



Land of Hidden Fires

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Occupied Norway, 1943. After seeing an allied plane go down over the mountains, headstrong fifteen year-old Kari Dahlstrøm sets out to locate the wreck. She soon finds the cocky American pilot Lance Mahurin and offers to take him to Sweden, pretending she's a member of the resistance. While her widower father Erling and the disillusioned Nazi Oberleutnant Conrad Moltke hunt them down, Kari begins to fall for Lance, dreaming of a life with him in America. Over the course of the harrowing journey, though, Kari learns hard truths about those around her as well as discovering unforeseen depths within herself.

Librarian Note: This is the updated cover for ISBN 0998465720

Land of Hidden Fires Details

Date : Published September 2018 by Grenzland Press (first published January 24th 2017)

ISBN : 9780998465722

Author : Kirk Kjeldsen

Format : Paperback 215 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, War, World War II

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From Reader Review Land of Hidden Fires for online ebook

Λ?να Θωμ?ρη says

Actually 2,5 stars.

Because it was too steep. It was almost unreal. Not so much the story itself as the actions of the characters. I mean how a 15-year-old girl decides to help a pilot and take him to Sweden, so without a second thought. Without telling anyone. Without doing any preparation and without losing time?!

Nancy says

This book is fast paced and exciting. It was easy to read in one fell swoop and it was a great read for a cold winter afternoon.

The book is set in Norway during World War II. Kari, a teenager, lives on a farm and has romantic dreams of someday going to America. Life is hard on the farm and the privations of the Nazi occupation only add to the burden. Kari sees an American plane go down. She tells her father about it and he tells her to leave it alone. Kari decides that she cannot and goes to check out the crash site. She finds the pilot and decides to help him get to the Swedish border.

The pilot, Lance, and Kari set out for Sweden without her father knowing what she is doing. She takes the horse and cart and some supplies. The trail is harsh and dangerous and it is extremely cold which is complicated by trying to avoid discovery. They are soon pursued by the Nazis who are aided by a friend of Kari's father who knows where they are going. Kari's father, Erland, realizes what Kari is doing and the danger that she is in so he goes after her to try and save her if he can. It is a thrilling chase.

The end is wonderful. Kari succeeds in her mission but at the end of it, she has to choose between between her dreams or her family.

The book was well written and the author told the story simply and cleanly. I enjoyed it and I will be looking for more by this author.

I received an advance copy of this book in return for a fair and honest review. I thank NetGalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read it.

Kat says

I received a free electronic copy of this novel from Netgalley, Kirk Kjeldsen, and Grenzland Press in exchange for an honest review.

This is a touchingly awkward, yet very interesting and original novel: historical young adult adventure with touch of Jack London stories, full to the brim of Scandinavian gloom.

There are the White Silence, icebound expanses of the Stjørdalen Valley and stern reticent people with 'hidden fires' inside, who spend their time together in silence while having intense internal monologues. Also I really liked the colorful descriptions of nature and local daily routines.

This story will certainly make lovers of Nordic literature happy.

El says

I received this book from NetGalley in exchange for review.

Oh, Norway. It's cold. It's snowy. It's got ice.

The best part about reading these Scandinavian novels is just how bleeping cold and blue and ice-like things are. I love the winter, and reading these books that feature people tromping through the wilderness in the snow really rocks my socks.

In this particular snow-trompin novel, Kari is a 15-year-old Norwegian girl in 1943. Norway is occupied. Things are dire. Kari is a resilient young woman who lost her mother and who helps her father on the farm, so she is no stranger to physical and emotional strains. When an allied plane goes down in the mountains, she sets off to investigate, because that's what most 15-year-old girls would do in the middle of the night.

When she gets to the crash site she finds an American pilot and helps him down from a tree without batting an eye. I'm just saying at 38 years of age I would probably give it a couple beats before deciding the best way to help him out of the tree. But not Kari. Kari is one of those characters that knows exactly what to do at the right moment without any debate. We should all be so lucky.

She also decides, without debate, that she will help him into Sweden. I know when I go into the mountains in the middle of the night and help an American pilot out of a tree, the first thing I tell myself is "Yeah, I should just go ahead and walk him into Sweden." I mean, I understand wanting to leave your current living situation, but this may have been a bit above and beyond as far as intensity of thought.

