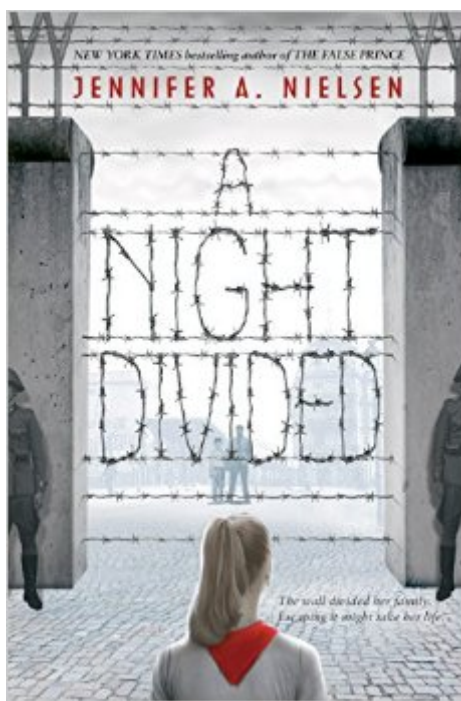


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A Night Divided



Synopsis

From NYT bestselling author Jennifer A. Nielsen comes a stunning thriller about a girl who must escape to freedom after the Berlin Wall divides her family between east and west. With the rise of the Berlin Wall, twelve-year-old Gerta finds her family suddenly divided. She, her mother, and her brother Fritz live on the eastern side, controlled by the Soviets. Her father and middle brother, who had gone west in search of work, cannot return home. Gerta knows it is dangerous to watch the wall, to think forbidden thoughts of freedom, yet she can't help herself. She sees the East German soldiers with their guns trained on their own citizens; she, her family, her neighbors and friends are prisoners in their own city. But one day, while on her way to school, Gerta spots her father on a viewing platform on the western side, pantomiming a peculiar dance. Then, when she receives a mysterious drawing, Gerta puts two and two together and concludes that her father wants Gerta and Fritz to tunnel beneath the wall, out of East Berlin. However, if they are caught, the consequences will be deadly. No one can be trusted. Will Gerta and her family find their way to freedom?

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

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Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1.2 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (109 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

When I hear the 1960s, I associate the decade with Neil Armstrong and his stepping on the moon, JFK's assassination, lots of classic TV shows, and even my parents' childhood. For other people, they can probably only associate one thing with the 1960s – that fateful day Berlin was divided and the Wall that continued to haunt their lives for 28 years. I remember learning about the

Berlin Wall and Reagan's famous quote in social studies; yet, I never pursued reading any further information. *A Night Divided* was the first historical fiction I read on the subject and I must say Ms. Nielsen does a fantastic job with drawing the readers into this ghastly point in history. Gerta, her brother Fritz, and their mother wake up one morning to find a fence separating them from West Berlin but more tragically, from their father and other brother who went to West Berlin only 2 days before. The book is told by Gerta, who struggles under the oppressiveness of the GDR while attempting to dig a tunnel to the other side with hopes to unite her divided family. Gerta's voice is strong and mature for a 12 year old girl as her circumstances force her to grow up before her time. Her courage and will to be free are admirable while her struggle to forgive and understand the world's cruelties is plausible. I must warn potential readers that you will not want to put this book down. From the first page, it is nonstop and Nielsen keeps you on edge with each new plot development (we fans know she is an expert at this!). Working and even sleeping got in my way of finishing this book sooner than I actually did. The provided historical pictures and map prior to the story prepare the readers for the somber yet hopeful mood of the book and many of the quotes at each chapter's beginning will stay with you.

They say that truth can be stranger than fiction, and in some cases, it can be much more frightening. Such is the case in *A NIGHT DIVIDED* by Jennifer A. Nielsen, the story of the Lowe family, seen through the eyes of 12-year-old Gerta. The Lowes live through the horrifying rise of communism in East Germany in the 1960s and the literal rise of the Berlin Wall, one of the most notorious symbols of oppression of the 20th century. The night the fences ascend, Gerta, her older brother Fritz and her mother can only watch helplessly, knowing that her father and other brother are trapped on the other side after visiting the west that day. Since her father used to belong to a cohort of rebellion, the chances of him ever returning are slim to none. The days grow dark, and everyone is silenced under the terrifying regime of the GDR. Fueled by an indomitable spirit, Gerta longs to cross to the other side and taste the foreign sweet honey of freedom. But when friends and neighbors begin to die from attempts to escape, the Lowe family is put under heavier surveillance, many viewing the family's history of resistance as a poison to the community and a threat to anyone who befriends them. More than ever, Gerta feels that fewer and fewer people around her can be trusted. But one day, Gerta sees her father across the chasm of the wall. At first she thinks he has dancing to a silly childhood song to show his love for her, but she comes to realize that he is sending her a message of a plan. More clues fall into her lap, and Gerta knows what she must do --- she and Fritz will dig a tunnel across the divide to her family and freedom.

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