



Prisoners in the Promised Land: The Ukrainian Internment Diary of Anya Soloniuk

Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch

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Anya and her family have made a difficult journey to Canada in search of a new life. But soon after they arrive in the land they hoped would welcome them, World War I is declared, and Ukrainians are considered “enemy aliens” — many of them sent away to internment camps. Anya must find a way to deal with the challenges in the land she now calls home.

Prisoners in the Promised Land: The Ukrainian Internment Diary of Anya Soloniuk Details

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From Reader Review Prisoners in the Promised Land: The Ukrainian Internment Diary of Anya Soloniuk for online ebook

Meaghan Steeves says

*4.5 stars I really love this story of a Ukrainian girl and her family immigrating to Canada and the sad turn of World War I and their internment there. She is so close to her family and has a kind heart, yet she isn't a goody goody. The only criticism I would make is the author choosing to cover such a long period of time to the point where toward the end she was only writing every so often and I preferred her writing daily. In defense of that though I understand the author wanting to give a good sense of the life they were living in Montreal before being sent to the internment camps. Overall I think it's a highly underrated diary in the series and should be read more; it's a treasure.

Nicola Mansfield says

Reason for Reading: I am reading this whole series. I picked this particular volume because I am participating in a WWI reading challenge.

I've only read a couple of Skrypuch's books so far, but she has become one of my favourite Canadian juvenile authors. Mostly, her historical fiction revolves in some way around Ukrainians as that is where her heritage comes from and her own family genealogy is always a great starting point. Skrypuch does write about other topics but this recurring theme is interesting as it is unique. Once again, I have learned something new from one of Marsha's books. I had no knowledge whatsoever of the Ukrainian internment camps in Canada during WWI; of course everybody knows of the Japanese ones during WWII but why not the earlier Ukrainian ones? Perhaps because they make very little sense at all from a political point of view.

This book is a fantastic read. While it takes place primarily in Canada, it does start with the boat trip to the new land, the WWI story is told through the newspapers and discussions of the Ukrainian people as they sit caught in the middle of this war. Their homeland is the battlefield in Eastern Europe for a long period of time and yet the Ukrainians are neither friends with the Austrians/Germans who own their land or the Russians who invade it. All news they hear is bad, because whether it is the Allies or the "enemy" winning on their homeland it means their people, friends, relatives are in danger and dying. Through the news the family receives and letters from home and friends across Canada, until letters are halted due to the War Measures Act, we get to see a side of WWI which I've never experienced before. All my WWI reading has been about the trench warfare in France/Germany. It was very different in Eastern Europe, especially there in Galicia, a Ukrainian area owned by Austria-Hungary, which became part of the USSR later on, and finally was reunited as part of present day Ukraine.

The Ukrainians were interred in camps mostly because Canadian/British citizens confused them with Austrians (the enemy) and were ignorant and intolerable of them living within their society. Anya's mother and father lose their jobs for "patriotic" reasons. She leaves school to work for the family, but eventually after the men are taken away to camps the women share rat-infested flats, have very little to eat, are not safe on the streets on their own, and are exposed to all sorts of vile, racist comments, making life a living hell. When the family is moved to the internment camp in some ways life is better for them: they are together again as a family, it's cleaner, they have nicer living quarters, are fed, don't face as much of the racism, etc. but it is a prison and therefore they have lost their freedom. Another compelling page-turner for me as we get to learn about the war in Eastern Europe, life for the Ukrainian immigrants on the homefront, and finally life inside the internment camps. Very interesting and new-to-me information. As usual the Epilogue in these

books describes what happened to the characters afterwards and the Historical Note is a goldmine of true facts. These are always my favourite part of the books in this series along with the contemporary photographs in the back. This is one of my favourites in the Dear Canada series so far. And I would love to read more on this topic.

Mateusz says

A wonderful book about the difficult and little known history of Ukrainians in Canada.

Amanda says

In this book so far Anya and her family have been waiting for the boat.

I love this book! This book is about a girl named Anya and her family. They go to Canada. Anya makes a friend on the boat. She goes through troubles, about people not treating her right. She meets a friend that is a boy, she hates him at first. Eventually she goes to this camp, and she gets out.

Renaë says

I remember when I learned about America's Japanese internment camps during WWII. I remember being appalled, since I had known so much about the concentration camps and so little about the internment camps.

The story of what happened to the Ukrainians in Canada is so similar, and so heartbreaking. And it's interesting that this is one of the longer time periods covered by one of the diaries. Instead we see more than two years of the girl's life. I enjoyed this one and I'm looking forward to reading more of the series.

Natasha says

I read this book because spirit lake is close to where I grew up and because of my Ukrainian ancestry. It was a short and easy read that makes me want to learn more.

Shanelle says

Another book from the Dear Canada series, Prisoners in the Promised Land is about the immigration of a Ukrainian girl, Anya Soloniuk and her family, during the years 1914-1916. The author creates a captivating story and provides the readers with a lot of history about the Ukrainian immigrants in Canada.

Jasmine says

Refreshing, I forgot how much I loved these when I was little.

Shanelle says

Prisoners in the Promised Land is a great read for those looking to learn more about Canada's history. This book is also important for those wanting to learn about Ukrainian history in Canada, something which hits close to home for me, personally.

Ellen says

A very good book which tells you about life for a Ukrainian girl living in Canada before and during the War in the form of a diary. This book gives you an insight into her life and shows you the prejudices she faces in the cities, and the difficulties she struggles with in the internment camp.

Susan says

I knew nothing of this chapter in Canadian history and I studied Canadian history and english in university. It's shameful. When I think of how we have treated so many of our native and immigrant population, I begin to wonder about our belief in how accepting we are. How can we learn from our history if we don't advertise and talk about our mistakes? This book laid bare the many tribulations these people survived.

Disty says

this historical novel tells us about Anya Soloniuk, an Ukrainian girl who lived at Spirit Lake, Quebec. furthermore, this novel illustrates a war between French and England to get the colonization and permanent settlement of Canada. i've got this book for an assignment at Ms. Dunne's class. the plot is designed like a diary, so you won't feel bored. there are a lot of novel in this Dear Canada series. nice one.

Kristal says

I read this once when I was 15 and loved it. Now that I'm in my 20s I've read it again and still enjoyed it. What I love about the Dear Canada series is that they teach younger people about lesser-known Canadian historical events through a young protagonist. You can tell the author does quite a bit of research, and I love the photos and historical notes in the back. Once criticism about the book is that the writing would be a tad sophisticated for a 12-14 year old. Also, in midst of certain situations (i.e. packing up all of your possessions because you are being evicted from your house) no one would be writing in a diary. I could just imagine Anya's mother yelling at her to put her diary away and help with the packing while her younger brother is crying and everyone is just stressed out. But overall this is a great story which shows the difficulties of Ukrainian immigrants during WW1 from a personal perspective.

Jessie says

As a Canadian whom is part Ukrainian I found this novel to be extremely fascinating. There has yet to be a Dear Canada or America book that I haven't loved and this fell right in with the others. Great series!

Molly says

This entire series is a wonderful way to learn history or teach it to adolescents. I find today's generations seem to recall more when they learn through other people (pop songs, celebrity gossip, etc.), so what better way to teach history than through someone else's perspective? Yes, "authentic" diaries would be "better", but would the language really hold the modern student's attention? Did the diary writer know what WOULD be important in the context of history? Probably not.
