.

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## **HazelNut says**

Wow. This one was a powerful read.

This book definitely had a more solemn tone to it than others of Ms. Nielsen's books, including A Night Divided. But it had to be that way, and in all honesty, the story ended with much more hope than I thought it

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would initially. Learning more about the history of the Jewish resistance was intriguing as well as heartbreaking. Well worth reading.

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### **Diane Shea says**

Jennifer Nielsen has a way with telling historical fiction that I enjoy and admire! She does such good research that I get pulled into the story and NEED to know the ending. Resistance is no different! A story about a young girl who finds her own courage and desperate need to make life better for her Jewish people during WWII in Poland, this book is in a league of it's own. Told with heart-wrenching realism and as much fact as possible, the characters are people readers will grow to love and root for at all costs.

This book was sent to me through a Goodreads Giveaway.

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### **Skip says**

YA book following the life of Chaya Lindner, who following the disappearance of her younger siblings and inability to convince her parents to leave their the Tarnow ghetto, Chaya joins the Jewish Resistance. Using her blonde hair and fair complexion, she smuggles food, medical supplies and eventually guns into and babies out of various ghettos in Poland during the Nazi occupation. The highlights of the book are the inner turmoil faced by Jews and non-Jews during traumatic times and events, especially the failed Warsaw rebellion. Nielsen's afterword is also not to be missed. The reason for 3 stars is that I did not really care for Chaya, despite her bravery, or the other main characters, who kept appearing and disappearing.

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### **Julie says**

I enjoyed this a lot. It's not a take I've read in fiction before and because the main character's a courier, we really get to see the situation in different areas of Poland. I appreciated the emphasis on family and friendship over romance because these aren't exactly romantic situations. There is some mixed info on if this is MG or YA, so to clarify: the MC is 16. There's only the tiniest hints at a romance. There's a lot of violence and death and being brutally honest about situations. So....I'd be careful about which pre-teens you'd hand this to.

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### **Shoshana says**

Holy. Crap.

This book completely took my breath away. It may be Nielsen's best, and I'm someone who swears by "The False Prince."

An incredible look at the work of Jewish resistance fighters during the Holocaust, "Resistance" pulls no punches - there is no sugar-coating of the atrocities committed by the Nazis, and the atmosphere of terror, suspicion, and desperation. And yet, this book is filled with hope, and pride, friendship and love. It's honestly incredible that a story featuring such a dark time has so much care and feeling.

And, my favorite, Nielsen manages to capture the pride and connectedness of the Jewish people. Chaya is fueled by the idea of saving as many of her people as she can. Others cling to their faith, finding solace in that and their people in the face of inhumane savagery.

This book is a genuine gem, and I hope it gets the recognition it deserves, and makes its way into curriculums and classrooms.

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### **Parker says**

this book brings up a lot of emotions. It is a really good book and at multiple points brought tears to my eyes. It is a really hard book to read personally, but all and all a really good book. but it isn't for everyone.

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### **Jessica says**

Fascinating book about couriers- Jewish youth who looked "Aryan" enough to smuggle things into and out of the ghettos- and the Warsaw ghetto uprising. It took me a bit to get into this book, I really didn't have a sense for who Chaya was until the book was well underway. But when it got going, it was very intense and heartbreaking.

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