



Saving Amelie

Cathy Gohlke

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2015 Carol award finalist!

Increasingly wary of her father's genetic research, Rachel Kramer has determined that this trip with him to Germany—in the summer of 1939—will be her last. But a cryptic letter from her estranged friend, begging Rachel for help, changes everything. Married to SS officer Gerhardt Schlick, Kristine sees the dark tides turning and fears her husband views their daughter, Amelie, deaf since birth, as a blight on his Aryan bloodline.

Once courted by Schlick, Rachel knows he's as dangerous as the swastikas that hang like ebony spiders from every government building in Berlin. She fears her father's files may hold answers about Hitler's plans for others, like Amelie, whom the regime deems "unworthy of life." She risks searching his classified documents only to uncover shocking secrets about her own history and a family she's never known.

Now hunted by the SS, Rachel turns to Jason Young—a driven, disarming American journalist and unlikely ally—who connects her to the resistance and to controversial theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Forced into hiding, Rachel's every ideal is challenged as she and Jason walk a knife's edge, risking their lives—and asking others to do the same—for those they barely know but come to love.

Saving Amelie Details

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From Reader Review Saving Amelie for online ebook

Sarah Sundin says

Saving Amelie by Cathy Gohlke rivets you from the start. An exciting race of a story, built on the stories of two compelling women, so different in every way, yet more alike than they imagine. The plight of the handicapped in Nazi Germany comes to life in darling Amelie, shedding light on the dangers of the eugenics movement – the danger of any society that rules certain lives have no value. A beautifully written novel you won't want to miss.

Dana says

I learned so much from this book somehow I missed the whole eugenics in school, so I learned a lot about it, it is heart wrenching. I love how the author incorporated real people in this fictional story. Being fictional, I am sure it hit close to home for many people, as it was very realistic. This was not obviously a feel good book (no book about the Nazi's is!) but one that really got you thinking, was very emotional, hair raising, suspenseful, and non-put-down-able. I thought it was very well written and can see why it is an award winner. Highly recommend it!

Olivia says

{4.5 stars}

I'm beginning to think my higher rated books are ones I can only think, "Wow," and barely right a comprehensive review. This book is packed with so many amazing moments and convicted me all the way through. It's applicable today: will we stand up for what's right? Will we let apathy overcome the strength we should have as believers?

There were so many characters in this book, but they all tied together so well, I was never lost or confused. The events unfold in perfect timing. Rachel, Jason, Lea, Fredrich, and sweet, little Amelia play a huge role in this unfolding. Darkness and light are portrayed perfectly, yet it made me realize, that even today the world's thinking is just as disillusioned as so many during the war. What are we doing to follow Christ with our hearts?

The romance was so sweet and moved at a nice pace. Loved how this author presents it so well :)

All in all, I love this book! Highly recommend to readers 17+ who love historical fiction, and to those who want to learn more of standing strong in the face of oppression.

Note: There was one scene that was slightly disturbing concerning a man forcing himself on a woman, but it never went past kisses and the man was stopped by before anything else occurred. The talk of sterilization and eugenics may be disturbing to some (made me squeamish a couple times)

Jamie says

Novels set in WWII are usually so hard to read, but they're some of my favorite to read. Some of the greatest stories in our history come from this era and I'm inspired by the stories of men and women who took a stand. Saving Amelie is one such read. And a fabulous one at that. The Nazi regime did horrid and terrible things, you don't need me to tell you that. This story while taking place in Germany, wasn't just about the Nazis, but the many brave Germans who made a difference.

This was an excellent read! Gohlke was able to pay homage to so many brave people, draw readers into a popular historical era and leave you thinking how their legacies affect us today. Plus there's a few appearances by Bonhoeffer himself, which I absolutely loved. Talk about a fascinating and inspiring person from history!

I also really appreciated how the characters had real faults. Many of them had to work through the ideas they grew up with against the backdrop of the Hitler regime taking over. Many had to work through the struggles, convictions and fears.

"Is my fear, my apathy - indifference - any better than perpetrating evil?"

