

## I'll Keep You Close

By Jeska Verstegen

Publisher: Allen & Unwin

ISBN 9781760526917 SCIS: 5384637

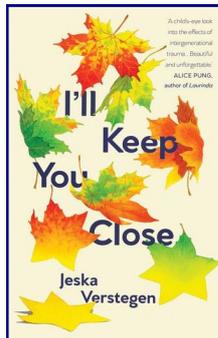
\$16.99

### Blurb:

A beautifully written novel based on a true story about a young girl who comes to understand why her mother is so fearful and overprotective when her class starts studying the Holocaust. Jeska doesn't know why her mother keeps the curtains drawn so tightly every day. And what exactly is she trying to drown out when she floods the house with Mozart? What are they hiding from?

When Jeska's grandmother accidentally calls her by a stranger's name, she seizes her first clue to uncovering her family's past, and hopefully to all that's gone unsaid. With the help of an old family photo album, her father's encyclopedia collection, and the unquestioning friendship of a stray cat, the silence begins to melt into frightening clarity: Jeska's family survived a terror that they've worked hard to keep secret all her life. And somehow, it has both nothing and everything to do with her, all at once.

A true story of navigating generational trauma as a child, *I'll Keep You Close* is about what comes after disaster: how survivors move forward, what they bring with them when they do, and the promise of beginning again while always keeping the past close.



### Lamont Review:

This is a touching story of a young girl discovering the tragedy her family suffered during WWII.

Beautifully written and translated from Dutch, we slowly find out how Jeska's family were affected, and the ways that it still touches their lives today.

Her mother's family were Jewish, and some suffered the ultimate loss at the hands of the Nazis. This tragedy can still be felt in their home with closed curtains, and rules like don't make too much noise or attract attention to yourself.

With Jeska's grandma seriously ill, Jeska shares some memories with her from her treasured photo album that lead Jeska to uncover what really happened that her mother refuses to even speak about.

With themes of war and the resulting generational trauma, family taboos and hope for a brighter future as seen through a young girl's eyes, this book is ideal for readers in upper primary and lower secondary.

Reviewed by Rob