



Saying Goodbye to Warsaw

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In the eyes of certain people, however, Abigail has committed a heinous crime. The year is 1940; the place is Poland; Abigail happens to be Jewish.

Along with half a million other Jews, Abigail and her family are evicted from their home and forced to live in the bombed out ruins of Warsaw, the Polish capital.

Although a handful decide to fight back, is the uprising strong enough to save Abigail's spirit?

Saying Goodbye to Warsaw Details

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From Reader Review Saying Goodbye to Warsaw for online ebook

Cheryl M-M says

For some reason I thought Abigail was a teenager of perhaps 14/15 yrs of age. I actually went back and checked. Then I realised that her 'voice' sounded older than her years. Jaded by experience and forced to be more mature than she should have to be at the age of nine. Ripped from her safe and comfortable existence and thrust into the bowels of hell.

The way she speaks about her surroundings suggests a level of denial of her reality, which would explain why her story often sounds as if the unfolding events are insignificant and not worth worrying about. So instead of the grimy, desperate and gruesome truth of the Warsaw Ghetto the reader experiences Abigail's version of life as she sees it.

That sense of being there and not emotionally attached to the situation was an aspect that bothered me. It could be the intended scenario or aura that the author wanted to create, if not then the author wasn't able to create an empathic connection between the story, the character and the reader.

I was both surprised and a little disappointed by the ending. There was suddenly a sense of frivolous adventure, which didn't gel well with the previous story-line or the setting. Balancing a story between the history of the holocaust and the fictional plot can be tricky. The fictional story should never be perceived as making light of the historical truth of that time.

I received a copy of this book courtesy of the author.

Margaret Madden says

The author sent me a copy of this in return for an honest review.

A different look at the effects of World War 2, this is Abigail's tale. She is 9 years old and living in the Warsaw Ghetto, created by the Nazis as a way of keeping all Jews together and under control before sending them to concentration camps. Abigail lives with her mother and her brother, Leo in a grim bedsit within the ghetto. While the young girl is content to spend the days dreaming of better times and remembering her father, Leo is restless and angry with the Regime. While their mother works in a secret soup kitchen, her two children get involved in the day to day issues within the ghetto.

This book is mostly written from Abigail's point of view and while her innocence is no different to any other 9 year old's at the start of the book, as she turns 10 and witness some harrowing things over time, her view on the world becomes more harsh and real.

Towards the end of the book we are introduced to a new character, Alenka, a young woman who is part of the resistance, and the narrative becomes a little confusing. Having very few paragraphs, I found it a little hard to follow who's thoughts I was reading.

The horrors of World War 2 have been written about by thousands of authors but not many have approached it from the Ghetto angle. Although nowhere near as horrific as the camps, there are still some heartbreakening stories to be heard, and you could do worse than reading this novel to see the war from a new perspective. I would recommend this book more as a YA read, as the language is simple and clean with a lack of graphic description which younger readers can be upset by.

T.R. Robinson says

The tale is based round a Polish Jewish family who, along with thousands of others, have been forced by the German occupiers to live in a rundown disintegrating ghetto in Warsaw. As most of us know, well at least those from my generation, this was by no means just a one off. The awful situation was repeated time and again across the world.

The author has done a good job of bringing to life the various characters with all their differences and quirks. He has also managed to describe their varying emotions in such a manner as to enable us to understand and empathise.

In the beginning we are shown how the youngest, Abigail, frequently withdraws into her own world. Some readers have considered this unrealistic (I have read some other people's reviews) but I can, from my own experience, say for some younger sufferers this was, and probably still is, realistic. I suppose it is a self-preservation, probably automatic, reaction. Later circumstances develop to the point where she suddenly matures way beyond her years. Again this is true for the majority of children who suffer war. Inevitably this leads to her having to learn and master new skills and becoming adept at them. Some reviewers have also criticised that Abigail suddenly became proficient at a number of different things. In war the survival instinct often leads to this and amplifies a person's intelligence even, if in theory, it is still under development.

We then have Abigail's elder brother (with his protective attitude), mother (weakened by the loss of her husband) and, later, various acquaintances who join together to resist the German soldiers. The author has privileged us to read about some of their inner emotions and philosophising. All of which are very realistic and with which I hope most readers will be able to identify. Some these inevitably arise in our own everyday ordinary lives when obstacles or difficulties are encountered. In times of war and occupation they are naturally more intense.