I also thought this was a very telling quote, from a conversation after the Nazi's banned prayer and religious symbols:

"Banning prayer from schools? Stripping crucifixes from walls? That would be like taking down the Ten Commandments in the United States. I've never been a churchgoer, but I can't imagine such a thing happening. The churches, even the people who aren't churchgoers, would never stand for having their rights stripped away like that."

It's hard to imagine that so many people (outsiders) simply ignored what Hitler's regime was doing. The Nuremberg Laws and Kristallnacht happened long before Germany invaded Poland or the doors first opened to Auschwitz. It got me thinking, what are we (myself included) ignoring in today's world? Who needs me/us to speak up for them? (So many answers to that question!)

It's a beautiful story honoring so many who stood up for right and good while facing such evil. I cannot even imagine how that must have been, but am so thankful for the examples they left us.

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." Desmond Tutu

What's an inspiring story from WWII that's stuck with you? Besides Bonhoeffer, the story of Corrie ten Boom is another incredible tale.

Originally posted at <http://booksandbeverages.org/2015/08/...>

Kerry Johnson says

I'm still recovering from Cathy Gohlke's latest release, Saving Amelie. I mean this in the best possible way. I'm recovering from the tense, fast-paced plot, the living, breathing characters I came to care deeply about and didn't want to say goodbye to, and the painful truth of history weaving through the story that grabs the

reader by the throat and demands we remember.

In fact, I wasn't sure how to put words on the screen to accurately share my thoughts and emotion about this powerful story based in Nazi Germany during Hitler's reign. The story left me breathless, my heart heavy with respect for those who gave so much for others during WWII. Saving Amelie brings to light the ugliness of the science of eugenics, but then overshadows it with the "costly grace" of putting others above oneself.

I settled into turbulent Nazi Germany with Rachel Kramer in 1939 as she follows her father, a well-known eugenics scientist who might have more to do with the Nazis' plans for Aryan dominance than Rachel realized. And I was twisted into the tight plot as American journalist Jason Young digs deeper into rumors of handicapped children disappearing - all because the SS deems them unworthy of life.

Rachel's childhood friend Kristine - married to an SS officer who views their deaf daughter, Amelie, as an unwelcome mistake - asks Rachel to take care of the child. With Jason's help, Rachel works to keep the little girl safe while trying to understand why her father brought her to Germany and exactly who she is.

The author's meticulous research and careful weaving of intricate details and important characters from Oberammergau's Passion Play framed the book's second half, creating a beautiful, stark landscape in which hiding is necessary for survival and family and friends walk a fine line with fear of discovery.

Saving Amelie is an historical love letter to those crushed and lost under Hitler's hate-filled reign, including a beloved Christian pastor who spoke out for the oppressed until he was silenced, and whose words and legacy live on today because He lived for Christ.

A particularly powerful, poignant scene near the end of the book, with a young boy named Heinrich Helphman, will long stay with me. I've reread it a few times, the childlike potency of his words the catalyst for tears each time.

There is much more I could say about the story, but the best I can offer is, "Read it. You will be better for it."

I've enjoyed all of Cathy Gohlke's books. My particular favorite was Promise Me This up to this point, but Saving Amelie, with its sheer scope of emotion and truth, gains that spot. It's a book not to be missed, and I can't recommend it highly enough.

Sarah Grace says

DNF

Just too much info . . . I might come back to it eventually.

Chantel says

This book was so good! Powerful story. Full review to come.

Sarita says

This was such a powerful story. Every time I read a book set during WW2, I learn something new. This story had me from the start - circumstances had me reading it very slowly, which I think was a good thing because I could work through what I've read.

I had to remind myself that I'm reading about actual events, not just a fictional story. The hatred of the SS, how disabled children, older folks and the eugenic subjects were treated sometimes felt surreal. And still today we find ourselves in situations where we treat each other with everything but love.

I loved Lea, Oma, Jason and Amelie and enjoyed seeing how Rachel grew through this experience.

A well researched historical novel which will leave you with lots to think about.

Sam B says

This was my first book by Cathy Gohlke and now it is one of my favorite books ever.

