



If I Should Die Before I Wake

By Han Nolan

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Hilary hates Jews. As part of a neo-Nazi gang in her town, she's finally found a sense of belonging. But when she's critically injured in an accident, everything changes.

Somehow, in her mind, she has become Chana, a Jewish girl fighting for her own life in the ghettos and concentration camps of World War II.

Han Nolan offers powerful insight into one young woman's survival through the Holocaust and another's journey out of hatred and self-loathing.

Reader's guide and an interview with the author included.

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If I Should Die Before I Wake By Han Nolan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Few novels can match this effort for its stupefying lack of taste. Teenager Hilary, who has never recovered from the long-ago death of her father and from her Bible-thumping mother's temporary abandonment of her, lies in a coma, the victim of her own adventures with her neo-Nazi pals. Suddenly she "slips" into another life--that of a Jewish girl in Poland at the beginning of the Nazi occupation. It turns out that she is sharing the memories of her hospital roommate, whose telepathic communications eventually bring about Hilary's salvation. Gratuitously lurid subplots involve teenage American neo-Nazi depredations and the torture of Hilary's young Jewish neighbor; the Holocaust flashbacks feature a psychic grandmother. Passages about Nazi ghettos and concentration camps seem cobbled together from survivors' memoirs (noticeably, Kitty Hart's several autobiographies and Fania Fenelon's *Playing for Time*), while the overall conceit owes a major debt to Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic*. Any hope that the author will redeem this misbegotten first novel is quickly quashed by her unrelievedly airless prose. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 7-12-Hilary Burke, a young Neo-Nazi, is in a coma after a motorcycle accident. Ironically, she has been taken to a Jewish hospital and shares a room with elderly Chana, an Auschwitz survivor. Instrumental in the kidnapping of her 13-year-old Jewish neighbor, Hilary hates all Jews and believes one caused her father's death. Through Chana's memories, the girl is transported back to World War II, experiencing for herself the horrors suffered by Polish Jews just trying to survive, first in the Lodz ghetto, then in the concentration camp. While the subject matter is certainly compelling, this first novel is not as powerful as Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Viking, 1988) or as chilling as Jay Bennett's *Skinhead* (Watts, 1991). Nolan does a better job of portraying Chana than Hilary or her Bible-quoting mother, but Mrs. Burke's dysfunctional personality and Hilary's problems with her are clear. Interspersed are Biblical passages that are sometimes appropriate to the text, but often unnecessary and distracting. The ending is predictable and soppy: Chana dies leaving an album full of family photos to Hilary. Stick to the numerous, excellent-quality, existing examples of Holocaust literature.

Jo-Anne Weinberg, Greenburgh Public Library, NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-10. High-school student Hilary Burke, whose rebellion against her fundamentalist Christian mother takes the form of hanging out with local neo-Nazis, lies unconscious in an intensive-care ward after a motorcycle accident. The other patient in the unit is an aged Holocaust survivor, Chana Bergman. Before returning to consciousness, Hilary slips into Chana's memory and travels back in time to the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz. Chana's chapters dominate the text until the elderly woman dies and Hilary returns to life, no longer anti-Semitic. This first novel has great strengths and weaknesses. The time travel is contrived, the characterization of Hilary's mother is shallow and unbelievable, a hospital fire set by neo-Nazis is an unnecessary plot element, and the preachy message about the "new" Hilary changing the world is tabloid psychodrama. Chana's story, however, is brilliantly rendered. Without sensationalizing or blurring, Nolan evokes the physical and emotional crowding of shared living space, the desperate struggle for food each day, and the compromises required for survival. Despite the contrived machinery through which it's introduced, Chana's story carries memorable emotional impact. *Mary Harris Veeder*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lawrence Seay:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children till adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for us. The book *If I Should Die Before I Wake* seemed to be making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The guide *If I Should Die Before I Wake* is not only giving you a lot more new information but also for being your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship with the book *If I Should Die Before I Wake*. You never feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

Jessica Wilson:

Hey guys, do you would like to finds a new book to learn? May be the book with the name *If I Should Die Before I Wake* suitable to you? Typically the book was written by renowned writer in this era. The actual book untitled *If I Should Die Before I Wake* is the one of several books that everyone read now. This book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this book you will enter the new age that you ever know prior to. The author explained their strategy in the simple way, and so all of people can easily to understand the core of this reserve. This book will give you a lot of information about this world now. To help you see the represented of the world in this book.

Sandra Bland:

Reading a publication tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With examining you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire their very own reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the guides. But also they write about advantage about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some research before they write to their book. One of them is this *If I Should Die Before I Wake*.

John Sherman:

With this era which is the greater person or who has ability in doing something more are more special than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple way to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time not much but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of many books in the top list in your reading list is usually *If I Should Die Before I Wake*. This book which is qualified as *The Hungry Hillside* can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking up and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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