We also see how Abigail's innocence finally departs and, along with the other participants, and as horrible as it is, develops a real satisfaction from the deaths of their captors. The author here is again showing us how war impacts upon those attitudes and acceptances we usually consider the 'norm'. How in such time of intense and unwarranted suffering each of us can, and frequently do, change.

I will not say too much more as I do not want to spoil the read for future readers.

The ending was sort of expected and yet unexpected. Again I will not say more.

The book is not a drama per se. It follows the daily life of the participants showing all they suffer and endure in the process of simply trying to exist. And yet it is drama. There is fierce action toward the end all of which hangs together very well.

Though I intend this to be primarily a review of 'Saying Goodbye To Warsaw' I would just like to add a couple of personal notes. I found this a difficult book to read because it brought back (not that I really ever forget) awful memories of my own war experiences. I am not Jewish and was not forced to live in a ghetto. However, as a young girl, I was captured and tortured by the Gestapo. I also know what it is like to have no food, shelter or shoes.

Would I recommend this book? That is a difficult question. It is not an easy light read. It brings the horrors of war and occupation to life even for those who have not experienced such. But at the same time the author has taken care not to include unnecessary descriptions of violence and suffering. And where he has included such details, as required to develop and progress the tale, has not indulged in gratuitous picture making. These occasions are however, still very real and in fact are probably more troubling by avoiding the pitfalls several authors fall into. So YES I do recommend this.

N.B. Apparently, as pointed out in detail by one reviewer, there is the occasional historical and political anomaly. Nevertheless, and thankfully as that reviewer acknowledges, these by no means detract from the tale for the ordinary reader. They certainly did not trouble me.

I would like to thank Michael Cargill for the opportunity to read this book. It may have been difficult for me but I am very glad to have read the well written story.

I happily endorse this with a four star rating.

Note: Due to the various demands upon me I have little time for reading, which is a shame. Consequently I usually restrict what reading I do to memoir or autobiographical works. If you are interested I explain on my blog (<http://www.trbooks7.blogspot.com>) why I chose to tread 'Saying Goodbye To Warsaw' though it is fictional.

Stephanie (Bookfever) says

First of all I want to thank Michael Cargill again for sending me his book for review. I really appreciate it. This book isn't what I would usually read. Yes, I do like historical fiction but I wouldn't pick up a book about war if I would see it in a bookstore or a library but when I read the description I found myself liking the sound of this book and I decided to take a chance on it. I am SO glad I did. This book really did something to me and I would actually rate it 4.5 but as some of you may know I don't work with halves but still it should be that rating. Anyways, before I start the real review I would say that everyone should at least read this book once in their life. It's pretty damn special.

Saying Goodbye to Warsaw follows nine (almost ten)-year-old Abigail 'Abbie' Nussbaum and her family which include her older brother, Leo and their mother, Chana, during World War 2 in Poland. After being sent to the Warsaw Ghetto life became increasingly hard for them but Abbie manages to live her life as best as she can and seeing things in a rather naive and although not entirely positive but sweet kind of way.

First of all, let me say that I'm quite surprised by how this book overwhelmed and grabbed my attention. I must admit that the beginning was a little 'eh' for me. And I was going a little crazy with the author's over-usage of the word 'whilst'. I'm not sure why it bothered me so much but there you go. But after the first 80 pages I couldn't stop reading anymore and I was totally caught up in Abbie's life. Actually, I was caught up in all the characters' lives. Chana's, Leo's, Elenka's even Borys'. My favorite character probably was Leo because I could relate to him the most. (And I just like male points of view the most)

As for the overall story, it was brilliant. And although I wasn't sure about it all at first, I loved the writing when I think back about it. It was quite dark but that's what I would expect from a book like this. And I loved it. Michael Cargill has a real talent writing a book like this that I admire.

The end was pretty shocking to me. When the resistance in Warshow arose I was hanging on every single word. And, yes, I was crying with that end. Actually I was already crying when something happened to Borys. How could I not? It's been a while since a book has impressed me emotionally like this one had. Sure, I couldn't expect a happy ending but yeah... I still hoped.

Overall *Saying Goodbye to Warsaw* by Michael Cargill was close to brilliant. Not perfect. It had some flaws like every book has but I really liked it. I even cried over it and I don't usually cry with books. The characters were close to my heart which made the ending all the more emotional for me. I'd recommend it to everyone, even if you don't like the genre or topic or whatever. Just read it. You might end up being surprised like me.

