



The Lily Cupboard

By Shulamith Levey Oppenheim

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Miriam, a young Jewish girl, is forced to leave her parents and hide with strangers in the country during the German occupation of Holland.

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The Lily Cupboard By Shulamith Levey Oppenheim Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Although this depiction of a young Jewish girl's experience in Nazi-occupied Holland "ultimately does not ring true," said PW, it is "sure to provoke further discussion and may serve to introduce the themes of war and racism." Ages 6-8.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 1-4-- In first-person present-tense narration, a young Dutch girl tells how her parents send her to the country to hide from the Nazis. Her homesickness and fear lessen when the farmer's son gives her a rabbit of her own. When soldiers come, her concern for her pet almost brings discovery, but the farmer successfully hides both child and animal. This moving story is beautifully illustrated with watercolor and gouache paintings in which warm earth tones depict the Dutch family and their home. While the text is simply worded and childlike, the picture-book format and frightening subject matter seem somewhat at odds. Children without prior background on the Holocaust may find the threat from the unseen soldiers hard to understand, despite the opening and closing statements that act as a conceptual prologue and epilogue. Used with similarly formatted World War II stories such as Amy Hest's *The Ring and the Window Seat* (Scholastic, 1990) or Roberto Innocenti's *Rose Blanche* (Creative Ed., 1986) in a classroom setting or by parents, this could provide a memorable introduction to the suffering and bravery of individuals during the war. --Louise L. Sherman, Anna C. Scott School, Leonia, NJ

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From Kirkus Reviews

The author of *Appleblossom* (p. 20), a Passover story set in Eastern Europe, re-creates a more somber chapter from the Jewish experience. Miriam, about five in Himler's tender illustrations, tells how her parents hid her when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands in 1940. Opening with a brief but explicit summary of the danger ("Jews...were sent to concentration camps, where many died a hideous death"), Miriam's narration focuses on her parents' love and care for her, the sorrow of all three at their parting, and the kindness of the farm family that takes her in. They have a hidden cupboard that opens when a painted lily is pressed; there she is to hide at need. Miriam's grief is not easily assuaged, but a pet rabbit offers some solace; in a final, dramatic scene, she almost doesn't make it to the hiding place in time because she is determined to protect her new pet. Oppenheim concludes there, pointing out the heroism of the many host families like Miriam's but leaving open the question of whether she or her parents survived--a wise, honest decision that avoids either telling more than is appropriate for young children or contriving an unrealistically happy ending. The carefully honed text includes some exquisitely touching details: asked to choose just one of her three dolls to take with her, Miriam replies, "No dolls...they have to stay together." Himler's lovely, understated watercolors beautifully evoke the setting and the warmth of the relationships. An exceptionally sensitive and effective portrayal of a difficult subject. (Picture book. 6-8) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dan Maes:

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John Buckner:

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Edgar Curtis:

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