



# **The Blue Salon and Other Follies: A Jewish Boyhood in 1930s' Rural Germany**

*Vernon Katz*

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*The Blue Salon and Other Follies* vividly recounts the 1930's childhood of Vernon Katz in Lippe, Germany. Through the eyes of an observant young boy, the author reveals how Jewish life in a country town gradually eroded as the Nazis came to power. With a dry wit, the author recaptures his childhood and family life through light-hearted anecdotes and pictures, as well as dramatic events, including his mother's escapes from imprisonment and death by the Nazis. The title, *The Blue Salon and Other Follies* refers to the inability of Vernon Katz's parents in the early years of Nazi rule to comprehend the dangers that lie ahead. Rooted in German soil and having built a successful brush factory together, they think it is all a passing phase. Fifteen months after Hitler's rise to power, when a tribute to Vernon Katz' father appears in a German business journal, his mother joyfully redecorates the house and creates the luxurious blue salon. When the Nuremberg Laws are enacted, the situation darkens. Vernon Katz, at age ten, is stoned, persecuted and terrified by his Nazi teachers. Ultimately, on Kristallnacht, the author's father is imprisoned at the Buchenwald concentration camp. The family doctor sends Mrs. Katz to a mental institution to protect her from the Gestapo. As the Nazis grow even more insidious, the family must take desperate measures to try to save themselves. *The Blue Salon and Other Follies* lovingly recreates small-town Jewish life in Germany before World War II and dramatically depicts the persecution, struggles and ultimate survival of one Jewish family. A literary gem and an unforgettable read, *The Blue Salon and Other Follies* will make you laugh and cry. It is a universal coming-of-age tale in which a boy fights adversity with courage and humor.

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