Sarah says

I won this book through goodreads firstreads, and am very grateful to the author for sending it to me. It's hard to say that you 'enjoyed' a book on such a sad topic, but I was riveted by the story and wanted to keep reading to find out what happened to Abigail and her family, so finished this in a couple of days. The fact that I was thinking about it when I wasn't reading is a good indication of how good the book is. I've read quite a bit of fiction set during the Second World War, but Michael still managed to come at the topic from a different angle to anything I've read before and I'd say this book should be valued as an educational tool about the Warsaw Ghetto. Many books talk about the journey to concentration camps or the initial rounding up of Jews, but the actual day to day lives within the Ghetto are not so well covered. The resistance and soup kitchen were especially interesting to read about, offering hope to the inhabitants. Of course this is fiction, but it's based on a reality and is a brilliant way to really 'put yourself in their shoes' and get a feel for what life could have been like.

Having said that, I felt the ending let the book down. I'm not going to give it away, but I will say that I would have preferred the book if just the last 2 pages had been removed. I didn't mind what happened to the characters, that was up to the author to decide, it was the way that the whole book was based on a gritty reality, except the last 2 pages and I didn't like the departure.

I think that most people would find this an interesting read, but be prepared, as the subject matter suggests, it's not a feel-good easy read.

Sarah Goffman says

The main characters in *Saying Goodbye to Warsaw* by Michael Cargill are Abigail ("Abbie"), her brother Leo and her mom Chana.

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In the eyes of certain people, however, Abigail has committed a heinous crime. The year is 1940; the place is Poland; Abigail happens to be Jewish.

Along with half a million other Jews, Abigail and her family are evicted from their home and forced to live in the bombed out ruins of Warsaw, the Polish capital.

Although a handful decide to fight back, is the uprising strong enough to save Abigail's spirit?"
Goodreads.com

Saying Goodbye to Warsaw is an inspiring book. It sounds weird to say that about a book with such a horrible subject matter. The main two themes that run throughout the book are if you don't like something fight to change it and find something positive about your current situation.

Often times, the main characters, like other Jews during 1940, had little or no food, lived in filth and were afraid of the German soldiers. Leo joins a revolutionary party to fight the Germans. He also finds a way to provide food for his family. Chana, who is hopeless of her current situation becomes determined to do something productive and helps out in the underground soup kitchens that provide the majority of her family's food. Abbie, find children to entertain and teach at the orphanage.

The book is not all inspiring because of the Nazi's. I am not one to cry at books but fair warning, a box of tissues should probably be nearby. I found myself cheering for the characters and shedding tears throughout the book.

The ending is well throughout and matches with the theme of the book. However, I would have liked the ending of the book to gone a different way. I don't want to say too much about why because I feel it may give away too much of the book. I say read the book and then let me know if you agree. Most reviews I have seen so far agree with this.

Saying Goodbye to Warsaw is an amazing book that should be read by all. It has made me favorite book of 2013 list.

Elle says

[for starters i simply couldnt believe a girl that young is physically capable of shooting a gun, especially after she was described as being small for her age. secondly, while the romantic in me enjoyed the last scene, i couldnt help but feel i

Erin Wynn says

I received a copy of this book through the Goodreads Firstreads program.

Lovely, but tear-jerking little book. I cried at several points. Abbie's innocence, her families strength, it was wonderful. The characterization was the best part. I would have liked for it to be slightly longer and more fleshed out, but nevertheless, I really enjoyed this.

Tess says

I got this book through Goodreads first reads. I loved the book although it made me incredibly angry; most books set during the Holocaust do I'm still trying to figure out why I read them. It's set in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust and follows the path of a nine-year-old girl called Abigail. Abigail is naive and she doesn't always understand what's going on around her, this attitude is in stark contrast to her overprotective older brother Leo who is angry at the Nazis and his inability to completely shelter his sister but who understands what's going on. The book follows Abigail as her awareness of the world around her grows and

her ability to miss the horror is slowly chipped away. I find that the various viewpoints made the story more interesting because Chana (Abigail's mother), Leo, Abigail and Alenka all saw the events differently.