I didn't realize until later that this is considered a young adult novel. This explains why Kari is just so gosh-darn resilient and... perfect. She can do *anything*. I haven't always had a lot of luck with the young adult classification, so I accept that I may not be the best audience for this book. The backdrop of the occupation of Norway had potential to be interesting to me in a historical context, but overall I felt it was just a convenient time period for the story. The relationship between Kari and the American pilot, Lance, never really went anywhere that I expected, and possibly the largest issue with this book is the lack of character development.

Not only does the story follow Kari and Lance through the snow and mountains into Sweden, we also get the perspective of Kari's father, Erling, once he realizes his 15-year-old is, well, not actually in her bed. He seems to be somewhat emotionally distant from Kari after the death of his wife - her mother - but again I felt this was room where their relationship could have been better defined. Erling is a man of few words, though,

so evidently that means his portion of the story can lack any real tension as well.

Overall it was a fine read. Recommended for anyone interested in World War 2, specifically the Nazi occupation in Norway. I wonder if someone who finds young adult novels appealing might better appreciate the story, but if you're looking for character development or interesting character relationships, this is not going to be the story. Still, it's a short novel, quick to read, and, again, it takes place in Norway so one can hardly go wrong with that scenery at all.

Dana says

Land of Hidden Fires was an interesting story about a young Norwegian teenager who helps a downed American soldier travel to safety. I found the narrative of the young teenaged girl to be authentic and interesting, however while I enjoyed the story it felt a little sparse at times.

A lot of the journey (which is essentially the entire story) was a bit vague. I wanted more details of the beautiful Norwegian wilderness, and the gritty realities of trying to survive in harsh conditions, both emotionally and physically. Basically I wished everything was more “fleshed out”, but the base of the story was still an engaging read.

The narrative is told through four perspectives, and normally I am not a fan of the multiple narrative, but the author made it work. Everyone's voice added meaning and intrigue to the story. Despite my qualms I did like this overall, but I generally prefer more expansive and detailed writing.

Buy, Borrow or Bin Verdict: Borrow

[Check out more of my reviews here](#)

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

Grady says

'He that lives on hope shall die fasting.'

Kirk Kjeldsen simply has it! Having worked through the hoops of preparation - an MFA from USC and serving as an assistant professor of cinematic arts at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts - Kirk lived in Shanghai, adapted the poetry of Yarrow Vesaas into a feature film, and has a résumé that reads like an actor's tryout for heavy movie roles. He now lives Essen, Germany with his family.

But to have all that background and then come to the literary table with a debut novel as polished as TOMORROW CITY suggests that his rightful role may be as an author or a screenwriter. Now with his second novel LAND OF HIDDEN FIRES he is becoming well established as a novelist of the first rank. His use of language is so appropriate and filtered free of extraneous clutter that the reader soon understands that to lose attention for a moment on a page will be like falling off a cliff!

Kirk's poetic fluid style deserves an example for those new to his gifts: 'Snow began to fall. It came down in hard, tiny bits at first that stung the skin and crackled as it hit the trees. Then, as it picked up, it softened, falling like flour from a sifter. Before long, big saucer-shaped flakes began to flutter down and fill the air, choking out the moonlight. It muffled every sound, blanketing the forest with silence.' Eloquent, conjuring the atmosphere for his new book.

In this novel Kirk enters the era of WW II and carries his experience into the climes of the Nordic region to create a story that seems simple while reading, but that carries a relationship lesson well past the final pages. The plot is well spelled out in the intro: 'Occupied Norway, 1943. After seeing an allied plane go down over the mountains, headstrong fifteen year-old Kari Dahlstrøm sets out to locate the wreck. She soon finds the cocky American pilot Lance Mahurin and offers to take him to Sweden, pretending she's a member of the resistance. While her widower father Erling and the disillusioned Nazi Oberleutnant Conrad Moltke hunt them down, Kari begins to fall for Lance, dreaming of a life with him in America. Over the course of the harrowing journey, though, Kari learns hard truths about those around her as well as discovering unforeseen depths within herself.'

Fine writing this, and a fine follow up to his first novel. We can only hope that he will continue to parcel out novels during his busy life - he has the gift!

