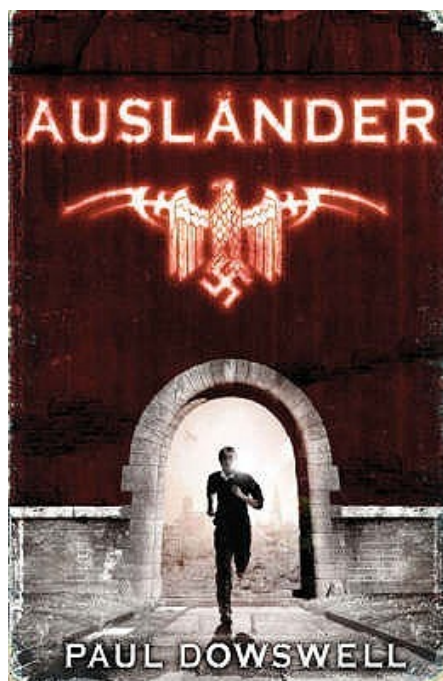




Ausländer

Paul Dowsell

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When Peter's parents are killed, he is sent to an orphanage in Warsaw. Then German soldiers take him away to be measured and assessed. They decide that Peter is racially valuable. He is Volksdeutscher: of German blood. With his blond hair, blue eyes, and acceptably proportioned head, he looks just like the boy on the Hitler-Jugend poster. Someone important will want to adopt Peter. They do. Professor Kaltenbach is very pleased to welcome such a fine Aryan specimen to his household. People will be envious. But Peter is not quite the specimen they think. He is forming his own ideas about what he is seeing, what he is told. Peter doesn't want to be a Nazi, and so he is going to take a very dangerous risk. The most dangerous risk he could possibly choose to take in Berlin in 1942.

Ausländer Details

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Author : Paul Dowswell

Format : Hardcover 292 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, War, Fiction, World War II



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From Reader Review Ausländer for online ebook

Cheryl says

YA historical novel set in Nazi Germany. Very well-written and absolutely riveting. The story follows Peter - an orphan in Nazi-occupied Warsaw who has German blood. The Nazis decide he is racially valuable, and take him to Germany to be raised as a Hitler Youth by a German foster family.

At first, Peter is grateful for his improved life - better food, better clothes, better education. But he soon sees how totally the Nazi government controls not only the foreigners (auslanders) and Jews, but also the German people. Everyone lives in a constant state of paranoia, for fear their words or actions will be deemed unpatriotic and they'll be punished by the Nazis.

Wanting to help the persecuted Jews, Peter and his girlfriend Anna - along with her family - secretly provide food and shelter for them. But anyone can betray them to the Nazis at any time - even close friends and relatives. And one day the inevitable happens.

This book was absolutely chilling to read, because it's based on well-researched facts. The excellent writing makes you feel like you're living in Nazi Germany along with Peter. The tension in this novel, especially towards the end, is almost too intense. A brutal, but excellent book. Highly recommended.

Margo Tanenbaum says

Auslander is the German word for "foreigner," and British novelist Paul Dowswell's 2009 novel (to be released in the U.S. by Bloomsbury in August 2011) spins a compelling tale of one foreign youth's experiences in Nazi Germany. When Peter's parents are killed in the German invasion of Poland, he is sent to a Warsaw orphanage along with other war orphans. But 13-year-old Peter is one of the "lucky" ones; he's Volksdeutscher--of German blood, with blond hair and blue eyes. He's therefore selected to be adopted by a prominent German family, and soon is living comfortably in Berlin. His new father, Herr Kaltenbach, has an important job deciding who is "racially valuable" or "racially worthless." He has three new sisters, and although Frau Kaltenbach is cold to him, he is kept busy with his new school and Hitler Youth meetings, barely leaving him time to be homesick for Poland. In his fantasies, he wants to be a Luftwaffe pilot, much to the delight of Herr Kaltenbach.

Although Peter may seem on the surface like the perfect young Nazi, he is unable to accept without question the Nazi propaganda he is fed at home and at school. When he becomes romantically involved with Anna, whose family works for the resistance, Peter soon is helping Jews go into hiding. When the Gestapo begins to suspect Peter and his friends, they must leave Berlin; will they be able to escape?

