



Who Are You, Trudy Herman?

B.E. Beck

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As a little girl, Trudy Herman is taught to stand up for truth by her much-loved grandfather. Then in 1943, Trudy's childhood drastically changes when her family is sent to a German-American Internment Camp in Texas. On the journey to the camp, Trudy meets Ruth, who tells her and her friend Eddie the legend of the Paladins?knights of Emperor Charlemagne who used magic gifted to them by the heavens to stand up for virtue and truth. Ruth insists both Trudy and Eddie will become modern-day Paladins?defenders of truth and justice?but Trudy's experiences inside the camp soon convince her that she doesn't have what it takes to be a knight.

After two years, her family is released from the camp and they move to Mississippi. Here, Trudy struggles to deal with injustice when she comes face to face with the ingrained bigotries of the local white residents and the abject poverty of the black citizens of Willow Bay. Then their black housekeeper?a woman Trudy has come to care for?finds herself in crisis, and Trudy faces a choice: look the other way, or become the person her grandfather and Ruth believed she could be?

Who Are You, Trudy Herman? Details

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From Reader Review Who Are You, Trudy Herman? for online ebook

Gmr says

Throughout my reading journey, I came to one conclusion time and again. Trudy was such a resilient little girl...not so little by experience now though, as sad as that may be, nor age wise by book's end. True, she held the secrets of others when perhaps it might have been better to expose them to the light of day, but she was carrying out their wishes and in truth, they weren't hers to share. My heart broke when her Grandfather visited her for the last time, and again when she witnessed what she witnessed at the camp, and yet again when she felt so incredibly helpless to come to the aid of her new "friend". She had come such a long way and though the fence was gone she could still see the forest for the trees. She realized that not all cages have bars and sometimes those are the hardest of all to break free from. Trudy met her match as the world kept trying to knock her back and allow the fear to take control, but in the end, she found the strength she needed to knock down at least one wall...and I've no doubt if we followed her story further, she'd continue to wow us all.

As I reached the end, I couldn't help but think that it's truly more of a beginning...and I was completely wrecked. No really, tear filled eyes overflowing and all. It's not a pretty story and if you're looking for a happily ever after, think again. It's gritty, raw, and filled with the dark side of humanity...but even in those darkest moments, there is hope...if only we're strong enough, have faith enough to reach for it. Trudy truly was the Paladin Ruth recognized her to be, so I guess the REAL question now is...WHO ARE YOU?

**copy received for review

Michelle Kidwell says

Who Are You, Trudy Herman?

A Novel

by B.E. Beck

She Writes Press

Historical Fiction , Teens & YA

Pub Date 08 May 2018

I am reviewing a copy of Who Are You Trudy Herman through She Writes Press and Netgalley:

Trudy Herman was taught to stand up for the truth by her Grandfather when she was a little girl. But everything changes in 1943 when her family is sent to a German-American interment camp in Texas. As they travel to the camp Trudy meets Ruth, Ruth tells Trudy and her friend Eddie about the legend of the Paladins , they were knights of emperor Charlemagne who used magic gifted them by the Heavens to stand

for virtue and Church. Ruth tells Trudy and Eddie they will become modern day Paladins and defend truth and Justice. Trudy is soon convinced by her negative experiences in the camp that she does not have what it takes to be a knight, a Paladin.

When she witnesses her friend Lise being raped she feels helpless to change anything, but the event changes Lise.

Trudy's family spends two years in the camp going back home to release they are no longer welcome so her Father gets a job in Minnesota and they move there. When Trudy comes face to face with the ingrained bigotries of the local white community and the extreme poverty of the Black Citizen of Willow Bay. After their black housekeeper Trudy had come to care for finds herself in a crisis, and Trudy faces a choice of either looking the other way or being the person he wants her to be.

I give *Who Are You Trudy Herman* five out of five stars!

