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Nevertell

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Eleven year old Lina was born and brought up in a soviet prison camp. She knows no other life, but dreams of escaping from prison, together with her mother Katya and finding her grandmother in Moscow. Just before her twelfth birthday her mother arranges for Lina to escape together with three other prisoners; then Lina's friend Bogdan sneaks out as well, so there are five of them trying to escape in the bitter winter of Siberia. Things get even worse when they are hunted by a strange woman called Svetlana and her pack of 'Ghost Wolves'. We begin to see the beginnings of something magical, but whether it is good or bad is difficult to judge and Lina does not know who she is able to trust. There are ups and downs for the main characters and a few surprises before there is a resolution to the tale. You will have to read the story to understand the very poignant title of the book and why 'never tell' is so vital to the plot.

This book was a truly delightful surprise. The initial setting in a Stalinist prison camp was a very depressing prospect, although there have been several amazing stories with a very similar concept. However the author has mixed in some magic and Russian folk lore in order to give us a truly beautiful story of love and hope against all the odds. Lina and Bogdan are very sympathetic characters; whilst they are coping with some very adult situations and fighting to become free we do not forget that they are still children and their life experiences mean they are still learning about those around them. We are also shown the difficulties that people faced in Russia after the Second World War. The descriptions bring home how dangerous it was to say anything against Stalin and how even children were persuaded to 'tell' on their parents. There is also a real sense of the fear about what could happen and how this permeated society and made those who helped the needy seem even braver than they were. At the heart of this story we have the love that exists between family and friends; the years apart do not lessen the desire to see parents, children and siblings and people are willing to take huge risks in order to see their loved ones. I ended up really loving this story and cannot recommend it highly enough.

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