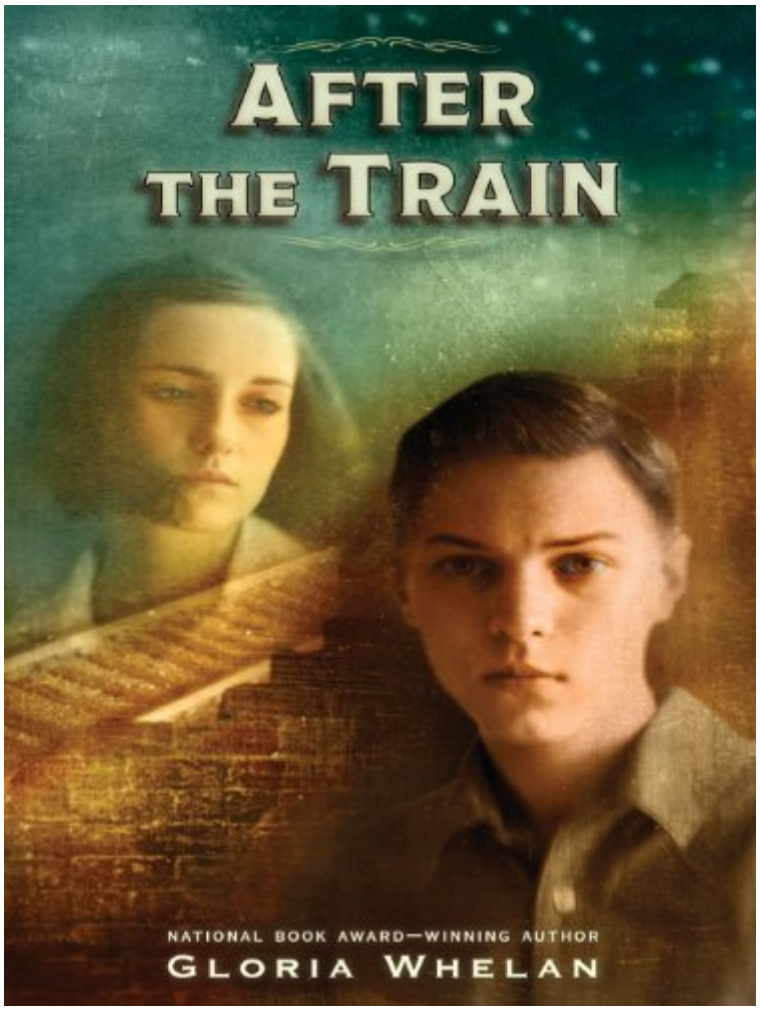
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After The Train



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Synopsis

Peter Liebig can’t wait for summer. He’s tired of classrooms, teachers, and the endless lectures about the horrible Nazis. The war has been over for ten years, and besides, his town of Rolfen, West Germany, has moved on nicely. Despite its bombed-out church, it looks just as calm and pretty as ever. There is money to be made at the beach, and there are whole days to spend with Father at his job. And, of course, there’s soccer. Plenty for a thirteen-year-old boy to look forward to. But when Peter stumbles across a letter he was never meant to see, he unravels a troubling secret. Soon he questions everythingÃ¢â ¬â •the town’s peaceful nature, his parents’ stories about the war, and his own sense of belonging.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I ordered it by mistake so just skim read it as it was a young persons book. It was OK

The story of a boy thrust from his Jewish mother’s arms to a Gentile German plays out in this

children’s story, as he in his teens learns that he is adopted. In 1955 post-war Germany, to learn that one is a Jew is certainly more than startling, or at least, that one’s long-lost mother was a Jew.The German couple unable to have their own children were happy to keep this boy as their own.The story is a quick read for adults, engaging in its plot as the summer vacation begins in Northern Germany near the DDR border. Our boy plays with others his age, fishing in the river, a mere 30 meters from the no-man’s-zone between the two new Germany’s. While fishing there is not exactly forbidden, it’s got a feeling of the spooky and dangerous, since armed guards sit atop watch towers so close by. As the three boys fish, a teenager from the East is seen crossing the 15-foot high fence, over the barbed wire, falling into the river on the Western side. They are astonished, bring the 18-year-old apprentice baker refugee to their town, settling him with a baker’s family. He swears against the Russians who’d killed his parents and never will accept living under Russian occupation, thus risking his life to escape.This is a part of the story that a teacher could emphasize about the penalties many millions of Germans paid, to become an occupied country ruled by a foreign, nasty Communist dictatorship for forty years.Meanwhile, our young Jewish fellow befriends a former philosphy professor of Heidelberg, an older Jewish man now a bricklayer for the local church. He learns about his Jewish heritage at a makeshift new synagogue, which later is attacked and set on fire by a boy from his school.There’s a lot of great elements in this story to make it exciting for young readers. Gloria Whelan seems to know her German history and geography.

Growing up in the aftermath WWII, Peter Liebig is sick of hearing stories about the war and the Nazis. They are history and don’t matter anymore. He just wants to move on. However, one thing stops Peter from forgetting it all: his nightmares. They are always the same: a crying young woman holding a baby boy in the darkness, and she is pushing him out towards the light.One day, while snooping through his parents’ things, Peter finds a picture of this mysterious young woman between a stack of letters written by his mother and father during the war. The only mention of the young woman in the letters is vague and unhelpful. Who is she and what does she have to do with Peter’s past?While many books are written about the Holocaust, this novel is about the impact it had after the war and, to some extent, still has on people today. A story of acceptance and understanding, After the Train is written by the acclaimed author, Gloria Whelan. Whelan won the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature in the year 2000 for Homeless Bird, the tale of a teen widow in India. If you enjoy After the Train, try Homeless Bird or anything else by this prolific writer from Michigan.-- Reviewed by Veronica L. Hernandez

Peter is a young boy living in Germany 10 years after World War 2. He is looking forward to his summer and just enjoying life. All of this changes one day when he finds some old letters of his parents. As he digs deeper into his past he learns that he was adopted. He also learns that his mother was Jewish and died in a concentration camp. Peter struggles to find his real identity and his relationship between him and his adopted parents become strained. This book is all about how learns to deal with this life changing news.If you're interested in World War II, the Holocaust or German History, After the Train would be a great book to pick up!

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