



# My Friend the Enemy

*Dan Smith*

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## **My Friend the Enemy** Dan Smith

Summer, 1941. For Peter in rural Britain, the war is a long way away, being fought by a faceless enemy. Until the night a German plane is shot down over woods that his missing dad looked after before he went off to fight.

Peter rushes to the crash site to see if there's something he can keep, but what he finds instead is an injured young German airman. The enemy. Here.

And helping him seems like the right thing to do...

## **My Friend the Enemy Details**

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Author : Dan Smith

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# From Reader Review My Friend the Enemy for online ebook

## Andrew Georgy-Embree says

Name Nolan

Title My Friend The Enemy

Published by Chicken House

And the author is Dan Smith

The copyright 2014

Pages is 279

### Setting

My Friend The Enemy starts in northeast England in a small village in the year 1941. In this village there is a boy name Peter and his mom who live in a house little bit out of town. Peter's father is a soldier in the British army, and there is a big threat of a Nazi bomber in that time.

### Plot

The conflict of this story is with a Nazi airman named Erik, who is being healed by Peter and his friend. Erik survived the plane crash. He is weak and injured so it is that much more difficult to hide him from the authorities.

### Characters

Erik, the airman, is my favorite character because I would love to be able to pilot a plane like him.

There is Kim, who is peter's friend Maybe she is his girlfriend from what I understand of the story line.

There is Peter kim's friend, who has the pistol and likes to be around Kim.

There is Peter's mom who doesn't know about Erik.

### My personal opinion

Personally, I think My Friend The Enemy is a good book but I would include more action and use fewer words. If you like action and adventure this is the book for you. I am giving it a 4 stars review out of five.

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## Aaron says

When I started reading this book it felt like it was going to be a book with a lot of death and I was wrong. I chose this book because it was a realistic,historical book. You could see that it has a story to tell people while there reading this book. It has a realistic feeling as you look at the cover it shows how people how we view the enemy at times of war. The characters in this book have gone through alot especially the main character and the secondary character at the end of the book. The other three character in the book are looking like there fine but you can tell that there not. That this helped keep the book realistic.

There were some small problems that I had with the book. At certain parts it is a bit slow but it is not too slow but could be a little faster. The middle of the book when they were getting supplies it was a little slow. There was a lot of bullying and it was there every single time. The end and the middle had a lot of bullying

and it was there again and again in the ending. The way that they had from bombs dropping. When they hear the air raid siren they go in to a shelter that isn't that safe from the bombs.

I liked the way that it was worded because it will make you feel like it is real and that you are not alone. The way that it is explained is how you don't feel alone. The way that the words describe the characters in the book will help you feel like you're there in real life. The other thing I liked about it was that two of the characters were doing something that would be totally looked down on. The way that the two kids put their differences apart in the book with the enemy is how it should be in every war. The way that they comprehend on the language barrier is incredible. One of the characters speaks the language that the enemy is speaking.

The way that they hid the enemy from the soldiers is a very genius idea. They see the soldiers in the woods and they have an alibi for why they're in the woods. Towards the end there was a bombe stuck in the street and the kids went and saw it. The soldiers were not looking at the woods because of the bombe and they used it as a distraction and it worked. The hiding the enemy from the soldiers and it was so close to being found. In the end I did enjoy the book

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## **Summer04 says**

I remember reading this book a few years ago and I remember it was a good one. I recently skimmed through it and all the memories came back to me. I loved the whole fight for survival and the secret friendship that came from it all. I believe it was an amazing book.

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## **Alex (not a dude) Baugh says**

One summer day in 1941, while Peter Dixon, 12, is in the woods checking his snares to see if he's caught a rabbit to supplement the meager amount of food he and his mum get with their ration coupons, the air raid siren goes off. Not knowing what to do, Peter starts running for home and the safety of their Anderson shelter, but before he gets there, a German plane crashes so close to him, Peter is knocked out.

It doesn't take long for the whole village to come out to see what happened, including all the children who want to try to get souvenirs from the wreckage. And that's how Peter meets Kim, a girl about his age, with short hair and dressed like a boy. The two become instant friends.

Peter and Kim decide to go back to the wreckage that night to look for their own souvenirs, even sneaking inside the plane. After almost getting caught by the soldiers guarding the plane, the two end up with a gun belonging to one of the dead Germans in it. Running off towards the woods to hide, they stumble upon a third German from the plane, who had parachuted out but was badly hurt.

Seeing the gun, the German begs them not to hurt him and they decide to take him to Peter's hiding place in the woods. They clean him up and over the next few days, they learn that his name is Erik, and the three become friends, as much as that can happen when you can't speak each other's language. Hiding and feeding Erik is difficult but Kim is afraid the army will shoot him on the spot and she is convinced that if they take care of Erik, then the same kindness will be shown to her brother Josh, in the RAF, or Peter's father in the army if they're shot or injured and found by the enemy.

