

Playing for the Commandant By Suzy Zail Thinking her family was lucky because their apartment fell within the walls of the ghetto Hanna Mendel continued to believe she would be able to attend Budapest Conservatorium of Music where she had just been selected for a hard won place as a piano student. But in the middle of a night in June 1944 a knock on the door by officers informed them that the Mendel family parents high-spirited defiant older sister Erika and Hanna 15 was ordered to assemble outside the synagogue at 8 the next morning. When she talks about the lice the smells the moldy bread or about how skeleton thin her sister and the other women are becoming you can clearly see and smell what she is describing. Despite everything Hanna's father had told her to survive at any cost to tell the world what happened to the Jews of Europe and so she is determined to do what her father wanted. But when she talks about the danger of stealing scraps of leftover food or of living under the pressure of always having to please the commandant Hanna's fate feels just as capricious or dangerous as her fellow inmates. But when a girl at the commandant's house drops a tray with tea and cakes on it I thought for sure that when she is removed from the house she is also killed but she shows up later and I have to admit I was surprised to see her again in the novel. Yet despite this criticism in the end I thought that Playing for the Commandant is definitely worth reading for its message of survival and hope but not for its gratuitous romance. This book is recommended for readers age 12+ This was an EARC received from NetGalley This review was originally posted at The Children's War 249 Although I found this book enjoyable it did have many loose ends that at the end of the book were left untied. You grew strong relations with the characters but at the end of the story I felt like the reader should be left more informed about what was going to happen to the girls with both the lover and the parents presumed dead. She hates to work for the people that ruined her life and everybody else's in the camp but thanks to this new job she has more food to share with her sister and warm clothes to get through winter with. This book has a place in my heart and I want to reread this book already! You follow the story of Hanna who plays the piano I play the piano as well so that was already a good start for me. Questo libro è una mina dentro al mio cuore perché anche in mezzo alla crudeltà l'amore e le scelte giuste riescono a donare la speranza! 249 Hanna Mendel has a dream to follow in the footsteps of her musical muse Clara Schumann the celebrated German pianist. At Auschwitz Hanna Erika and their mother are separated from their father - with a flick of his cane Josef Mengele sends healthy workers to the right while the children elderly and infirm are sent to the left and never seen again. But by the last page I was ready to sell this novel on street corners - I'm already imploring friends to borrow my copy and I intend to tell my aunt to recommend the book to her students (she is of Austrian descent and a German language teacher at a Melbourne high school). Block leaders were assigned to keep people in check - Jewish women who were also prisoners but ranked above the rest (and often with a coloured patch on their uniforms identifying them as murderers). When Hanna is assigned as Captain Jager's pianist she and her family experience derision from their barrack mates who believe Hanna is like those women in the camp who spread their legs for the soldiers. Throughout the novel Hanna is seemingly in two worlds - within the camp she witnesses the horrors and injustices - women picked off one by one when they don't pass the morning fitness test and the way that they eventually turn on one another for a scrap of bread or a dead woman's shoes. And then she ventures into Captain Jager's luxurious home where she is made to play Mozart and Wagner making herself sick as she entertains his uniformed friends; I closed my eyes and tried to slip inside the music but I couldn't get in. I squeezed my eyes shut but it was still there an image flickering against the backs of my eyelids - a man with silver hair bent over a dead body prying open lips and pulling at gold teeth. Because 'The Wrong Boy' is set in Auschwitz Zail writes about real figures of the Holocaust and Nazi party - Josef Mengele for example assumes his role as the 'Angel of Death' the camp's man with the cane who chose who lived and who died. The young adult genre seems to produce some wonderfully complex and important fiction books about the Holocaust; Morris Gleitzman's 'Once' series 'The Boy in the Striped Pajamas' by John Boyne and of course certain nominees in the 'Sydney Taylor Book Awards for Older Readers and Teen Readers' (books that exemplify the highest literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience). Although this book does give the impression of

