

*By Cortney Ophoff, First published in Booklist, April 15, 2017 [www.booklistonline.com]*

By June fourth of 1944, Emma and her fellow villagers on the Normandy coast have known German occupation for years. The army takes the lion's share of whatever is available, leaving the people hungry and wanting, and an atmosphere of despair has settled over the town. Emma was still a young woman when the Germans came and when she watched as they killed the kind Jewish baker to whom she was apprenticed. From that time forward, Emma has kept her head down, baking only the bread she is ordered to provide to the German officers, until a day when her ingenuity and fighting spirit lead her down a different path. Taciturn and full of dread, Emma manages to bring hope to her townspeople, finding solutions to their needs and delivering food to the starving and wish-list items to the downhearted. But even while helping others, Emma feels only a stubborn nihilism, wondering why she even bothers when there is no sign of relief on the horizon. Kiernan (*The Hummingbird*, 2015) invites readers to fully connect with his depressed and stoic heroine in this beautifully written account of the emotional and moral struggles of a people gripped by fear in the depths of WWII.