

Under the Linden Tree



Author Background

Margaret Reid

Born: Sydney, 1942

Resides: Blue Mountains

Margaret Reid researched and wrote *Under the Linden Tree* to help her husband come to terms with his terrible life experiences and in the hope it would give him an identity, find family and friends from his past, create a sense of belonging somewhere and bring some contentment into his later years.

Reid's professional background has included music teaching and nursing. During her school teaching career, Reid wrote *Ben's Music Book* - an aid to teaching young children the violin. Reid has also written short stories for general interest and as successful competition entries. Many of Reid's craft ideas have been published in *The Family Circle* magazine.

Reid's spare time is devoted to her family and to helping those in the community less fortunate than herself. An active member of Zonta International (a service organisation which aims to advance the status of women), Reid is passionate about the rights and welfare of women, children, the aged and people with a disability. Reid plays the violin in the Blue Mountains Orchestra, sings in a community choir and plays the ukulele with the Blue Mountains ukulele group.

Source: Adapted from information kindly supplied by the author.

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Book Summary

Under the Linden Tree is the life story of the author's husband, Rudolf, as he relates his experiences in therapy sessions over a period of years. It's an incredible journey into the past encompassing the horror of war, the suffering of a child in Nazi concentration camps, the brutality endured by political prisoners under Stalinism, and the struggles of a post-war migrant in the unfamiliar land of Australia. Ultimately it is love and medical intervention that helps Rudolf to conquer the demons from his past and to find some peace and contentment.

Under the Linden Tree was originally written as a documentary containing all the information gathered in the research - including documents, letters, photographs, newspaper articles and birth, death and marriage certificates. It was suggested to the author that many people would like to read the actual story without all the historical records. *Under the Linden Tree* was then rewritten in its present form.

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Discussion Questions

1. What was your overall impression of *Under the Linden Tree*? How did you feel when you finished the book?
2. How were you affected by the descriptions of Rudolf's wartime experiences and his time in a Soviet prison?
3. What did you think about Rudolf's experience of being newly arrived in Australia? Do you know anyone who had similar experiences in Australia during this period?
4. Which parts of the book did you find most memorable?
5. What did you think of the author's use of language and structure?
6. Have you read any other biographies or memoirs involving similar war-time or migrant experiences? If so, how does *Under the Linden Tree* compare with these other books?
7. Do you prefer to read fiction or real life stories like this one?

Just for fun

8. If a relative wrote your life story, what would be the main themes and who would play you in the film version?

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Reviews

No published reviews are available for this book.