

April 24, 2015

Alan Gratz
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Dear Pennsylvania Readers,

Thank you so much for voting *Prisoner B-3087* your favorite book in the 2014-2015 Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award Grades 6-8 Division! It's a real thrill for me as an author to win this award, and such an honor for Jack Gruener and his legacy.

When Jack and his wife Ruth took his story to Scholastic, they immediately saw that it would make a great novel. But neither Jack nor Ruth are writers, so Scholastic asked me to write the book. Once I heard Jack's account of his time in the camps, I couldn't resist—it was such an incredible story! In particular, I loved that he survived. So many stories of the Holocaust of course did not end so well.

Prisoner B-3087 was a really tough book for me to write, because some of the things that happened to Jack were so horrible. At the same time, I think it's very important that we never forget those things happened, and so I was glad to be able to work with him to tell his story.

I wrote part of the book before I ever met Jack in person, using what he and his wife had told Scholastic about his experiences in World War II and doing a lot of research on the concentration camps on my own. Then, about halfway through writing the first draft, I got to fly to New York and meet Jack. We spent the afternoon at the Holocaust Museum in Manhattan, where some artifacts of Ruth's time during the war are on display.

Jack's memory isn't what it once was, and he wasn't able to answer some of the questions I had for him. But then, when he read my first draft of the book, a lot of things came back to him! I think he needed the world of the book to help jog his memory. I'm pleased that I was able to write something that brought the past to life again for him, even if a great deal of that past was painful. Jack is one of the bravest people I've ever met.

Thank you again for this wonderful honor. I'm so glad *Prisoner B-3087* had such an impact on you that you would vote it your favorite book of the year. This award is as much for Jack's incredible life story as it is for my novel about it.

Sincerely,

Alan Gratz