Emily V says

Series Standalone

Genre Historical Fiction

Release Date: September 7th 2013

Source: E-book received in exchange for an honest review

Overall Rating: 4/5 Stars

Cover Rating: 4/5 Stars

Synopsis: Like any girl who is loved by her family, Abigail Nussbaum loves to chase butterflies, enjoys lying on her back looking for shapes in the clouds, and happily teaches young children to make daisy chains. In the eyes of certain people, however, Abigail has committed a heinous crime. The year is 1940; the place is Poland; Abigail happens to be Jewish. Along with half a million other Jews, Abigail and her family are evicted from their home and forced to live in the bombed out ruins of Warsaw, the Polish capital. Although a handful decide to fight back, is the uprising strong enough to save Abigail's spirit?

First Line: "When Abigail wriggled her toes, the tops of her shoes rippled as if a small rabbit were burrowing around inside them."

When I started Saying Goodbye to Warsaw I did not know what to expect. I had not read a wartime historical fiction in a long time so I was slightly worried that my review wouldn't do the book justice due to my lack of ability to compare it to others in the genre. However, as I read I found this problem nullified given that there is no need to compare a book when it is excellent in its own right. A problem that I always find with novels narrated by children are that they are much too simplistic, understandably so of course but it is still off putting. Abigail's narration did not have this problem; it was intelligent and complex while still very dreamy and childlike. The mix of these attributes was a risky one but it really paid off. Another problem of novels in which the protagonist is a child is that it usually results in much less concentration on other characters. Again, Cargill flawlessly avoided this through his choice of narration style. Not only do we see multiple perspectives within the story but we are able to connect with them just as easily as we do with Abigail. In fact, my favourite character, Borys, was one of the most minor but still so well developed that I couldn't help loving him. Not one of the characters is exaggerated or idealised, we can easily relate to the fear Chana's fear for her children's safety as well as Leo's anger at the Germans for forcing the Jews into the ghetto. It is impossible to read Saying Goodbye to Warsaw without identifying completely with the characters responses to their situation, not to mention counting yourself lucky not to have experienced such horrors if you are anything like me.

The plot of Saying Goodbye to Warsaw begins quite slowly but the undertone of the horrific war going on in the background plus the readers own knowledge of the persecution of the Jews means that the tension builds throughout even if the events are relatively calm. This clever plot device means that the eventual explosive climax is all the more shocking and effective in contrast to the calmer beginning. Speaking of the ending, it is not often that I am surprised by finales but this one caught me off guard. I cannot tell you any more about it but be prepared to be emotional. However, the comment on the emotional nature is not only reserved for the endings. The extreme tragedy of the story line is emphasised throughout. I promise you that if you pick up this book there will be times when you must fight the urge to internally scream in frustration, not to mention despair.

One element of the book I didn't enjoy is how unrealistic Abigail's character temporarily became. It was only brief, near the end of the book, and therefore excusable, but I did find myself forgetting how old she really was due to her seemingly innate skill at adult activities such as first aid and shooting. One scene in the novel had her learning to accurately shoot a gun in just three attempts, I am no expert on that kind of thing but I doubt most adults could do that, let alone ten year old girls. But, as said earlier, this flaw is only minor in an otherwise interesting and gripping story.

I would recommend *Saying Goodbye to Warsaw* to those who love historical fiction just as much as those who aren't such big fans for one simple reason, it doesn't read like your usual historical fiction. You don't need to remember vast amounts of historical detail in order to understand the plot like with many; this book could easily be read with minimal knowledge of the situation in Poland for Jews therefore no one should be discouraged. *Saying Goodbye to Warsaw* has a tense and gripping plot and realistic characters with whom you can easily empathise with and for this reason it gets 4/5 Stars from me. I certainly look forward to reading more of Michael's work.

Best Quote: "There we are,' he said, shooting her a quick wink. 'You look so much prettier than your brother when you blush."

Joo says

This is a story set in a Ghetto in Warsaw during the war. We follow one family of mum, 17 year old son and 9 year old daughter in coping with this extreme change of life. Horrors are never too far away, hunger is always with them.

They don't do anything special, they aren't heroes, they are just living from day to day, hoping they get to see another one.

Whilst not much happens, I was glued to this story. I knew the outcome, whatever it would turn out to be, would be bleak. Not many people back there and then had happy endings. This author's stories are about the journey, not the destination and I was certainly carried along.

When I put the book down, I'd be thinking of the characters and wishing for a happy ending for them.

Kath Middleton says

This book begins from the point of view of Abigail, a nine year old girl, soon to be ten, and views the dreadful situation of herself and her mother and older brother in a sweetly naive way. She is unable to understand why people are cruel to one another and she herself enjoys helping out at the ghetto's orphanage. The point of view changes, first to that of her brother, then of a resistance fighter. It is chilling to see Abigail's vision of the world change as she becomes exposed to the more extreme events happening around her.

