



## Kasper Mützenmacher's *Cursed Hat: Life Indigo, Book One*

**Keith R Fentonmiller**

**Eugene Teplitsky, Illustrator**

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*This standout novel pulls no punches and paints an unforgettable Technicolor picture of a time we usually see in black and white.*

Berlin 1938: what a time to be alive. *Kasper Mützenmacher's Cursed Hat* is a stunning, surreal historical fantasy that glitters with color and character. Although wartime Germany is often depicted as dull and grey, this novel sparkles. Set in a Jewish community during Hitler's rise to power, *Cursed Hat* is one part noir, one part slapstick, and one part high-octane adventure.

Nothing is as it seems in *Cursed Hat*. The only rule seems to be "expect the unexpected." Author Keith R. Fentonmiller dashes headlong into the topsy-turvy world of 1930s Berlin. Instead of being populated by characters dressed in dull felt, Fentonmiller's Berlin is vivid and lush, packed with historic detail, colors, bright costumes, and hilarious dialogue. *Cursed Hat* celebrates life on the fringes of a fascist society.

Kasper Mützenmacher, inheritor of the family hat shop, the family "broad cockleshell of a schnoz," and the family curse, is a complex, satisfying main character. His weakness for the magic hat that his mother keeps locked away sprouts into a full-fledged addiction. He can't wait to slip the gryphon-skin fedora onto his head and explore the world, popping in and out of places he's only ever dreamed of. Of course, it's a magnet for trouble, including the terrifying Klaus, a veiled Nazi who steals women's faces and brainwashes his victims.

The hat enables Kasper to escape the Nazis after he's marked as a Jew. However, its curse is real, and Kasper must try to convince his family that it's better off in the hands of the deity that created it.

Fentonmiller weaves an incredible, breakneck story that jumps from the personal to the political in a single breath. His wonderful sense of humor skewers tense scenes of explicit anti-Semitic violence.

*Cursed Hat* is not a comedy, but you can't help but laugh. Why not? Kasper does. Fentonmiller also incorporates elements from contemporary politics, which adds to the novel's noirish realism. Fentonmiller's terrifying scenes of interrogation and transformation are phenomenal and add a dimension of thrilling psychological tension. Real life, he points out, is frightening—but the real enemy is hiding inside your mind.

*Kasper Mützenmacher's Cursed Hat* is the first in the Life Indigo series and promises more great writing to come. This standout novel pulls no punches and paints an unforgettable Technicolor picture of a time we usually see in black and white.

CLAIRE FOSTER (November 17, 2017)

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