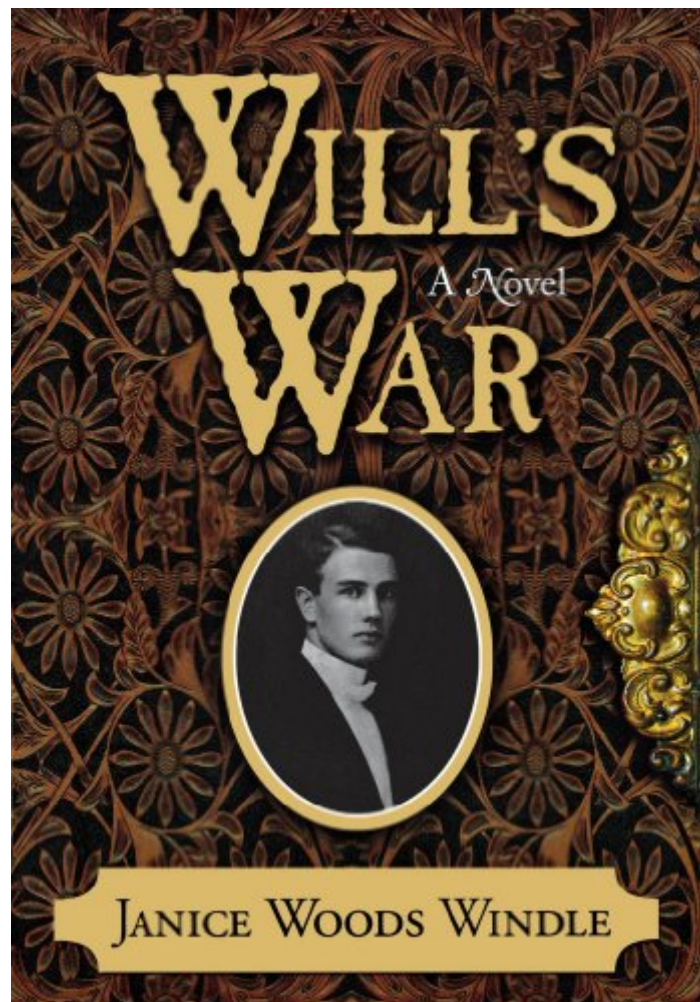


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Will's War: A Novel



Synopsis

From bestselling author Janice Woods Windle comes a compelling historical novel based on the life of her own grandfather. The protagonist is Will Bergfeld, a brash young man of German descent who is accused of treason and stands trial for his life in 1917, in the midst of the anti-German sentiment that ran rampant in small-town Texas during World War I.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Will Bergfeld, who "sometimes accompanied the sunset" on his grandmother's violin, was playing for his wife and little girls in Weinert, Texas one night when a train stopped, ominously, without whistling. Eighteen lawmen burst into the Bergfeld home and arrested Will without a warrant. The year was 1917. The United States had declared war on Germany. In a wave of anti-German hysteria, authorities in this country began gathering information about Americans of German descent and placing them on a secret list, "Subjects of the Teutonic Order." Will, a rural mailman west of Fort Worth, was noticed because he organized workers and was concerned about protecting water rights of farmers in a dry land. He could not stand injustice. He greatly loved America, where his family had come to escape the same sorts of injustices in Germany. However,

he and 51 other men found themselves in a Federal trial in Abilene. He was accused of treason, conspiracy to overthrow the government, and threatening to kill President Woodrow Wilson. Will's father-in-law Henry King hired a gifted attorney. Readers of TRUE WOMEN will remember Henry and Bettie and their gracious home in Seguin, on the beautiful Guadalupe River. In WILL'S WAR, the King's daughter Virginia is a young woman. Her daughters Little Virginia and Mary play on the courtroom floor during their father's trial. Bettie is there, too. Peachtree, the odd vagrant "with a wreath of wild hair" materializes with his owl. He provides valuable information to Will's sister Louise, a thoroughly modern woman with a custom-made red roadster. Other remarkable people make a first appearance, among them, Pastor Jose Polycarpo Rodriguez. This story is not fiction. It is based on the 3000-page transcript of the trial.

I find it amazing that this story is a true story of the author's grandfather, and his trial for treason due to the fact that he was/is of German descent. All of these amazing characters are even more amazing because they actually existed. Will's wife Virginia, who believed in, supported, and was so frightened for him; his mother-in-law, who was on his side from the beginning to the end, helping the other men's families while they were confined in prison; and his sister, beautiful, strong, and unafraid to go to the ends of the earth to prove her brother's innocence. Will's attorney, Atwell, again, a man who went the extra mile, even when he wasn't all that sure of his client's innocence. The part about the miners fighting for a union broke my heart, the struggles that they had to go through, the awful working conditions they had to endure...and there was Will, just trying to make a difference, trying to help the families, literally trying to save their lives by "uniting". He was a wonderful man by all accounts, strong in his beliefs, and fearless in the face of adversity. The story of his parents, and grandparents was so enjoyable, with all the love and adventure of people trying to escape their countries and start anew in "The land of the Free, and the home of the Brave." America is a land of so many different peoples who came here on the soul belief that they would be treated with fairness, equality, and respect. I am always so saddened when I read these true accounts of how we treat other cultures and nationalities because of fear, or mis-understanding.

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