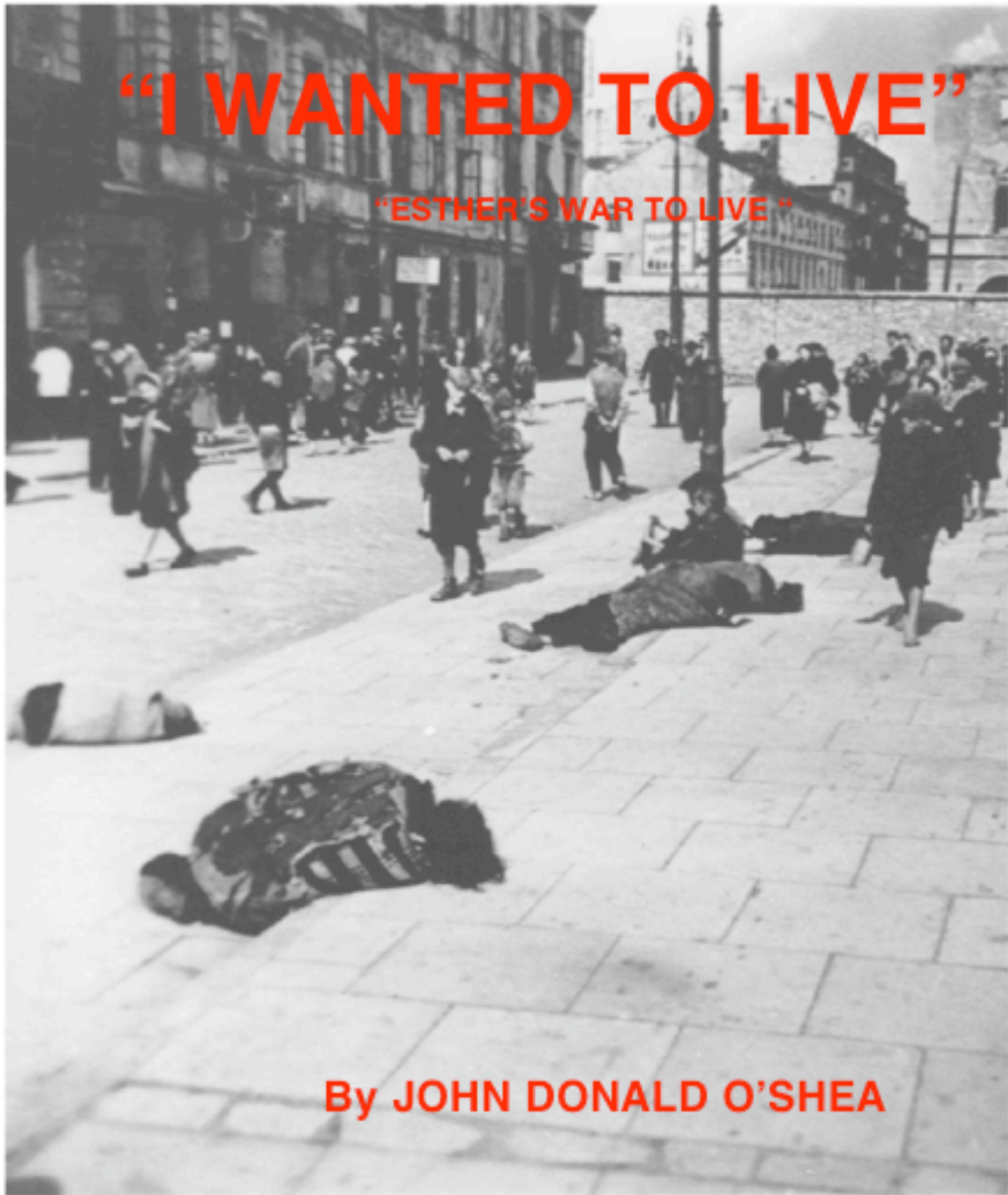


“I WANTED TO LIVE”

“ESTHER’S WAR TO LIVE”



By JOHN DONALD O’SHEA

“I WANTED TO LIVE”

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John Donald O’Shea

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“I WANTED TO LIVE”

SYNOPSIS

World War II began on September 1, 1939 when Adolf Hitler’s German soldiers invaded Poland.