Happy Reading

Marisa Natale says

This book surprised me in a few ways. When I picked it up, I was a bit suspicious of the premise, worried that German American internment would be positioned as comparable to the Holocaust or Japanese American internment. I was pleasantly surprised that Beck handled the topic without ever making that comparison. I also enjoyed the character's personal development and found it pretty true to life. In the first instances where Trudy sees racism, she doesn't immediately spring into action to defend against it, even for her "friend" Ellie Mae. She gets angry with Ellie Mae and does her best to ignore it so she can heal from her own trauma and be a normal carefree teenager, which I also found realistic. In the climax of the story, Trudy finally acts, and does what she can to help one individual instead of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the structures of racism. I found this to be a good message- there's things you can do to help fight wrongs without having to completely dismantle an unjust system by yourself. And that you can use injustices you've faced to inspire you to empathize with others.

However, this book had a lot of weak points. As others have said, it slows considerably in the second half. In addition, I found the characterization of Black people to be reductive and insulting. Beck clearly doesn't understand the internal syntactical and grammatical rules of AAVE, and as a result the limited moments of dialogue from Black characters reads like an exchange from Huckleberry Finn. The dynamics of Trudy's relationship with Ellie Mae also aren't really thrown into light. Ellie Mae is an employee of Trudy's family, and her life depends on their graciousness and kindness. Based on the complete lack of personal investment we can see from Ellie Mae (not discussing her family, etc), I don't think they were actually friends. I think Beck intended for the reader to interrogate that independently, but for a YA audience, that needs to be spelled out more. Ellie Mae's character in particular became much more developed towards the end, but for most of the book she's a foil for Trudy to process her white guilt, which is very problematic. Finally, I was very irritated that Trudy is just so shocked and surprised at racism and segregation when she moves to Mississippi. To say nothing of the extremely violent and real racism that exists in Minnesota, she spent the majority of her life in rural Virginia, and Beck expects me to believe that she has never heard of racism before now? Even if her parents are the "good white people" the author positions them as, there's no way a girl growing up in Virginia in the interwar period is just completely shocked that racism exists. Much more seriously, racism is not just a southern problem and never has been. This perception is a major issue today

and I'm disappointed Beck is forwarding this notion.

Still, I liked the nuanced portrayal of Trudy's own journey enough and thought the message was so good for a YA audience, I'm going to award it 3 stars instead of 2.

judith duty says

Great summer read for all ages.

Who Are You , Trudy Herman? is an educational historical novel that reminds the reader of both America's past and the importance of standing up and doing the right thing.

Emi Bevacqua says

Trudy Herman lives a very eventful life. When war breaks out and Trudy's father is harassed for his Germanic origins, her very normality crumbles. Their friends and community abandon the family, and Trudy and her parents are forced from their home. Eventually they're shipped out to a Texas concentration camp. After surviving the camps and the war, Trudy's family strives to blend back in again in a new location: the American South. Here Trudy finds herself witness to slavery-derived racial inequality. It killed me when she studied Japanese-American internment in school and got enraged by the exclusion of her own culture's treatment in the textbook. I really wish Trudy'd been given a chance to discuss that with a teacher or trusted grown-up.

I like the themes this book raises for kids about social justice, moral etiquette, and doing the right thing. But beyond that, what I really appreciate is the high regard with which Trudy approaches elderly characters - rooted in the close, warm relationship she shared with her maternal grandfather, and carried over with German Ruth who she befriended on the train journey to the camps. Trudy's superficiality and love of popularity is a bit of a thing for me, for example I didn't like her admiring somebody's lack of "a single freckle on her pixie face" or her "But they were popular, so I kept silent" as a justification, but for a teenage character I say Trudy sets a mighty fine example.

Brin Murray says

This is an interesting read. It's the thoughtful story of a young girl whose father is interned because of his German ancestry during WW2. Eventually the whole family, along with the families of other internees, end up behind barbed wire in internment camp in Texas, often because the families left behind have no form of financial support. Their former communities ostracize them – even Trudy's teachers at school suddenly treat their former star pupil as if she is invisible. And they are considered unemployable. When her mother finally finds a job in the next town, their neighbours find out, and the new employer is informed he's unpatriotic for employing people related to a spy. So Trudy and her mother are destitute, and have no option but to follow her dad to the camp.

