



# The Diary of Laura's Twin

*Kathy Kacer*

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## **The Diary of Laura's Twin** Kathy Kacer

Laura is about to celebrate her Jewish coming of age ceremony, called a Bat Mitzvah, when she is -twinned- with Sara Gittler, a young girl her own age who was imprisoned by the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust. Laura is to learn about Sara's life and then share her Bat Mitzvah with her -twin- by speaking of her at the ceremony. Sara's diary unfolds with the details of her daily life in the Ghetto, a world full of fear, confusion, tragedy and above all, courage. From Sara's brave story, Laura learns how to find the courage to confront a problem in her own life. Includes photographs, biographies of young heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and true accounts of -Twinning Ceremonies.-

## **The Diary of Laura's Twin Details**

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Author : Kathy Kacer

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## **From Reader Review The Diary of Laura's Twin for online ebook**

### **Westcoast\_girl says**

I have read many young adult books about the holocaust through my youth. This one was sweet, but nothing special. That is, until my younger cousin picked it up whilst visiting. She is a girl who does not read. Yes, she knows how to and does well on her book reports and school. But she does not pore over the shelves of the library, buy books with her birthday money, or rush home after school to pick up where she left off. However, with a 3-hour flight facing her the next day, she decided she wanted reading material. And so she picked up 'The Diary of Laura's Twin' off my shelf. A couple hours later, I found her halfway through it. I believe that what worked for my cousin was the reality of the book (she never liked fantasy or sci-fi), its multimedia pictures, and its gentle style. If I'm not mistaken, this was one of her first introductions into the holocaust. This book was a perfect starting point for her: not too graphic, not too shocking, but still realistic. She ended up taking the book home with her. I'm not sure what became of it. But I hope that in some way, its story meant something to her. Whether it was its pleasures of a good story, its role modeling of strong characters, its messages of equality, empathy, and compassion, or its historical teachings, I hope she walked away with something.

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### **Edith Wood says**

It was good I enjoyed it. It was a bit too focused on the modern side of things but I suppose that was the point. I don't think I changed my opinion and I don't think I will always remember it but it was interesting to see how the author portrayed a modern teenage girl's perspective on religion in comparison to a 1930's/1940's teenage girl's perspective on religion. Arguably they were both going through different situations at the time when they "met" but I do believe if they had known each other they may have bonded on many levels, this probably being obvious due to the title of the book.

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### **Hannah says**

An AMAZING book about a Jewish girl who is doing a study on the Jews that died back in the day. While doing this she discovers more about herself than she ever thought she would and made an incredible friend.

A sweet book that will make you laugh, cry and just smile the whole way through.

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### **Courtney says**

It wasn't bad, but the writing style didn't really draw me in. It seemed a little too forced. It was still an interesting story, though, and the author added some mini-biographies in the back about some people from the time period, some of whom are mentioned in the story.

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## **Coco Chanel says**

A Beautiful Story!

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## **Jennifer Wardrip says**

Reviewed by Rebecca Wells for TeensReadToo.com

Laura Wyman has only three weeks to go before her Bat Mitzvah when she is assigned a special "twinning" project. She must read the diary of Sara Gittler, a young girl imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust. Sara never had the chance to celebrate her own Bat Mitzvah, so it is Laura's task to share hers. She will honor her "twin" by speaking of Sara at her ceremony.

Though Laura is at first reluctant to undertake this project, she quickly becomes immersed in Sara's story, a struggle filled with tragedy, courage, and the will to survive. From Sara, Laura learns how to find the courage to understand some of the darkness of the world, and the strength to rise above it.

THE DIARY OF LAURA'S TWIN is a touching Holocaust remembrance story for younger readers. Though it is relatively conventional in theme and plot, Kacer brings the main characters to life, giving Laura a voice that is real and heartfelt. Photographs and historical facts are cleverly interwoven into the book, making it a teaching device as well as a captivating story.

This book serves well as an age-appropriate introduction to the Holocaust that will stay in readers' minds.

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## **Emily M says**

The Diary of Laura's twin beautifully entwines two stories, one modern and one during wartime, both however, displaying heroic acts of faith. Laura, a twelve year old girl busily preparing for her Bat Mitzvah, is dismayed when her rabbi adds yet another task for her to do. Laura tried desperately to come up with excuses to not to her assignment, when her rabbi makes her read about a Jew her age who lived during the Holocaust. Rabbi Gardiner gives Laura the phone number of an old woman who supposedly has an interesting story. The woman gives Laura the diary of a young girl named Sara Gittler, who barely escaped the Nazi's death camps that stole the lives of so many others.

Laura was horrified by Sara's diary, as she wrote about her daily life in the camp. Meanwhile, the local Jewish cemetery was vandalized, disgusting the public. Laura soon discovers that her own best friend, Nix, may of had something to do with the Vandalism. She realizes that Nix saw exactly who destroyed the cemetery, although Nix refuses to come forward with information.

