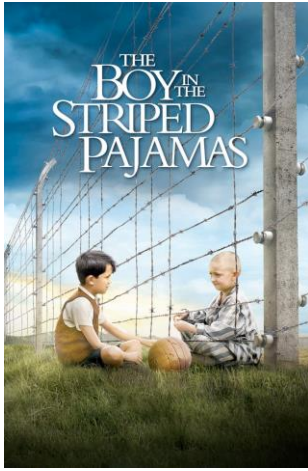


The Other Side of the Fence



Bruno and Shmuel, a Jew in a concentration camp, come from different backgrounds. They're both nine-years-old, but as I mentioned, come from different backgrounds. Bruno and Shmuel are supposed to hate each other, but in fact they are best friends. There are plenty of beautiful themes here, such as the friendship of two people that *should* want to kill each other but don't, that make this book impactful and resonate with readers.

One of the best parts of Boyne's writing is his characters. The main character, Bruno, is a normal, nine-year-old boy. The only unusual thing is the fact that he is wealthy and the son of a Nazi officer. Bruno is kind and charming, but blissfully unaware of the horrors and war crimes going on around him. Since he is nine, the point of view is interesting. It's entertaining to be in the head of a playful little kid who doesn't know how to say certain words, such as "Out-With" (Auschwitz) and "Fury" (Fuhrer).

Speaking of Bruno's mispronunciations, those words serve as a little bit of humor *and* meaningful puns. "Out-With" refers to the genocide of the Jews (and many others) during the holocaust, and "Fury" refers to Hitler. There are plenty of small details in this novel, such as the puns, that everyone can appreciate.

Other good features of Boyne's writing are his realistic dialogue and plausibility. Again, Bruno is nine; through his thoughts and dialogue, readers can clearly see that. The way he speaks and mispronounces words makes his interactions that much more immersive. His sister, Gretel, gushes about lieutenant Kotler, a handsome young German soldier, which is something I can easily picture her doing.

Bruno changes a lot throughout the book. At first he feels lonely and dislikes his new home, but later meets a new friend. That friend completely changes Bruno's negative view of his new home, and when he is offered to go back to his old home, Bruno finds himself actually *wanting* and *fighting* to stay in Auschwitz. This is one of the many prevalent themes of the book.

A strong feature of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is its unpredictable plot. There are few clichés or events that readers see coming. The only other book comparable to *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* is *The Boy at the Top of the Mountain*. Both take place in World War Two and aren't scared to reveal the tragic things that happened during it. They each have their jaw-dropping moments that make their stories better.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas is one of the best books I have read. No other book has caught me off guard as much as this one did. It has a little bit of everything for everyone. Everything about this book is what makes me think it is worth every last penny. Again, if you want a story that warms your heart while simultaneously catching you off guard with less heartwarming things, pick up a copy of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*.

-John Golicki