I was very impressed with the complexity of this story, which could be read by adults as well as young people. Dowswell's carefully researched novel reminds young readers that not everyone in Nazi Germany was pro-Hitler or even a Nazi. Anna and Peter listen secretly to the BBC, and attend parties where they dance to "degenerate" American jazz. Peter is a well-rounded character, who although at first wanting to fit in with his new family and follow the party line, maintains his compassion and humanity throughout. For example, Peter not only puts himself in great danger to deliver messages for the resistance, he also wants to help fellow Poles who are working as slave labor in Berlin, and tries to bring them food. There is plenty of exciting action as well, especially at the end as Peter and Anna try to make their escape.

The author paints a vivid picture of what it was like to grow up in Nazi Germany, complete with fascinating details such as the family Christmas tree decorated with illuminated plastic swastikas. The children receive Christmas presents laced with Nazi propaganda, such as a book on the perils of fraternizing with Jews or a doorknocker decorated with a caricature of the head of a Jew. They hide in bomb shelters as the Allies bomb Berlin, killing thousands. Peter struggles with his beliefs, realizing that both the Allies and the Nazis are murdering innocent civilians.

Lady Knight says

I really loved this one! The historical detail, plot, characters, and background are all done exceedingly well! This will definitely rank among my favorite WWII books for youth. My only bone to pick, however, is where I found this book: in the children's section of Chapters. This is not a book for young children, it is a book for teenagers. Granted large parts of it would not be unacceptable to younger ones, but the extreme coarse language in certain parts, the detailed explanation that one of the characters gives regarding their participation in killing mentally challenged ones, and the some of the talk regarding sterilization (far too graphic for those under 12) are definitely drawbacks to reading this to children. Having said that, this is definitely one any teen fan of WWII literature should not miss.

Piotr Bruck is an orphan. After the Nazis invaded Poland, his parents died in an unfortunate accident, and his dog is shot by the SS, Piotr is packed off to the Warsaw Orphanage. Soon nazis begin to examine the boys for racial purity and weed the "good German" stock from the "impure". Piotr is fortunate, his family is of German background and he looks like the poster boy for the HJ, with his blonde hair and blue eyes. He is soon adopted into a high-ranking nazi's home. they change his name to Peter and enrol him in the HJ (Hitler Jugend - Hitler Youth). As the years pass, he surpasses many of the boys around him in academics, sports, military exercises, etc. He soon notices Anna, who is a senior member of the BDM (Bund Deutscher Madel - League of German Girls) and they start to talk. Anna is dissatisfied with the direction Germany is heading, Peter, who has been thinking the same thoughts, agrees. Soon the two are dating and Anna pulls Peter into the underground world of Berlin in the 1940s. Swing dancing, jazz records, helping "U-Boats" (escaping Jews), and pretending to be a solid HJ member, soon become a way of life for Peter, until one day he is told that is a quarter -Jew...

For those who will enjoy / have enjoyed this book, I highly recommend the movie "Swing Kids" which gives a great look at how the "Swing Heil" movement progressed in Berlin and how the Swing Kids were treated. "The Book Thief" is also a great read for older teens. "Daniel Half-Human" is another interesting look at the HJ culture during the Third Reich. It follows Daniel as he tries to "hide in plain site" because of his Jewish ancestry.

Siobhán Bayertz says

I really loved this book! It was extremely touching and well written. There a lot of books flying around under the topic of World War 2 and this book, though on the same topic, gives us a different outlook/insight on it. Reading this book I felt as if I was there with Peter (main character) Though he is in fact Polish he looks like the perfect German (Volkdeutscher - of German blood)

I also loved this book because it's a very believable if not likely story and is something I plan on reading

again and again. It's a highly praised book and with good reason too. I would recommend it to anyone who enjoyed the book, 'The Boy In The Striped Pyjamas', or in fact anyone who enjoys reading in general..

Hazel West says

Thoughts on the Overall Book: This was a very well-written historical fiction story, well researched and exciting. While it might have had some slow parts, I liked the fact that it seemed like a real story, more than actual fiction. The author did a wonderful job portraying what life was like back in the Nazi occupation and this book even went to extremes that I hadn't really heard about before, but, as explained in the author's note, were completely accurate. For me this book was actually very eye opening as to how truly fanatic Nazi supporters were.