Peter, however, just wants his dad to come home. Than maybe Mr. Bennett, who owns most of the land surrounding the village, who stop coming around to see his mother so much. And maybe the older boys in the village will stop bullying him so much about his mother and Mr. Bennett.

Things get more complicated, but in the end, all the elements of this story come together in an exciting, maybe a little predictable, but definitely satisfying denouement.

I found myself immediately pulled into *My Friend the Enemy*. It is a compelling story right from the start. Peter is a sensitive boy, a bit of a loner and rather timid who seems to have spent much of his time with his dad, the gameskeeper for Mr. Bennett's land. Kim, on the other hand, is a confident girl. a bit of a tomboy, and not the least bit afraid of standing up to bullies older and much bigger than she is.

It is also an exciting story, with plenty of action and historical detail. Times were tough during the war, food was in short supply and people lived their lives in fear of bombing raids. Smith incorporates all that into his story, giving the dilemmas Peter wrestles with - to help a German soldier, to steal food from his mother to feed Erik, to accept Mr. Bennett's help even as he begins to suspect the bullies are right about him and his mother - a very realistic quality so necessary in good historical fiction.

I did like that it takes place in the same north-eastern area of England as Robert Westall's book and, in fact, *My Friend The Enemy* did remind me somewhat of books by this favorite author. Unlike the Blitz in London, the north eastern coast was one of the places that was bombed only because German planes were dumping them to lighten their load as they returned home from a bombing raid, a fact Dan Smith includes in his novel, but not a place you read about much in WWII books for young readers. *My Friend The Enemy* gives readers another perspective on the war as it happened in England.

Young readers will definitely find this a book to their liking, especially readers interested in WWII and what like was like on the home front for kids around their age.

This book is recommended for readers age 9+

This book was an E-ARC obtained from NetGalley

This review was originally posted at The Children's War

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## **Andrew Galit says**

### **My Friend the Enemy, Book 1, Quarter 1**

The book is called *My Friend the Enemy*. The author is Dan Smith. The genre of the book is Historical Fiction. The setting is in village with the main characters are Peter, Kim, and Erik. The main problem is that Kim and Peter found a Nazi in the plain crash and they are trying to take care of him without getting caught by trying to help the enemy soldier. The plot is that Kim and Peter found a enemy soldier in the plain crash and then helped him. I enjoyed the book because there action throughout the book. I also liked the book because i like books that revolt around war-themed things. The Book was complete and there was not any key elements left out of the book. The book did spark some fear emotion for Kim and Peter.

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## **Julie says**

I read this out loud to my 7 and 9 years old after I found it on a suggested reading list. There are places where the story drags and there is way too much unnecessary dialogue, but it also had some fantastic discussion points about what it means to be the "enemy" and the problem with vilifying an entire people or county (or religious belief, to bring it modern times). Overall, we really enjoyed this book. I was surprised at the swearing and hints about his mothers "special friend" that had stayed the night. Could have left that out.

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## **Serendipity Reviews says**

Originally posted on [www.serendipityreviews.co.uk](http://www.serendipityreviews.co.uk)

I'm not normally one for historical war time books but this book appealed to me. I had spoken to the author, Dan Smith, quite regularly on Twitter and I was intrigued about the change from writing for adults to writing for children.

For me the cover of the book screams – boy's book! But that really isn't the case. Although the story is written in first person from Peter's point of view, you watch his strong friendship with Kim grow as the story progresses, so I know it will appeal to everyone.

I loved the detailed descriptions in this book. I felt that I could almost step into 1941. The author has really done his homework and brought the war years back to life. I'm sure while reading it, I could smell the tripe cooking. The difficulties with food and rationing were so clearly obvious and it left me wondering how as a nation we would cope if we had to return to those days. Where food is now fast and in abundance, I think we would struggle to live off such meagre portions. Not to mention digging up our landscaped gardens to fit in some home grown vegetables!

I warmed instantly to the relationship between Kim, Peter and Erik. Kim and Peter were such wonderful characters who acted with more dignity, courage and honour than the contrasting British soldiers within the book. They wanted to treat Erik in the way they hoped their loved ones would be treated while fighting abroad. Erik was a young German soldier, but he cared for Kim and Peter too. He trusted them and was prepared to abandon his hideout to save them. Throughout the book, you find yourself questioning the war, especially when you see innocents from both sides of it caught in such difficult situations. I really do think the author created some memorable characters who highlight the humane side of the war.

I believe this book would make a great accompaniment to any class studying World War 2 as it gives such an insight into what life was really like during such hard times. It has elements of *Whistle Down The Wind* in it, although the lines are blurred as to whether Erik could be considered a criminal. To me, it felt as though he was another innocent person fighting someone's else war.

If you love books such as *Goodnight Mr Tom*, I'm sure you will enjoy this.

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## **Cesar says**

This book is very good. For the people that like wars well this book is about WWII.

There is this British boy named who is living through WWII. There is a point in the story were it says that he wants hes father to come back home. His father went to fight the Nazis.

