

# The construction of the characters in summer of my german soldier



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Summer of my German Soldier takes place in Jenkinsville, Arkansas during World War II. The story is told in first person point of view. The mood for the story is depressing. The main character is Patty Bergen. She is an intelligent, questioning twelve-year-old girl. Patty is always teased about being so skinny. Her mother criticizes her brown hair and boyish looks. Patty enjoys attention and loves to talk. Patty often lies just to be noticed. Patty's father, Harry Bergen, is a rough man who doesn't have a good sense of humor. He beats Patty and verbally abuses her. However, Mr. Bergen is respected by many of the townspeople.

Ruth Hughs is Patty's black nanny. Ruth cares about Patty and is kind to everyone. Ruth is the Bergen's cook, cleaner and baby-sitter. She is very religious and one of Patty's few friends. Charlene Madlee is a journalist that becomes great friends with Patty. Charlene teaches Patty all the basic journalism skills and also supports Patty when no one else will. Anton Reiker was a prisoner of war. After he escapes the POW camp he hides in the room above Patty's garage. Patty feeds and clothes Anton. Anton is kind and generous to others, but more than anything he wants to protect Patty. He is one of Patty's only supporters. Pearl Bergen is Patty's mom. She is nervous and quick to judge people, but especially Patty. She is rude and does not protect Patty from her father when he decides to beat her. FBI agent Pierce is the man who comes to question Patty before and after the death of Anton. He is a hard man and is rude to Patty during the interrogation.

There are many conflicts in the novel. One of the main conflicts is between Patty and her father; (and Patty vs. her society). They are constantly fighting. When her father gets really mad he decides to beat her. He is

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constantly criticizing her and telling her she is worthless. Patty's society is not very caring either. The townspeople are not nice to Patty. Patty and her mother are always arguing about what to wear and what is proper of Patty. Patty does not enjoy dressing up and showering often like her sister does. Her mother is very fussy about it. Patty has an internal conflict with herself and her love for Anton, she is not sure if he loves her the way she loves him.

The turning point of *Summer of My German Soldier* begins when Patty's father and FBI agent Pierce came to question Patty about Anton's shirt. The FBI agent begins by asking Patty about Anton. He then pulls out a shirt with Patty's father's initials on it. Patty says that she has not seen the shirt before. She looks over the shirt noticing a hole with bloodstains around it. Agent Pierce informs Patty that Anton was killed. "You killed him!" Patty screams. She jumps up and claws his face causing him to bleed.

The falling action begins when Patty is sent to Memphis to live with her grandparents while she is awaiting her trial. The falling action ends as Patty is tried. The climax is the ending of the trial. Patty is sentenced to attend a girl's reformatory in Bolton, Arkansas. Mr. Grimes, Patty's escort for the trip picked her up in Memphis, and they begin their journey to Bolton. The ending is when Ruth comes to visit Patty in the reformatory. Ruth leaves Patty with a word of hope, saying, "You got love to give Honeybabe, ain't nothing better'n that" The theme to *Summer of My German Soldier* is "... everyone has the right to be loved." Patty is denied that right.

People can take away quite a few good things from this story. Through this book people can see how much it means to love. *Summer of My German*

Soldier demonstrates many significant lessons. Most importantly it shows the importance of love. Because many times people are not open minded enough, they often miss some of the greater things in life. One scene that is member able from this book is when Anton, the German soldier, risks being captured, discovered, and possibly killed. As Patty's father is beating her, Anton runs out of his hiding place, and he would have saved Patty if she had not shouted, " NO!" Patty realizes that this man would risk his life to save her. I highly recommend this book.