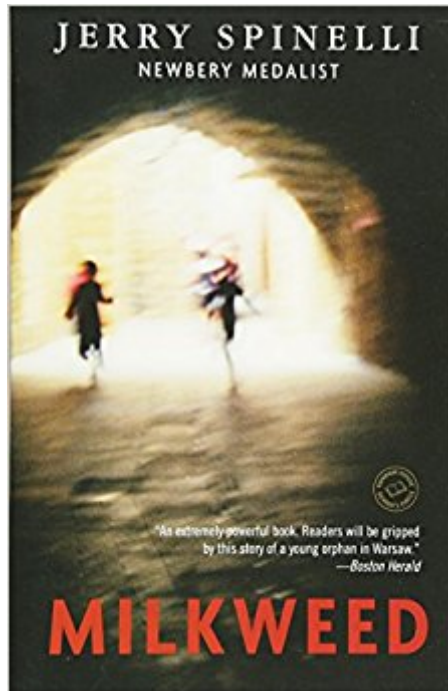




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# Milkweed (Random House Reader's Circle)



## Synopsis

A stunning novel of the Holocaust from Newbery Medalist, Jerry Spinelli. He's a boy called Jew. Gypsy. Stopthief. Filthy son of Abraham. He's a boy who lives in the streets of Warsaw. He's a boy who steals food for himself, and the other orphans. He's a boy who believes in bread, and mothers, and angels. He's a boy who wants to be a Nazi, with tall, shiny jackboots of his own-until the day that suddenly makes him change his mind. And when the trains come to empty the Jews from the ghetto of the damned, he's a boy who realizes it's safest of all to be nobody. Newbery Medalist Jerry Spinelli takes us to one of the most devastating settings imaginable-Nazi-occupied Warsaw during World War II-and tells a tale of heartbreak, hope, and survival through the bright eyes of a young Holocaust orphan. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 510L (What's this?)

Series: Random House Reader's Circle

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Ember; 1 Reprint edition (March 23, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0375861475

ISBN-13: 978-0375861475

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.5 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 279 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #12,769 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Orphans & Foster Homes #10 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Holocaust #17 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Newbery Medal-winning author Jerry Spinelli (Maniac McGee, Stargirl) paints a vivid picture of the streets of the Nazi-occupied Warsaw during World War II, as seen through the eyes of a curious, kind, heartbreakingly naïve orphan with many names. His name is Stopthief when people shout "Stop! Thief!" as he flees with stolen bread. Or it's Jew, "filthy son of Abraham," depending on who's

talking to him. Or, maybe he's a Gypsy, because his eyes are black, his skin is dark, and he wears a mysterious yellow stone around his neck. His new friend and protector Uri forces him to take the name Misha Pilsudski and to memorize a made-up story about his Gypsy background so that no one will mistake him for a Jew and kill him. Misha, a very young boy, is slow to understand what's happening around him. When he sees people running, he thinks it's a race. Nazis (Jackboots, as the children call them) marching through the streets appear to him as a delightful parade of magnificent boots. He wants to be a Jackboot! (Uri smacks him for saying this.) He compares bombs to sauerkraut kettles, machine guns to praying mantises, and tanks to "colossal gray long-snouted beetles." The story of Misha and his band of orphans trying to survive on their own would have a deliciously Dickensian quality, if it weren't for the devastation around them--people hurrying to dig trenches to stop Nazi tanks, shops exploding in flames, the wailing of sirens, buzzing airplanes, bombs, and human torture. Spinelli has written a powerfully moving story of survival--readers will love Misha the dreamer and his wonderfully poetic observations of the world around him, his instinct to befriend a Jewish girl and her family, his impulse to steal food for a local orphanage and his friends in the ghetto, and his ability to delight in small things even surrounded by the horror of the Holocaust. A remarkable achievement. (Ages 11 and older) --Karin Snelson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 5 Up-In Warsaw in 1939, a boy wanders the streets and survives by stealing what food he can. He knows nothing of his background: Is he a Jew? A Gypsy? Was he ever called something other than Stopthief? Befriended by a band of orphaned Jewish boys, he begins to share their sleeping quarters. He understands very little of what is happening. When the Nazi "Jackboots" march into the town, he greets them happily, admires their shiny boots and tanks, and hopes he can join their ranks someday. He eventually adopts a name, Misha, and a family, that of his friend Janina Milgrom, a girl he meets while stealing food in her comfortable neighborhood. When the Milgroms are forced to move into the newly created ghetto, Misha cheerfully accompanies them. There, he is one of the few small enough to slip through holes in the wall to smuggle in food. By the time trains come to take the ghetto's residents away, Misha realizes what many adults do not--that the passengers won't be going to the resettlement villages at the journey's end. Reading this unusual, fresh view of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a child who struggles to understand the world around him is like viewing a poignant collage of Misha's impressions. He shares certain qualities with Spinelli's Maniac Magee, especially his intense loyalty to those he cares about and his hopeful, resilient spirit. This historical novel can be appreciated both by readers

