

In The Shadow of the Cathedral

Titia Bozuwa Ruth

Reviewed by Amaron

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In The Shadow of the Cathedral is the story of Titia Boszuwa, who was a nine year old girl living in Breda, Holland, when the Germans invaded her country at the beginning of World War II. The book chronicles her experiences during the five years of the war from her own perspective.

In many ways this is a very engaging story. Rarely do you encounter the story of this period of history from a child's point of view, particularly a European child whose very town was occupied by German soldiers. I really appreciated her honesty in portraying her understandable feelings of resentment and anger about how the Germans treated her family, friends, and fellow countrymen, particularly the Jewish population of Holland. At the same time, she was able to achieve a balance in the story in depicting details of how she and her family lived, celebrated holidays, how she and her brothers continued to go to school, and tried to live as normal a life as possible during extraordinary conditions.

While it is well written, particularly for a younger readership of ages 11 to 14, it should be understood that the book is really a memoir, not a novel. It has no plot or story arc other than describing what this young person went through, growing up during this time in these circumstances.