Cover--Yae or Nay: I do like the cover for this book, that and the title is what made me pull it off the shelf. Though it makes it look more like an action thriller which it really wasn't. Only the last part of the book really had that kind of feeling to it whereas the rest of it, while not boring, didn't really have a lot of action in it. But it definitely looks like a WWII novel.

Characters: Peter's a good protagonist, as well as Anna. At some points you wanted to smack them over the head for their stupidity, but that was another thing that led to this book being like a real story. They were real, flawed characters. I loved the idea of a character (Peter) who was a privileged Aryan even though he was Polish instead of fully German, being idolized by the Nazi's because of his 'perfect' complexion. I also liked how, at first, Peter seems flattered though a little overwhelmed by his position, but then when he sees what the Nazis are really capable of, he decides he doesn't want to be part of that anymore. I also really loved how the plot went into the underground as well, helping the Jews to escape occupied Germany.

Writing Style: I haven't read any of Paul Dowswell's books yet besides this one, but I know I'll like them now because his writing style truly is very very good. You can definitely tell all the research that went into this story down to every little detail. In fact it's so detailed that the reader automatically knows he is not making anything up. He is a truly amazing Historical writer.

Problems/What bothered me: Nothing truly bothered me. I think "Auslander" is a good look into life in Nazi Germany. I can't complain about the book because it was presented in a historical way.

Conclusion: 4 stars. This was a really good book, and I'm only rating it four because it's not one of my favorite books I have read, though I'm not marking it down for anything but personal preference. If I was going on historical accuracy alone, I would give it five stars.

Recommended Audience: Probably older teens and adults. It's not as brutal as it could have been, but, as can be expected, there are themes that young readers might find disturbing (it goes into torture/execution methods, medical experimentation and the horrors of the camps--though that's only mentioned somewhat in passing. It also talks about what they would do to the mentally ill people, which is rather hard to swallow.) Any fans of good historical fiction would enjoy this book though.

Jessikah says

I would love to give this one a solid 3.5 stars. The only reason it would not be higher in my ratings scale is the fact that I felt the writing to be inconsistent.

The story on the other hand is one rarely found when dealing with youth WWII literature. While I have read numerous stories of Jewish Holocaust victims in hiding or on the run, valuable in their own way because to ignore that what happened in literature is criminal for numerous reasons, it is always equally as important to get a sense of what was going on in other facets of this dark point in history which is really not that far in the past.

Like "The Devil in Vienna" and "T4" we get to see other sides of the atrocities which lurked within the dark corners of Nazi Germany. In "Devil", Inge, a young Jewish girl finds that her best friend Leiselotte remains faithful to her in spite of Leiselotte's father's rise in the Reich and the brainwashing she receives in her Hitler Youth chapter. In "T4" we learn about the Nazi vendetta against the handicapped and the Roma. Auslander brings us right to the doorstep of the Hitler Youth agenda and the people within.

Now I will state here that I am generally not a fan of WWII fiction. It is not because I do not find it important to exist. As I mentioned above it is quite the opposite, but of late I feel that it has become an easy out for an author who wishes to write a juvenile Historical Fiction novel. There are just so many of them. They begin to blend together. Surely there are plenty of other points in history which could be explored and are valuable in spite of this one being so recent and for many so raw. What I do always find fascinating is the ones that depart from the formula. I could mention Markus Zusak's "The Book Thief" here, but somehow the "death as narrator" gimmick makes it vaguely something else to me.

So Auslander is the story of Piotr/Peter a young Polish boy whose parents were killed in a car crash involving a German tank after the invasion of Poland. He is plucked from his orphanage by the Reich because he is blond haired and blue eyed, therefore of use to the "racial purity" of Germany under the Reich. At first Peter is very eager to become a part of this. He showboats his ability to speak perfect German in front of his Polish mates who brand him a traitor. He repeatedly tells those who take him to Germany that this is what he wants when they accuse him of trying to run off.