with previous knowledge of the Holocaust and by those who share Misha's innocence and will discover the horrors of this period in history along with him. Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Interesting but pretty overwhelming and sad. It does keep you engaged as a reader but I had to put it down a few times because it was so depressing. It is an interesting perspective . The reader gets to grow and age with the author and.... (spoiler alert) at least he survives till the end of the book. It depicts a very grim portrait of an awful time In History of Poland and the world. Reminded me of the book all the light that we cannot see but not as descriptively prose.

This book takes place during the times of the Holocaust. Having read Jerry Spinelli novels in the past, it didn't surprise me that the main character was a young, somewhat innocent boy and that the novel is in first person. Overall I wish I would of read this book when I was younger. Spinelli serves as a great young adult writer, and this book is best suited for someone in middle school when they are just learning about the holocaust. This novel highlights a unique perspective with a light theme of how the holocaust impacted everybody in Germany; without the gruesome details. Beyond that, this still can be a great quick pleasure read for all ages. However, out what i've read from Jerry Spinelli, I recommend Maniac Magee over Milkweed without a doubt. The character development and characteristics in this novel was on point. Each character remained consistent and the details of each person's identity gave life to the story. The main character, Misha has a unique perspective from being raised on the street with little to nothing to call his own. Once the Nazis (or Jackboots as Misha called them) gained power, Misha was able to use his skills to help others close to him and himself. Compared to other Holocaust novels, this novel has less action and a lot less war battles than the average story. However, Milkweed still remains captivating and another Young Adult hit from Jerry Spinelli.

I have a 6th grade son who hates reading but for some reason all books by Jerry Spinelli keeps his attention. So of course I will buy all the books I can.

My son's 6th grade class read this book in school and they were enthralled by it. After completing the book my son was emphatic that my husband and I read it too. We're so glad we did! The book was outstanding and kept us engaged from start to finish. Milkweed is a must read that set the stage

for a very insightful dialog about the atrocities of the Holocaust. Sensational book! Don't pass it by!

This is a historical fiction set in [mainly] Warsaw Poland, that uses many facts and events of the time period. I highly recommend this book. With the assistance of a grown-up, younger readers can appreciate and learn from the subject matter and hopefully come to sympathize with anyone who is unjustly oppressed or mistreated. The main character is a young, destitute, orphan boy who has no certainty of his identity (name, ethnicity, etc) and his daily life of surviving in the city. The story begins just before the Nazi invasion/occupation of Warsaw, Poland. Shortly after, he witnesses the subjugation of the Jews of the city and their forced segregation to the ghettos, then their eventual removal by freight train (to send them to the concentration or death camps). The character's child innocence and lack of common knowledge (and current events) brings a third-person point of view to the story, as the reader is taken along with him as he gains knowledge and identity.

written in the point of view of a child during the time of the Holocaust. So interesting to see another point of view.

My son read this book for a summer reading project, he enjoyed it very much and felt that the characters were well developed and it had a good story line.

Milkweed is the best book I've ever read that deals with the Nazis, Hitler, the concentration camps, the fear and the reality of torture and death to the Jews during this reign of terror. It is written so any older child can understand it, and yet it captured my attention from beginning to end. I couldn't put it down. My 12 year old, who IS NOT a history buff and doesn't even like to read, never has trouble remembering the Jackboots, the children stealing food to keep from starving, and the trains pulling away while loved ones held their arms out to each other for the last time. MILKWEED is a totally accurate portrayal of the horrors the Jewish people lived and died in under Hitler's rule, yet it is presented in a fictional way that children can understand. Don't miss this one. Thanks for putting Milkweed out there for all to read.

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