Another shocking factoid, is that their home and possessions are basically requisitioned and sold. In that way the process seems pretty similar to the sort of thing Nazis were doing to the Jews – with the major difference,

of course, that Texas isn't a death camp.

So, the first half of the book reveals a little known and disturbing aspect of US history.

In the second half, the author attempts to link Trudy's sense of injustice to the racial inequality she experiences in the family's new home of Mississippi. The story drifts a little here, but Trudy's journey to finding the inner strength to fight injustice is the core of this story.

'Who Are You, Trudy Herman?' is written in a gentle style appropriate to a young girl's voice. It would be even more affecting if there was less tell and more show, and it can be slightly repetitious and over-written, but it's a highly readable and thought provoking story with a strong coming-of-age message. Three and a half stars.

For more of Brin's reviews go to:

<http://www.brinmurray.com/>

Ella says

I liked this book a lot. It took me a little time to get into but I really liked it when I got into it. The author did a really good job of transitioning to different settings. The end sort of wrapped itself up but it left some things unfinished. I like the ending but wish it wrapped things up a little bit more.

Ciara Donohoe says

I liked this book a lot, I had no idea about German internment camps. The first half of the book was fast paced and i was captivated. The camp seemed less violent than I would have presumed, save for one incident.

The second half of the book was also interesting, I liked the bulk of the characters, save for Charlene, Joe, a few others. I did struggle with the fact the overarching message seemed to be that Trudy could relate to the racism that Ellie Mae and the rest of the black Americans faced, because Germans were interned. I wonder if I would have rated this higher if it wasn't for that sense of discomfort.

Jessica says

I received this book for free as part of BookSparks' YA Summer Reading Challenge.

I wanted to like this book, but I had a lot of issues with it.

First off, it took me a while to get into the book. It didn't really engage me until Trudy and her family got sent to the internment camp. That's when things finally started to get interesting.

I did appreciate that the book focused on German American internment because I didn't know anything about that prior to reading this book. It was nice to learn more about that.

As for the actual story itself, it was really lackluster. Quite a few things happened, but nothing was ever really developed to its full potential. Everything felt really glossed over; there was no depth to the events. I felt like the book was trying to make some sort of point about injustices, but never really got there.

At one point in the book, Trudy's class learns about Japanese internment which I felt was a little inaccurate. I'm skeptical that internment would have been a part of the curriculum. That part of the story took place in 1948 in Mississippi. I really don't think they would have been talking about internment at that time, especially in place that was shown to be segregated and very hostile to blacks.

The ending of the book was so rushed. Something major happened and then it was resolved in like 10 pages and then just ended. There was no closure for a lot of the other little storylines in the book.

Lastly, I can't stand the cover. It's a very poorly chosen stock photo. The fence part is fine, because that is a part of the story. But I have major issues with the girl. This book takes place in the 1940's and the girl looks like she's from modern times. I could probably buy the shirt she's wearing from a mall store.

Overall, this book had so much potential, but ultimately failed in its execution.

For more book reviews, be sure to check out my blog: <https://oddandbookish.wordpress.com/>

Elizabeth says

This historical fiction is a great YA read. It provides a viewpoint of America in the late forties and early fifties and touches on events that are little known today. This story does not try to include WWII internment and racism in full but gives us a glimpse of our own history. I'd recommend it for all school libraries.

hannah (faerystories) says

I received an ARC from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

This novel is set during and after the Second World War. It follows the story of a young girl whose is forced into a German-American interment camp with her family after her father is arrested on suspicion of spying. The rest of the book explores how Trudy's worldview changes upon her release, and how she bears witness to American's racism and prejudice.

