

"the nightingale" by kristin hannah

Literature



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The author and her times

Kristin Hannah was born on September 25, 1960 in Garden Grove, California.

Kristin is married to Benjamin Hannah and has a 23 year old son Tucker.

When Hannah was in law school her mother was diagnosed with cancer and everyday she would go visit her mother. One day her mother told her not to worry about law school because she was going to become a writer anyway.

At that point her mother and her decided to write a book together. Hannah was inspired to write *The Nightingale* when she was writing her earlier book *Winter Garden* she found information about a resistance group and how a brave young girl was helping fallen pilots over the Pyrenees Mountains to safety.

Form, structure, and plot

The Nightingale has a total of 438 pages, all of it is put into 39 chapters.

Most of the chapters are in the present, what's going on to Isabelle (*The Nightingale*) and Vianne during the war. Overall, most of the chapters Vianne and or Isabelle is talking about their experiences and how they feel about what is going on in their lives. Other chapters are dialogues going back and forth between Vianne and Antonie, Vianne and Isabelle, Vianne and Sophie, Vianne and Rachel, Vianne and Captain Beck, or Isabelle talking to her resistance group. In the novel covers Vianne and Isabelle struggling journey throughout World War Two. Antonie gets drafted from war, Rachel and Sarah both pass away, Vianne and Isabelle's father gets killed, Vianne kills Captain Beck to protect Isabelle, Isabelle gets captured by the Nazis' and get sent to a concentration camp, and Rachel's son Ari now must change his identity so Vianne could keep him safe and as her child.

Point of view

The book is written in two different point of views which is very effective for the author and not giving away which sister is speaking in the first chapter. The chapters from Vianne in the year of 1995 is in the first point of view and she talks about her feelings about her past as her life is coming to an end. However, most of the novel is written in third person omniscient point of view. In the novel it describes present events that are happening to Vianne and Isabelle during the war. There is some during the novel where Vianne or Isabelle have flashbacks and or memories about their lives as children and their abandonment of their father. Through most of the novel the author allows the reader to understand each character and their story.

The novel is set at the beginning of World War Two in Europe. Hannah describes it as everyone in the town of Carriveau seemed to not really be aware of everything that was going on in the cities around them. The story begins with Vianne her husband Antonie and daughter going out on a picnic then during the picnic Antonie brings up war and how sooner or later he was going to have to fight. Vianne hates war because it torn her family apart many years ago. This sets the rest of the story into play.

The novel has symbols such as the nightingale and the strings of fabric that represent loves one that Vianne and Sophie has lost. In the story *The Nightingale* the nightingale represents loss and courage. It represents love and lose because Isabelle has courage and does what she feels is right and that is to stop Hitler and save those who are hurt. It represents lose because Isabelle must leave her sister in order to save those who are hurt. The Nightingale is an important symbol in the novel. The pieces of fabric that

Vianne hands Sophie tie to their tree branch represent all the loves one they have lost. In chapter 11, Vianne realizes that Antonie may be killed while held as a prisoner, " She took the short coil of crooked tarn and tied it to an apple tree branch. The burgundy color stood out against the green and brown. Now, each day in her garden and when she would walked to her gate and when she picked apple, she would pass this branch and see this bit of yarn and think of Antoine." How when they pass the tree they remember and never forget those they once loved.

Hannah uses a variety of figurative language throughout the novel. Similies is what Hannah commonly uses to compare things to one another. An example of this in the beginning of the novel Vianne make a comparison, " It is like being in the hold of an old steamship" (2). This is comparing the attic to a hold of a steamship how it's so small and inconvenient. The author also uses personification" the stairs unfold from the ceiling like a gentlemen extending his hand"(2). This is showing how Vianne is reminded of a gentleman when she sees the ceiling unfold.

The tone of the characters throughout the story line is curious and wistful. Throughout the novel the characters are always curious about what is going to happen next in the war and how it may affect them in their daily lives. The characters are wistful in that they are always thinking what if I did this differently and how things would be different for all of them. For example of the characters being curious is " certainly they would not round up and arrest all the Jewish people this hour. Everyone knew that arresty were never made during mealtimes" (263). An example of characters being wistful is " It was hard without you.. Le Jardin is so close to the airfield. The German

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noticed the house on their way into town. Two officers billeted here-"(392). Both of these quotes show and explain the tone of the character throughout the story.

The central theme of *The Nightingale* is the power of women. This can be seen in how Vianne and Isabelle fight for what they believe and do the right thing in time of trouble and doubt. This can be seen within Isabelle when she becomes the nightingale and fights against the Nazis'. She does what she believes is right and rescues fallen pilots and takes them across the Pyrenees mountains into Spain for safety. Then how Vianne keeps strong while Antonie is off in war. She does what she needs to do to survive and never gives up. She puts Sophie and Daniel (Ari) first before her. How she keeps calm as Captain Beck and Sturmbannführer Von Richter come live with her and the decisions she must make in order to have her children survive. Vianne started saving Jewish children from dying. Both of these women stand up and show that women are capable of anything and everything. They have a voice in the war just as any man and made a difference.

The title of the novel *The Nightingale* is significant because Isabelle and Vianne's last name Rossignol means nightingale. The nightingale is also a symbol in the novel for loss and courage in the novel. The word nightingale is significant because that is what Isabelle was called during the war when she was rescuing fallen pilots and taking them to safety across the Pyrenees Mountains. How there last name means nightingale how Isabelle signified herself as the nightingale as if it was the statement that made her feel that she was making a difference in the war. Overall, the title was significant in how it directly linked to Isabelle and Vianne.

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The novel, at first, seemed slow. In the first chapter it was not clear who was speaking if it was Vianne or Isabelle. I thought that the first character was Isabelle and that maybe she was afraid of what she had done in the past. As the story went on I finally realized that the first character was Vianne not Isabelle. How each of them played a big role in helping those in need during the war and the impact they made in others around them. Overall this novel was an amazing read and gave me a lot of insight to what people would do for the ones they love and others around them.