



AUTHOR

Liz Kessler is an English author who has written over 20 books for children and young adults including the Emily Windsnap mermaid stories and *When the World Was Ours* which draws on her own family history. She loves living by the sea which inspired her to write about mermaids. She has worked as a journalist and a teacher and has always loved writing and encouraging others to write. She has a dalmatian dog called Poppy.

WEBSITE

<https://www.lizkessler.co.uk/>

LINKS

An excellent video for adults. Liz Kessler talks about the real-life inspiration for *When the World Was Ours* and offers tips for talking to young people about the **Holocaust**.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vVqyigK-Zs>

Children can visit Liz's website to read her writing tips.

<https://www.lizkessler.co.uk/writing-tips/>

A short film about Anne Frank

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTKgHhI7gs0>



CODE NAME KINGFISHER

Older Readers Shortlist 2024

INTRODUCTION

Set in both present-day Great Britain and Holland during the **Second World War**, this is a story about **family, resilience, courage, friendship, bullying** and ultimately hope. It focuses on the dangerous work of the **Dutch resistance**, and although it is less harrowing than *When the World Was Ours*, it doesn't shy away from **the realities of war** – with incidents of hardship, **betrayal** and **self-sacrifice**.

When clearing her grandmother's house, Liv discovers a box which contains clues about Bubbe's childhood in **Amsterdam** during the **Nazi Occupation** and her sister Hannie's commitment to leading **Jewish children** to safety. Narrated by Liv, Mila, Hannie and Willem, a boy who befriends Mila, but is suspected of betrayal, although later we discover he is one of the children rescued by Hannie. When introducing the book, read aloud from 'Saturday' on p19 to the end of p23. This section, which is set in the present day, provides an insight into Liv's deteriorating friendship with Karly and her developing relationship with Bubbe, her grandmother.

ACTIVITIES

Read about and research the real-life story of **Anne Frank** who would have been hiding in the Secret Annex around the same time that the fictional sisters Mila and Hannie were living undercover in Amsterdam. See film in Links.

Write or illustrate Suggest your child or children write a letter to the author to tell them how the story made them feel. Or illustrate a favourite character or scene.

Create a comic strip version of one of the key episodes in the book or character profiles for each of the four narrators.

NOW READ ON

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit by Judith Kerr (HarperCollins, 2017) Semi-autobiographical classic family story of escape and refuge. 9+
Resist by Tom Palmer (Barrington Stoke, 2022) Another story about the Dutch resistance based on Audrey Hepburn's childhood.
Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine (Cherrytree Books, 2017) Investigating the true story behind a suitcase sent from the museum at Auschwitz to a Holocaust education centre in Tokyo. 12+
When the World Was Ours by Liz Kessler (Simon & Schuster, 2021) A powerful, heart-breaking story about three friends in WW2 whose fates, though very different, are closely intertwined. 13+