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# Story of the Holocaust, The

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

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Lawton's record of this century's most notorious act of genocide begins with a photograph of the discarded, naked and emaciated corpses of some of its victims, heaped without ceremony into a mass grave at Bergen-Belsen in 1945. This image is superimposed on a photograph of a village at the foot of the Alps that, in its picturesque neatness, could have been clipped from a travel brochure for a skiing holiday. As Lawton reminds us, 'it all happened in a place and in a time not so very different from our own.'

This is a powerful, understated account of the Holocaust that allows images of arrogance, absurdity, degradation, terror, cruelty and indifference to speak for themselves: the vicious caricatures of Jews in the Nazi school texts; the yellow badges; a child comforting another starving in the ghetto; women and children hurried into the wood to be shot; and the camps themselves. Lawton has made the events and their history as comprehensible as they can be to any child over the age of eleven. He touches on the history of European anti-Semitism, and shows the conditions in Weimar Germany that led to the Third Reich. He leads us through the terror step-by-step. He tells of collaboration with the Germans in persecuting Jews in occupied Europe and of the men and women, Jews and Gentiles, who resisted. Finally, he talks of the aftermath: for the perpetrators, the survivors and for the rest of the world. It is an account that is as conscious of the meaning of each single tragedy among so many as it is of the implications of the Shoah for all of us. Lawton reminds us, too, of the Romanies, political prisoners, trade unionists, gays, communists and Jehovah's Witnesses who suffered and died with the Jews.

The question, 'Could it happen again?' is answered in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosova.

A list of important dates, a glossary and an index support the text. A further reading and viewing list suitable for teenagers would have been a good addition.

Running Order:

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