Bandit says

Norway, 1943 under Nazi occupation, bleak winter, woods, snow for miles...it's very atmospheric and makes for a great setting for a story of a 15 year old Norwegian girl who saves the life of an Allied American pilot, who may or may not deserve the effort. After them are the Nazi officer in charge of the region and the girl's father desperate to find her in time. Very straight forward plot with a likeable tough young protagonist and it renders a compelling detailed picture of a specific historical time. Not to mention how nice it is to see a story told succinctly in just 215 pages. The moral is presumably something about doing the right thing no matter how difficult and unrewarding it may be or that such a thing is a reward in itself. Quick entertaining read. For a Kindle freebie you can't really ask for more.

Lorilin says

An allied plane goes down over a remote region in Norway. Kari Dahlstrom is out working on her family's farm when she sees it drop. Though her recently-widowed father forbids her to get involved, Kari investigates the crash anyway, and when she finds the pilot alive, she decides to help him cross the border into Sweden. Land of Hidden Fires is about their journey through the cold and unforgiving countryside as they try to avoid being captured by SS officers.

I wasn't expecting to enjoy this book as much as I did, but I was hooked from the start. It's a short little nugget of a story but still completely captivating in a quietly suspenseful sort of way. The characters are very reserved, but their inner lives are revealed just enough so that it is easy to empathize with them. Kari's father, Erling, surprised me by becoming one of my favorites.

I also really appreciated how fully author Kjeldsen was able to describe the harsh Norwegian climate. I felt

like I was frozen on a mountain right next to these people.

My only minor complaint is that the story's ending felt rushed. I liked where the book ended up, but Kjeldsen seemed too eager to get there. As an example, it took a whole novel for Kari to get from her farm to Sweden, but it only took a few pages for her to go from Sweden back to her farm. I wish there had been a little more detail at the end. I wasn't ready to let go that quickly.

Still, I loved getting lost in this story. The characters are endearing, the setting harsh but gorgeous, and the plot is unique and creative. Not a bad little book.

ARC given to me by author.

See more of my book reviews at www.BugBugBooks.com.

Bonnye Reed says

G Nab I received a free electronic copy of this historical novel from Netgalley, Kirk Kjeldsen, and Grenzland Press in exchange for an honest review. Thank you all, for sharing your hard work with me.

This is one of those books that hook you from the get go. It is WWII and Norway has already been taken by the Germans. Life is hard and winter, always long, seems endless. Land of Hidden Fires is a fast read, and a good tale, but the descriptive phrases sing, and the beauty of the land is heart wringing. Kari and her father Erling are all that you need them to be: strong, stoic, silent, loyal. This is a keeper. Kirk Kjeldsen is an author to watch for.

Pub date Jan 24, 2017
Grenzland Press

Diane Perry says

I received this from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This is a short read, and interesting in parts. I'm not sure if author was going for historical fiction or coming of age or maybe both. It has bits of everything in it. What I didn't find was a character I could truly warm up to. Kari is a head strong fifteen year old that sets out to explore a plane wreckage. This is 1943 and she is not liking her father much. Her father begins to look for her and we slowly learn little about him. I just wasn't completely sold on this book, but it will probably have more of an audience with readers that love this kind of genre.

Erin says

Advertised as a "literary thriller", Land of Hidden Fires, seemed to me as a "coming of age" story. Set in Norway during the Second World War, the story begins when fifteen year old , Kari Dahlstrom, misrepresents herself as a member of the Resistance in order to help an American pilot cross over to Sweden. Kari is enamored with America(through the movies) and with the idea of being swept away by the American pilot and taken far away from her Norwegian home. Unbeknownst to Kari and her American pilot "Lance",

they are being pursued by an ambitious Nazi officer, a greedy neighbor, and Kari's own father.

The plot escalates quickly and I have to admit, as I approached the climax of the story, I was holding my breath. I really liked the ending because it wasn't what I was expecting, it was far from the "Hollywood" type of conclusion. That probably makes it all the more memorable.

Thanks to NetGalley and Grenzland Press for an advanced reader copy of this book.

Laurie says

I would like to give this book a 3.5/5 Rating.

I want to thank NetGalley, the Publisher and the Author for my ARC copy for a fair and honest review.

This YA novel has a personal link to me. My Grandmother's family lived in Trondheim before and after the war, so getting a glimpse at the beautifully described scenery was almost magical to me. The Authors descriptions make it very easy to visualize the scenery and feel and see what that the characters face throughout the novel.