For the next five years, the Jewish people who lived in Poland faced the Nazi “final solution.”

This is the true story of a 10 year-old Jewish girl, Esther Flaiszman from the small town of Sochaczew, Poland who by her courage and wit managed to survive starvation and disease in the Warsaw Ghetto, and to escape transport to the Nazi extermination camp at Treblinka.

It is the story of a witness to the horrors of the Holocaust.

CAST LIST

(Smaller parts can be “doubled.” 7 Women & 9 men)

Esther Flaiszman Avruch	Ester Flaiszman, in her senior years. Avruch is her married name.
Esther Flaiszman	A 10 year old Jew living in Poland at the start of WWII
Reisal Flaiszman	Esther’s sister. Three years older
Adolf Hitler	Chancellor of Germany
German Officer	
Unnamed Man	A bigot and Nazi Collaborator
Unnamed Woman	A second bigot and Nazi Collaborator
British Announcer	
Scharma Flaiszman	A Polish Soldier. Esther’s adult brother
Miriam Flaiszman	Esther’s Mother
Old Woman	A Polish citizen
Man	A Jewish forced laborer
Another man	A Polish peasant
Scharma’s Friend	Scharma’s Polish friend
Widow	An older, kind Polish woman. A Catholic
Bishop	A Roman Catholic Bishop in Warsaw
Officer	A German Officer

Esther's Friend

A Jewish woman from Esther's home town.

Narrator

“I WANTED TO LIVE”

(Born: July 15, 1929 - Died: March 07, 2010)

- “Esther’s War”

by John Donald O’Shea

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Scene 1 Prologue

[Light up on Older Esther. The actress playing Esther Flaiszman Avruch is dressed as an older woman Older Esther wears a gray wig, wire glasses, and a business suit and blouse. She is a small, trim woman. She comes down center on an empty stage. Speeches below printed in blue ink may be skipped if they are deemed inappropriate for the audience. They are included only to show Hitler’s irrational hatred for the Jewish people.]

OLDER ESTHER

As we begin our play, I should like to ask you just a few questions. *(She pauses briefly)*

Have any of you ever been so hungry that you thought you would die? *(A pause)*
I mean, really die? *(A pause)*

Have any of you ever been so afraid - so afraid of the police - that a simple knock on the front door made you break into a cold sweat, fearing that you would be arrested and taken away? *(A pause)*

Have any of you ever huddled in the cellar of your home as bombs dropped from screaming airplanes exploded all about you? *(A pause)*

Have any ever had as your main goal in life - indeed your only goal -- living just one more day? *(A pause)*

My name is Esther Flaiszman Avruch. Avruch is my married name. For five years, when I was about your age, this was the only life I knew.

I never had a chance to participate in sports, or in school activities of any kind. I never went to a movie. And I never went out on a date. I had but one goal in life. I wanted to live.

(Lights down on Older Esther)

Scene 1

[The stage is bare, except for a stool younger Esther enters. She has removed the wig, glasses, and suit. She is now a 10 year old child. A light comes up on her and Reisal.

Behind her there is a projection screen, which will be used to show videos and pictures relevant to her story.]

ESTHER

I was born Esther Flaiszman in Sochaczew, [So-ha'-chev] Poland on July 15, 1929. Sochaczew is a small town, about 34 miles west of Warsaw -- the capital of Poland.

REISAL

And I am Reisal Flaiszman. I am Esther's older sister. Sochaczew was a lovely town situated on the River Bzura. In earlier times, it had been the proud summer home of the Polish kings and queens and their court.

ESTHER

Prior to 1939, it was still a town of beautiful gardens and parks.

REISAL

It had a library, a theater and a gymnasium. The town was culturally Jewish.

ESTHER

On summer evenings, our family and friends would all go down to the river, to eat, and sing, and dance.

REISAL

Twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, the peasants from around Sochaczew, would hold an open air market in the center of town to sell their produce. Visiting the market was something we never tired of doing.

ESTHER

We loved living there.

ESTHER

In the years before World War II, Sochaczew was a town of perhaps 11,000 people. Perhaps, 5000 of them, including the members of our family, were Jews.

REISAL

The center of Jewish life in Sochaczew was the synagogue.

