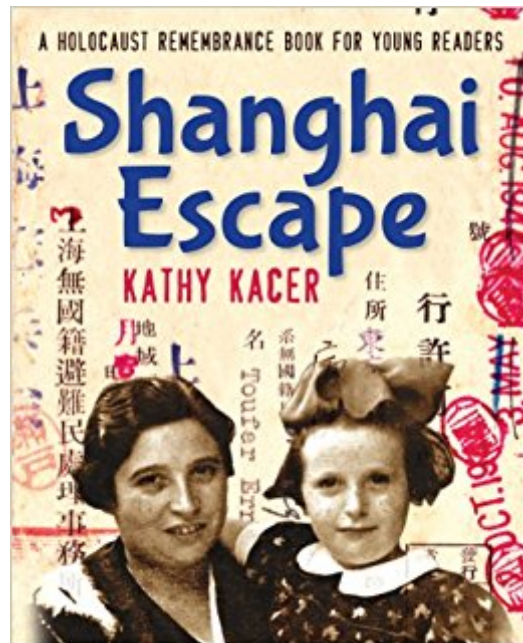




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# Shanghai Escape (Holocaust Remembrance Series)



## Synopsis

Shanghai, China, seems an unlikely destination for Jewish refugees trying to escape the cruel anti-Semitic laws of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party before the Second World War. But while most countries were unwilling to give refuge to Jews, China was one place that did. More than twenty thousand European Jews found refuge in Shanghai between 1937 and 1939. Lily Toufar and her family arrive in Shanghai in 1938, having fled from Vienna on the eve of Kristallnacht. Shanghai is a strange place for this bright young girl. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and under pressure from Hitler, the Japanese government in Shanghai has ordered Jewish refugees to move into a ghetto in an area of Shanghai called Hongkew. There is little food to eat and poor sanitation, and disease is rampant. For Lily, life becomes grueling after her family is forced into the ghetto. Lily endures the difficult conditions, always hopeful for an end to the war and a return to normal life.

## Book Information

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[Holocaust](#) #150 in [Books > Teens > Social Issues > Prejudice](#)

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-6- Filled with photographs, Shanghai Escape is an episodic novelization of Lily Toufar's real-life story growing up in Shanghai. Lily is four when her extended family flees Austria on Kristallnacht. They go to one of the few places accepting Jews-Shanghai. There Lily lives in the French concession and goes to school as her family tries to adjust to a new life. Shanghai is under Japanese control and after Pearl Harbor, things start to change. Eventually Lily, her family, and the rest of the stateless refugees who arrived after 1937 move into the Hongkew ghetto-a place already overcrowded with poor Jews and even poorer Chinese citizens. Once there, they hear the horror

stories coming out of Europe and wonder what will happen next. Making Toufar's story accessible to middle-grade readers means that some of the realities of Asian geopolitics are not entirely accurate, and some of the horrors of the Holocaust are glossed over. As there is little written about the vibrant Jewish community in Shanghai, this does remain a good and different addition to Holocaust literature, especially for readers too young for Andrea Alban's *Anyã's War* (Feiwel & Friends, 2011).-Jennifer Rothschild, Arlington County Public Libraries, VA  
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"A good and different addition to Holocaust literature." (School Library Journal 2013-10-01)"Lovingly researched, this middle-grade novel opens the world of the Holocaust as it affected refugees who fled Europe and found themselves persecuted in other lands. Author Kathy Kacer uses the true story of Lily Toufar to show us what daily life was like as Jew in China as she endured poverty, starvation, and cruelty. We empathize with Lily and her extended family as we grow to love and respect their courage." (Historical Novel Society 2014-02-01)"Kacer brings us into this turbulent time in history through the eyes of a child who was caught up in the horror and once again she does it with a finesse that portrays the suffering and pain without making it too graphic for young readers." (Resource Links 2014-02-01)

While I liked this book, it didn't seem as well written as some of the other books by Kathy Kacer. Very little was said about Lily's family escaping Austria, and nothing at all was said about the long boat trip to Shanghai. A bit disappointing, although it is a good book for young readers.

I saw this book at Yad Vashem in Israel. I had no idea there was a Jewish community in Shaghai during WWII nor the horrors they experienced there. Very definitely for Young Adults but if you want to know about this part of the Holocaust, you can get a sense quickly.

A wonderful heartwarming story but poorly writtenI can assure you that no refugee child from Austria called their father " Pop " in Shanghai in those years, having lived there myself.

I thought I knew my Holocaust history fairly well. I studied it, went to museums and lectures but never heard of the Jewish Immigrants that fled Nazi Europe to Shanghai. This amazing middle school book took me on a journey with a little girl of seven torn from her home in Vienna and taken to a far off place where everything was different. Lily, lived in a relatively safe community of other

immigrants while semi sectioned off from the ghettos. She had a strong family, a strong community and exceptional parents. Life was never easy, but they adjusted, till Japan started taking control of the area and they listened to Hitler's wishes. Her family was once again torn away from the home they knew to something far worse than any expected. There are some basic war facts covering events that caused major changes in the war's direction and some harsh realities and deaths. Everything was very well written, with respect and decency. I loved this way of telling history. I was excited to share what I was reading with others all through the story. I will read more in this series.

It is odd that in all my reading of stories relating to WWII and the Holocaust, I was somehow unaware of the many Jews who, when they sought refuge from the Nazis in the 1930s, moved to Shanghai. Indeed more than 20,000 did so. It was during this time—1938 to be precise—that Lily's family made their move to the city. At the time, Lily "marveled at how nice [her mother] looked, as if she was planning a dinner party and not an escape from their home." In any case, Lily, along with her parents, her Oma, and some extended family, journeyed for weeks to arrive at one of the few places that at the time would offer safety to the Jews. Some time later, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Imperial Army occupied Shanghai, and the U.S. entered the war, the lives of the Jews in Shanghai changed drastically. In a manner similar to the ghettos that many Jews had sought to escape from in Europe, those in Shanghai were also left with little space, food, medication, or other life necessities. Lily's story is recommended for middle graders readers, despite the hardships and violence of which the author tells—and it is an important story, particularly given that much of the physical evidence of Jewish life in Shanghai during that period has already disappeared.

Shanghai Escape by Kathy Kacer  
Second Story Press  
Middle Grade, Children's Nonfiction  
Pub Date Oct 14, 2013  
I was given a copy of Shanghai Escape through the Publisher and their partnership with Netgalley in exchange for my honest review which is as follows:  
Between 1937 and 1939 Over 20 thousand Jews came to Shanghai China mostly from Austria and Germany. In Shanghai like in Austria and Germany Jews would be sent to Ghetto's and even work camps living in the conditions they were trying to escape. In November of 1938 Lily and her family leave their home in Vienna and head to Shanghai. Lily and her family all settle into a one room flat. Life for Lily once again changes after the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. By February of 1943 Lily and her family along with all other Jews will be forced to move from their flat into the

Ghetto of Hongkew. Lily and her family would remain in the Hongkew Ghetto until it was liberated in September of 1945 when Hongkew was liberated. I give this book five out of five Stars Happy Reading

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