Yet, Peter fails to find funny the jokes about "Lazy Pollacks" or "Dirty Jews" that are made by the people he is so grateful to for finding him to be "special". He goes along with them not commenting and following directions even so. Eventually Peter is adopted by a "respectable" German family whose Patriarch is a "Genetic Scientist". Ummm, yeah. You can use your imagination as to what THAT means but it involves lots about detecting "undesirable" strains in people's genetic make up. Peter tries hard to please his new family and joins the Hitler Youth as expected. At first he is glad to be part of something even though he feels increasing discomfort in what he is aspiring to. He is relieved to meet Segar, another boy in his chapter who seems to make light of the seriousness placed in front of him. Then he meets Anna.

Anna is the perfect example of what a young German girl should be, even if she DOES have dark hair. She is head of her chapter for the Jungmadel. She repeats the ideals of Nazi Germany so fluidly it is as if her life depends on it... which it does because she is actually aiding the resistance. From here Peter and Anna find romance while secretly listening to BBC broadcasts, exploring the underground Swing movement and learning to do what is right even if it scares the hell out of them.

While the perspectives in this book are fairly unique (an anti Nazi story told from the perspective of two HJ members) as mentioned before it is far from perfect. The writing is choppy. At points it feels as if parts of the unfinished draft notes are left in the final copy. Peter sometimes comes across as fleshed out, relatable and likable and other times he just seems to be a cardboard cutout. Wonderful are all the descriptions of his changing feelings and confusion as to if he should join the resistance. Not so great are the points when it seems the author is just listing things that happened and changing perspective just because. Some really poor "show don't tell" violations cushioned between action and suspense.

Peter and Anna's complicated friendship with Segar comes across as genuine as does Peter's confrontation with his foster sister who has become an "empty shell" since her time as a T4 nurse, yet is still full of Nazi

poison.

I was also annoyed that the F word was uttered early on in the book when Peter secretly began bringing food to Polish captives being used as slave labor. I'm not a prude and enjoy using the word myself but it makes the book inaccessible to younger grades for recommendation. I think this would be a great book for advanced 4th graders and up in spite of some references to kissing, forced sterilization and cross dressing. All of those things are what they are. Boys and girls kiss. We have plenty of books with that and not much else in the Children's Department. The other two things are facts of life. Nazi's sought to sterilize those who had any "bad blood" in their opinions and we have some books that touch lightly on cross dressing as something some people do (one is even a picture book). However, I cannot give this book to a child if it has such "adult" language in it because I don't think I would be able to aptly defend it not being in the YA department for that reason. This is a great disappointment to me as a children's librarian. It was completely unnecessary in a book that could have otherwise been given to a younger reluctant reader.

So I give this one a thumbs up in general. It has its faults but is a solid entry to the pool of Historical Fiction. It would be well paired with both fiction and non fiction books dealing with the White Rose group who's resistance efforts ended tragically in the execution of several German youths who distributed anti-Nazi leaflets during the war.

A sad point in history and yet great perspective on standing up when your own life could be at stake.

Mara says

Cover Blurb: Yes or No? I really like the cover; there's no second-guessing where - and when - this book takes place, and its general subject-matter. It's intriguing, attention-grabbing, ominous, and exciting at the same time. Or maybe that's just because I absolutely *love* WWII stories.

Characters: Unfortunately, this isn't the book's strong point. To call the characters cardboard is harsh and untrue, but to say that I became attached to them is also a falsehood. Peter Bruck, the protagonist, starts out as a young thirteen-year-old Polish boy who has just lost his parents after the fall of Warsaw. He's eager to become a German citizen, because it means an improvement in his circumstances - and leaving the horrible orphanage. So when we first meet our protagonist, it's hard to really accept him because he seems to be well on his way to becoming an ideal Nazi youth. Pretty difficult to sympathize with a person like that, right? Well, naturally Peter does have a change of heart as he learns more and more about Nazi brutality and the blatantly untrue things they teach about races. Peter never did understand their hatred for Jews - not even in the beginning, - and his view on that never changes. So while he's learning to be a perfect Brown Shirt, we Readers can cling onto the obvious niggles that persist in the back of Peter's mind, which keep him free from complete Nazi brainwashing, and he slowly begins to form his own opinions which strongly contradict the National Socialist teachings. But did I ever really *connect* with him? Well, sadly no, and I think it's largely because Peter never has an iconic moment of where he *really* puts his foot down and denounces the Nazi party; his conversion is gradual. The rest of the characters - Gerhart Segur, Anna Reiter, Herr Kaltenbach, and Elsbeth Kaltenbach - were fascinating in the fact that they all embodied the different opinions and attitudes that were floating about Berlin at the time. Gerhart Segur isn't all that serious about his duties as a member of the Hitler Youth, but he ends up causing the most trouble for Peter when he's forced to cooperate with the Gestapo. He doesn't want to, but he turns a blind eye and tells himself that he did all he could - which is something a lot of Germans did. Meanwhile, Anna Reiter and her parents put on a facade of loyalty to the National Socialist party, while they are secretly hiding Jews. Herr Kaltenbach is the very persona of a loyal "one-hundred percenter" - a true Nazi, while Elsbeth Kaltenbach - his daughter, started out believing in the Nazi cause, but began to doubt some of the their ideals when she has a very personal