(1. Show slide of Sochaczew Synagogue)

ESTHER

My father's name was Aurum Flaiszman. He was in the business of selling coal

REISAL

Our mother was Mirium

ESTHER

My dad's first wife had died leaving him with four children. My mother bore him six more. I was her fourth.

REISAL

Our father was deeply religious. We were orthodox Jews. We carefully observed the Jewish religious laws and shared the prescribed meals.

ESTHER

We were a large, close family. I had a happy childhood.

REISAL

Mother was a wonderful home maker.

ESTHER

All our neighbors knew her for her good baking and cooking.

REISAL

We shared our meals with the poor - Jew and Christian alike. In those days, Jews and Gentiles lived together pretty well.

ESTHER

I can recall the beautiful holidays that we celebrated in our home...

REISAL

With our family, our friends and our neighbors.

ESTHER

I started school one year early.

REISAL

Poland was, of course, very much a Catholic country.

ESTHER

I attended the Catholic Public school for girls. There was a separate school for boys. We were not required to join in the Catholic prayers.

REISAL

And, even though it was a Catholic school, twice a week a Jewish teacher would come to our school to instruct the us in our Jewish faith.

ESTHER

Of course, some of the Catholic girls picked on us, but nothing serious. Because we ate Kosher, mother would often pack cheese sandwiches for our lunch.

REISAL

A few of our Catholic school mates liked to stick a slice of pork in with the cheese when we weren't looking. But that was about it. Jews, of course, didn't eat pork.

ESTHER

We went to school five days a week from 8 in the morning until 1 p. m.

REISAL

Then two days a week we attended girls Hebrew School from 4 until 7 p.m.

ESTHER

My father was very proud of our Hebrew schools.

REISAL

He would donate the coal they needed to heat the schools.

ESTHER

I can still remember the Hebrew songs we learned there. My childhood was a very happy one.

REISAL

At least until Esther was 10, and I was 13.

ESTHER

Until then, I had not heard of Hitler -- Adolph Hitler, the German Chancellor.

(2. Show slide with portrait of Adolph Hitler #1)

(Light up on German Officer and down on Reisal and Esther)

GERMAN OFFICER

Our beloved Führer, Adolf Hitler, has clearly stated in his wonderful book, *Mein Kampf*, what the “proper” Aryan attitude toward the Jew must be. It is a new “bible” which every good German citizen must read, as it clearly expresses our Führer’s political philosophy.

(3. Show slide of “Mein Kampf” #1)

(Light up on Reisal and Esther, and down on German Officer)

REISAL

And although I was three years older than my sister, I, had heard only a very little about Adolf Hitler, and I certainly had not read *Mein Kampf*.

ESTHER

But because I liked to hang around older brother and his friends. I heard them talk. I heard them say that Hitler hated the Jews.

(Red Light up on Adolf Hitler to suggest Hell, and down on Reisal and Esther)

(2. Show slide with portrait of Adolph Hitler #1)

ADOLF HITLER

“The Jew ... lacks ... belief in a hereafter *(In a mocking tone)*
[A] religion, in the Aryan sense, cannot be imagined which
lacks the conviction of life after death in some form. This being

so, the Talmud, which purports to set out rabbinic teachings on Jewish law, ethics and history, is not a book to prepare a man for the hereafter, but only for a ... profitable life in this world. ...

(Light up on Reisal and Esther, and down on Adolf Hitler)

REISAL

I had always suspected our parents didn't tell us about Hitler, because they did not really believe he meant all the terrible things that he was saying that he was going to do to the Jews.

(Red Light up on Adolf Hitler and down on Reisal and Esther)

ADOLF HITLER

"Of course, [Jesus Christ] made no secret of his attitude toward the Jewish people.... [H]e even took the whip to drive them from the temple of the Lord

(Light up on Reisal and Esther, and down on Adolf Hitler)

ESTHER

Most Jews scoffed at the things Hitler was saying, but a few took them very seriously. My father, thought it was all hot air.

REISAL

His brother was so scared that he fled Poland and immigrated to Palestine.

(Lights down on Esther and Reisal.)