being mainly a love story it actually very strongly focuses on Hanna's relationship with her mother father and especially with her older sister. Ovviamente non mi sono piaciuti il dolore e ingiustizia che la protagonista ha dovuto affrontare (lei sarà anche un personaggio fittizio ma rappresenta milioni di persone vere come il padre della scrittrice effettivamente deportato) il racconto del campo è raggelante come tutti gli altri senza fronzoli e senza illusioni. Però l'autrice ci tiene a tenere accesa la speranza ci tiene a sottolineare (attraverso la piccola -immensa?- storia d'amore inter-razziale e attraverso la sua aguzzina ebrea) che le persone non sono mai tutte buone o tutte cattive. In questo libro c'è Karl il giovane figlio del comandante nazista di Birkenau che schifato dal comportamento del padre cerca di fare quello che pu💎💎 per aiutare quelli che dovrebbero essere i suoi nemici. How could she know she would fall in love with the wrong boy? These are Hanna's father's parting words to her and her sister when their family is separated at the gates of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Her first novel for young adults *The Wrong Boy* was short listed for the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book of the Year Awards the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature the WAYRBA USBBY and YABBA awards. Her first novel for young adults *The Wrong Boy* was short listed for the Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book of the Year Awards the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature the WAYRBA USBBY and YABBA awards, It made the book very gloomy especially with the author constantly hinting that all would soon be better. Also the action got tiring there would be a cliffhanger after every chapter and would often not even be resolved or mentioned in the following chapters. Finally I thought that although the main character was suppose to be 16 at times she sounded very young maybe even 12 years old, She kept on referring to be so bright for her age but it seemed as if she was not as intelligent as it may seem. All in All I gave this book 3 stars as it was hard to put down and generally enjoyable although I found the ending annoying, 249 I wanted to like this book so badly.

In my opinion this would be a fantastic way to introduce younger people to the topic of the holocaust. Not overly graphic while also addressing the horrors that went on. 249 In spring 1944 Hungary was occupied by German soldiers and in the city of Debrecen a ghetto was formed at the end of April. Before leaving Hanna rips the C-sharp from her beloved piano and takes it with her, The next morning the Mendels along with all of Debrecen's Jews begin their long trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. Once they arrive at Auschwitz the family is split up but luckily Hanna Erika and their mother are able to stay together in the same barrack even sharing a bunk, Put to work in the quarry one day Hanna sees her music teacher playing piano with an ensemble made of up inmates and called the Birkenau Women's Orchestra: Piri thinks that maybe she can get Hanna a place in it: When that doesn't work out Hanna is sent to audition with five other inmates for the camp's cruel commandant, Believing she doesn't stand a chance at being chosen the commandant leave the choice to his totally disinterested son Karl Jager who points to Hanna: Day after day Hanna trudges to the commandant's house to await the order to play for him and any guests he may have: The only perks to playing for the commandant is a warm shower everyday (the commandant detests dirt) shoes a warm coat and a warm house while she's there. The only extra food is leftovers she must steal and risk getting caught and shot, Gradually however she discovers that Karl Jager harbors his own dangerous secrets and is not as disinterested or as indifferent as she originally thought, When he treats her kindly Hanna finds herself more and more attracted to him. But returning to the barrack at the end of each day she sees that her mother and Erika are cold starving and barely surviving: To make matters worse her mother who had started going mad during the roundup in Debrecen is having more and more trouble surviving the selections each time they are done, Their one hope is that the Red Army is really moving east as rumored around the camp and that they arrive in time. Playing for the Commandant is certainly a very readable book, It is told in the first person by Hanna a very observant 15 year old and on many levels her voice rings true, Her descriptions of the camp of the cruelty inflicted on innocent people are spot on: For example when the gardener a Jew steps on the grave of the commandant's dog he is shot in the head for it, But Hanna's growing romance with Karl is very most disturbing and a real flaw in the novel. I guess I

