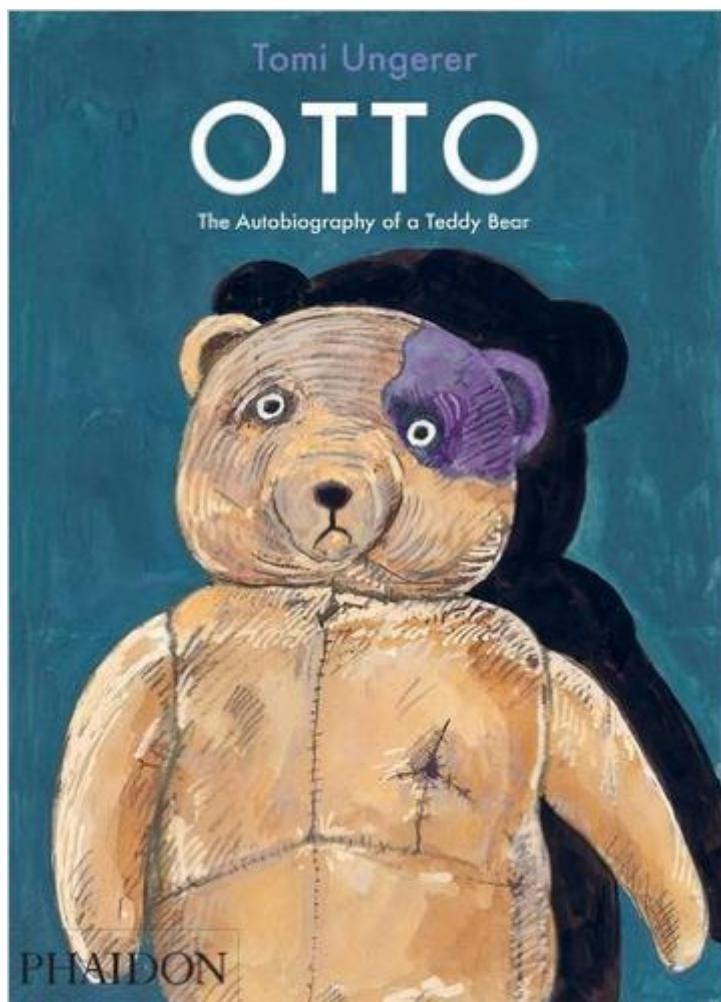


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Otto: The Autobiography Of A Teddy Bear



Synopsis

This is an autobiographical tale of a teddy bear named Otto. Otto is a German-born teddy bear. His first memories are of being stitched together and being given to David, a Jewish boy living in Germany before WWII. David and his best-friend Oskar always play with Otto, using him for pranks, games and even teaching him to type on a typewriter. Life is a lot of fun for the Otto. However, one day, David starts to wear a yellow star on his jacket. He and his parents are soon carted away by men in leather coats and uniforms. David decides to give his dear teddy bear to Oskar. Many lonely days pass for Oskar and Otto. But even gloomier days soon arrive when Oskar's father is drafted into the army and the bombings start. One day, a sudden explosion sends Otto flying through the air and into the middle of a raging battle-field. The teddy bear is spotted by a soldier, but the moment the soldier picks Otto up, they are both shot through the chest. Otto and the soldier, an American G.I., are taken away to a hospital. In hospital, the soldier keeps Otto by his side. When he recovers, he pins a medal on Otto's chest, saying that Otto saved his life, taking the brunt of the bullet. The story makes papers and Otto becomes a mascot of the soldier's regiment. The teddy bear is then taken to America and is given to a sweet girl called Jasmin, the soldier's daughter. But Otto's new home and happiness is once again brutally ended when he is snatched away by mean and violent street urchins, who hit and trample on him and throw him into a bin. Otto is then picked up by an antiques dealer and taken to his shop. Years and years go by, until one rainy evening, when a bulky man stops and carefully examines the shop window. The man recognizes the bear instantly buys him. It is Oskar, Otto's old friend. The story of Oskar, a German tourist and survivor of the war finding his teddy bear in America soon makes the papers. And the day after Otto's picture appears in the paper, Oskar's telephone rings: it is his old friend David. And so, the three friends finally reunite, sharing the sorrows and pains of war and living a peaceful and happy life together. Otto now keeps himself busy, typing the story of his life on David's typewriter. Children will become attached to this loving, innocent protagonist, and will naturally be interested in his life story. Tomi Ungerer deals with one of the darkest chapters of history and pulls off the challenge admirably. This tale will prompt reflection and important questions without causing undue fear.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 700L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 36 pages

Publisher: Phaidon Press (October 20, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0714857661

ISBN-13: 978-0714857664

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.5 x 11.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (19 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #366,086 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Holocaust #277 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars #304 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Europe

Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Tomi Ungerer, the prolific author-illustrator of so many imaginative children's books, (among them The Mellopps Go Flying, Flat Stanley, Crichtor the Boa Constrictor, Moon Man, The Three Robbers) has based this war story partially on his own experiences growing up during the Nazi occupation of Alsace, France. Although its format looks like a simple picture book, it is actually an illustrated Holocaust story that can be used to introduce the subject of the Holocaust to grades four and up. Otto the teddy bear begins the story where he has been languishing unsold in an antique store window; we are then taken back to 1930s Germany. Otto was a birthday gift for a Jewish boy, David, who greatly enjoyed making mischief with Otto and his best friend, Oskar. When David, wearing a yellow star, was taken away with his family, he gave his beloved bear to Oskar. During a bombardment, Otto was tossed up into the air and became separated from Oskar. Then Otto's body partially blocked a bullet aimed at an American G.I. who took him to New York after the war ended. After more mishaps, Oskar ended up in the antique shop. A now-elderly Oskar recognizes him in the window. David sees the newspaper headlines about their reunion and contacts Oskar. They relate their wartime experiences and family losses to each other, and then decide to live together with Otto. Otto comments that this makes life finally what it should be--"peacefully normal." As the book ends, he is typing his life story. The horrors of war are shown effectively through the contrast between the understated way Otto tells his story, and the disturbing watercolor and pencil illustrations of battles, destroyed buildings destroyed, guns, fires, and graphic portrayals of dead soldiers.

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