



2010

### Benno and the Night of Broken Glass

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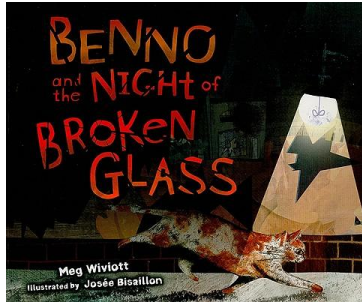
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Wiviott, Meg. *Benno and The Night of Broken Glass*. Illustrated by Josee Bisailon. Kar-Ben Publishing/Lerner Pub, 2010. ISBN 9780822599296. \$17.95. 32 p.

Reviewer: Gabi Kupitz

Reading Level: Primary, Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Fiction; Historical Fiction;

Subject: Kristallnacht, 1938; Germany history 1933-1945; Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945);

Books--Reviews;

Benno is a cat--a very observant cat. Benno lives behind the furnace of an apartment house at Number 5 Rosenstrasse in 1938 Berlin where he has a nice warm bed and plenty of milk every day. The neighborhood is ethnically diverse and, as far as Benno can tell, everyone gets along. That coziness changes one night when brown-shirted men build a gigantic bonfire on Rosenstrasse, burning books and breaking shop windows. This night will forever be known as Kristallnacht, or The Night of Broken Glass. For Benno and the people he loves, nothing will ever be the same, for they will never see many of these Rosenstrasse residents again. This dark event marks the beginning of the nightmare known as the Holocaust.

Wiviott uses a unique way of telling a Holocaust story, through the eyes of a cat, that allows for a whole new perspective on the event, Kristallnacht. Bissailon uses stark illustrations that change from bright to muted colors with only the symbolic flames of change in red contrast. The text of the fictional story in a historical setting ends abruptly--a metaphor for the events about to be unleashed. Wiviott also includes an afterword and bibliography; a great supplement for a World War II or Holocaust unit.

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