thought Hanna should be thinking more about food than a boy. She didn't get that much more to eat than her sister and what she got she shared with Erika, Also at one point Hanna gets angry at the people ordinary farmers who watch her walk to and from the commandant's house every day and do nothing, I got mad at Karl for being against what the Nazis were doing to the Jews but who passively sits by and watches it all happen: I would be curious to know how others feel about this part of an otherwise good novel, It would not have hurt to leave them some kind of fortune money family but I just couldn't: It was supposed to be a story about how a Jewish girl falls in love for the wrong boy the German son of the camp commander: Hanna a fifteen years old Jewish girl who loves more than anything else to play the piano is sent along with her family to Auschwitz: When they first arrived there they have been separated from their father and as her mom slowly goes insane Hanna turns to her older sister Erika for support. Erika might as well be the only reason why Hanna keeps holding on, Erika with her passion for photography with her fighting spirit is a strong young woman seeking for freedom, When she first got into Auschwitz she was the strongest one in the family. With her blind optimism she's trying to give back to her sister the hope she has lost. One day Hanna is asked to start working for the commander of the camp thanks to her greatest passion: music: Thanks to her new job she also gets the chance to meet Karl the camp commander's son, At first she thinks he hates her she thinks that he's no better than his father, But then they get the chance to spend more time together and she starts to realize that she was wrong, And even though she knows she shouldn't she knows it's wrong she slowly starts to fall for the wrong boy, I was hoping for a desperate-passionate heart-breaking forbidden love story but even though there were all the elements it just seemed too shallow to me: I found the book too plain stereotyped especially the love story. I wanted to know more about Erika I wanted to know more about Karl. 249 I feel rather deceived with that synopsis since the romance is everything but the theme of this book, 249



Can I just start with saying this book deserves so many more stars than 5 Seriously. If you want to read a world war 2 story I would highly recommend you this book. Every emotion a person can feel is present and also the lack of feelings a person can have you find in this book, I loved the relationships growth so much between Hanna and her sister Hanna and the Barrack leader Hanna and Karl Hanna and Vera Hanna and her parents, How these relations changed through the story was magnificent if you ask me: That was a terrible but ending although it couldn't have had a better ending at the same time, What better way to finish this review by saying one thing: C sharp: 249 La musica per sovrastare le urla l'orrore il dolore e la disperazione. Tasti bianchi e neri che scandiscono il tempo dei ricordi e della speranza: E la dolcezza sconfinata di piccolissimi gesti che riescono a dare conforto là dove non esiste altro che ORRORE: Hanna is only fifteen and already her musical talents have seen her debut at the Debrecen Town Hall and play at the Goldmark Hall: By eighteen Hanna hopes to shadow Clara and be playing to sell-out crowds in Vienna , then Hitler and the war came to Hungary and everything changed, Hanna and her family have been living in a ghetto; sectioned off with other Juden (Jews) and slowly their world began to alter: Her father a talented watch-maker had his business close down, The Mendel family have tried to cope in these trying times of war; Hanna her father mother and older sister Erika all living day-to-day within the confines of the ghetto, These are difficult times to be Jew but so long as the family has each other they should be fine: Everyone is told to pack a bag and enough food to last three days. Hanna and her family