I thought the first half of the novel was absolutely brilliant. B.E. Beck puts gorgeous detail into the descriptions of her settings that bring every scene to life. Trudy's confusion and terror upon the arrest of her father, and her own internment is absolutely heartbreaking. I did find that the narration swings between elegant and rather childish, but the first half of the book is ultimately very engaging.

The second half seems to lose some wind. The pacing slows quite dramatically, and I found myself growing bored at points. Various parts of the plot are spoiled by the narration before they can actually play out. Trudy's relationship with Ellie May is really quite white saviour-y, which is not great at all. In contrast to the slow pace, the ending comes out of nowhere and is extremely rushed. I finished the book feeling kind of disappointed.

This book has such great potential! I know very little about the German-American internment camps, and so it was really good to learn more. Trudy is an earnest and clever character, but I think the second half doesn't quite give her the development she deserves. I loved the first half of the novel, and I really wish the rest of

the book had been consistent with that.

Sherrie says

I had heard that this book was being categorized for young adults, so I was expecting a simplistic book without a lot of depth. I couldn't have been more pleasantly surprised. *Who Are You, Trudy Herman* is a great book for both young and old. The main character is a child when the story begins and you follow her as she develops into a thoughtful, compassionate young lady. The book may better be described as a historical novel, as Trudy moves from being a victim of prejudice, living in a German-American internment camp in Texas, to witnessing and standing up against injustice in Mississippi. B.E. Beck deals with a little-known part of our country's history, as well as current issues, facing us today. Through Trudy and her journey there are lessons to be learned in truth-seeking, prejudice and injustice, and empathy for others.

Heather says

I received a copy of this book from the publisher on Netgalley. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

I'm currently living in Germany although I'm originally from the United States, but my father was born in Germany. I have always had a strong connection to Germany and my grandparent's histories during the world (they were both in concentration camps.) So when I read the synopsis of this book and saw that it was on an internment camp for Germans in America during the war, I was intrigued. I had never heard of that before and knew I had to pick this book up.

Unfortunately, **Who Are You, Trudy Herman?** did not live up to expectations. This follows Trudy Herman as she goes from being a normal girl in Virginia to living in an internment camp for German-Americans during the war. Afterwards, her family moves to Mississippi and Trudy starts to see the discrimination prevalent in the world that she has previously been blind to.

The main interest to this book for me was the camp, but we only spend about a fourth of the book there and a lot is glossed over. This is also not a very long book, so I don't see why that couldn't have been the majority of the book. We quickly move on to Mississippi, where Trudy makes some friends, falls in love, and learns about racism for the first time. Really.

I just felt like this book had the potential to be great but fell so flat. Trudy was very bland and there were so many plot points that were just left to dangle at the end of the book. Where did Eddie go? Did he and Trudy ever connect? (view spoiler) There was so much of this book that felt rushed, or felt too slow, and it never got better. Also, the ending is quite abrupt. Something big happens, and yet we get no closure, the whole book is suddenly over.

This book felt like a bunch of ideas for a novel put together with some vague writing, and then called itself a novel. I was very disappointed, especially since I thought the premise was so interesting. Unless you're really intrigued, I'd give this a pass.

Jena says

“Yet, if we trace back far enough, aren’t we all related — all deserving of equal justice?”

Trudy Herman was a normal American girl when the War hit. Her parents came from Germany, but she was born and raised in America. She couldn’t imagine her home turning against her. But, in 1943, Trudy and her family were sent by train, to Texas, miles away from their home, to live in a German American Internment camp.

There, she meets Ruth, an older woman who’s belief in the system and in justice, teaches her through stories about the brave Paladins, knights of Charlemagne who fought for truth and justice. Every day in the camp, Trudy tries to be a Paladin. She tries to be brave and strong, but she often feels lost and helpless.

After they are released, her family finds themselves living in Mississippi, and once again, Trudy is faced with discrimination and injustice. She must decide if she’ll turn the other way, or if she can finally be the brave Paladin both her grandfather and Ruth believed her to be.

“I won’t tell others, Trudy. But be careful. People here are unforgiving. They hold tight to their beliefs and prejudices.”

