

Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee II

Heather Lenson

Description: The Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee will discuss recent trends in Jewish children's literature and will highlight selected books received in 2014. Bibliographies for all ages will include inclusivity, young adult love stories, graphic novels and Holocaust literature.

Heather Lenson received her undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University in Business Logistics. She received her M.L.I.S. from Kent State University. She is the Media Specialist at the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland's Ratner Media & Technology Center. She also leads story time for Park Synagogue Wolf Religious School. In addition to being on the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee, Heather is the editor of the Jewish Valuesfinder database, and she reviews books for the *AJL Reviews*. She lives with her husband Kevin and three children: Emma (12 years old), Owen (10 years old) and Dylan (7 years-old). Her favorite genre of books is young adult.

Holocaust Fiction Books:

Inspiring, illustrated, picture books that are about hope and based on true stories of Holocaust survivors. Life in Auschwitz with factors that help them survive:

- **Gifts from the Enemy** by Trudy Ludwig
 - Grades 4-6
 - Boy kept alive from camp worker who snuck him sandwiches, shows kindness in a desolate situation
 - Illustrations are dramatic oil-paintings
- **Magician of Auschwitz** by Kathy Kacer
 - Grades 4-6
 - Non-violent
 - Auschwitz grey tones, pale, gaunt prisoners. Only bright colors are the magic cards-represent hope
- **Playing for the Commandment** by Suzy Zail
 - A teen novel about a gift pianist who gets the job of playing for a Commandment in his villa.
 - It is warm and she gets extra food.
 - She feels guilty about her comfort, because her sister suffers in the cold working by moving stones to build a quarry.

Different topics that are Holocaust – related:

- **Under the Egg** by Laura Marx Fitzgerald
 - Middle grade level 5-8.
 - Has the feeling of an E. L. Konigsburg mystery.
 - A mystery about a quirky, non-Jewish girl in NYC discovers that her late grandfather was an art dealer helped save art work owned by a Jewish art collector in France during the Holocaust.
 - She realizes the woman who lives next door is the daughter of the French Jewish man. Her house was a haven for French Jewish refugees.
 -
 -
- **Prisoner of Night and Fog** by Anne Blackman
 - For teen readers
 - A non-Jewish girl's relationship with Hitler, her "adopted uncle"
 - Information about the rise of the National Socialist Party in Munich.
 - How Hitler hid plans to exterminate the Jewish people.
 - She gets in a relationship with a Jewish journalist.
 - She eventually defies the Nazis.