

“liberation” can only be achieved with her words. Thus this novel. Of course, Raab cannot fully heal; some of her sorrow will remain unspoken. But *And Peace Never Came* allows her to establish a memorial, to give voice to her pain, to remember the people from the place that she once thought was safe, and the experience that forever destroyed her concept of safety.

As an educational tool, this novel is most suitable for older students; there is too much left unsaid and too little clarity to allow a younger, elementary school age child to identify the depth of this novel. Although the narrative is both lyrical and moving, it lacks the cohesive kind of intrigue demanded by younger readers. As Raab finds her voice and the words to tell her story, the plot is necessarily related slowly and painfully; it often reflects Raab’s own disorientation as she struggles to identify her place in a new world — something younger children may not be able to fully understand or appreciate. High school or university students can learn much, however, especially if they make use of the historical notes provided by Marlene Kadar (something I suggest most students do before attempting to tackle the novel itself).

*And Peace Never Came* teaches the student and the interested reader that it is too easy, over fifty years later, to rest comfortably in the image of the Holocaust as a story with a beginning and an ending — the ultimate triumph of good over evil. It is too easy to look for the few uplifting stories that emerged from that time and take comfort from them. It is too easy to believe that the pain ended in 1945. Raab’s novel insists that we recognize, as children and grandchildren of survivors and persecutors and spectators, that the Holocaust is not simply a “story”; it does not hold a singular ultimately redeeming “message” for humanity. The painful legacy left by the Holocaust asks that we listen, that we resist, and that we remain aware. *And Peace Never Came* allows us that opportunity.

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### A Place Not Home

*A Place Not Home*. Eva Wiseman. Illus. Don Kelby. Stoddart, 1996. 177 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5834-8.

*A Place Not Home* explores a Jewish family’s escape from communist Hungary in the 1950s. The Adlers have survived the Holocaust; they have managed to rebuild a kind of life; but Nazi hatred rears its ugly head once more and this Jewish family, fearing a pogrom, decides to leave Hungary and begin life anew in Canada.

At the centre of this story is thirteen-year-old Nelly Adler. Obsessed with her emerging teenage world, anxious to spend every minute with her best friend, and testing her own independence, Nelly is thrown into a complicated and changing adult world that has little respect for her thirteen-year-old concerns. Wiseman sensitively traces Nelly's development from the spirited adolescent that she was in Hungary to the shy immigrant she becomes in Canada.

Beginning her chronicle in 1956 as Hungarian students rose in revolutionary furor against the Communist regime, Wiseman juxtaposes Nelly's stereotypical teenage traits against the turmoil and terror that is besieging both her country and her family. As a typical adolescent, Nelly is excited about her upcoming birthday party; she is desperately interested in attracting male attention; she is overwhelmed by her parents' overprotectiveness. Her understanding of the Holocaust is limited. It is not until the desecration of her family's monuments in the Jewish cemetery on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, that it occurs to Nelly that Nazi hatred may not have passed, that it may pose a terrifying danger for her future.

In addition to this, the communist threat is ever present. Nelly must face a daily existence that includes schoolmates who are informers and soldiers beating her own father for his suspected attempt to flee the country. She is caught in a world that she recognizes as home, as familiar, at the very same time that she is becoming increasingly more afraid of the looming danger with which it is presenting her.

Memory remains a central theme in this novel, and questions arise surrounding its treatment. Why does Nelly learn so little of the Adler family history? Why can't Kati, Nelly's mother, communicate her sense of loss and terror to her children? In fact, why did it take so long for so many Holocaust survivors to write their stories? Were they waiting until they were settled and comfortable in new lives, with new languages, perhaps new occupations? Were they waiting until they had put thousands of miles and an entirely new world between them and the Holocaust? A possible explanation for the silence of so many can be located in the book, *Tell No One Who You Are*. Walter Buchignani interviewed Régine Miller at the International Gathering of Hidden Children in New York, in 1991. Miller spoke from her own experience, from the observations she made when meeting other survivors directly after the war, "it was as if each had decided privately she must not talk about the past, as if that was the only way to survive it and not go mad with grief or anger."

Kati Adler has been immeasurably scarred by the events of the war and yet she cannot find the words to tell her story, or perhaps it is that she cannot bear the implications of those words. And so, she remains silent, her grief and her devastation illustrated only in the loving reverence with which she treats her pictures, the ritual washing she engages in when her family is in a refugee camp, the fear that is in her eyes when her children are late for dinner.

What is most interesting, to me, is Nelly's development throughout the novel. She evolves from a self-centred teenager who argues with her father, who cannot comprehend a life beyond her friends and her school, into a mature and spunky young woman able to gather the courage to give up all that is important to her, to enter a classroom full of students who refuse to view her as anything other than an immigrant, a "stinking DP" (165). And it is here that the duality that defines Nelly is at its most apparent. The further that Nelly gets away from Hungary, the further that she also she gets away from the person that she has always believed herself to be: "The Hungarian Nelly was always laughing, always doing something important with her friends. This Nelly in the window, this stranger Nelly I had become, felt as if she were floating anchorless, with no school, no friends, no belongings, no home" (107). Strangely, while the reader recognizes Nelly as a stronger individual, Nelly sees herself with much less confidence, much less certainty — her eyes become the Canadian eyes she longs for, and yet that vision allows her only to see herself as different and strange. The novel does end with hope, however. Nelly has a friend and "Canadian clothes" — she has begun a new journey into self-acceptance, into security, and, finally, into a new adolescence.

In *A Place Not Home*, Eva Wiseman draws a strong, vibrant character who demands the Canadian child's understanding of the difficulties that accompany an immigrant's journey into a stigmatized status. It is a learning experience for young readers — to broaden their perspective, to understand what newcomers had to achieve to endure a life of purpose and freedom, and to come to a place where those words mean different things. And yet, while Nelly's emergence into a Canadian adolescent is represented as a personal victory for the character, it must also be regarded as a loss. As readers, we have been taught to love the Hungarian Nelly, and to hope fervently that the spirit and strength that defined her will continue to do so as she begins a life in a place that is finally home.

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### A Holocaust Play

*Goodbye Marianne.* Irene Kirsten Watts. Scirocco Drama, J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, 1994. 48 pp. ISBN 1-896239-03-X.

This is a moving and evocative one-act play that offers seven brief scenes from the life of a young girl living in Berlin right before World War II. Hitler is