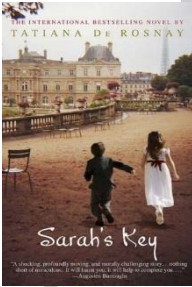




## Fr. Michael Goetz Library Learning Commons Teacher's Book Review



### *Sarah's Key*, Tatiana de Rosnay Reviewed by Ms. Cosgrove, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Vel' d'Hiv, as it was known at the time, was a huge stadium in a district of Paris in 1942 and it was there that over 13,000 French Jews were imprisoned without water and food for four days, after being awakened at 4:00 a.m. in the morning and forcibly removed from their homes. Those who committed this atrocity were not German Nazis. They were French civil servants and police officers, who were given instructions by the Nazi occupiers to arrest all Jews in Paris who were 16 years and older. Instead the French officials, perhaps to please their occupiers, extended the age range to include young children and toddlers, as well. Confined first to internment camps in France, all of these doomed souls were transported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered.

It is a dark period in the history of France. Memorials have been erected around the city, at sites where the round up occurred, including the site where the stadium was located, as well as the internment camps. In 1995, Jacques Chirac, president of France at that time, delivered a speech acknowledging the key role played by France in the deaths of so many innocent men, women and children, as well as an apology on behalf of the people of France.

This book tells the story of the weeks that followed what was known as the Vel' d'Hive roundup. The narration is split between a young girl who is arrested during the infamous roundup and a woman who is about to live in the girl's apartment 50 years later. It is a heartbreaking story of Sarah, who locks her little brother in a closet in their apartment, believing that she and her parents will return to free him from his safe hiding place. In the end she is the lone survivor in a world filled with horrifying reminders of her tragic past. The woman who is about to move into the little girl's home, discovers Sarah's story and seeks to bring about truth and justice, in the aftermath.

This is a story of great suffering, but it is also a story of redemption. It is our great responsibility as people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to have complete knowledge about the Holocaust. We must know about it and then we must never forget.