



Inmate 1818 and Other Stories

Bernard Otterman

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The release of *Inmate 1818 and Other Stories*, a collection of twelve short stories inspired by the Holocaust and its aftermath, marks a new milestone for a celebrated writer with unusual skill and vision. The stories of Bernard Otterman, a Holocaust survivor born in Lodz, Poland, are set in the ghettos and camps of World War II and in the difficult days following Hitler's war against the Jews. The Shoah defines the lives of all characters in the stories—survivors as well as their children. In the title story, "Inmate 1818," a young boy is smuggled into a labor camp and befriended by an eccentric teenager with a love for astronomy, who gives the boy a gift that saves his life. In "Golem of Auschwitz," a survivor is haunted by the memory of the golem, a mythical creature drawn from Jewish folklore, that he and a Rabbi's son created while in captivity. A German boy is determined to redeem his family's Nazi sins by recreating the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp using plastic toy bricks in "Lego Lager." In "Days of Rage," married survivors are tormented when their son believes and spouts a neo-Nazi ideology. A survivor in "Lotto Fever" is both upset and obsessed by winning the lottery using numbers very similar to those tattooed on his arm. And in "Black Grass," the author turns to the rich tradition of magical realism to respond to the phenomenon of the Holocaust, where the darkness born by this tragedy slowly envelops the world.

Scholars and fans of the work of Franz Kafka, Chaim Grade, Primo Levi, Ida Fink, and Henryk Grynberg will find immediate parallels to Otterman's writing. His poems have been published in *Poetry*, *Jewish Currents* and other noted journals while his short stories have appeared in *New Millennium Writings* and *Word/Slovo*. *Inmate 1818 and Other Stories* is Otterman's third published collection of Holocaust-related short fiction. This collection is not to be missed—and once read, never forgotten. Praise for Bernard Otterman: "Facing the notoriously difficult task of representing the Holocaust and its aftermath, the author creates fantastical situations that parallel the surrealism of the Shoah itself. Otterman's willingness to engage creatively with the metaphysical questions raised by the Holocaust should be applauded." - Marissa Brostoff, *The Jewish Daily Forward* "Polish born writer Bernard Otterman portrays the textured worlds of pre, during, and post World War II. These are stories of inherent drama, yet there is no exploitation of events here. Often understated, frequently macabre, Otterman's observant narrators see the world, as it is, surreal, yes, otherworldly, unbearable, and somehow wry." - Martha Rhodes, *Founding Editor and Director of Four Way Books* "Here is historical fiction at its finest, concise and penetrating. Otterman's vivid tales of life during and after history's darkest hour explore complex issues such as complicity, denial, and shame with sensitivity and skill." - Joshua M. Greene, author of *Justice at Dachau* and *Witness: Voices from the Holocaust* "A tour de force from a marvelous writer who himself survived the wrath of the Nazis." - Harvey Rachlin, author of *Lucy's Bones*, *Sacred Stones* and *Einstein's Brain* "Holocaust survivor, Bernard Otterman, locates some of his stories in the ghettos and the camps, others in the aftermath of WWII. This double narrative perspective greatly enriches his collection, whose stories are often chilling but always powerful and imaginative. Readers will be captivated by characters they will never forget." - Patrick Gerard Henry, author of *We Only Know Men: The Rescue of Jews in France during the Holocaust*

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Diana Castillo:

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