

**Making Bombs For Hitler**  
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In the book “Making Bombs For Hitler”, the main character is an eight-year old girl named Lida. Lida and her sister, Larissa, along with many other children, have to take a medical exam because they are also being sent to Nazi camps. The year is 1943. Larissa is the first of both her and Lida to take the medical exam. After she does, she is sent to the other end of the room. After her, Lida takes the same medical exam, but after she takes it, she is forced to go to a different spot. As a result, Lida is forced to separate from her little sister. After she takes the medical exam, Lida is put in a train car with many other children. The train car is very crowded and full with bugs and a rotten smell. In the train car, she meets Luka, Zenia, and Marika. After a while, the train car stops, and everyone in the train car is given food to eat from a pail (some soup). After that is over, the train car continues to drive to its destination. Lida tries to calm herself by singing her mother’s lullaby. Everyone else in the train car recognizes the song, so they decide to sing as well. Finally, after what seemed like a few days, the train car finally arrives at its destination. Lida and the rest of the children are shaved, sprayed with a chemical, showered, and given a dress to change into. After that, Lida, Zenia, and a few other girls are sent to their barrack, which consists of three rows of bunk beds and a mattress for each girl. Lida decides to make her bed and then meets the rest of the girls that she is sharing the barrack with (Kataryana, Olesia, Tatiana, and Zenia, who she already knows). Lida realizes that each person is sad and afraid, just like she is herself, so she decides to comfort everyone by singing another lullaby. A short time later, a woman comes to their barrack and tells them to follow her. She leads them to two officers, who make the children tell their age, date of birth, place where they came from, and name. Lida realizes that she has turned nine years old because it was her birthday, but because Lida heard something about being useful, she decides to lie about her age by saying she is 4 years older than she really is. That way, because she told the officers she was thirteen, she would make the officers think she was useful. After that is done with, Lida is given food to eat. She is excited when she realizes the food that is given, until she realizes that the food she saw was for the Germans. Because she was Ukrainian, or Russian according to the officers, she was given lower quality food, to her disappointment. She gets even more disappointed and begins to question why the officers hated Russians when she realizes that Russians are given bleaching power instead of soap to clean themselves. After all of this is done, it is time to go to bed. Before going to sleep, Lida hears that Zenia is Jewish, which Lida realized the officers hated. As a result, Lida gives Zenia her crucifix in order to help her. The next day, the officers separate the children into a group of children that can work and a group of children that are under the age of 12. Lida becomes a part of the group that is under the age of 12 (because she was small, even though she mentioned she was 13). Lida is photographed and then has to work for a woman named Inge, who makes her do laundry and sewing. When Inge recognizes Lida’s skills, she praises her, which makes Lida feel better. During the lunch break, she meets another girl named Juli, who is Hungarian. She learns from her that children that are sent to the hospital have to be bled so that their blood can be given to soldiers in the war. This shocks Lida. She learns that her

friends Luka and Zenia are doing metal work, and she later meets three girls named Natalia, Oksana, and Marta, who are new to the camp but have been to other camps before. After the three girls introduce themselves, Lida shockingly realizes that everyone in the camp gets to eat only once each day.

This routine continued for many months in the camp. One day, in October, a bomb attacked the metalworks factory of the camp, where Lida's friends Luka and Zenia worked. Lida had to make beds with Juli for those who were injured by the bomb. Lida was later relieved to hear that Zenia only had minor injuries, but she was shocked to hear that Luka was more injured. She started to worry if Zenia and Luka would be fine. However, Inge is rather happier after the attack due to her receiving a gift from her husband, which turns out to be a blouse, some handkerchiefs, and a coat. She tells Lida to replace the nametag on the blouse, which she does successfully. Later, at lunch, she realizes that Luka is fine, and she visits him later at the hospital. After that, she receives some food from Inge as a gift for making her blouse better, but Lida decides to ask for a dress instead to give to Zenia. Inge decides to consent to her request and gives her a dress, but after the evening whistle, she has to deal with an officer questioning why she has a dress. After that problem is dealt with, Lida gave the dress to Zenia, who loves the dress. When she realizes that the dress is too big for Zenia, she stitches it to the right size and uses the leftover pieces to improve her own dress. However, the next day, when the officer realizes that Lida is enjoying her job, he assigns her a new job at the same metalworks factory that was bombed. Lida's new job is to make bombs. Zenia, Kataryana, and Natalia have the exact same job as her. When Lida and the others realized this, they were shocked and terrified. At the metalworks factory, everyone is assigned a separate job related to the formation of the bomb. When Lida tells Juli about her new job, she is also shocked, but then she brings up the news about how Luka escaped the camp. This makes Lida relieved. A few days later, Natalia manages to find a package of brown sugar and shares it with Lida and everyone else in the barrack. The texture of the brown sugar gave them an idea on how to sabotage the bombs by sneaking dirt in the bombs. However, because they are always watched, their plan will be hard to do. However, after work one day, Lida receives a pair of shoes from Juli, who had apparently gotten the shoes from slaves who had died. Juli told Lida that the reason that the slaves had died was because the officers had poisoned their food since they thought that the slaves were not useful anymore. Lida, hearing this, said that the Nazis will eventually pay for their cruel actions. Lida and the other children decided to start sabotaging the bombs they made by adding dirt instead of gunpowder. After that, Natalia would add an icy fluid to the bombs in order to spoil the gunpowder. One day, while Lida and the others were eating lunch in the factory, a bomb fell into the room. Lida and the others tried to escape the building as fast as possible. After Lida and the others had escaped the building, the bomb exploded in the factory. While a Nazi officer was telling members of the Hitler Youth what to do about the explosion, Lida saw someone familiar in a black car parked in front of the factory that was exploded. Lida thought for a second that the person in the car was her sister Larissa. A while later, Lida and everyone else boarded the train back to the camp, only to realize that the camp had been exploded as well. Juli decided to help Lida and the others by curing their wounds. After that was dealt with, Juli found a gun and decided to try to shoot one of the officers, Officer Schmidt. When she tried to shoot the officer, she managed to hit him once