I think the most important thing for a reader to know going into this book, is that this is aimed for the younger end of the YA spectrum. My review is going to be focused on this book for a younger reader, or for a parent of a younger reader, as I believe that is the intended audience for this book.

Who Are You, Trudy Herman takes us through the eyes of a young girl, who within a short amount of time gets her world disrupted in profound ways. Her father is accused of a crime, though we never learn what. Afterwards, her life begins to get smaller and smaller. Her friends ignore her. Her teachers ignore her. Her mother loses music students. And then, they are told to report to a train station to live closer to where her father had been taken.

“My friends and classmates had forgotten I existed. They no longer saw me. Miss Pruitt didn’t call on me even with my hand raised. She returned my homework unmarked.”

For an older reader, not knowing the details of what exactly was happening could be frustrating. But, it’s important to remember that Trudy is simply an eleven year old girl. She is getting her information from her mother, who obviously would try and minimize the trauma, and from what she can overhear. The point isn’t the details, it’s in the experience, and Beck captures this vividly. We feel Trudy’s fear, her confusion, her unease through every step.

Eventually her father is released to the camp, and they attempt to live as a family again, albeit behind barbed wire. This isn’t a book about life in the camp, as much as this is about Trudy’s growth as a teenager. She describes life in the camp, but not in great detail. It is more the feeling of the camp. How her mother painted the barbed wire fence. The hate and disgust in the guards eyes. These are things that would stick out to a child, so again, I felt that Beck did a good job in capturing the essence as a child would experience them.

“The compound was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence, guard towers, and searchlights. This was our new world? Fear filled my body until I could hardly breathe.”

After they are released, the family eventually relocates to Mississippi. This is where the second half of the novel takes place. It is here where Trudy wants to finally leave the trauma of the camp behind and finally be a normal teenage girl. But she quickly finds, that even here, while the hate isn't directed at her anymore, there is still hate in the world.

Her experience with racism unfolds slowly. Every time she is told that's the way things are, or told to stay quiet, Trudy is faced with the choice over who she wants to be. Her growth takes place over this portion of the novel, where she struggles with whether she wants to live an easier life, or to be brave, like the Paladin knights.

“Each action is a choice. And remember, Trudy, your life is built on those choices.”

For a reader in their early teens, or even a mature younger reader, this book is filled with great messaging on how to face bullies, trauma, friendships, loss, and change. I would urge parents to read it, as there is difficult subject matter, not just with the internment camp and racism, but there is a scene involving an attempted rape that is alarming. It isn't graphic, however, parents should be aware of the scene since it is traumatic.

In all, this is an excellent book for a more mature classroom, especially since Trudy goes through a spectrum of emotion in how to deal with difficult choices. Trudy doesn't always make the right choice, or handle situations well. She is often confused over what she sees and feels. I think this is all very realistic given both her age and history, and I think that many young readers will relate. The ending is quite powerful and opens the door for some fantastic conversation on how preteen readers can handle difficult situations.

This book doesn't go into a great amount of detail on the war, or internment camps, or the Civil Rights Movement, but it does present the opportunity for discussion and teaching, which I think is fantastic in a book.

Again, this is aimed for a younger YA reader, and someone looking for a more immersive experience may find it lacking in the depth and detail an older YA book would provide. However, for a parent or teacher, looking for a book to read with their preteens and students, I think this book is excellent in content and learning opportunities.

Thank you BookSparks for sending as part of their #readbythesea2018 #yasummerreads program.

Cheryl says

I liked this book. I did share a connection with the characters in this story. Where it was concerned in regards to Trudy and her family; I liked how they stayed bonded no matter how dire the situation they found themselves. Trudy really had to grow up fast. It was sad the things she witnessed. Yet at the same time it was sad that Trudy's innocence was lost.

As the story progressed, I did become more invested in it as well as Trudy and her family. I liked the author's writing style. Ms. Beck does bring life to her characters and the story. A very easy read. I would read another book by this author.
