

The devil in vienna's relevance to history

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The Devil in Vienna's Relevance to History My historical fiction novel is The Devil in Vienna by Doris Orgel. This book is about two young girls during the pre-holocaust era. One girl, Lieselotte is a Nazi while Inge is a Jew. The book represents Nazi-Jew relationships in the times leading up to the Holocaust and World War Two. The book The Devil in Vienna is very accurate historically to the pre-Holocaust era. The author of The Devil in Vienna is Doris Orgel. She was born in Vienna on February 15th, 1929 ("Doris Orgel Papers"). Orgel is Jewish like the girl Inge in the book. The book is based off of her own life experiences in Vienna (Orgel). She immigrated to the United States in 1940 with her family. Once she moved here, Orgel undertook training to become an author. From 1946-1948, she went to Radcliffe College to obtain her degree. In 1950 she finished out her training with a bachelor's degree from Barnard College. As an author, she has written many children's books. These include titles like The Devil in Vienna, Risking Love, and Crack in the Heart. She has also translated many books, including Dwarf Long-Nose by Wilhelm Hauff and The Grandma in the Apple Tree by Mira Lobe ("Doris Orgel"). The historical fiction novel The Devil in Vienna includes many aspects throughout it that are true to actual history during the pre-Holocaust era. Through the character Inge, we learn of many of the things that Jews had to go through. For example, we learn from the book that Evi's father's business was vandalized because he was a Jew (Orgel 190). This happened often during this time. Jewish professions began to be banned in the fall of 1933 (Schulz and Soumerai xvii). In the book, at one point her teacher has to throw away some of their schoolbooks because the main character in it was Jew (Orgel 201). This is true because Nazis banned any books that they

considered “ un-German” (Schulz and Soumeri 38). Many times these books were burned. The largest book-burning occurred on May 10th 1933 (Schulz and Soumeri xvii). Also, Inge has to sit in the back of the classroom with other Jews and non-Nazis (Orgel 200). This happened often during this time period. Alfons Heck remembers that “ Herr Becker made the Jewish children sit in a corner, which he sneeringly designated as ‘ Israel’” (Bartoletti 42). Many times in the book through Inge we see events of the Nazi takeover. The Nazis changed many school curriculums to only teach Nazi ideas and threw out many old textbooks from these schools (Bartoletti 38). In the book, we see Inge’s family witnessing Austria being annexed by Hitler (Orgel 120). In history, Austria was annexed on March 13th 1938 (Schulz and Soumeri xviii). In the book, we also see what happens in the Nazi Youth through the letters that Lieselotte gives to Inge after she moves back to Austria. Throughout the letters she says that they have a lot of physical education and that they all went on a hike. She also talks about the leader of her group, Imgard, who is an older member of the Nazi Youth. She tells Inge that when girls turn fourteen they can get promoted into the B. D. M, the Bund Deutscher M  del. She also tells her that some girls can get chosen for Faith and Beauty. At her school, she also has to take National Socialist Ideology. She also had to greet everyone with the saying “ Heil Hitler” (Orgel 151-172). All of this was required of the Nazi Youth in the pre-Holocaust era. On December 1 1936 it was required that all young Germans were “ to be educated in physically, intellectually, and morally in the spirit of National Socialism”. They had to be physically fit. All of the girls had to go on a two day hike, like Lieselotte in the book. The Youth was always run by older

members. At age fourteen, girls got promoted into the B. D. M, and at age seventeen, they were chosen for Faith and Beauty. It is true they had to take classes to educate them in the Spirit of National Socialism alongside their physical education classes. It is true that the Youth to greet everyone with "Heil Hitler" (Bartoletti 26-39). These are many of the ways that the book *The Devil in Vienna* is historically accurate to the pre-Holocaust era. This book is very interesting and has many powerful themes. The book begins with the young girl Inge talking about her friend Lieselotte and what they used to do together. She also informs us that Lieselotte and her family moved away and that she always writes letters to her. She also tells us that their parents do not get along, because Inge's family is Jewish and Lieselotte's family is Nazi. As the book goes on, we see that the persecution of the Jews is getting worse and we hear some of Inge's family and friends talking about the death camps. Eventually, they begin to have talk of a plebiscite (a vote) whether to keep Austria independent or not. Before the plebiscite can take place, the Nazi soldiers take over and annex Austria, renaming it Ostmark. After the Nazis take over, Lieselotte and her family move back to Austria and Inge and Lieselotte begin secretly meeting to see each other. Lieselotte gives Inge the box of letters she was unable to send to her, telling Inge about her time in Germany and her adventures with the Nazi youth. As the book goes on and some of Inge's family begins to flee in fear of persecution, we see her parents begin to debate whether they should too. Finally, as the persecution gets worse and Inge leaves school they make the decision to try and leave Austria. Her family ends up getting fake baptismal certificates and fleeing the country for Yugoslavia. The main character in the book is Inge. She is a

young Jewish girl living in Austria. She is the protagonist. The other main character is Lieselotte, her best friend that is a Nazi. The neutral character in the story is Mitzi. She is Inge's family maid and she is neither a Jew nor a Nazi. Another main character is O. O., Inge's very religious grandfather. He is Jewish and he eventually leaves the country for America. The antagonists in the story are the Nazi regime. The main character in this category is Herr Vessely, Lieselotte's father. He is a Nazi commander. Some other minor antagonists are the Nazi soldiers who appear throughout the novel to persecute the Jews, and Hitler who is their leader. Hitler is the one that annexes Denmark, is in control of the Nazi soldiers, and is responsible for the persecution of the Jews. One of the major themes of the novel is the power of friendship. This is represented throughout the book by Lieselotte and Inge. The novel shows us how even though they aren't supposed to be friends, they continue to be. This is because even though they are Jewish and Nazi, they aren't letting that come between their friendships. Another theme of the novel is the power of family. Even though sometimes Inge gets upset at her parents for some of the decisions they make, she still loves them and realizes that they are only trying to keep her safe. We also see the power of family in the relationship that Inge forms with her grandfather, O. O., as she begins to listen to him before he immigrates to America. I think that this book is very powerful and interesting. First of all, it gives a very powerful message and representation of the powers of friendship and family. Second of all, I think it gives an interesting time period. Many times, there are only books about the actual Holocaust. This book gives an interesting perspective because it shows us the events leading up to the Holocaust. All in all I loved

this book and would definitely recommend it to anyone thinking about reading it. These are the ways that *The Devil in Vienna* relates to history. The novel occurs in the pre-Holocaust era and is very accurate historically. We see what Nazi and Jew relationships were like during the pre-Holocaust era. Also, throughout the book we see themes of the power of friendship and the power of family. This book gives us an interesting insight to the events that led up to the Holocaust and World War Two. The book *The Devil in Vienna* has many accurate facts about the pre-Holocaust era within it.

Works Cited

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