

Title: **The Soul of a Thief.** 2018

Author: **Steven Hartov**

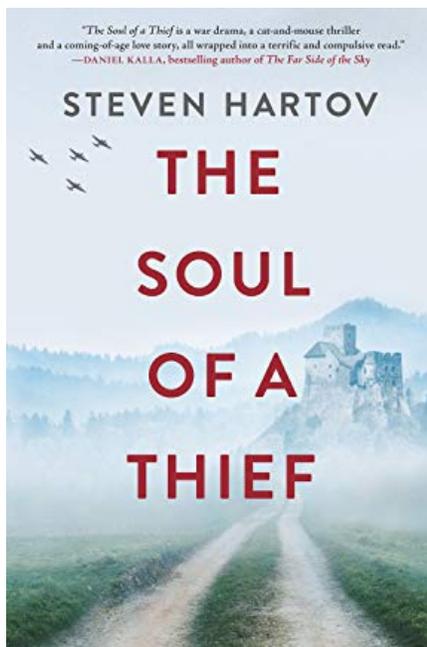
Genre: *Fiction*

Subject: *Coming-of-age-during-wartime story*

Hook: *Sympathetic main characters fighting for Germany*

Reviewer's opinion: *The end of the novel left me with several questions, which was rather unsatisfying*

Personal recommendation: *Recommend this book to anyone who reads WWII fiction*



Reviewed by **Jessica Eisenberg**
TBI member for 7 years

This novel tells the story of a **young German in the SS corps in occupied France during WWII**, specifically the spring of 1943 through early summer 1944. It is an interesting and unique story because most WWII novels do not have sympathetic main characters fighting for Germany, yet this one does. It is a coming-of-age-during-wartime story, through several battles and, oddly enough, romance. The main character, Shefan Brandt, while **concealing his Jewish ancestry**, works as an adjutant to a brutal SS colonel and ends up falling in love with his beautiful mistress, who also happens to be

Jewish. Although the narrative seemed choppy at times, overall the character development was there and done well enough to make me care about what happened to Shefan and Gabrielle. Near the end, the colonel senses the end of the war is coming, and rather than face certain defeat and war trials, he decides to betray Germany and fund his escape from Europe by stealing money from the Allies. The writing of these events

leading up to the end of the novel seemed more rushed than the earlier narrative, and the end of the novel left me with several questions, which was rather unsatisfying.

This novel reminded me somewhat of “Beneath a Scarlet Sky” by Mark Sullivan, which is a fantastic novel, based on the true story of a young Italian who joins the Nazi forces in Italy and ends up spying on them for the Allies. “The Soul of a Thief” doesn’t measure up to that book, but overall, I still liked it because of the main character’s personal **struggles and uncertainty about doing what needs to be done for survival**. It was also interesting to read a story with a German perspective on the war, so I would recommend this book to anyone who reads WWII fiction.