encounter with their "cleansing of undesirables" from society. As characters, though, I didn't really become attached to any of them, or really hate them. They were figures standing in as representations of the personal struggles German citizens faced, and that was it.

The Romance: Peter and Anna have a bit of an adolescent crush going on between them, but it takes backseat to everything else, and I was all right with that.

Plot: When the Nazis invade Poland, Peter's parents are killed and his family farm seized by the occupying army. With no relatives, Peter is sent to a Warsaw orphanage, where living conditions are far from ideal. But when German officials come looking for "racially pure" boys to send to Berlin and be rehoused with German families, Peter is excited. With his blond hair, blue eyes, tall and athletic build, and wonderfully well proportioned skull, he's the very essence of the Aryan ideal. Peter sees this as an opportunity to leave the orphanage and someday regain his family farm back, and he eagerly steps into his new life as the adopted son of Professor Franz Kaltenbach - a devoted Nazi doing extensive research into purifying the world of sullied races. As with all German boys his age, Peter joins the Hitler Youth, attends school and excels at athletics, and does everything a perfect German boy ought. Swept away in the thrill of being a part of something big - like restoring Germany's national pride, - Peter isn't bothered by what is truly going on in the world. But he is never able to accept how the Jews and Poles are treated, though he tries desperately to push it to the back of his mind, and as the war drags on and on, and Peter learns the full extent of what the Nazis stand for, he begins to realize that he doesn't agree. With Anna's help, he decides to do something about it. The majority of the plot is spent with Peter's *gradual* realization - notice the emphasis on *gradual*. Because that is exactly what it is; he never has a sudden moment of epiphany that changes everything. It's a slow accumulation of knowledge, which slowly leads to him listening to forbidden music, listening to forbidden radio stations (the BBC), which then leads to helping the Reiders hide Jews, which leads to a ton of other revelations. This is, I will relent, realistic, but it also makes for a plot that isn't necessarily exciting or even fast-paced. This is an illustration of what life would be like for a Polish boy deemed German in Berlin - a Polish boy who wasn't willing to accept what he was told to accept. As Peter grows up in WWII-era Berlin, he encounters lots of side characters that tell him of the further horrors of the Nazi party - and how some people feel about it. A real plot doesn't really surface until the last 90 pages, when things start to go horribly wrong for Peter and the Reiders. That isn't to say that *The Auslander* was boring - I found all of this exploration of Nazi Germany to be utterly fascinating. But some Readers might not.

Believability: The Author has done impeccable research, and it is because of this that I am able to give this book a high rating while complaining about the characters and writing style at the same time. I have absolutely no complaints in this quarter.

Writing Style: Third person, past tense. Occasionally, the chapters switch perspectives between characters, but not very often. The style isn't anything poetic or even descriptive - the Author doesn't do much to color in Peter's world. At times, it feels rather textbookish, which is hard to avoid when addressing so many historical facts. But the information the Author explores is so fascinating that I didn't mind all that much, and I did love how he threw in lots of German words - I love German! It's so much fun to try and pronounce. But he also offers in-text translations, so we Readers aren't left in the dark about what that extremely long word means.

Content: 1 f-word, 2 s-words. Things like sterilization are addressed, though not in detail, and of course there are a few scenes of Gestapo interrogation, but nothing gory.