Naturally we don't read a book about children in the Warsaw ghetto and expect happy-ever-afters all round and there are some memorably awful scenes. This is a very well written book and tells its tale graphically but without trying to manipulate the reader emotionally. There is no need. The story speaks for itself.

I felt that the ending let the book down. I can't say more or it would spoil it for other readers. I'm sure many would find it a good way to finish the book but to me it made light of the horror in the rest of the novel. It's important that people remember that, although a novel, it's based on a terrible truth.

Shomeret says

This is the second book that I've read by Michael Cargill. My first was the anthology *Shades of Grey*. *Saying Goodbye To Warsaw* was selected as the Book of the Month for June on the GR group Books, Blogs, Authors and More. I belong to this group and participate in it. It's a WWII novel that takes place in the Warsaw Ghetto, and I received it for free from the author in return for this honest review.

What I liked most about this book was Alenka, a character who appeared late in the novel. She was spirited, resourceful and optimistic in a situation that left little room for optimism. She played an important role in Cargill's version of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. I also found her believable unlike the nine year old protagonist, Abigail.

Another review said that Abigail became unbelievable only toward the end of the book during the uprising. I disagree. I think she was always too good to be true. She had no flaws other than being young and innocent which was too temporary in her horrifying environment to be a real flaw. All the children in the Warsaw Ghetto had to grow up in a hurry. Abigail became much more seriously unbelievable toward the end of the book. She not only acquired skills too quickly, she was better at them than anyone else. Credibility went out the window.

From a storytelling perspective, I thought that *Saying Goodbye To Warsaw* was well-plotted and well-paced. I also liked the final scene. It affirms the centrality and sacredness of family. In the end, family is what matters most.

For my complete review see <http://shomeretmasked.blogspot.com/2013/06/saying-goodbye-to-warsaw.html>

Charlotte Tobitt says

Saying Goodbye To Warsaw is a book about war's corruption of innocence and how uncertainty and fear battles with bravery and resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto.

The story follows nine year-old Abigail, her big brother Leo and their mum as they endure life in the ghetto. They are surrounded by the constant threat of drunk or unprovoked German soldiers, and eventually find solace in a secret, underground soup kitchen.

In a grand sense, not a lot actually happens throughout this relatively short book. However, it's not plot events that matter, and the construction of the story is done masterfully throughout. Instead of lots of big events, Cargill focuses on the instability, worry and boredom of the ghetto. It comes as a shock when we finally see some resistance happening, but this just shows how well hidden it was, both from the reader and the German soldiers.

Read the rest at charlottetobitt.wordpress.com

Dianne says

What started as an endearing tale of the capacity of a young Jewish girl to endure the brutality of the Nazis and keep her sense of wonder with the universe has left me shell-shocked. **Saying Goodbye to Warsaw** by gifted author Michael Cargill makes a dynamic statement to the horrors of war, persecution, genocide and the will to fight back against all odds, at any cost.

The setting is bleak, Jews forced to live crowded into the hulking remains of old neighborhoods, like lambs being herded for slaughter. Michael Cargill doesn't just pen a story of the plight of a young Jewish girl and her family, he stages each scene with such clarity and feeling that I was there, on those sad streets, watching people become a mere shadow of themselves, fighting for food and survival. Abigail has just turned ten. What could she have done to deserve the twisted wrath of the Nazis? How could she hold the joy of life and living so vibrantly living as she and her family must? Abigail's brother, Leo is her protector, her guardian, who sees that she gets food to fuel her body and tries to be the buffer between her young world and reality, fueling her imagination and gentle demeanor.

How much is too much for a young mind? At what point does reality come crashing in and vengeance take over? Is there a turning point or is it a culmination of events that put Leo and then Abigail on a path they cannot turn back from?

I am astounded at the Mr. Cargill's capacity to give us characters who spoke to my soul, gained my heart and respect, as I feared for what could happen to them. His dialogue flows between characters with a realism that will have you hanging on every single word. **Saying Goodbye to Warsaw** is one of those books that takes history and makes it personal, never once stopping to cover any festering sores.

I won't forget this book or its people, or the events they endured. I highly recommend this as a book you will NOT want to miss, but I will warn you, you will be mentally and emotionally haunted.

I received a review copy from the author and I cannot thank him enough.

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