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# Diana's White House Garden



## Synopsis

Diana Hopkins lived in a white house. THE White House. World War II is in full force across the seas. It's 1943, President Roosevelt is in office, and Diana's father, Harry Hopkins, is his chief advisor. And Diana wants to be part of the war effort. After some well-intentioned missteps (her quarantine sign on her father's office door was not well-received), the President requests her help with his newest plan for the country's survival: Victory Gardens! From award-winning author Elisa Carbone comes the true story of how Diana Hopkins started her own Victory Garden on the White House lawn under the tutelage of Eleanor Roosevelt. With dedication and patience, she showed the nation that the war effort started first on the homefront.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

## Customer Reviews

K-Gr 3- Diana (Hopkins) Halsted, the daughter of one of Franklin Roosevelt's close advisors, lived at the White House during World War II. Without other children around, she spends most of her time with Fala, the Roosevelts' dog. After her playful activities get her in trouble with the White House staff, it is decided that a good way to direct Diana's energy would be for her to take care of a Victory Garden on the lawn. The 10-year-old becomes part of a publicity plan to encourage people all over the country to help the war effort by growing their own food. This book connects with the current day as Michelle Obama and many schools are involved in gardening, and demonstrates

how that movement has roots in the 1940s. An author's note describes conversations with the real Diana, who is still living. The style of the illustrations reflects the time period. Created with pencil, gouache, and digital methods, sepia-toned backgrounds are drawn but not filled in or completely colored. Painted people and Fala are fully colored and appear more solid. They are arranged on the pages almost like characters on a stage or paper dolls being moved through different scenes. The effect is visually interesting but not highly engaging for children. The pictures reflect great attention to detail, with people of varying races featured in street scenes in Washington, DC. Front endpapers show the garden plants sprouting, while those at the back include vegetables ready for harvest.

**VERDICT** The many curricular tie-ins make this book a good choice for school

libraries. •Lucinda Snyder Whitehurst, St. Christopher's School, Richmond, VA

Praise for Diana's White House Garden: "A cheerful mix of gardening, history and patriotism." --New York Times Book Review "Carbone's straightforward text features just the right details to engage children [and] is complemented by Hill's mix of simple line drawings and muted colors that evoke the era's austerity....An important piece of our history." --Kirkus Reviews "Playfully [depicts] Diana's well-meaning mischief and her gardening work with Mrs. Roosevelt and the groundskeeper." --Publishers Weekly "Carbone's depiction is lively and entertaining [while] Jen Hill's line drawings with muted gray and pastels add to the austerity of the period." --SLC

The kids love this one so much they asked to keep it at school for the reading room to share - so cute. Great book, great gift

Outstanding!

Great book! It is inspiring to read about children who have an impact. It reminds us that you are never too young to make a difference for something you believe in. My daughter and I thoroughly enjoyed reading this picture book. The book drew my 7-year-old in immediately. The book starts, "Diana Hopkins lived in a white a house. The White House." My daughter was excited by that and exclaimed, "Really?" We learned how Diana's father was an advisor for President Roosevelt and they lived in the White House. Diana wanted to play a role in the war effort but she was just a little girl so it was hard to find a way to make a meaningful impact. Finally, when the president decided to encourage people to have Victory Gardens in order to grow their own food so other resources could

be used for the soldiers, Diana finally found way to contribute, a White House Victory Garden! This book really gives you a strong surge of patriotic feeling! My daughter and I looked up Victory Gardens to see pictures of these Gardens from the 1940's including the White House garden. We even listened to one of Roosevelt's fireside chats mentioned in the book. It was great to hear Roosevelt's voice say, "My fellow Americans," just like in the book. Great little inspirational biography! The illustrations are also fabulous. I love how the background at times is just charcoal although still very detailed. The people are in color with detailed expressions. The colors are all slightly softened as if aged which is the perfect feel for this historical biography. The first picture in the book is beautiful and my favorite of the book. It shows Diana standing in the White House drive. The White House is in charcoal and most of the picture is black and white except Diana and tree limbs with cherry blossoms in the foreground. Just beautiful.

Flawless blend of biography and history. The story follows a White House aide's daughter during the Roosevelt administration and the homefront era. Specifically focusing on Victory Gardens, the story is nonetheless filled with hilarious moments of pure child-like mayhem drawn from interviews with the real-life Diana Hopkins. Excellent from endpaper to endpaper.

Summary: World War II is raging, and Diana Hopkins, the 10-year-old daughter of Presidential advisor Harry Hopkins wants to do her part. Spying and trying to scare off enemies by sticking pins in the couch don't work out for her so well, but she's delighted when she overhears her father and Franklin Roosevelt talking about a new plan to encourage Americans to grow victory gardens. The first demonstration garden is to be planted right on the White House lawn. Diana teams up with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Before long, Diana is outside watering and weeding almost every day, and even gets her picture in the paper with her thriving Victory Garden. On the last page, the Hopkinesses and the Roosevelts sit down to a dinner that includes beans, carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes from the new garden. Notes from both the author and illustrator give a bit more information about Diana Hopkins and Victory Gardens, and the research that went into the creation of the book.

Pros: A nice bit of World War II historical fiction. Diana is a likeable character, with both a mischievous side and an admirable desire to contribute to the war effort.

Cons: Diana's life looks like it was a lot sadder than portrayed in this book. Her mother died before this story takes place and her father, just a few years after.

I never knew how the term, 'Victory Garden' came to be until after I read this book. A precocious little girl who desperately wanted to help in some way during WWII volunteered for a plan President Roosevelt came up with to get good food to the soldiers and keep the citizens healthy as well, by every one planting gardens. It was a tremendous success that Diana Hopkins had a huge part in along with the White House dog, Fala. I wish all of the schools would partake in having school gardens so all of the children can learn the value of growing your own food. So much can be gained from partaking in this science and common sense curriculum activity. Students could also learn about the environment, and financing by continuing the growing season through summer school when many of the crops would be harvested. Excellent picture book written as a fiction story but based on true events and people. Written by Elisa Carbone, illustrated by Jen Hill and published by Viking Books. #PB #Fiction #NF #truestorybased #mustread #gardens

A great pick for the start of summer and the gardening season, the inspiring story of Diana Hopkins shows young readers that even they can make a difference and inspire others!

Victory Gardens were big in World War II. But did you ever hear the story of how the White House got involved in the Victory Garden business? Who got it going? Why, a little girl. It's a lovely little story, told well for the young audience. I suspect you grownups will like it, too.

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