

Girl in the Blue Coat

Monica Hesse

Reviewed by: Haasini Tatti, 13

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Hanneke, a Dutch citizen who found herself in the middle of World War II in the Netherlands knows she should only care for herself and her family and not meddle in anyone's business. She has a "job" in which she delivers items bought from the black market to buyers who are quite rich. By doing this, she gets a good amount of money to support herself and her parents. It's not like she wants to do this, but she has to as the war keeps going. Stopping the Nazis is hard as many lost their lives, one Hanneke knew. Her first love, Bas went out to the front lines to help defend his country and lost his life. She didn't know what to do afterwards and knew keeping to herself is the best option, but things can change just like that. Hanneke finds herself being asked a favor by Mrs. Janssen, one of her buyers. Mrs. Janssen asks Hanneke to find someone, not just anyone, a Jewish girl she had kept hidden for the past three weeks. Mirjam's family was shot in the night with only her escaping. Hanneke knew the risk in taking on the challenge of finding Mirjam but yet took it on and gave it her all as she wants to help people just like her Bas tried to do. But sometimes finding a person is harder said than done with many mysteries lurking around and people not knowing the whole truth. Follow Hanneke's journey in trying to find Mirjam and slowly unraveling how and why she stole away in the night.

This book was a roller coaster with twists and turns no one, not even I could expect. Monica Hesse wrote the book wonderfully by keeping me on my toes and always wanting to read more. Never revealing too much as it all adds up in the end makes everyone just want to read things in one go. I found it interesting how all the characters were crafted, and I was interested in all of them, main characters, side characters, and even characters that only appeared a few times. Some of the characters had unexpected sides to them in which Hanneke and I were in shock because of them. The plot isn't something I expected as one page could change the way I thought of what was to happen. I also noticed how Hesse kept the originality of the Netherlands within food, places, language, and culture. I found many things could've been taken away from this book such as things aren't as they all seem and to always have trust in your allies.

Girl in the Blue Coat is a historical fiction book written for young adults. Those who are interested in historical fiction and mystery will make their time worthwhile reading this book. Young teenagers around 13 - 15 might find a great interest in this book as it does talk about topics that really happened in the past and might give an insight on how living in WWII in the Netherlands was like. If I were to receive this book as a gift, I would be ecstatic, but I feel it is better to read it at the library as it can be used to make excellent book reports. *Girl in the Blue Coat* is a book which can help readers get interested in history and historical fiction.

Recommended Titles:

Making Bombs for Hitler by Marsha Skrypuch

The Light in Hidden Places by Sharon Cameron

They Went Left by Monica Hesse

The War Outside by Monica Hesse