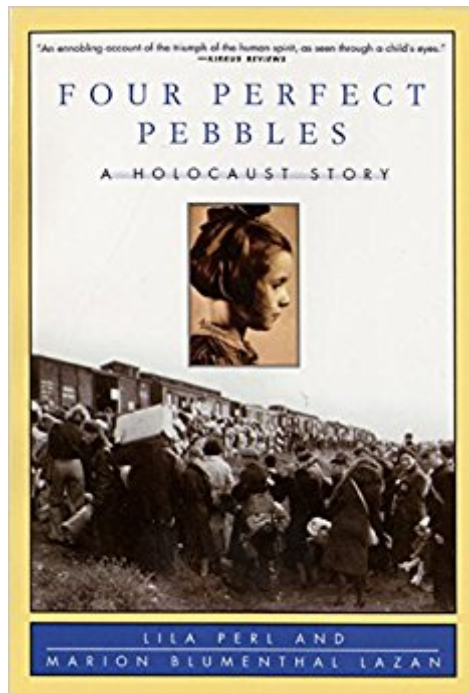




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# Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story



## Synopsis

The twentieth-anniversary edition of Marion Blumenthal Lazan's acclaimed Holocaust memoir features new material by the author, a reading group guide, a map, and additional photographs. "The writing is direct, devastating, with no rhetoric or exploitation. The truth is in what she said and in what is left out." —ALA Booklist (starred review) Marion Blumenthal Lazan's unforgettable and acclaimed memoir recalls the devastating years that shaped her childhood. Following Hitler's rise to power, the Blumenthal family—father, mother, Marion, and her brother, Albert—were trapped in Nazi Germany. They managed eventually to get to Holland, but soon thereafter it was occupied by the Nazis. For the next six and a half years the Blumenthals were forced to live in refugee, transit, and prison camps, including Westerbork in Holland and Bergen-Belsen in Germany, before finally making it to the United States. Their story is one of horror and hardship, but it is also a story of courage, hope, and the will to survive. *Four Perfect Pebbles* features forty archival photographs, including several new to this edition, an epilogue, a bibliography, a map, a reading group guide, an index, and a new afterword by the author. First published in 1996, the book was an ALA Notable Book, an ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers, and IRA Young Adults' Choice, and a Notable Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies, and the recipient of many other honors. "A harrowing and often moving account." —School Library Journal

## Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

## Customer Reviews

FOUR PERFECT PEBBLES is just one of thousands of such stories that mandate telling and retelling. Simply and beautifully, Perl relates one little girl's mode of survival through one of history's most heinous periods. As the author of another Holocaust book, FAR ABOVE RUBIES by Cynthia Polansky, I read everything I can get my hands on pertaining to the Holocaust. This one is a gem that must not be overlooked.

This book is unforgettable as a story of the Holocaust from the eyes of a child. I've had the pleasure of hearing Marion speak several times and she is marvelous. My students read her book this past school year and then went to see her for an author visit. They were moved to tears--even the boys--by her life during the war. Reading the book and then hearing her speak about her experiences is sobering. Her message isn't just about the Holocaust; it is also about learning tolerance and fairness which is certainly a page we can all learn from in today's world.

I am in 6th grade and 11 years old. I love holocaust stories better than anything and this is definitely a five star book! I have read this book and it is fabulous. Marion and her family show great courage as they fight the battle of antisemitism. I love this book and I want Marion Blumenthal to know that it has touched me very much. It was so stirring that I couldn't put it down. If you liked this book, you should read Never to be Forgotten by Beatrice Muchman. (You can order it here on .) Marion, her mother, brother and father are wonderful testimonies of strength and courage during WWII. Anyone else who has a story like this should tell it. There are to many people out there who love these stories alot, I'm one of them. Thankyou for sharing your story with us Mrs. Blumenthal!!! It is fantastic!

Though this story is told as Marion saw it as a young child, it nevertheless remains a powerful and moving documentary of the most devastating war our planet has ever known. This book is also a very good WWII primer. It would be required reading for a class entitled "WWII 101". Marion Blumenthal spent her early childhood in Hoya, Germany with her brother and parents. They were a happy, prosperous Jewish family who owned a successful shoe retail business. But Marion's safe, secure world was shattered by the rise of the Third Reich in Germany. The Nazis, the dominant political party of the Third Reich, implemented their radical racial attacks against Jews, Gypsies,

Slavics, Homosexuals, Communists, and whomever else was seen as a threat to Aryan purity. This meant the end of life as Marion knew it. Each passing day was a struggle to stay alive and out of the Nazis' clutches. Despite their best efforts, the Blumenthal family fell prey to the Nazis. They eventually landed in Westerbork, a camp from which the prisoners were shipped to their deaths in places such as Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. The Blumenthals were transferred to Belsen, and despite their bleak future, Marion clung tenaciously to the hope that better times would come for her and her family. To bolster her and their spirits, she set about collecting four perfectly-shaped pebbles from the grounds of the camp. This was her metaphor for her family which, hopefully, would remain as one till the end of the war. As the war dwindled to a close and Germany suffered one defeat after another, camp prisoners were shuttled along the remains of the German railways as the Nazis tried to desperately conceal the evils they had committed in the abandoned camps. Just when it seemed the war would drag on forever, Marion, her family, and their fellow prisoners were intercepted and liberated by Russian troops. A beautiful story of inspiration, courage, and keeping a positive attitude even in the most dire of circumstances.

"Four Perfect Pebbles" by Lila Perl and Marion Blumenthal Lazan, tells the story of young Marion's life in Hoya Germany during the rise of the Nazis. The story goes from Holland to Bergen-Belsen where the Blumenthal family ends up. And then after the war in the United States. While this is a book for the younger reader, this is a book that can be enjoyed by anyone at any age. Truly this book should not be missed.

Brief summary and Review: *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story* is a wonderful book of how a family stays together through thick and thin. The story is about one Jewish family's struggle for survival during the Nazi occupation of Europe. The family includes Ruth Blumenthal, the mother, Walter Blumenthal, the father, Marion Blumenthal, the daughter, and Albert Blumenthal, the son. The Blumenthals lived in concentration camps for six years which included Westerbork in Holland and the notorious concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen in Germany. Conditions in these camps were so terrible that nearly half the camps population died of disease, starvation, exposure, exhaustion, or brutal beatings. The book received its name from young Marion's search to find four perfect pebbles of almost the same size. If Marion could manage to find these four pebbles, she felt that it meant her family would remain whole and be strong enough to survive the Nazi reign. This game kept young Marion's mind on things other than dead bodies lying around, the rumblings of her starving tummy, and the want for her family and life to go back to normal. This is a great story about

the importance of family and diversity. I would encourage everyone to take this book home with them today and experience the true account of one family's struggle through the Holocaust.

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