



[Home](#) > The Missing

The Missing

Books Reviewed:

[The Missing](#) [1]

Issue:

[240](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Tony Bradman](#) [3]

~~Not a choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

There are many books about the Holocaust - history, memoirs, essays, novels, poetry, even graphic novels and picture books. Although it seems that as the actual events of the Holocaust recede ever more into the past, real knowledge of it among young people fades. Perhaps it's now increasingly thought of as a 'historical event', the 20th century's version of the Black Death or the Great Famine in Ireland, especially as it's now at the point of being almost beyond living memory.

But it's clear that we do need to remember the Holocaust, and Michael Rosen's latest book is an excellent way to do exactly that. His parents came to Britain from Eastern Europe, and as a child young Michael asked them about their extended family, the uncles and aunts who stayed behind and fell under the shadow of Nazi Occupation. They had disappeared, never to be heard of again, and he wondered how that could happen - how could people simply vanish?

That was the stimulus for a life-time of investigation that took him to the USA to talk to other family members, through archives and libraries and digital sources, and this book is the result. He does find out what happened to his family, retrieving in the process their names and something of their history. The stories are, as you can imagine, poignant, tragic, and horrifying, but this act of familial loyalty and remembrance is ultimately uplifting.

Michael has included some extracts from his poems about his missing relatives, and the whole thing is perfectly written in a clear, accessible way that will help children to engage with such a difficult subject. This is absolutely not to be missed, a title that should definitely be in every school and library.

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Links:

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-missing>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/240>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/tony-bradman>