



# **My Secret War Diary, by Flossie Albright: My History of the Second World War 1939-1945**

*Marcia Williams*

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**Marcia Williams follows a young girl's coming of age during World War II in a moving fictional journal that includes the author's own family mementos.**

The year is 1939, and Britain is about to declare war on Germany. After Flossie's father joins the army, the nine-year-old girl is left to care for both her baby brother and her great-uncle. In a collage-style diary merging photos, postcards, and other memorabilia, Flossie relays events ranging from the arrival of evacuees to the wrenching news that her cousin has been killed. Her vibrant first-person narration reveals a humor and a fighting spirit that sees her through many a hardship until she welcomes her dad home at last.

## My Secret War Diary, by Flossie Albright: My History of the Second World War 1939-1945 Details

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Author : Marcia Williams

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## **From Reader Review My Secret War Diary, by Flossie Albright: My History of the Second World War 1939-1945 for online ebook**

### **Sally says**

This is an absolutely beautiful book! Flossie is a young girl of I think eight or so when the second world war starts, and as the title states this is just basically her diary through to victory in 1945. It's simply written and has little non-war asides so her character really comes shining through. She lives in the country so her house of course ends up with evacuees from the city (and one German boy, Simon, who is another fabulous character) and land girls, she's far removed from the bombing action but not from the war itself - her mother died a year ago and now her father's off fighting so she has that fear that she and her baby brother (who we get to watch grow up) will end up orphans.

The diary is gorgeously illustrated and written in lovely child's cursive, and is peppered with letters to take out of envelopes and secret notes to unfold. The only part I didn't really care for was when Flossie wrote a few things in her secret code... there was a key, but it was many pages ahead of the first two coded messages, and I did flick forward a little to try and find it but it wasn't instantly visible so I just gave up. When I found it, and the third coded message, I simply couldn't be bothered translating I'm afraid! As a kid I know I would have instantly grabbed a pen and paper and worked it all out... I still remember doing that in *The Eleventh Hour*, and STILL remember that "ovofox" is "eleven" haha!

I liked how this book did touch on a bit of sadness, it's still mostly a cheery kids book but it's also realistic in that not everyone came through the war unscathed.

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### **Deb says**

Wonderful way to explore the history of the Second World War from the perspective of a child living thru it.

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### **Aerin says**

Amazing, scrapbook-like tale of Flossie Albright, a British girl whose father goes to fight Hitler. Detailed, interactive, even a little on the heavy side, in terms of subject matter and presentation.

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### **Jayne Downes says**

A beautiful handwritten diary with lots of colour illustrations, letters and sketches. Flossie tells the story of her family life in England during war years. Lots of information about the war, will appeal to Intermediate and secondary.

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### **Angie says**

SO cool. It's the journal/scrapbook of a fictional character in WWII England. Glad I finally got to it. Put it on my to read list when it was brand new ... and here it is, what. Two or three years later? You can't get to all of them right away. :X

Loved all the little foldouts and doodled drawings!

Her "voice" was very well done. Flossie seemed real. I did not know that "flipping" had ever been a British swear word. ;]

Actually there were lots of wonderful characters. Frankie. Simon. "Boo." Uncle C.

The only thing not so cool about it is that it is written in tiny cursive script. I had a hard time in some places. I have to think for many kids it would be an issue.

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### **Becky says**

Several of the letters were torn out of my library copy of My Secret War Diary, so I feel like I missed some important parts. Also, I was too lazy to decode her secret code and decided instead to just guess what it said. Despite this, I liked this book. It seems like a really well done account of the war effort in England from the perspective of a downstairs girl in rural England who is 9 when the war starts and 15 when it ends.

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### **Annikka says**

Summarize the book:

This is a book about Flossie Albright who was a child in England during WWII. This diary was written by Flossie, in her words, about her time living and growing up during war time. The book is full of pictures, drawings, and advertisements that Flossie has cut out and pasted into "her diary". We follow Flossie during pre-war when there are rumors of war, during the days of war when there are refugees, shortages, bombings, and ups and downs, and finally to the end of war with celebrations, homecomings, and coming to terms with those that won't be coming home.

Identify the characteristics from the text that support the specific genre:

This is a historical fiction diary, in that it is written about an actual time and place in history but from the viewpoint of a fictional character. Many of the events in the book did actually happen, however the character of Flossie and her family and friends are fictional.

Identify specific concepts that could be integrated into the classroom:

In the classroom you could use this book to show a child's perspective of what war looks like. You could also take parts of it and incorporate them into history lessons about the events.

Provide any other suggestions that would be useful regarding literary content, reading level, and other ways in which the book might be integrated:

This book is for grades 3-7, however if they don't know cursive writing yet then the students are going to have a difficult time reading this book. The writing is made to look handwritten, and since cursive writing was more common during that time the writing is in cursive. This book could also be integrated into the classroom by using it as an example, and have students research and write their own diaries about a historical time period.

