

Passages

Reading Level 6



Title: Summer of My German Soldier

Author: Bette Green

Sample From The Book

From the crowd a woman's voice – it may have been Reverend Benn's wife – asked, "Well, where are they?"

Jimmy Wells pointed to the last passenger car. "There!"

Everyone hurried toward the end of the train in time to see two GIs with their side arms still strapped in their holsters step quickly from the car. Then came the Germans. The crowd moved back slightly, leaving a one-person-wide path between themselves and the train.

The prisoners were unhandcuffed, unchained young men carrying regulation Army duffel bags.

They wore fresh blue denim pants and matching shirts, and if it hadn't been for the black "POW" stenciled across their shirt backs you could easily have mistaken them for an ordinary crew from the Arkansas Public Works Department sent out to repair a stretch of highway. I tried to read their faces for brutality, terror, humiliation – something. But the only thing I sensed was a kind of relief at finally having arrived at their destination.

"Nazis!" A woman's voice shouted. And this time I knew for sure that it was Mrs. Benn.

A blond prisoner who was stepping off the train at that moment stopped short then smiled and waved. It was as though he believed, or wanted to believe, that Mrs. Benn's call was nothing more than a friendly American greeting.



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