Scene 2

(4. Show slide of Adolf Hitler #2)

(Light up on Reisal and Esther)

ESTHER

In the months just before the War began, we began to hear the adults talking about a whole lot more Hitler, and how bad he was to the Jews

REISAL

... and about how war might break out.

ADOLF HITLER

(Lights down on Esther and Reisal and Red Light up on Adolf Hitler)

(Continues to refer to "Mein Kampf")

(5. Show slide of "Mein Kampf" #2)

"If we consider how greatly [the Jew] has sinned against the masses in the course of the centuries, how he has squeezed and sucked the blood again and again; if furthermore, we consider how the people gradually learned to hate him for this, ... we can understand how hard this shift must be for the Jew.

(Lights down on Adolf Hitler and up on Esther)

ESTHER

We children were not to upset over these things. We didn't understand.

REISAL

For us, War meant only that we would not have to go to school. It would be a holiday!

(Lights down on Esther and Red Light up on Adolf Hitler)

ADOLF HITLER

“Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”

(Lights up on Esther and Reisal and down on Adolf Hitler)

ESTHER

Then, as the War drew nearer, things got worse for the Jews.

REISAL

People that we had never seen before - outsiders - began showing up in Sochaczew ...

ESTHER

With signs that called for boycotting all Jewish businesses. They accused us of killing Christ.

(Light up on Unnamed Man and Unnamed Woman)

UNNAMED MAN

(Shouting) His blood is on your hands!

REISAL.

(Shouting) They said the Jews had caused his crucifixion.

UNNAMED WOMAN

(Shouting) You Jews cried out, "Let him be crucified!"

UNNAMED MAN

(Shouting) You'll get what you deserve when Hitler comes!

UNNAMED WOMAN

(Shouting) You have corrupted the Poland long enough! Just you wait until Hitler comes." Get out of Poland now! Go back where you came from! Go while you can, if you know what's good for you!

(Light down on Unnamed Man and Unnamed Woman)

ESTHER

When you are ten it is very scary when someone says "just you wait until Hitler comes."

(Lights down on Reisal and Esther)

Scene 3

*(A Red spot light comes up on a German Officer, acting as a radio newscaster. He is seated behind a desk and a microphone, which is DS right. There is a large photo of Adolf Hitler behind him. He reads **Herr Hitler's Proclamation to the German Army of September 1, 1939.**)*

(6. Show slide of German Army troops on move)

German Officer: I have just been handed an official proclamation from our Führer to the German Army. It is dated September 1, 1939.

“The Polish State has refused the peaceful settlement of relations which I desired, and has appealed to arms. Germans in Poland are persecuted with bloody terror and driven from their houses. A series of violations of the frontier, intolerable to a great Power, prove that Poland is no longer willing to respect the frontier of the Reich.

(Lights down on German Soldier, and Red Light up on Adolf Hitler)

(7. Slide Show of Germany Troops Boarding Train to “Thrash Jews”)

ADOLF HITLER

“In order to put an end to this lunacy, I have no other choice than to meet force with force from now on. The German Army will fight the battle for the honor and the vital rights of reborn Germany with hard determination. I expect that every soldier, mindful of the great traditions of eternal German soldiery, will ever remain conscious that he is a representative of the National-Socialist Greater Germany. Long live our people and our Reich! “

(The spot light goes down on Adolf Hitler. Light comes up on Reisal and Esther)

REISAL

(8. Show slide with portrait of Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigly)

On September 1, 1939, we heard on the radio that war had broken out. I was 13 at the time. The President of Poland, Marshal Edward Rydz-Smigly, said that "Poland would fight to the last man, and that the Polish people would never give up their beloved Poland."

ESTHER

When the war started, I was 10 years old. Later that evening we were reassured when we heard on the radio that England and France would come to Poland's aid.

(A spot light comes up on a British radio newscaster. He is seated behind a desk and a microphone, which is DL right.)

BRITISH ANNOUNCER

This is the BBC. I will now read you a portion of the Mr. Chamberlain's remarks to Parliament in which the Prime Minister tells of the note which our British Ambassador in Berlin has delivered to the German Minister.

(9. Show slide of Hitler's Proclamation to German Army)

"Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland. Information which has reached His Majesty's Government ... indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks upon Polish towns are proceeding.

