This novel is my all time favourite book to read! I love its storyline; Jewish girl innocently trying to save a German POW in the second world war. I love how the author used many themes such as prejudice and religion (different to many other young adult books which mainly consist of gossip girls or full on romance novels, this novel would also be great to study at school if studying racism or WWII). I also like how this 'war' novel is entailed with a very innocent and cute love/friendship story (so its not just all blood and guts!). This novel never bores the reader, which means that the author, Bette Greene, did well when she wrote endless paragraphs of things that would interest and make the audience think. But the main reason why I enjoy this novel so much is because it is not only a novel about an innocent Jewish girl who looks after and falls in love with a German POW, its much more than that; it teaches you to learn to love yourself even if others don't and to always keep your mind open to all sorts of questions, even if they can not be answered. “Even if you forget everything else I want you to always remember that you are a person of value and you have a friend who loved you enough to give you his most valued possession.” This is quoted from the German POW to Patty, the Jewish girl, as he was saying good bye to her.

However, I would have liked the love between the protagonist and the German Soldier to go a bit further than a peck on the lips (but not too much!). This also links to my second and final criticism which is that I would have liked the protagonist, Patty, to be slightly older than 12, therefore I could maybe relate to her a lot more and the author may have allowed her and the German Soldier to go a little further than a peck. However, these are both minor criticisms and I find the novel perfect enough already (you can’t have everything perfect!).

I highly recommend this novel to year 12 students because it is an old modern classic novel (published in 1973), it covers a range of themes such as love, courage, prejudice and religion. It gives the reader a good view of what living in that time period was like; Jews and Germans being nice to each other was a crime let alone a Jew and a German falling in love with each other. Also how every white family had a ‘negro’ servant to clean the house, cook and look after the children. I recommend this novel also due to the fact that the protagonist always got back on her own two feet no matter how far she was knocked down (her parents or friends bullying her and nobody liking her except the German POW, Anton, her family servant, Ruth, her younger sister, Sharon and the poor boy who lives in a tin shed, Freddy), this could be a thing to look up to and idolise.

Although the age recommendation of the novel is 10+, I think that it is much too mature for for 10 year olds and would recommend age 14+. The novel is still well within the literary understanding for year 12 due to the use of prejudice themes and name calling such as ‘negro’ and ‘nigger’. Ever since I found out about this novel when I was around 12 years of age from my mother, she then told me that it was also her favourite novel when she was around my age as well. The author, Bette Greene, is a very talented and experienced writer whom writes a lot of novels for children and young adults about daily discriminations within our world; e.g. the discrimination against races, sexual preference, our appearances and cultural differences. This type of writing style may help us year 12 students understand the meanings behind some of the subjects we may take in school (health, history, english, etc).
This novel teaches us about the world in which we live in by telling us to do what we think is right (to an extent, obviously) even if you may get into trouble for it, for example, Patty did what she thought was right which was to try save an innocent German’s life and she was aware of the risks she took and the trouble she may get in for it but she did it because she thought it was right. Unlike how in the novel they describe all the white families having a black servant to look after the house and everyone in it, we rarely have servants/ nannies, let alone black ones (we cook, clean and look after our kids ourselves). The money currency from WWII to now has changed dramatically. “When I considered the price of my lunch, $1.45, I said I was all filled up.” $1.45USD then for a lunch meal is round about $8 - $10USD now! Throughout this novel Patty has been abused socially, mentally and physically by her parents and friends around the town. Nowadays it is a crime to physically abuse your children and could receive a fine, go to prison, or have your children taken away from you if done so. Throughout this novel, racial and cultural discrimination is displayed frequently, “A German prisoner! That’s almost as bad as going out with a nigger!” Nowadays there’s rarely any sign of racial or cultural discrimination. Most people respect what others believe as long as they’re respected themselves.

This text connects to me because like Patty, I too am very curious and almost continuously ask people questions. I love reading about wartime romances and this novel was my first (although its more of a wartime friendship than a romance). This novel gets to my emotional side by starting up a few tears and sobs and I haven’t stopped recommending the novel to all my friends since I first read it (when I was around 12).

This text connects to my society and the wider world because people within my society (or the wider world) may be trying to protect others from dangers such as family or relationship abuse, bullying, terrorism, etc.. just like Patty was trying to save Anton from being killed by the Americans. An example of a real life situation is Nazi party member and staff officer, Karl Plague, attempted to employ and protect approximately 1240 Jews (men, women and children) in order to give them a better chance of survival and to stop the total wipe out of Jews in Lithuania back in 1941 - 1944. This text connects to my society and wider world also by the fact that if we all looked back at how much lunch at a cafe was or how much a dress was, we would all probably be in fits of laughter because the cost of anything valuable in those days (which was seen as extremely expensive) is now the cost of peanuts in our days!