leave their apartment their valuables and small mementos behind (save for a C-sharp black key from Hanna's beloved piano): They will be there when they come back when this war ends , All the Jews are herded into cattle trains; made to stand for days on end while the train clatters along the countryside taking them to Poland and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Hanna is now A10573 and put to work in the quarry like everyone else. But it quickly becomes apparent that the Auschwitz slogan 'Arbeit macht frei' (work sets you free) is a cruel taunt, Block leaders whip and beat the women if they so much as look at them the wrong way : Auschwitz is no work camp Hanna decides rather it is a place of death: And then a miracle; Auschwitz commandant Captain Jager needs a pianist, He will be holding an audition for one girl to be his entertainment when he wines and dines guests, This is a mixed blessing - the lucky pianist will be alone in Jager's home and able to steal scraps of food and have a respite from the back-breaking quarry work. But Jager's last pianist lost a finger when she hit the wrong key and to be caught stealing means a bullet to the head, Hanna is successful and wins the audition - and it is in Jager's house playing for his SS officer friends that Hanna first sees Karl Jager's son. What starts as contempt for the beautiful boy turns into something more something dangerous and forbidden, 'The Wrong Boy' is the new young adult novel from Australian author Suzy Zail. I first heard about Suzy Zail's novel from Adele of Persnickety Snark fame. Then I was told that Ms Zail had attended the same RMIT Writing & Editing course as me and that a couple of my friends were mentioned in her 'Acknowledgements', So long before I actually read the book I was excited for all the whispers of brilliance and because the blurb was thoroughly intriguing: And now that I have devoured the novel I must say that all the advance praise is utterly deserved. 'The Wrong Boy' is a beautifully crushing read and I hope it gets nominated for a few young adult literary awards in 2012: From 1933 to 1945 six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust; though this is a rough estimate since it's impossible to precisely know the extent of the slaughter, Of the six million it is again roughly estimated that 450000 Hungarian Jews perished. And in Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp alone over one million Jews were murdered. Suzy Zail's story is somewhat inspired by her father who she explains in her author's note was sent to Auschwitz when he was just thirteen-years-old. She has previously written a book about how her father survived the Holocaust titled 'The Tattooed Flower' but 'The Wrong Boy' is a work of fiction . Many times I had to put the book down unable to read through my tears: This novel left me raw but I'm bloody glad I read it: Through Hanna's eyes Suzy Zail explores all aspects of the Holocaust. We learn of the slow unfolding before the war when Jews were ghettoized and made to live with 'their own kind'. Hanna speaks about the non-Jewish friends who abandoned her the neighbours who turned a blind eye. At Auschwitz Zail delves into the little-discussed politics within the concentration camp and barracks hierarchy, I opened my eyes and stared at keys but no matter how hard I tried I couldn't force my way in: I stared at the notes dancing across the page and felt sick: Playing in Jager's home means Hanna also comes into contact with his beautiful son Karl: The boy will not meet Hanna's eyes and she is convinced that she disgusts him - the dirty Jew in his home: But the months pass with requiems Chopin Beethoven and the 'Moonlight Sonata' : and Hanna begins to see Karl in a new light even if he is the wrong boy for her: The romance in Zail's novel is complex and sure to keep the reader on edge but is really second-tier to the politics and sadness within Auschwitz: Zail writes about life in the concentration camp with striking clarity and ruthlessness; and these scenes within the camp's walls are utterly harrowing: Zail also touches on Mengele's role as camp doctor when Hanna's hometown friends twin girls are hand-picked by Mengele and taken from the barracks. Throughout the book she sways between terror anger and profound sadness - but her determination is constant. She simply will not succumb to death in this putrid camp and she will do anything to help her family survive with her. She is an inspiring heroine and an utterly compelling narrator, I don't want to give anything away about the ending particularly concerning who lives and dies: But I really liked that at the end Zail touches on yet another aspect of the Holocaust - the return: Those Jewish survivors who returned to their homes across Europe only to find they no longer existed: In the aftermath of liberation there are rumours of Jews fleeing to Palestine where they intend to build an army, Other Jews are talking about finding solace in Australia - as far away from Europe as they can get, This is a

