



Doing My Part

Teresa R. Funke

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Based on a true story...

Until World War II came along, fourteen-year-old Helen Marshall's biggest problem had been her height. Few men in Hayden's Valley, Illinois are as tall as Helen. But when Helen's mother is hurt and can't work and her favorite cousin ships off to fight, Helen must find a way to support both her family and her country. Along with her best friend, Janie, she takes a summer job at a war factory and discovers that not everyone welcomes her enthusiasm. Determined to prove she can handle her new responsibilities, Helen must confront a lazy boss, two older women who try to slow down her work, and townspeople who gang up on one of their own. But when she answers the eerie cries of her mysterious German neighbor, Mrs. Osthoff, Helen learns the true sacrifice of war. And when she keeps a secret for a friend, she realizes that grown-up decisions sometimes have life-or-death consequences.

Doing My Part Details

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From Reader Review *Doing My Part* for online ebook

Steven Carroll says

This morning I finished reading my copy of *Doing My Part*.

Teresa R. Funke did an excellent job with this book. I especially appreciated her attention to "moral details", small seemingly insignificant actions that tend to show the deeper parts of a person's character.

The dialogue was well written and believable, and I liked Helen's development over the course of the story.

Very easily a four star read, and a great book for kids studying the World War 2 era.

Review by Children's Author Steven J. Carroll

Sally says

I won this through first reads, and the lovely author included a card and some other postcards and that totally made me squee :D

I loved this book :) It's set in America during the Second World War, which I realised is kind of a new thing for me! Everything else I've read has been set either in the UK, where they're being bombed out, or Europe, where they're being bombed out as well as facing all the other things. Plus one or two in Asia, POW camps and the like. But nothing in America. There's kind of a gaping hole in my historical knowledge there too, which is shameful but we didn't do much non-Australian history in school.

Anyway, really interesting setting! Because you have boys and men going off to fight (and getting killed), you have girls working in factories now that the men are away... but you don't have the threat of being bombed each night. No air-raid sirens. No sheltering in the tube. There was rationing at least, so that was familiar! And of course those of German-descent being treated unfairly. But it was very different to all other WWII books I've read, and I did enjoy. Nice to see yet another side of things!

Helen is a great main character as well. She's fourteen and working in a factory over summer, and has a mix of grown-up problems and childhood problems to deal with. She's been forced to grow up too quickly, but sometimes you do remember that she's only fourteen.

One line of hers that really gave me a chill: "I can at least help bring [Hal] home quicker by working hard, by making timing devices for these bombs that will sail right over those German cities. **I can help make sure that nobody else's son has to die like Mrs. Osthoff's...**" - those bombs she's helping to make *are* going to kill other people's sons. And daughters, mothers, fathers, etc.

I'd be interested to read more in this series! A nice change from my usual WWII fare :)

Chrissy says

Though I finished this book in only about two hours; I don't think this book is entirely finished with me.

Helen is a wonderful character. She is strong, hard working , responsible, and always seeking to do the right thing.

The story is believable, and at certain point wholly moving.

I'm very pleased to see a series of books about young people on the homefront, hopefully there is a Canadian equivalent.

I'll be reading whatever is left of the series, and recommending it highly.

Goldie Herechuk says

I won this book through GoodReads. I thought it was very interesting. It is always good to know what has happened in the past and how people dealt with it. It is also an easy read so that teenagers who read this book will learn interesting facts about the past.

Kai says

This is a wonderful book to introduce the younger generation of what have happened during the World War II era. So many changes had happened but as each younger generation replaces the older generation, they will not know of what their parents, grandparents, and even great-grandparents endured during this period.

Doing My Part gives a perspective from a teenager's point of view. Helen Marshall, a fourteen year old, is working in the war factory for her first summer job and at the same time believed she is helping the war effort. She is quite proud of herself and believes that she is taking on grown-up responsibility. She also finds out that being a grown-up is not as quite as she thought it was going to be. She found that that even grown-ups could be lazy, spiteful, and mean. She also found out that being a grown-up, some things are not all black and white. It could also be gray.

Helen has to face two older women who spent more times, spreading rumors and being mean to those who worked with them, a supervisor who is never there, a lonely German woman who has lost her husband and now her son to the war, and her friend who is joining the military by lying about his age. Most of these dilemmas that the character Helen faces are quite true of what a young adult is facing during that era. This book is entertaining and educational for all ages.

Mike says

Of course it's a five, it's my sister's book! But really, it's a good story for young readers or any of us interested in WWII.....

Recommended.....

Joni says

An excellent book to introduce children to what it was to be a child/teenager during the years when our country was involved in World War II. This book is well-written, well-researched, and deals with moral issues that involved youth and adults not only in the 1940's, but are just as valid today. I received this book as a "first read" book, and am passing it on to my granddaughters (ages 9 and 11) to read. Great book, made more fascinating as it based on stories from real people!

Ava says

i thought that doing my part was a good start to the series!!!!

Teri says

Doing My Part is Teresa R. Funke's first in the Home-Front Heroes series for young readers. I felt it read more like an adult book. Well written historical fiction that gives the reader an inside view of life on the home-front during World War II.

Crystal says

Excellent story about the coming of age of a teen-age girl during World War II. Though, aimed at the middle school audience, this book has appeal for all ages. It is based on the real-life story of Shirley Brand (Helen Marshall in the book). The author, from Ft. Collins, CO, has written several books about WWII surrounding the lives of local people in the area she has interviewed. This one tells about a teenage girl who, because her mother has sustained a job injury, has to spend her summer working in a factory to help her family make ends meet. Along the way, she learns many things about people in general and the importance of doing her own part to make things better. A great read for all. I highly recommend. Looking forward to reading another of Teresa Funke's books.

Carol Coutts says

Not usually a fan of historical fiction lately but this was lovely, set in World War II. I enjoyed the story,

spunky girl heroine who finds a way to fee useful in a time when boys were the ones who seemed most valuable. It was a quick read for me and I loved that it's based on a real person. The historical context notes at the end were also great. As a history buff, I have a lot of background but most middle grade readers don't about this time period - not curriculum here til 9th grade. The historical notes would really help with that piece. I will be adding it to my library and reviewing it there as well for my elementary kiddos. Thank you Teresa Funke for the free copy to try!
