

## Hidden on the High Wire: A Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers

**Kathy Kacer**

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A Jewish circus artist's daring spirit sees her through World War II in Kathy Kacer's latest Holocaust Remembrance novel, *Hidden on the High Wire*.

Irene is a fifth-generation performer with her family's Lorch Circus. She thrills in performing tricks far above the ground, without the comfort of a safety net. But Irene's nascent career is threatened when the Nazis begin imposing rules against Jewish-owned businesses and Jewish employment, putting the entire circus at risk.

When Irene's father is sent to fight at the front, she, her grandmother, and her mother relocate to a city apartment, where they are at constant risk of discovery. Irene can pass as a gentile; her grandmother cannot. A terrible day at the market leads to another family separation—and to Irene making a bold request of Adolf Althoff, another circus owner: that he hide her and her mother in plain sight.

Buzzing with tensions both pronounced and implied, this true tale highlights defiant circus settings and the leaders who worked to keep their spaces fair. Althoff, one of the Righteous Among the Nations, is welcoming when Irene approaches him, determining that there's no right choice but to help her: to allow her to fall into Nazi hands, he says, would make him "a murderer as well."

Kacer is cognizant of her audience as she narrates horrifying historical events: realities such as transport trains and concentration camps are named, and their purposes are alluded to, but the book avoids cataloging the nightmarish details in full. Still, Irene's is a sobering story, and young readers will benefit from the truths that it reveals—including about the bravery that's required to do what's right. *Hidden in the High Wire* is a fast, conscientious Holocaust story that centers survivors and their benefactors alike.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (September / October 2022)

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