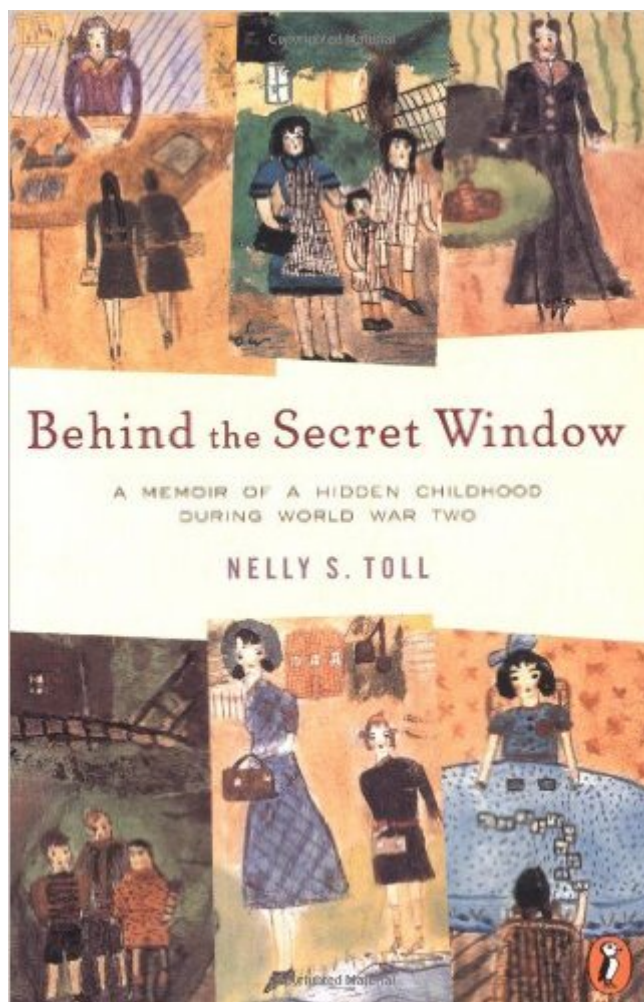


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# Behind The Secret Window



## Synopsis

The Nazis come to Poland when Nelly is six. By the time she turns eight, the events of World War II have taken almost everyone she loves. Scared, lonely, and running from the Nazis, Nelly hides in the bedroom of a Gentile couple in Poland. For over a year, she lives in fear of discovery, writing in her diary and painting pictures of a fantasy world filled with open skies and happy families.

Illustrated with Nelly's original watercolors, this powerful memoir tells the true story of how a little girl's imagination helped her survive a nightmare.

## Book Information

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (March 24, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142302414

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Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #710,917 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #111 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Holocaust](#) #1139 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Historical](#) #3470 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Girls & Women](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

We were given a World War II book report in English. I chose this book over Anne Frank. The way Nelly Toll told her story, it made you feel as if you were there, hiding in a small room, waiting for the Gestapo to leave, and praying that they don't find you. Even though her family was hunted by the German army, the Nazis, she continued to read, and write, and paint. Though the story has a sweet, and happy ending, sadness does lurk behind it. I highly recommend this book!

Nelly Toll's story is very passionate and descriptive. She really allows the readers to visit her emotions. This book is an excellent choice of literature for classroom use on the Holocaust--one that probably is overlooked.

This book is a memory of Nelly Toll's childhood experiences during World War II. She battled so many things none of us could imagine. She lost very much during the war but always had hope. The main characters in this book are Nelly, her mother, and pani pan Wotjek. (They are Christians willing to hide them). This book takes place mostly in Poland 1943-1944. She also goes to Hungary. She spends most of these two years living indoors. It's a very in-depth look at the war. To me it seems almost fictional. It's amazing how much she remembers about how she felt.

Hidden with her mother during World War II, Nelly S. Toll reveals her childhood story in her book, *Behind the Secret Window*. Toll's family is Polish Jew who lived in Lwów. The Tolls have been very successful in Lwów and were better known by their business. The story begins as the Russians are leaving the country and the Germans march in. Everyone is worried about Germans, but they comfort themselves that since the Germans are educated people, peace will become back to Polish lives as it had been before the Russians came. Toll recalls how her life had been affected by living with Russian soldiers and how her father vanished into the darkness. When the Germans came, the Tolls had to move to a ghetto, a little house on Kleparowska Street. The Tolls were trying to make a secret hiding place, like other Jews did, hiding children from the German and Ukrainian police. Toll recalls that every time the police would come, the streets were quiet, as if they were empty. The town was like a ghost town. The author was sent away to a Christian family where she will be safe from the Germans for a while. Later, she learns that her cousins were taken away and have not been heard from since. After that, the Tolls attempt to keep the author away from the ghetto as much as possible. They try to escape to other neighboring countries. As all their attempts fail, the author and her mother live with a Polish family who hide them in their bedroom, in a secret place behind where there used to be a window. The author and her mother live in this secret place until the Germans leave Poland and the Russians once again march in. People may think of this book as just another World War II story where Jews were affected greatly by the Holocaust. Most of these stories are recalled through a diary that the authors have written, and this book is no exception. Nelly S. Toll was a young girl when she wrote the diary, which later became her published book. The book also contains her artwork. It is very rare to find children's watercolor paintings during wartime. This book has a happy-ending. Anne Frank's diary ends as soldiers' march in one day to their hiding place and all of the family members, exception of her father, are killed at the concentration camp. In this story, even though most of Nelly S. Toll's family members are killed or dragged to concentration camps, she and her mother survive and come to America. The book,

Behind the Secret Window is published by the author herself, rather than published by a member of her family. This book will make the readers think of their surroundings and recognize once again how lucky they are to live in the world where no one feels threatened by one's race.

This book is about a girl. She is about 7 when the Nazis come and invade her town. Now she is 8 and her dad has left or "disappeared". Her maids have been taken away, and the soldiers are taking her stuff from her so they can give the stuff to other kids in their country. She is so mortified! It is now her and her mom. They move to her aunt's apartment. And then something happens that you have to read the book to find out. By the end of the book the little girl is left alone with her awful thoughts of the horrible things that the soldiers do to the people that live in her town. So all she can do is paint pictures of what she thinks of all the things that are going on around her. This is a book that every one needs to read.

In *Behind The Secret Window* by Nellie Toll, the message that the story has to offer is that life can knock you down sometimes, but most importantly you can't let life keep you down. Nelly is a small girl who is hiding from the Nazis during World War Two. The Nazis take her two siblings, aunt, father, and is really unhappy. Throughout the book she realizes that being unhappy won't help her during this difficult time. Instead she starts believing that one day her loved ones will return. Nelly finally benefits from this by making it through the war alive and finally seeking freedom. This book gives you the best of advice and messages you could ever find for difficult hardships and advice.

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