



## **Darker the Night**

*Lisa London*

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# Darker the Night

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## **Darker the Night** Lisa London

Inspired by a true story and told from a fresh perspective, this uplifting tale tracks an extraordinary young woman persevering through the challenges of love and war.

Hedy spends her childhood playing with her Hitler Youth group in the hills of Western Germany. When the Führer's troops march across Europe, Hedy is determined to help the soldiers by becoming a physical therapist. The Nazis, however, have other plans. Suddenly she finds herself assembling airplanes, dodging bombs, battling hunger, and standing up to invading tanks.

As the pride in her country is shattered with the news of the Nazi atrocities, her father reminds her, "The darker the night, the brighter the stars." Is her star the charming American Counter-Intelligence Agent who keeps appearing in the oddest places? Hedy must decide between her love of country and her newfound desires.

Each chapter of *Darker the Night* begins with a historical quote or piece of propaganda to place the reader alongside the German population experiencing the effects of the war.

## **Darker the Night Details**

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Author : Lisa London

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## **From Reader Review Darker the Night for online ebook**

### **Alison Cairns says**

I really enjoyed this book. It's interesting to read about WW2 from a German point of view, and this was handled very sympathetically but without sugar coating. Characters you wanted to have a happy outcome, and a story you wanted to follow and see where it led. Humanity in wartime Germany. Hedy became my friend, or my daughter, and I cared what she was up to and how it would turn out.

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### **Stanley Trice says**

Inspired by the author's next door neighbor's experiences growing up in Nazi Germany, Lisa London wrote a novel filled with strong imagery and true details of civilian life back then. The story follows the life of Hedy, a young German girl, growing up in southwest Germany from 1937 to 1947. Some of her friends are taken to concentration camps, some join the Nazis SS and special corps, and some live, with Hedy, through bombings and occupation.

During the war, Hedy volunteers at a field hospital and learns the truth about the war. She is daring, head strong, and almost fearless traveling the countryside during the allied invasion. In her travels, a young American soldier falls in love with Hedy. Johnny is more Italian than American and he leads his fellow soldiers many times through the war torn countryside to find the elusive Hedy.

I liked how each chapter was titled with the year of the experience and a quote of the times. In the beginning, quotes were the failed illusions of the Nazis. In the end, that of the occupation forces.

This novel is compelling because of Ms. London's research and that Hedy is really Hilde Sensale who grew up in Nazi Germany. This is almost her biography about civilian life among the Nazis, the war, and finding her true love Johnny.

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### **Pat Welte says**

This is a well-written book about Nazi Germany during and after World War II. Hedy is bolder than many people in this time and country. She almost appears invincible. Lisa London makes her characters come to life. I cared about these people and almost wanted to yell at them to not continue where they are headed.

I would recommend this book and author to others, especially if you want to read about this time in history. I will be looking for more books to read by Lisa London.

I would like to thank NetGalley, the author and the publisher for the opportunity to read an early copy for writing an honest review.

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### **Cindy says**

My favorite books shows the great resiliency of the human spirit. And, this book definitely fits the bill. I love that is inspired by a true story. I had put off reading this book for a while because the cover seemed dark. (the picture of Hilde is beautiful though) DO NOT judge a book by the cover. There was so much light inside! Thus, the saying, "The Darker the Night the Brighter the Stars". This book has courage, compassion, forgiveness, hope, love and even humor! I love how it was told from the perspective of a German citizen as she came to grips with what was truly happening in her country, by her country. I often wonder how I would have reacted in the same situation! The chapter heading quotes were very insightful. And, I enjoyed going to the web and learning more about the true Hedy I would love to read more by the author. This is a clean read. I was given a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Sam says**

This book follows a girl named Hedy in western Germany during the war. Wanting to become a physical therapist she instead finds herself assembling airplanes, dodging bombs, and battling hunger. This books brings out so many emotions. Once you start it you simply can't put it down. I received this from LibraryThing Members Giveaway for an honest review.

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### **Kristi says**

I gave this book 4 stars because I loved the point of view and the fact that it was based on first person accounts. The writing wasn't fabulous. It was obvious that the novel was woven together from the first person interviews which was cool but made the story feel stilted and choppy.

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### **Linda Marie Marsh says**

I would love to see this book, *Darker The Night*, become required reading for history classes, alongside *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Open minds to the differing perspectives on the same topic- teen years during the time of Hitlers regime. Hedy is not Jewish, but is mature in her thinking beyond her years...made me thrilled when i took a 2nd look and realized that this story is based on a real woman!

I know MY dad met a German girl he promised to return and marry. Hedy actually had this happen, her dream came true with the American soldier, who helped this gutsy girl and her family survive the trials and tribulations of war and later marry.

I can not emphasize enough what an incredible, marvelous book this is. It's true..." the darker the night the brighter the stars", even when we don't realize it.

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### **S.P. says**

*Darker the Night* is an amazing book from debut novelist, Lisa London. I was privileged to edit Lisa's remarkable novel and am now looking forward to sharing my enthusiasm for this story with readers.

Lisa tells the captivating, inspiring story of a young girl coming of age in Nazi Germany. As WWII blows up

around her, Hedy faces mounting obstacles to her desire to become a physical therapist and her need to protect and care for her family and friends. While still holding her homeland close to her heart, Hedy witnesses events that shatter her developing awareness of the world and her understanding of what even people she knows are capable of doing. However, Hedy meets each challenge with bravery and the determination to choose her own fate.

