

Two Pieces of Cloth: One Family's Story of the Holocaust

Joe Gold

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Two Pieces of Cloth is the loving biography of a couple who lived through the twentieth century's darkest days.

Joe Gold recalls how his parents relied on faith and good fortune to survive the Holocaust in the historical biography *Two Pieces of Cloth*.

In the affectionate and affecting prologue, Gold relates how, at five years old, he stumbled across a book of harrowing photographs depicting the Holocaust. For the rest of the book, he assumes the voices of his parents, resulting in intimate storytelling. His father, David, grew up poor and made good as a textile salesman; his mother, Aurelia, was an aspiring nurse who loved cooking and gymnastics. The book's early chapters establish the setting and the peaceful, ordinary lives that David and Aurelia enjoyed in Czechoslovakia before the war.

But by the time David and Aurelia were married in 1941, the world was changing. With the Czechoslovakian government growing more antisemitic and Hitler's armies closing in, they took the risk of escaping to the relative safety of Hungary. When David was later imprisoned in labor and concentration camps, all that kept the couple going was their love for each other and the anxious hope that they would see each other again.

The prose is direct on its face, but it conveys deep emotions. Aurelia's quiet determination as she searched for David after the war, and David's near boundless faith that he would survive the camps, are poignant. Luck and the generosity of strangers helped them to survive the war when so many of their relatives and friends did not; still, their flight to safety did not end when David left the camp. Harrowing scenes show how they still grappled with antisemitism, and came close to being trapped behind the Iron Curtain.

Maps at the beginning of the book trace David and Aurelia's movements through Europe during the war, and their subsequent immigration from Europe to Canada. Photographs show how the family changed before, during, and after the war.

Gold argues with clarity that the Holocaust did not only impact those alive at the time; it affected and will affect their descendants for years afterward. He asserts that it—and the stories of its victims and survivors—must always be remembered. In this way, his book is a touching and informative way of memorializing two resilient, meaningful lives.

Combining personal stories with independent research, *Two Pieces of Cloth* is the loving biography of a couple who lived through the twentieth century's darkest days.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (July 9, 2021)

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