Conclusion: Once Peter decides that he doesn't agree with the Nazi party, things come crumbling down pretty fast for him - and the Reiders. Where the plot lagged in the beginning, we have a heart-pounding climax that genuinely had me wondering for a moment if Peter really was going to get away - or if the book would end with his death. *The Auslander* is not a character-driven or even plot-driven book; it's a fact-driven one. The story begins with a information-dump on the Reader and doesn't really let up all that much, as the

story spans events from 1941 to 1943. But I found the historical facts so fascinating - and at times downright chilling, like the school curriculum, the "Christmas" decorations, and of course the termination of so-called "undesirables" of society - that I didn't mind the slow plot at all. I like fact-driven books, especially when they are about WWII and the Nazi regime - a time in history that we can *never* afford to forget.

Recommended Audience: Girl-and-guy read, fifteen-and-up, as well as a great book for adults, perfect for historical fiction fans that prefer a more factual-driven story than drama-driven.

El Cuaderno de Chris says

Una historia interesante basada en hechos reales, el inicio y el final tienen un ritmo frenético, y un tanto lento hacia la mitad del libro, me gustó mucho.

K. says

Trigger warnings: Antisemitism, racism, death of a parent (in the past), car accident.

Based on the blurb, this sounded intriguing. Unfortunately, it proved to be more meh than anything for me. While the concept of a Polish boy sent to live in Germany following the death of his parents was definitely unique, the characters lacked emotional depth for me. The writing was pretty choppy and it didn't always feel finished.

That said, it's a pretty unique viewpoint - a teenager in Nazi Germany who's living with the perfect high ranking Nazi family but who's secretly rebelling against everything he's learnt in the Hitler Youth.

But ultimately, it took a little too long to actually get to the rebelling part for me, and then when it DID get to the rebelling part? It was over too quickly.

Robert says

I have no words to describe this book!!!

Amanda Tuinstra (Liefde voor boeken Amanda) says

recensie volgt op mijn blog

Maartje De Groot says

Ongelofelijk, zoveel nieuwe en schokkende dingen gelezen over de nazi praktijken.
Dat je al zoveel weet en toch zoveel nog niet.

John Makowiecki says

In Auslander, Paul Doswell reveals the story of a young 13 year old boy with blue eyes and blond hair who had just recently lost his parents to a Nazi tank during the German Invasion of Poland. This boy's name was Peter. Peter grew up on a farm just south of Warsaw, but just after his parents were killed, Peter was sent to an orphanage in Warsaw. Since he had a German complexion, Peter was adopted by a Herr and Frau Klatenbach, who had three daughters. As Peter is forced to move to Berlin with his new family, he makes friends quickly and is perceived to be a fine young Nazi, but the reality of Peter's situation is that Peter can't quite grasp the idea of the Nazi Propaganda. Peter must decide his faith, To be a normal Nazi or something far worse in the eyes of those around him.

As soon as the story started, I was enticed by Paul Doswell's quick and exciting hook right off the bat. I was intrigued with the exposition and I could not stop reading. Another quality of Paul Doswell's book was the realistic approach to World War II. The real world depiction of this World War II book must truly perceive the war in a way that is both factual and exciting at the same time. This allowed for readers of all types to enjoy this book. One thing that I didn't fancy much about Paul Doswell's interpretation was that, in my eyes, the story seemed to slow down after such an exciting beginning. The author could have done a better job making the transitions of rising action to climax more exciting for the readers. A little more suspense was needed in this area for a more exasperating Climax. The author's purpose of this story was to show the reality of World War II in the view of German people. The theme of this story was one of morals and the difference between the easy yet bad way out and the hard yet good way through.

I gave this book a 4/5 on GoodReads. The reality and exiting manor of this story is sure to engage all readers. I would recommend this book for 13 and up due to some harsh parts of the story. I think this book would attract more attention to guys, but I feel girls would enjoy it aswell. Does contain some minor romantic parts. This book really is a joy to read.