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### **JennLynn says**

The diary of a girl growing up in England during World War 2. The content is quite comprehensive (though I wish she could have mentioned Canada's contributions too). I also really liked all the sketches and artifacts included (real photos, newspaper clippings etc.) and the pop-ups. It brought the whole war experience wonderfully alive. I did think the writing could have been a little better - I got flippin' tired of readin' the word "flippin'"! and there was a lot of what I consider bad grammar, though it may have been realistic for the location and class. I also think it could have evolved a bit more as Flossie aged. Still, few books illustrate the life of a child growing up during the war better than this one does. Well worth reading. B.

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### **Bonnie says**

This was a fictional diary made by a girl named Flossie Albright, and it takes place during WW2 in England. I loved the fold-out letters, and the format was really nice. It was informative, and the first-person perspective made it very interesting. Because this is geared toward...late elementary, early middle school, I'd say, the author did a good job of balancing the truth of the time without making it too depressing. It was quite long, and I'm not sure that the intended age group would actually make it all the way through, but I found it very enjoyable.

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### **Terry says**

I like books that have a diary format because I think they can engage kids to think about writing. Carrie wrote about this one at 5 Minutes for Books.

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### **Dov Zeller says**

This is historical fiction in the form of a diary -- the experience of WWII as seen through the eyes of Flossie Albright, a 9 year old girl (14 by the end of the book) keeping a journal of the war years. She lives in the country, near the coast, not far from London, and fairly close to France (geography plays a big part). And she lives with her father and younger brother, her uncle and Cook (the cook?). Flossie lost her mother not long before starting the diary (maybe a year?) and her father goes off to war early on, so Flossie has to take on a lot of responsibility. She receives the diary as a gift and keeping the wartime diary becomes a community effort. People send her letters, pictures, medals, and other memorabilia to keep in there. She adds some newspaper clippings and lots of cartoons and there are little entries by others in her household.

This is a book that would have a lot of appeal for middle graders. Flossy is smart, funny, thoughtful. There are a lot of great characters, many of them animals. It does a great job of evoking the atmosphere and

language of the times and describing what it is like to live in a time of hunger and rationing, constant fear of military invasion and loss of loved ones. It also brings to life a sense of how communities came together as families were torn apart. The dynamics weren't overly simplified. There's quite a bit of acknowledgement of death and destruction, and yet the book manages to be a gentle historian. We witness both the horrors of wartime and also the wonders of war -- how it gives people a sense of purpose and and often moves people to appreciate their loved ones.

On the other hand, it's pretty big (clunky) and long and some of the writing, in style and content, might present challenges to middle graders. And there are some things that I felt a bit uncomfortable with or found frustrating. When Flossie writes in code, well, one would have to get out pen and paper to work it out and I certainly didn't have any interest in doing that. So I ignored those passages (three or four of them?). Maybe that's what the writer was going for, but I doubt it. And, well, there is something that doesn't sit quite right with me about the token Jewish refugee kid and the token black American soldier. A little forced and bathetic.

So, I was between a three and a four but decided on a four.

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## **Peg says**

Extremely well done historical fiction for middle grades. Flossie is a resilient youngster, dealing with a tough hand--mother dead, father off to war, responsible for her baby brother, caring for a young Jewish refugee and London evacuees. At times she rages against the unfairness of it all but overall she handles it with humor and grace. She draws on lessons learned from her mother; her notes on her mother and her mother's wisdom are particularly poignant. Flossie's diary spans six years and we experience her maturation as she faces war, death, fear, and first love.

Along with Flossie's story is the story of a community becoming more connected as they face the war and, of course, the progress of the war and its impact on those involved. The scrapbook format gives an immediacy to the text, but readers have to deal with crowded pages with lots of text and drawings. Fold-outs, usually notes from her relatives or friends serving England in some way, break up her entries.

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## **Shanaz Khan says**

This is an amazing book to read! I loved it so much. In my year 6 class we started a 'thematic' topic of World War 2. This book has so much details of the war that you could use it both for Literacy and History lessons. This is the war diary of 'Flossie Albright' who is a child living away from London with her Uncle, baby brother and for a while her dad (who joins the army). Flossie records what life is like/what happens to her during WW2. Flossie also experience evacuee's living with her.

The structure of the book makes it very engaging for children to read, it has flaps to open, letters to pull out of envelopes, its very colourful and the font of the text is written as the handwriting of Flossie Albright. There are real newspaper clippings, posters of WW2 and real photos. Children can really engage from the point of view of various characters within this book, especially from Flossie as it is written in first person. The author has not made the the topic of WW2 'depressing' as it can be a sensitive topic to teach however the author has balanced the events in the book quite well.

### **Dpalange44 says**

This is an excellent read. So cool to read an account of World War II from this perspective. I loved the pop out notes and letters. There were so many creative illustrations and additions that I really thought I was looking at a scrapbook.

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### **Gill says**

This is a wonderful book for all ages. Flossie's experience of the Second World War from the age of nine is portrayed in the form of a diary, with lots of drawings and secret flaps to lift, scrapbook-style.

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