The story takes place during WWII in Norway, which had been overrun by the German Occupation. Kari, the heroine of the novel, lives on a farm with her father. After the loss of her mother, Kari and her father Erling drift apart. While Kari was outside she spots an Allied plane smoking and out plummeting to the ground. Now Kari has always had a love for all things American, so when she sees the plane coming down, she feels compelled to find the pilot and help him, even at the risk of her own life. If she were to be caught she could be sent to a work camp, or at the worst be killed as a traitor. Kari finds the pilot Lucas and helps rescue him from the trees and so their adventures begin.

What happens next is that they set off trying to get to Sweden, which is about the only safe place for Lucas. They set off and have many near misses and face multiple challenges as they race towards Sweden. Erling realizes his daughter is missing and sets off after her, therefore you have multiple storylines throughout the novel, but they flow well with each other.

You also have Moltke, the German Oberleutnant that wants to have an active role in the War and not be sitting on the sidelines in Norway. Moltke's goal is to capture Lucas and claim the glory so that he may finally get to leave Norway and start to earn himself some military glory like his ancestors.

Unfortunately, I found the characters were missing some depth. They could of had some more personality and maybe filled us in a bit more on the back story, such as why Kari and her father were at such odds.

I wish that we found out what happened to the main characters after the conclusion of this novel. The historic accounts in the novel are quite accurate and well done. I am looking forward to reading more from this author.

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

A motherless child who disliked her father, a downed airplane during WWII, an escape, and a German officer searching for the downed pilot.

Kari did not get along with her father and simply just made it through each day. Her father was not like her. Kari was always curious about things. Her father just wanted to go on with his farming and take no interest in what was going on around him.

The day Kari saw a plane crash was the day she realized she had to do something for the pilot and the day she saw her chance to leave. She decided she would take Lance, the American soldier, to Sweden.

LAND OF HIDDEN FIRES allows the reader to experience the dangerous trip Kari and Lance took in the freezing weather while they feared being caught by the Germans and as Kari felt remorse about leaving her father and taking his horse and carriage.

We continue as three characters pursue three different journeys but for connected reasons.

We follow Kari and Lance as they head to freedom for Lance in Sweden.

We follow Kari's father, Erling, as he searches for his young daughter.

We follow the German officer as he searches for Lance.

Mr. Kjeldsen has wonderful descriptions of the landscape, the characters, and the thoughts and feelings of the characters.

I liked the thought at the end of the book that said: "People seemed to be full of hidden fires, invisible to one another and often even invisible to oneself." If you have the pleasure of reading this book, you will understand the quote.

I enjoyed LAND OF HIDDEN FIRES. The book was sensitive, thoughtful, but definitely tense.

I think readers will enjoy the hidden, emotional messages as well as Mr. Kjeldsen's marvelous writing style and story line that kept me turning the pages and wanting to get back to the characters' journeys. 4/5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the author in return for an honest review.

Valerity (Val) says

This was my first dip into the writing of Kirk Kjeldsen. It turned out to be a delightful experience. I have a recent fascination with Norway already, so when I found that the book is set there, it was pretty much a forgone conclusion that I'd want to check it out. LAND OF HIDDEN FIRES was an easy book for me to get involved in, enjoying the storyline and the time period, all handled in a wonderfully descriptive writing style. It became a battle between wanting to finish the book to see how it ends, and trying to keep from inhaling it too quickly so that it wouldn't be over too soon. Something that doesn't happen all too frequently for me. A satisfying read that has me already looking forward to future works by this author. My thanks to Netgalley, Grenzland Press, and the the author himself for the complimentary copy to read.

Thomas says

I received this book from NetGalley after the author asked me to review his book. I found it to be a short, easy read, finishing it in two days. It takes place in the winter of 1943, in occupied Norway. A US air force plane crashes near a Norwegian farm run by a widower and his 15 year old daughter. She finds the pilot, stuck in a tree, and gets him down. She tells him that she is with the resistance (not true) and will take him to Sweden. She fantasizes about a romance with the pilot. The Nazis are searching for him and the plot proceeds at a good pace. There is quite a bit of descriptive information about the geography, plants and people of Norway.

Two quotes:

"The black mountains rose in waves, churning and white-capped. They climbed ever higher to the east, each row more faded and illusory than the last."

"People seemed to be full of hidden fires, invisible to one another and often even invisible to one self."

I enjoyed reading it and give it 4 out of 5 stars.