This is a great read: I got hooked at the very beginning and had a very hard time putting the book down. The author does a very good job at bringing you back to the time when WWII began. The story follows multiple characters which gives the story so much more depth: Rachel is the daughter of a eugenics scientist, Jason is an American reporter, Leah and Friederich are a German couple. There are also other characters such as a Curate, a SS officer and a little deaf girl.

At first, the numerous characters can be hard to follow. But the story is so good, that I soon got a hold of all the names and was easily able to follow the story.

I also love the fact that the author incorporates some characters that actually existed and played a role during WWII. At the end of the book, she explains which characters were actual people that lived during that time and which characters were fictional while being inspired by real people.

Furthermore, this novel talks about a lot of different aspects of the war and is a great way to learn more about the atrocities that took place in that time.

This book really made me want to know more about this dark period of our history and is a book that I will recommend over and over again.

Abby A. says

I'll skip a summarization of Saving Amelie.

This. Book. I cried. I also laughed a little. I was actually biting my nails during the super tense times. Biting my nails is something I DO NOT DO. Usually.

I so loved the ending, definitely full closure. At first I thought I was going to be disappointed, thankfully I was not. Reading this book is definitely not a waste of time and also a good reminder of history. Very real.

Loraine says

SUMMARY: Increasingly wary of her father's genetic research, Rachel Kramer has determined that this trip with him to Germany in the summer of 1939 will be her last. But a cryptic letter from her estranged friend, begging Rachel for help, changes everything. Married to SS officer Gerhardt Schlick, Kristine sees the dark tides turning and fears her husband views their daughter, Amelie, deaf since birth, as a blight on his Aryan bloodline.

Once courted by Schlick, Rachel knows he's as dangerous as the swastikas that hang like ebony spiders from every government building in Berlin. She fears her father's files may hold answers about Hitler's plans for others, like Amelie, whom the regime deems "unworthy of life." She risks searching his classified documents only to uncover shocking secrets about her own history and a family she's never known.

Now hunted by the SS, Rachel turns to Jason Young, a driven, disarming American journalist and unlikely ally who connects her to the resistance and to controversial theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Forced into hiding, Rachel's every ideal is challenged as she and Jason walk a knife's edge, risking their lives and asking others to do the same for those they barely know but come to love.

REVIEW: This is my first read from Cathy Gohlke; and this award winning historical novel is one of my top 20 books of the year. It kept me riveted from beginning to end as I fell in love with Amelie, Lea, Oma and Jason and had a hate/love relationship with Rachel as she grew in her faith and in her compassion and love for her family and others. This book is highly intense and emotional and gave me a great understanding of eugenics and the role it played in Hitler's Nazi Germany. The author brought a very dark period in history to life with vivid descriptions, obvious historical research and the inclusion of real people who were part of World War II such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Dr. Josef Mengele, and Dr. Vershuer. I appreciated how the author pointed out that we don't have to like someone or agree with someone to protect them. She also reminded us that in the midst of horrible evil such as forced sterilization, euthanasia, and human experimentation, love, compassion and resistance to wrong still could not be defeated. Another underlying theme was the cost of discipleship as represented by so many in World War II who followed the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

FAVORITE QUOTES: "But we've come to practice cheap grace--grace that appears as a godly form but costs us nothing--and that is an abomination, a stench in the nostrils of God."

"I suppose nothing like this could happen in America." "Banning prayer from schools? Stripping crucifixes from walls? That would be like taking down the Ten Commandments in the United States. I've never been a churchgoer, but I can't imagine such a thing happening. The church, even the people who aren't churchgoers, would never stand for having their right stripped away like that? "

"Is there an explanation for blindness, for hatred? For sin? I don't know the answer. I only know the remedy is Christ's great love as we've been shown in His Passion."

"None of us can save everyone, but we can each do something."

"Most of life is not high drama or danger. It is our responsibility to help those around us to live.....Sometimes taking up our cross is doing the thing in front of us, not the glamorous, high-risk thing afar off."

