



## Soldier Boys

By Dean Hughes

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### Soldier Boys By Dean Hughes

Spencer Morgan And Dieter Hedrick, one American, one German, are both young and eager to get into action in the war. Dieter, a shining member of the Hitler Youth movement, has actually met the *Führer* himself and was praised for his hard work. Now he is determined to make it to the front lines, to push back the enemy and defend the honor of the Fatherland.

Spencer, just sixteen, must convince his father to sign his induction papers. He is bent on becoming a paratrooper -- the toughest soldiers in the world. He will prove to his family and hometown friends that he is more than the little guy with crooked teeth. He'll prove to his father that he can amount to something and keep his promises. Everyone will look at him differently when he returns home in his uniform, trousers tucked into his boots in the paratrooper style.

Both boys get their wishes when they are tossed into intense conflict during the Battle of the Bulge. And both soon learn that war is about a lot more than proving oneself and one's bravery. Dean Hughes offers young readers a wrenching look at parallel lives and how innocence must eventually be shed.

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## **Soldier Boys By Dean Hughes Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The premise of Hughes's (Family Pose) novel, the disillusionment of two idealistic boys one American, the other German who idealistically insist on hurrying into battle during WWII, proves more compelling than the somewhat uneven plotting and character development. The author effectively portrays the motivations of Hitler Youth leader Dieter, from his nascent aspirations at 10 to the brainwashed zealotry in the name of Hitler that leads him to lobby to be sent into combat at the age of 15. However, the back story describing the motivation of 17-year-old Spence, a Utah Mormon who joins the Airborne paratroopers to prove his toughness to the folks back home (especially one disinterested girl), feels cursory. The pace of the narrative quickens as the boys each experience the gut-wrenching and haphazard realities of war that challenge their starry-eyed, patriotic notions. Though some readers will find a few passages overblown (e.g., "None of this seemed like the stuff Spence had seen in the movies") and Spence's religious epiphany which leads to his rather convenient connection to Dieter implausible, others will appreciate this realistically harrowing depiction of the pointlessness of war. Ages 10-14.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 7-9-Parallel stories follow teenagers Spence Morgan, a farm boy from Utah, and Dieter Hedrick, a farm boy from Bavaria. Stirred by complex feelings of patriotism and adolescent insecurities, both young men find themselves fighting for their respective countries in World War II. The first part of the story follows Spence from his small-town life to the rigors of basic training as a paratrooper; Dieter has left his family in order to supervise other Hitler youth, digging trenches on the German border. Then suddenly, both teens are thrust into the chaos and carnage of the Battle of the Bulge. Dieter has his eyes opened somewhat by a disillusioned and embittered corporal in his unit. Spence learns of war's truths when his best friend dies. The novel comes alive in these final chapters, capturing the soldiers' struggles to stay warm and to overcome their fear, and the battle scenes place readers in the center of the action. Hughes doesn't flinch from describing the devastating effect of a bullet. *Soldier Boys* rises above the clichés of standard World War II stories and serves as a reminder that wars are often fought by young people like those we see every day in our libraries.

*Todd Morning, Schaumburg Township Public Library, IL*

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Review

"In this coming-of-age novel, the true test of manhood is in helping, not fighting."

### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Marylou Arroyo:**

This *Soldier Boys* tend to be reliable for you who want to be considered a successful person, why. The reason of this *Soldier Boys* can be on the list of great books you must have will be giving you more than just

simple reading food but feed an individual with information that possibly will shock your before knowledge. This book is handy, you can bring it just about everywhere and whenever your conditions in e-book and printed people. Beside that this Soldier Boys forcing you to have an enormous of experience such as rich vocabulary, giving you demo of critical thinking that we understand it useful in your day action. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

**Craig Duran:**

Your reading sixth sense will not betray a person, why because this Soldier Boys guide written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written within good manner for you, dripping every ideas and producing skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still uncertainty Soldier Boys as good book not merely by the cover but also by the content. This is one book that can break don't ascertain book by its deal with, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick that!? Oh come on your reading through sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to an additional sixth sense.

**Bobbie Freeman:**

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**Vickie Duke:**

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