



The Druggist of Auschwitz: A Documentary Novel

Dieter Schlesak

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Dieter Schlesak's haunting novel *The Druggist of Auschwitz*—beautifully translated from the German by John Hargraves—is a frighteningly vivid portrayal of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of criminal and victim alike.

Adam, known as "the last Jew of Schäßburg," recounts with disturbing clarity his imprisonment at the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp. Through Adam's fictional narrative and excerpts of actual testimony from the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial of 1963–65, we come to learn of the true-life story of Dr. Victor Capesius, who, despite strong friendships with Jews before the war, quickly aided in and profited from their tragedy once the Nazis came to power. Interspersed with historical research and the author's face-to-face interviews with survivors, the novel follows Capesius from his assignment as the "sorter" of new arrivals at Auschwitz—deciding who will go directly to the gas chamber and who will be used for labor—through his life of lavish wealth after the war to his arrest and eventual trial.

Schlesak's seamless incorporation of factual data and testimony—woven into Adam's dreamlike remembrance of a world turned upside down—makes *The Druggist of Auschwitz* a vital and unique addition to our understanding of the Holocaust.

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