

## DEBUT AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR RELEASES THE INCREDIBLE TRUE WWII STORY OF ‘ANNA UND GUNTHER’.



*Anna und Gunther* is the first novel by Australian author Jacob Hendryx to be released globally by Osmond Press on February 1st, 2021. It is a historical fiction based on a true story that follows the separate storylines of two children forced to grow up too young in Germany during World War 2 and the subsequent Cold War. The dual-storylines merge into one in the third and final part of the book where the protagonists fall in love and emigrate across the world to Australia.



As described in the Author's Note, the book was written after the author travelled to his German grandmothers hometown in the Sudetes Mountains of today's Czech Republic. Returning with photos of one of the few buildings that remained, his grandmother began to recount stories of growing up in the town in vivid detail she had never shared before. These stories formed the first chapter of the story which Jacob gifted to her, and upon her delight at reading her own stories, encouraged her to share the stories from her life following that chapter that she previously had not shared. It was a series of repeating visits like this, writing only a chapter at a time, that today's novel came together.

*Anna und Gunther* appeals to a broad range of readers young and old and will be favoured by those who enjoyed other notable true stories from the era such as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, and *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*. Rich historical content also lends itself to inclusion in high school curriculum and university reading lists. Available in all good book stores, online and via Kindle from Feb 1<sup>st</sup>.

<b>RRP:</b> AU \$24.99 / NZ \$27.99	<b>Genre:</b> Historical Fiction	<b>ISBN:</b> 978-0-6489084-0-1
Watch the video trailer here: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLjR4IXUAZI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLjR4IXUAZI</a>		

**“I have never read a book with quite as much authenticity as well as being thoroughly entertained from beginning to end”**

– Maegan McFall @turningpagesmm

**“A uniquely innocent take on unfathomable horror, this book is as relatable as it is shocking”** – Dr. Sam Nicholls, Australian Historian

**“The book is well written, jam packed full of historical accuracies that elevate this tale of humanity”** – Julie Oakley @bookish.intoxication

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

By the time I reached my mid-twenties, I could have offered little conversation on the topic of World War II. I knew the main characters and who won, but had no idea of the events and motivations leading to the twentieth century's most significant turning point and the fallout that followed. Whether from teenage ignorance of anything surrounding history as a topic, or a curriculum focused on local Australian settlement – probably both – a story that has fascinated me for the last few years nearly went undiscovered.

I grew up close to my German grandparents. The term 'favourite grandson' was often thrown around – which might have had something to do with my being their only grandson. I even lived with them for a year after leaving home to study in Adelaide. I knew they had both grown up around the time of the war, that she was a nurse, he had been a soldier. Yet when the topic arose, neither would give it much time. It was a subject they preferred not to talk about.

Several years later, now living on the other side of the country, I planned my first trip to Germany. I began reading more about the war; I wanted some perspective on the sights I would see. After some extensive digging, I located the little town my grandmother had grown up in, which had since changed names. It was just across the Czech border between Berlin and Prague, nestled into the Sudetes mountains. I planned to brave the harsh winter and drive out there to see what I could find.

Returning home, I showed her photos of a small chapel, one of very few buildings that remained. Immediately she began to recount stories of her childhood eighty years earlier, in vivid detail I'd never heard before then. Stories of growing up in the town that used to surround that chapel during a time when rising political tensions in the region were almost invisible, as seen through the eyes of an innocent eight year old girl. I furiously scribbled down notes, and it was these stories that formed the first chapter of this book.

The chapter was sent to a friend, who helped edit and proofread it before I printed it as a gift for the next time I visited. Clearly delighted to read her own stories told back to her, and giving a few corrections here and there, she then began to recount the stories that followed in the same extraordinary detail. Another chapter would be created, edited, gifted to her on my next visit – a repeating cycle.

*'Can you tell me what happened next?'* was the catalyst to many conversations over a couple of years that formed a story which had previously gone untold. One of thousands of stories grandparents around the world might still be holding onto today, keeping them to themselves until somebody is ready to listen.

**BLURB:**

Anna is forced into a life constantly on the move as a child in 1940s Germany, never welcome in one place, her very existence hidden from the Soviets to keep her safe. She grows up idolising the women in her family, who band together during the war, and dreams of becoming a nurse – something she will never realise in the suppressed and miserable communist East Germany.

Gunther's world is upended when he's thrust into the horrors of war, a life that he will risk everything to escape from, not without irreplaceable loss.

Miraculously they would eventually find each other, fall in love, and set off on an adventure across the world that is both challenging and unexpected.

Anna und Gunther is based on the inspirational true story of two children forced to grow up too fast, and the life they chose together. It's a classic story of overcoming adversity, coming of age, and following dreams by throwing caution to the wind.