before the officer shot her, causing both of them to die. Lida was extremely sad that Juli was dead, but she was extremely thankful for Juli's sacrifice to keep everyone safe.

Lida was then told to stand with a group of slave laborers, but she could not find Zenia, Kataryna, or Natalia anywhere. After that, Lida and the others in her group were put in a military truck. In the truck, a woman gave Lida the crucifix that she had given to Zenia on the first day of the camp. The woman explained to Lida that Zenia, Natalia, and Kataryna were trying to look for Lida, but they couldn't find her, so they told the woman to give the crucifix to Lida if she saw her. When Lida heard this, she was relieved that Zenia, Natalia, and Kataryna were safe. After a few hours, the truck arrived at another camp. The conditions of the second camp were very similar to the conditions of the first camp. Lida's job was the exact same as her job in the first camp; she had to measure gunpowder. However, this time, the gunpowder was poured into cartridges instead of bombs. This continued for many more days, and each day, Lida hoped that Larissa, Kataryna, Natalia, and Zenia were safe. However, one day, all of a sudden, the ground started shaking, and bombs started falling on the camp. Lida and the others decided to go to the back of the room in order to avoid getting injured. Eventually, the door of the camp exploded, leading to fresh air. An American soldier entered the room and helped everyone out of the destroyed camp. Lida realized that she could trust the soldier because the soldier cared about her. Later, the soldier helped Lida by giving her a drink and a piece of chocolate. Soon, Lida saw more American soldiers. She also realized the large wooden icon of the Madonna being loaded in the back of a Jeep. She learned from a soldier that it was being taken to a Ukrainian Catholic priest who is building a church. After that, Lida was taken to an American hospital, where a nurse took care of her. Soon, Lida was happy again. The nurse gave Lida some socks and leather boots a few days later after breakfast. Later, the nurse, named Astrid, took Lida to a displaced persons' camp where she tried to look for people who were looking for her. When Lida realized that there was no one trying to look for her, Astrid promised that she would try to send her name to the Red Cross to look for others that were looking for her. Then, Lida entered the refugee camp and prayed for her parents, her sister, and those that she met at the camp. While she was praying, she was surprised by Luka, who was so happy that he found her. However, a few days later, Luka had to leave the refugee camp after realizing his father is still alive. On the same day, Lida was surprised by another person she had not seen in a while, Natalia. Natalia told Lida that Kataryna was killed, but Zenia was safe. However, Lida learned from Natalia that people who were born in pre-war Ukraine, such as Lida, have to go back to the Soviet Union, which worries Lida. However, Luka returned to the refugee camp a few days later, injured. Luka explained that he had been attacked by Red Army soldiers and that his father had died a long time ago. In order to calm him, Lida tried to let him know that he was safe. Lida and Luka continued to try to look for their loved ones, but there was no luck. However, Lida learns from a conversation to her relief that people that were born in pre-war Ukraine will not have to be sent back to the Soviet Union anymore. Months eventually passed by, and Lida and Luka were not able to find their loved ones. 1947 arrived, and Lida and Luka still lived at the refugee camp. Lida tried to find her sister by giving information about Larissa to the woman from the Red Cross that had visited the refugee camp, who replied that finding Larissa would take some time. Thankfully, 4 years later, in 1951, Lida finally received a letter from Larissa, who is now living in Canada with her adopted parents. Larissa asks Lida if she wishes to be sponsored by Larissa's parents and live in

Canada with them. Lida was so happy because of this, and she even suggested that Luka can also immigrate to Canada with her.

There were many things that I liked about this book. I liked how the book was based off of a real life event. The events that occurred in the book occurred during World War II, and it gave a realistic idea of what life was like at the Nazi concentration camps during World War II. While the characters in the book may not be real, the events that occurred in the book were. However, I didn't like how there was some violence in the book, such as war and guns. I would recommend this book to ages 11 and up. I would give this rating because of how this book is based off of World War II, which can be a confusing event. I also gave this rating because of the violence in the book. I would definitely recommend this book to someone else.

**Recommended Titles:**

Prisoner B-3087 by Alan Gratz

Projekt 1065: A Novel of World War II by Alan Gratz

The Enemy Above: A Novel of World War II by Michael P. Spradlin