Laura went to school the next day with the intentions of giving Nix's information to the authorities. To her surprise, that work had already been done by Nix.

At the day of her Bat Mitzvah, Laura tells the story of Sara, the young girl who, against all odds, survived the disease-ridden ghetto, the concentration camps, and the inhumane conditions. The one part of Sara's story

Laura never understood what happened to Sara after she was liberated by the Russian Army. She then learns the elderly woman who had given Laura the diary was actually Sara. Thanks to Laura's Bat Mitzvah speech, Sara had finally been put at peace, and Laura tied up a beautiful ending to the hard work she had done.

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### **Janie says**

It does a great job of bringing relevance to the Holocaust, but it was a bit boring in parts. Several of the characters were under-developed, and parts of Laura's life just weren't that interesting.

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### **Jes says**

Wow. I didn't go into this book with very high expectations to be honest but I read it in four hours. I was absolutely hooked and I love that it was based off something that exists. I'd never heard of the twinning program before, it's absolutely brilliant. I have journaled since I was 10 so I think that was something that really resonated with me. I loved Laura and seeing how her outlook changed so much as she read further into the journal. I could go on forever about this book but I'm definitely going to be recommending it to people and I'll definitely read it again in the future. I now want all the books from this author. If I could, I'd give this book a 6 out of 5. I wish I'd had the idea myself!

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### **Heather says**

This is a touching Holocaust story for younger readers. Laura a voice that is real and heartfelt, as is Sara's through her diary. Photographs and historical facts are included throughout the book, making it a useful teaching device as well as a link to the past and the present in a captivating story. A worthy read.

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### **Madison says**

This book is a great read about the holocaust. It tells the story of a girl who is about to have her Bat Mitzvah, and is assigned to learn about someone in the holocaust and honor them at her ceremony. My only complaint is that sometimes it's hard to keep the present world and the past world straight, but over all it's awesome!

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### **Madelyn says**

Interesting storyline, but the MC Laura does get annoying at times. Other than that, it's a great read.

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### **JustOneMoreBook.com says**

Musings and melodrama of a modern twelve year old, careful chronicling of a young prisoner of the Warsaw Ghetto and dozens of potent photographs stitch together the present and the past in this engaging and educational look at bullying, bigotry and backbone.

You can listen in on our chat about this book on our Just One More Book! Children's Book Podcast.

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## **Canadian Children's Book Centre says**

Laura is just weeks away from celebrating her Bat Mitzvah. She has prayers to memorize, assignments to finish at school, an outfit to pick out and now Rabbi Gardiner wants her to take part in another project – a twinning project. Laura is to learn about a child who lived during the Holocaust and then honour her memory during her own Bat Mitzvah. Reluctantly, Laura goes to meet with Mrs. Mandelcorn and is given a diary written by Sara Gittler, a thirteen-and-a-half-year-old girl who lived in the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. Deeply moved by Sara's story, Laura learns she must persuade her friend to come forward with information concerning the desecration of a Jewish cemetery. Kathy Kacer intricately weaves the telling of Sara's and Laura's stories together and skillfully brings both characters to life for her readers. Students will easily relate to 12 year-old Laura's family life, school assignments and peer pressure and be moved by the fear, uncertainty and courage of Sara's experiences in the Warsaw Ghetto. Interspersed among Sara's diary sections are photographs depicting the conditions and atrocities that were committed at the time and, although some may be disturbing for younger students, they help to reflect the somber nature of her story. The book also includes real-life twinning stories and short biographies of the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Written for students in the junior/intermediate age group, this book would be a powerful piece to include in Remembrance Day or World War II discussions and a wonderful way to honour the memory of those children who suffered through, were orphaned or died during the Holocaust.

Reviewed by Sandra O'Brien in *Canadian Children's Book News*  
Winter 2009 VOL.32 NO.1

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## **destiny ? [howling libraries] says**

*Assigned reading for MLIS 7421: Multicultural Youth Literature.*

*The Diary of Laura's Twin* tackles an interesting concept that I hadn't heard of before, but have now learned is actually a fairly common practice in Jewish communities: "twinning", or learning about a child of the same age from the Holocaust days to commemorate them during the Jewish child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. I think this is such a fantastic idea, so reading about it as the plot of the story was actually quite interesting.

While I didn't particularly enjoy the writing itself, as it was definitely on the younger end of middle grade stories, there's a lot of good discussion going on in this book. Laura's kind of a brat in the beginning, but she grows a lot as her life is put into perspective and she grows to count her blessings a bit. My favorite aspect of the entire thing was actually her friendship with non-Jewish Nix, who starts the book pretty heartless in regards to the Holocaust as a whole, putting Laura into the interesting position of learning that sometimes, just because a friend seems like a 'good' person, doesn't mean that they empathize with your experiences or

see outside of the bubble of their own privilege. Of course, Nix grows and learns from her mistakes, but the entire scenario revolving around her reaction to Laura's "twinning" experience is pretty insightful and could offer a lot to young readers.

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