They are in British territory and then a German airplane crashes very close to Peter. Now Peter is knocked out.

It didn't tooked that long for the village to realize that a plane crashed close to them. When the children got to the plan there is were Peter meets Kim a girl of hes age with short hair and dressed as a boy. They became friend the second they meat each other.

Kim and Peter decides to go back to the plane at night. They were gourds every were, but they didn't care they still decide to go inside the plane and inside the plane they see a dead German soldier.

They ended up with the Germans soldier gun.

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### **Anna says**

3.5 stars. A slow start, but once the airman is discovered it gets more interesting. The kids wrestle with the difference between the monstrous enemies they see on propaganda posters and the scared teenager they found in the woods, and the friendship they start to feel for him versus their distrust/fear of the local sergeant, which makes them scared to turn him in even though he is an enemy combatant.

Readers who enjoyed this story, or feel like "I would have enjoyed it except for (x)", might like the similar but more grown-up 'Summer of my German Soldier' by Bette Greene, about an escaped POW.

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### **Sierra says**

This book is awesome I recommend lots of people go and read it

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

Boy and girl hide and befriend a downed German flyer in the English countryside during the Battle of Britain. Impressively well-crafted historical novel.

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### **Ryan Teplitzky says**

Great book. I loved the organization because it had a nice flow and it was easy to understand in my opinion. I loved how every decision was decided with much thought. Two people Kim and Peter made a life changing decision that benefited almost everyone until someone's death. This book is great for readers that like books about history and war. Also Dan Smith has written many other books that include history about wars.

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### **Olivia says**

Oh my, my throat is still feeling rather thick right now. Such a good book! I so enjoyed it. It is during the Second World War which is one my favorite settings, and it was just downright sweet, amazing, and heart-

wrenching.

Peter and Kim were such good characters. I love their friendship with Erik, the German. I loved how realistic the author portrayed their ages. They were afraid and were unsure what to do. But they decided that if Erik was Kim's brother or Peter's Dad they'd want someone to help them.

And Erik...\*sniff\*. The second to last chapter had me crying. Seriously, I don't really even know how to describe how I felt. He's a very, very, very good German indeed! I loved (I know I'm using that word a lot again!!) how Kim and Peter try to communicate with him despite the language barrier.

Mr. Bennet's character ended up being really nice too. I wasn't expecting that to happen, and I like how the author makes you feel exactly how Peter felt. Everything was through his eyes and feelings. Superb writing!

I lowered my rating only slightly because:

There isn't any Christianity in this book, and Peter and Kim do lie several times, although I can understand the difficulty of keeping with the truth when you are helping the enemy. Also, there are several swear words- most of which are only swear words in England. There is some description of dead people which some might find gruesome.

If you like a good war story with no romance, then grab this. You won't be disappointed, I assure you.

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### **Tyler says**

I thought this was a very historically accurate book because it states things such as that German bombers dropped bombs on coastal cities to lighten their load for the trip back. It also shows the war from the perspective of a little British boy named Peter. It was very colorful the way Dan Smith showed show not tell all throughout the book. The characters were very diverse and showed the Germans not as demons, but humans that were just fighting for what they thought was right. Overall this book greatly shows the good and bad of war and tells a powerful story about treat others the way you want to be treated.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

When a German plane crashes in a field near Peter's house in the English countryside, he and the other children in the area are enthralled. When the adults have cleared off, Peter and Kim, an evacuee, search the plane and find a "souvenir" handgun as well as the body of one of the pilots. Other children have seen a parachute go down, so Peter and Kim search for another German soldier, and find one. He begs them not to shoot him, and the children decide that if they turn him over, the Home Guard might well kill the man, who is injured. They put him up in a pheasant coop that Peter's father (who was a gamekeeper for Mr. Bennet's estate and is currently a pilot) built and attempt to bring him food and mend his injuries. The war has caused everything to be rationed, so this is not an easy thing to do. Kim becomes a great friend to Peter; even though she is a girl, she dresses like a boy and is fearless. The two spend a lot of time with Erik, the flyer, and come to understand that he is just like Peter's father and Kim's brother, who are fighting even though they don't particularly want to. The people in Peter's village continue to look for the downed flyer, and a local bully makes Peter's life even more difficult, although Mr. Bennett has taken a shine to Peter's mother and brings the struggling family much needed supplies. The children know that they can't keep Erik a secret forever,



and a tragic accident leads to his discovery.

**Strengths:** While there have been plenty of books about children taking care of enemy soldiers, this one seemed fresh and very interesting. The details of life for the British during the war is told in vivid detail in a way that will be applicable to young readers, and the slow realization that the Germans are just the same as the English is well done. Even the minor sub plot of Mr. Bennet's interest in the mother was a nice touch. The cover is fantastic, so I will definitely buy a copy for y insatiable WWII readers.

**Weaknesses:** While Kim was a fantastic character, she seemed a bit anachronistic, and I kept wondering where she managed to get the boy's clothing she wore and who allowed her to cut her hair.

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