

[J.M. Ledgard] Giraffe Read Online eBook or Kindle ePUB

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Synopsis Books:

An astounding novel based on the true story of the life and mysterious death of the largest herd of giraffes ever held in captivity, in a Czechoslovakian town sleepwalking through communism in the early 1970s In 1975, on the eve of May Day, secret police dressed in chemical warfare suits sealed off a zoo in a small Czechoslovakian town and ordered the destruction of the largest captive herd of giraffes in the world. This apparently senseless massacre lies at the heart of J. M. Ledgard's haunting first novel, which recounts the story of the giraffes from their capture in Africa to their deaths far away behind the Iron Curtain. At once vivid and unearthly, Giraffe is an unforgettable story about strangeness, about creatures that are alien and silent, about captivity, and finally about Czechoslovakia, a middling totalitarian state and its population of sleepwalkers. It is also a story that might never have been told. Ledgard, a foreign correspondent for the "Economist" since 1995, unearthed the long-buried truth behind the deaths of these giraffes while researching his book, spending years following leads throughout the Czech Republic. In prose reminiscent of Italo Calvino and W. G. Sebald, he imbues the story with both a gripping sense of specificity and a profound resonance, limning the ways the giraffes enter the lives of the people around them, the secrecy and fear that permeate 1970s Czechoslovakia, and the quiet ways in which ordinary people become complicit in the crimes committed in their midst.

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