whole other facet to the Holocaust and just as interesting so I fully intend to read Zail's 'The Tattooed Flower' to get more insight into this aftermath. I remember reading 'The Diary of Anne Frank' in year six and being crushed by the book's epilogue which described Anne's death from typhus in a concentration camp: Going into high school and finally learning about the ideologies that led to The Holocaust was both interesting and disheartening: That people can be swayed to violence and inhumanity by nothing but madness and prejudice, Even more so when you see picture evidence of the suffering - skeletal people in rags and shaved heads looking like ghosts as they stare out of black and white photos. And those photos of bodies piled like mountains discarded and buried en masse: It doesn't matter how many documentaries I watch or history books I read - seeing photos of the concentration camps those faces and inhuman bodies absolutely floors me: I don't want to believe that human beings can be so cruel to one another, 'The Wrong Boy' is vital reading another harrowing but important fictionalized account of the darkest period of human history: I hope that Zail's novel gets put up for a few literary awards this year. 'The Wrong Boy' is a book that anyone who reads it will be moved and enraged by the history and truth within its pages: 249 'The wrong boy' is not a fitting title for this novel neither is the synopsis, The story of a Jewish girl sent to Auschwitz with her family. She falls in love with the wrong boy - the German son of the camp commander, This time it's between a Jewish Hungarian girl and a German boy. It does seem a bit wrong in a way as if the holocaust was a tragedy rather than a great atrocity. 'The wrong boy' doesn't solely revolve around the camp commander's son. As for the historical accuracy concerning how life was in a concentration camp in Poland it isn't anything you couldn't discover by simply going on Wikipedia. I thought it satisfactorily conveyed the emotions of the characters but of course I can't be the judge of that. I don't think anyone can simply understand the emotions of those unfortunate people thrown in a concentration camps in World War II, "Hanna Mendel liked to know what was going to happen next: She was going to wear her yellow dress to the dance on Saturday night, But she didn't plan on her street being turned into a ghetto, She didn't plan on being rounded up and thrown in a cattle truck, She didn't plan on spending her sixteenth birthday in Auschwitz in a wooden barrack with two hundred other prisoners: " Hanna is naïve but she also has a strong optimistic side to her that makes her endearing, As for the love interest Karla Jaeger there was no denying he was also an endearing character and the way his compassion and sympathy was presented made him very likable: Overall I would recommend this but it surely isn't anything impressive for a historical fiction. However it's heart-warming or as heart-warming a book about the holocaust can be: 249 Dire che questo libro mi è piaciuto molto mi sembra di cattivo gusto visto il tema trattato, Le persone scelgono di fare cose o di non farle e appartenere a una razza (ebraica o ariana) non significa essere tutti uguali: Nel mondo reale è esistito Oskar Schindler e suppongo come lui qualche altro: Esistenze come questa non giustificano o scusano assolutamente le azioni di troppi altri ma sono comunque una speranza. In definitiva sono contenta di aver letto questo libro (anche se mi ha fatto male) perché non bisogna demonizzare nessuno a priori, Oggi ancora abbiamo bisogno di speranza e se ce n'è stata allora quando tutto sembrava perduto significherà pur qualcosa, 249 A young Jewish pianist at Auschwitz desperate to save her family is chosen to play at the camp commandant's house, Her father's words -- and a black C-sharp piano key hidden away in the folds of her dress -- are all that she has left to remind her of life before. Now it is up to Hanna to do all she can to keep her mother and sister alive even if that means playing piano for the commandant and his guests: Staying alive isn't supposed to include falling in love with the commandant's son: But Karl Jager is beautiful and his aloofness belies a secret, Playing for the Commandant Suzy Zail has worked as a litigation lawyer specialising in Family Law but now writes full time: Among other titles she has written her father's story The Tattooed Flower his life as a child survivor of the Holocaust, Her second novel Alexander Altmann A10567 was a Notable Book at the CBCA Awards: Her latest YA novel I Am Change is the story of a young Ugandan girl's struggle to stay in school: In 2022 Suzy published her first Picture Book Arabella's Alphabet Adventure, Suzy's books have been published in Germa Suzy Zail has worked as a litigation lawyer specialising in Family Law but now writes full time. Among other titles she has written her father's story The

Tattooed Flower his life as a child survivor of the Holocaust. Her second novel Alexander Altmann A10567 was a Notable Book at the CBCA Awards. Her latest YA novel I Am Change is the story of a young Ugandan girl's struggle to stay in school: In 2022 Suzy published her first Picture Book Arabella's Alphabet Adventure[1]

A future. Sad but with happy hope-filled moments as well. It doesn't romanticise them through avoidance. I read it in one day. They need each other to survive. To keep on hoping. The one still standing not losing hope. She was the strong one the wild one. The one who was more angry than afraid. However slowly the anger started to abandon her. Fear started to get to her. Therefore Hanna is now trying to be the strong one. In fact she starts playing the piano for him. She makes new friends and new enemies. That Karl was nothing like his father. I wanted more. I wanted more details. More romance. A breath-taking love story. Not love-at-first-sight. This book was full of emotions. Angry sadness happiness revenge hurt scared optimistic pessimistic. It was hard and beautiful at the same time. And that ending omg that ending. . Her non-Jewish friends stopped talking to her at school. One night the ghetto is evacuated. The Jews are being taken to a work camp. . But no one is prepared for the journey before them. . The women are stripped shaved and tattooed. Everyone works for mouldy bread and muddied water. . . based around a tragic and dark moment in human history. 'The Wrong Boy' is a tough read and so it should be. . . Hanna is a brilliant heroine. I am fascinated by history always have been. . it's sickening. But we can. Detailed review with photos here: <http://alphareader.blogspot.com.au/20>. Yes it's a novel about star-crossed lover. I wish the author gave a second thought about the title. It does not give the book enough justice. She was going to be a famous concert pianist. Qui la recensione completa --> <http://nonsempreiosonodelmiostessopar>. Before Hanna was going to be a famous concert pianist. She was going to wear her yellow dress to a dance. And she was going to dance with a boy. But then the Nazis came. And war makes you do dangerous things. Suzy's books have been published in Germany the UK U.S. Sweden Italy Romania and the Netherlands. She lives in Melbourne and has three children. Visit her online at suzyzail.com.au and [@authorsuzyzail](#) {site_link}.