Nicole says

Where to start! I would give this book far more stars if Goodreads allowed. This story had so many layers, so many thought-provoking moments; I had to stop several times to think alongside the characters: Why do I believe what I believe? And what am I willing to sacrifice for the sake of truth? A powerful journey! The spiritual aspect did not come into play for a while (because the characters were not spiritual people), so I noticed when all of a sudden it did, but it was so naturally done and became crucial to the story's progression as well as the characters' growth. And speaking of, I was thoroughly impressed with how the author opened my eyes to the true nature of the characters, so that I looked forward to seeing some redemption. It was beautifully written. I'd never heard so much about Hitler's eugenics research and how far-reaching the results were. What an eye opening and bite-your-nails-til-the-end experience. I had no idea how it would all turn out! This author is definitely getting added to my favorites.

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot...>

There are currently forty-seven five star ratings for Cathy Gohlke's *Saving Amelie* on Goodreads and a whopping sixty-nine on Amazon. Why am I noting this? Probably because I feel like the only reader out there who didn't love the book.

I suppose my biggest problem was the number of primary cast members. Rachel, Jason, Lea, Friederich, Gerhardt, Bauer, Amelie... There were too many competing voices and I felt the number of narrators only served to complicate the already over overburdened plot.

Another issue I had was Gohlke's treatment of faith. It was barely mentioned in the early chapters, but it developed into one of the book's primary themes in the latter portion of the novel. The resulting imbalance created a sense of disconnect and that didn't sit well with me when looking at the book in its entirety.

Historically speaking I loved the material Gohlke used. Her depiction of the Nazi eugenics program and Oberammergau's Passion Play were particularly well done and I liked how she tried to exhibit the conflicted allegiances that might have been felt by common Germans during the war.

Overall, not a bad piece. Ideally I might have liked a cleaner ending with fewer loose ends, but by and large I liked the book and look forward to reading Gohlke's other titles.

Staci says

4.5 stars

This was my first Cathy Gohlke novel. From reviewing what she writes, it's clear she writes about a variety of historical time periods. In *Saving Amelie* she had done a great deal of research regarding eugenics, Hitler, Bonhauffer and other facets of WWII.

Saving Amelia is about a four year old deaf girl that is deemed not good enough by SS standards and the quest to save her. Along the journey, we get to know the town of Oberammergau and their Passion Play. It's a well told story and I highly recommend it for those who enjoy WWII Fiction.

I look forward to reading other novels by Cathy Hohlke.

Andrea Cox says

The WWII reading kick I've been on has brought me to some very intriguing books. This one is no exception. It was fascinating to read a book that revolved around the study of eugenics. Don't take that the wrong way, please. Euthanizing people is completely wrong, in my opinion. However, it was an aspect to WWII that I haven't yet seen featured in a book, and the attention to detail the author put into it was eye-opening and made my stomach turn into a pretzel. How people of any sort could do such atrocious things to their fellow human beings is beyond my comprehension. I am grateful for books such as this one, because they make sure to share our collective history in the hope that we won't find ourselves repeating the same mistakes that nearly decimated many ethnic groups of people.

This story reminded me that choosing kindness and expressing the love God pours into my heart are two of the most important things I could possibly do. Taking a risk to help someone is living out bold, confident faith. I hope I am never in a World War, but if I find myself there, I hope I have the courage of the characters in this book -- and the folks in real life -- who hid their fellow humans in order to save their lives. It could have been any one of us that were targeted, had we been there, after all.

I really liked that Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his book were featured in this story. I haven't yet read his books, but I enjoyed seeing his thoughts on "costly grace." Grace is my One Word this year (2018), so this really hit home for me and opened my eyes a bit wider to the deep meanings of grace and how living it out is crucial to expressing my love for God. I am determined to learn more about costly grace this year, step by step, with my God at the helm. May we all learn to let go of ourselves a little more each day and instead focus on how we may help each other. Perhaps that is one way to avoid apathy toward fellow members of mankind.

This is a must-read for anyone with a strong stomach (eugenics is tough to read about), those curious about WWII, and folks who want to build up a stronger faith. Fans of Kristy Cambron will appreciate it.

Content:

- * tobacco products
- * alcohol; beer halls
- * two vulgar terms (used once each)
- * eugenics
- * sterilization

I was not compensated for my honest review.