Rosa says

I picked up Auslander because Goodreads recommended it to me, and then I found it in my library. The minute I read the blurb, I knew I had to read this book. I am a huge fan of historical fiction, especially novels set in World War I or World War II. So, I especially enjoyed this because it was set in a period of history I enjoy reading about – World War II and I couldn't put it down! It did what books set in the war tend to do: shock, fascinate and be totally absorbing. I also really enjoyed the occasional bits of German throughout the novel. It helped me picture the setting of the book so much better (and I read Auslander the night before a German exam, so it was helpful for revision!)

The category this book completes is “a historical novel.” While I have read many war books this one gave me a different perspective – from families living inside Nazi Germany. I learned many new things about this time period and what went on inside German cities, as well as inside the homes of both Nazi supporters and people who did not support the Nazis. The contrast between the Kaltenbachs and Anna's family was huge: from the display of Nazi propaganda to anti-Jewish presents exchanged at Christmas in the home of the Kaltenbachs, to the way Anna's family listened to a BBC broadcast to get a bigger perspective on what was

really going on in the war and (view spoiler)

At first the main character, Peter, seems to accept what the Nazis are doing in Germany and sees only the very little good Hitler has done for the country. Peter is outwardly symbolic of the ideal of the Nazi party – he is blonde, blue eyed and looks exactly like the boys on the Hitler Youth posters. But he starts to question the propaganda and false information he is told at school and in the Hitler Youth. He soon is sees that the Nazi party is rotten to the core, and he realises everything is not what it seems and also discovers his girlfriend's life isn't quite what it seems either. It turns out (view spoiler)

The plot was tense and had interesting twists (which I probably just revealed to you in the spoilers above... whoops) and the writing was interesting. It was different from your usual battlefield war fiction, it made me think and contemplate the time, the awful things taking place, and the difficult choices everyday people had to make.

My favourite character was Anna, who seemed like someone totally indoctrinated by the Nazis' at first glance, but from the minute the reader is introduced to her we suspect this is an act and that Anna doesn't actually completely agree with the government. Anna's family is doing very brave things that she needs to be courageous to do, and I admire her for that. She is a compassionate character who is very brave and passionate, and has unexpected twists to her personality the match the story.

A quote from this book I liked was

“Every one of them, he reflected with mounting anger, if they knew what I'd just been doing, they'd betray me to the Gestapo without a second thought.”

This quote proves how much of a lying, backstabbing place Nazi Germany was and how the main character could not trust anyone, not even his 'family'.

I learnt so much from this book in terms of many awful things about Nazi Germany, such as the way in which the Nazis influenced children. From dollhouses with swastika wall paper, to learning songs about Hitler in school and Nazi flags on Christmas trees, children were totally sucked into the Nazi regime. There was even a prayer about Hitler they would say. Children would spy on their friends at school, and report them to their parents who would alert the police to any anti-Nazi activity (even a bad joke about Hitler could get you arrested!) This whole idea shocked me and was a disturbing insight into one of the ways the Nazis took over the country- beginning with the children. It was very interesting to learn about the war from a new perspective, someone in Germany for a change. I felt like I was submerged in the setting and was experiencing emotions along with the main character, and got a very good idea of the tensions and dangers faced by Germans that did not wholeheartedly support the Nazi regime.

Auslander was a very good book that I would recommend to anyone with an interest in war history.

Mariam Abood says

My teacher recommended I read this book for a teenage reviewing challenge, and I'm really glad she did because I really ended up enjoying this book.

This book is incredibly underrated, and I feel this book is a lot better than some other books I've read that have been set in Nazi Germany. This was also one of the first young adult books I ever read and I think the fact it was a young adult book made it even better, because this book was able to explore how impressionable teenagers in Nazi Germany were, and how vulnerable they were to influences such as the government, the Hitler Youth, and people's attitudes towards anti-Semitism in general.

The story features Peter, a lovely Aryan boy, who looks like he could be the poster child for the Hitler Youth. After his parents die, he is sent to live with an awful, prominent German family. The reason why I found them awful was because they were incredibly miserable and stuck up.

I don't want to say too much more, because I may end up giving the plot away, but read this book for yourselves, it's a good read I promise. It's got quite a good plot twist at the end, which I personally didn't see coming, but I guess it's all down to interpretation so check this book out for yourselves.

4 stars, an incredible, underrated book.