What's makes *Darker the Night* even more incredible, is that it's based on a true story of a German war bride who Lisa knows personally and is getting ready to celebrate her 90th birthday!

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### **Sandra says**

Hedy grows up in Germany, and when the Second World War hit, she puts off her plans to become a physical therapist in order to help the war effort and her family. Despite her difficulties, she always remembers her father's words, "the darker the night, the brighter the stars." She is disillusioned about her country, when she finds out what about the concentration camps and other atrocities. However, she never allows these things to dull her spirit.

This wonderful story is based on the life of a truly remarkable woman. It is well written. Each chapter begins with a quote, often of propaganda perpetrated by her country. It is interesting how Hedy's story shows the contrast between what her country's government was saying and how the people were living. This is a moving account of an unbelievable but true period of history.

Some German words and phrases are used to add realism. A glossary is provided in the back of the book for those readers who do not speak German.

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### **Barbara says**

Super!

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### **Lynn says**

Thank you to the author and netgallery, for a copy of this to review, this is so well written, and, the author has made me want to find out more about the couple that the book is based on,

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### **Colleen Deitrich says**

I liked the book overall. Hedy was a likable character who had her moments of bravery and independence without being either obnoxious or unbelievable.

The pacing of the book is on the slow side, but that's okay in light of the fact that, for a book about war, it's not about the front lines or action. The second half takes place after the war and is less of a coming-of-age narrative as it is a romance between Hedy and Johnny, an American officer.

While I cannot fault the story for having a few shortcomings (it's based off a real life relationship), I was a little disappointed to read that Hedy, after struggling and being set back so many times from getting to her goal of being a physical therapist, ended up forgoing that dream altogether for the sake of having a baby. How very baby boomer, right? I guess it's what a woman in the time period would have ended up doing most of the time...but as a millennial feminist, I did roll my eyes at the ending, wishing that was a point where the author would have chosen to deviate from what actually happened and giving Hedy her first dream in the end.

For that matter, for a story that was based off a real-life couple, we don't get any prologue or epilogue that centers around Hilde after the story concludes. Did she go back to school after having children? Did she ever go back to Germany to visit her family? What became of Rosemary, Gunter, or Gerda? We have to do our own research to find the author;s interviews with Hilde, which is fine and good, but even a page or two about the epilogues of the real-life counterparts would have been nice.

Despite this, I did enjoy the book. It's well written and interesting. Just don't expect this to be a "one sitting" read. You will need time to get through it, as it is slowly-paced, and some of the chapters can be lengthy.

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## **Diane says**

Enter the story in 1944 (World War II), where the blast of an air raid siren sends two girls tumbling from their beds and into a basement shelter; then go back in time to 1937, where Hedy is a winner in a competition certain to make the Furher proud of his young warriors. This win will earn her a position in his Youth Gathering in Cologne, a high honor, indeed, for one not yet fourteen.

Hedy's classmates are in the SS and in special corps serving the Furher, and their lives take on new meaning in an adult world where they are usually directed instead of respected.

More so than most similar books about Hitler's youth movement, *Darker the Night* chooses a powerful character (Hedy) to portray how youth were affected by his ideals and encouraged to participate in increasingly dark events. It's often about seeking and gaining approval from peers and adults alike: and just as frequently, events pose a strange juxtaposition between adult training and concerns and a child's eye view of the world just beginning to change as they teeter on the cusp of adulthood.

By interspersing these moments of a child's life and innocence with the insidious unwinding of events to come, London's survey succeeds, more so than most young adult reads, in capturing the flavors of both the times and the sentiments of young people determined to fit in and establish a position for themselves in life.

As Hedy continues to mature and comes to make some difficult decisions about friends, enemies, and her future, she finds herself constantly walking a thin line between survival and ethics, making decisions that often tend to thwart the effects of starvation and challenges to life itself.

And as she interacts with Americans and Germans alike, she savors the good things that evolve in her world (for, yes, there is good - it's not all darkness) and battles against those which would drag down her and her family.

Each chapter opens with a quote from a speech or piece of propaganda to give a flavor of the times and its influences, and each section offers new opportunities for reflection and understanding; because just as events

in Germany weren't singular, so Hedy is a complex character whose perceptions aren't based on political correctness today, but on the experiences of a young German citizen confused about her country's direction and its real actions.

Against this backdrop, Hedy's coming of age isn't just political: it's a personal saga personal, throughout. This approach gives the book a stunningly realistic, absorbing quality that will make it a powerful juxtaposition to Diary of Anne Frank, recounting the youth experience from quite a different vantage point and making it a special recommendation for a companion read and contrast to Anne Frank's more famous Diary's perspective.

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### **Denis Mcgrath says**

A dramatic tale based on true events of young Hedy who grows up in Germany during Hitler's regime. She is naïve and innocent and unable to realize the terror the Nazi's are inflicting to its citizens and other nations. Her dream is to be a physical therapist, instead she is forced to work for the Reich in farming or work camps. She does volunteer to help in hospitals settings. As the war ends she meets an American soldier, a romance is kindled and eventually she becomes a war bride. The story is told with compassion and reflects the feelings and attitudes of many Germans who were caught up in war, propaganda, starvation and destruction. As someone who worked in military intelligence in Germany, it caused me to reflect on the many stories I heard from German civilians who experienced WWII or their families' sufferings. A good Read.

I was given an electronic copy in return for an honest review.

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