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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

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Eve Garnett's *The Family from One End Street* still continues to generate controversy 65 years after its publication. Chosen by Goebbels as a reading book for schools because of what he saw as its damning portrait of British working-class poverty, it was also selected by the Allied Commission at the end of the war as a story suitable for rebuilding young German minds after years of fascism. Garnett herself flits between a different set of extremes, celebrating the toughness and warmth of her characters in her still excellent line illustrations while sometimes selling them short by choosing lazy stereotypes over first-hand observation in her texts. Her nephew Terence Molloy has now written the first biography of a somewhat prickly aunt who became increasingly reclusive as she grew older. Since all her literary papers were destroyed in a fire in 1941, he has little to draw on dating from her most creative years. The picture that emerges is therefore only intermittently diverting, padded out with domestic details such as Garnett's favourite snack of Bengers and corn flakes and a description of her chosen attire for exploring the Norwegian arctic, including a goatskin coat and a pair of her father's golf stockings worn under a tweed skirt. Extracts from the original reviews of her most successful story are of more interest, along with other snap-shots of a life that ended in 1991 but which already seems much further away in time.

Running Order:

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