



REVIEWS

From the Kids Can Marketing Team

KOSITSKY, LYNNE *The Thought of High Windows*. Kids Can, 2004 175p
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Esther Wilinsky could read the political writing on the wall, even if her mother could not, and the teenage girl arranged to join a group of children being evacuated by the Red Cross from Berlin to Belgium, one step ahead of the German invasion. As her narrative opens, Esther and her comrades are in Southern France.

On the estate of the Château la Blaize, the children enjoy a period of relative security, in which they can indulge their normal kid tendencies toward cliquishness and mild bullying, and overweight Esther is the designated target. Her only prospective friend, Walter, is undependable at best, since he seeks control in his life by obsessing on the most beautiful girls at hand—which certainly do not include Esther. The invasion of France puts personal matters on hold. Older teens are particularly in peril, and Esther, now in disguise and under an assumed name, ends up in the Jewish Underground, where she reunites with and then unintentionally betrays Walter. Esther's safety is, of course, never more than tenuous, so her tale speeds along like a runaway train. Kositsky deftly handles the irony of Esther's maturation—that her girlhood tendency toward self-destructive acts is finally overcome by horrors greater than low self-esteem. The conclusion, which finds Esther committed to the Resistance and the war still raging, forces readers to supply their own ending; cautiously hopeful is as good as it gets. EB

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