

## The Novel 'After the War'

'After the War' is a carefully researched novel by Tom Palmer, based upon the testimonies and experiences of 'The Boys'. This novel allows students to explore the persecution suffered by these young survivors through a compelling story of friendship and hope. The families and the lives that these young people had before the war are prominent in this novel, enabling students to grasp both the enormity of individual loss and the loss of entire communities as a result of the Holocaust. It also speaks to the resilience of these young people, many of whom would be the only survivors of their immediate families. Who, having suffered unimaginable trauma, would go on to have careers, families and productive lives, making invaluable contributions to the communities that they would adopt to replace those that were lost.

### Accessibility

'After the War' is published by Barrington Stoke who produce reading for pleasure books for young people who are reading below level, are disengaged with books, reluctant to read, or who have particular challenges that affect their reading such as dyslexia. They are produced in a dyslexia friendly format, on cream or off white paper with no show through, a bespoke Barrington Stoke font, spacing and layouts. All these features reduce the barriers to reading and enable a smooth and easy read. 'After the War' is part of their Conkers range, 'next step fiction' for upper Primary and Lower Secondary students. It is longer and is designed for all readers not just the reluctant or struggling reader, yet it still utilises Barrington Stoke's special layout, spacing and font to enable every student to access the text. Barrington Stoke have designed all of our lesson materials using the same unique features that they use to promote accessibility in their published materials

### The use of historical fiction in the classroom

This novel allows students to explore the persecution suffered by these young survivors through a compelling story of friendship and hope, providing younger students with a version of the past that is framed in an age appropriate way whilst maintaining historical accuracy. The central characters in the book are composite characters based upon a number of the survivors and their experiences. Using historical fiction in the classroom, if it is supported and contextualised, can be beneficial. Historical novels are representations of the past, they cannot be used in the classroom to secure students' substantive historical knowledge and understanding. But what they can do is personalise the victims and through students' 'relationship' with the central characters they can recognise that these were not distant historical events that happened to distant, nameless historical figures. But real events that affected children and individuals, in many ways just like them. Children who miss their homes and families, who want to swim, play football, ride bikes, learn and survive. This relationship that the reader has with the central



characters will encourage enquiry, students will want to learn about the historical context in which Jewish children across Europe were persecuted and their families murdered. This in turn can lead them to confront key issues and seminal questions; such as, for instance, how and why did the Holocaust happen? Our materials are designed to help teachers to explore these questions with their students.