



2006

# Your Eyes in Stars

Jan Staheli

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Kerr, M.E. *Your Eyes in Stars*. HarperCollins, 2006. ISBN 9780060756833. \$16.89. 229 p.

Reviewer: Jan Staheli

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Friendship--Juvenile fiction; World War, 1939-1945--Juvenile fiction; Conduct of Life--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Jessie's father is the prison warden. Elisa's father is a visiting university professor from Germany. Jessie is a tomboy who collects wanted posters. Elisa is confident and sophisticated, a world traveler. The girls forge their unlikely friendship over Slater Carr, a young "lifer" at the prison who plays Taps every evening over the prison loudspeaker so soulfully that people come out of their houses just to listen. It is the 1930's in America: people are trying to recover from the Depression and Hitler is on the rise. Slater Carr's tragic life plays out as the girls' friendship grows and the world changes. When Elisa's father takes his family back to Germany to look after an elderly grandmother, Jessie loses track of her.

Kerr has written a slow, funny, understated story of friendship, family and prejudice in a small American town. The characters are engaging and the book brings back memories of being young and having a best, best friend. The prison background makes the story unusual, and the slightly menacing presence of Hitler in the background gives the conclusion quite a punch.

There are no language issues in this book, but there is some violence. It is a completely absorbing story, particularly good for thoughtful readers, that should certainly be recommended.