(Light does down on British Announcer)

REISAL

The radio said Poland had been attacked. But all we knew was that Sochaczew, [So-ha´-chev] was safe - for the minute.

(Light up on British Announcer)

BRITISH ANNOUNCER

“In these circumstances, it appears to the Government of the United Kingdom ... that by their action the German Government have created conditions, ... threatening the independence of Poland, which call for the implementation by the Government of the United Kingdom ... of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.”

(Light does down on British Announcer)

ESTHER

Our parents were happy that the British said they were going keep their promise and assist Poland against the German attack.

Light up on British Announcer)

BRITISH ANNOUNCER

“I am required accordingly to inform your Excellency that unless the German Government is prepared to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German

Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland, and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will, without hesitation, fulfill their obligations to Poland."

[Lights down on British Announcer.]

[Credit: The British War Bluebook, Document 107, The Avalon Project]

(10. Show slide of Stuka dive bombers)

ESTHER

The following day, German airplanes bombed Sochaczew.

REISAL

At the very outset, they bombed the synagogue, and Jewish schools.

ESTHER

We watched them burn.

(11. Show slide of Bombed out Sochaczew Synagogue)

REISAL

Then they bombed Jewish businesses. Before long, the whole city was in flames.

(12. Show slide Bombed Building in Sochaczew)

ESTHER

It seemed as if the Germans had a map of the city --.

REISAL

-- or at least, a map of the Jewish sections of the city.

(13. Show slide Burning Buildings in Sochaczew)

That evening, my brother, Scharma, who was in the Polish Army, suddenly showed up at our home.

(Lights up on Scharma)

SCHARMA

Father, mother....

ESTHER

Why are you here? The President said the Polish Army would fight to the last man.

REISAL

Why aren't you with the army?

SCHARMA

The Polish army has been shattered - broken like grass. I got separated from my unit.

ESTHER

I don't understand.

(14. Show slide of Stuka dive bombers)

SCHARMA

The German attack was overwhelming. Our horse cavalry had no chance their tanks and dive bombers. We could do nothing against their bombs and high explosive shells. Our soldiers were machine gunned, and blown into pieces -- slaughtered.

REISAL

But our President said...

SCHARMA

We weren't prepared. Our generals never imagined...

REISAL

But the President promised our army would fight "to the last drop of Polish blood."

SCHARMA

The army never had a chance. The German attack came like a lightning storm. Our army was utterly broken and scattered. I didn't know where to go. So, I came here.

(15 Sochaczew During, September 19, 1939)

(Lights Down on Scharma)

ESTHER

My mother and father were terrified that Scharma might be seen as a deserter and shot. They made sure that no one saw him that night.

REISAL

The next morning, September 3, 1939, the whole town was full of soldiers

ESTHER

They were all milling. None of them knew where to go.

REISAL

They told us of how the Germans were bombing and shooting soldiers and civilians.

ESTHER

They told us that the German Stuka dive bombers were bombing and machine gunning the unarmed Polish villages.

REISAL

Strafing civilians --- even the children -- trying to use the roads. They told us bodies -- dead bodies - were scattered everywhere.

(Lights up on Scharma)

SCHARMA

You all must leave Sochaczew.

ESTHER

We can't leave our home

SCHARMA

For the love of God, you can't stay here. Go to Warsaw. Immediately. It will be safer there.

REISAL

Why will it be safer there?

SCHARMA

Here, there is nothing here to stop their tanks. No where to hide from the Stukas. Our army will regroup, and make a stand around Warsaw.

(Lights down on Scharma)

ESTHER

My father didn't want to leave our home and all our possessions. He had worked his whole life to get them.

REISAL

My father argued that the Germans were a civilized people. He could not believe German soldiers would make war on unarmed civilians.

SCHARMA

Whether you believe it or not, it's true. They follow only their own rules. I am telling you what I have seen. Don't you believe me?

(Lights down on Scharma)

ESTHER

My father finally gave in and went to find transportation.

REISAL

He quickly found out that nearly the whole Jewish population of the town was fleeing to Warsaw. Everyone thought that they would be safer in there.

ESTHER

Nobody ever dreamed that Warsaw would be the next target -- bombed next.

REISAL

The only transportation available was via the horse wagons of the peasants.

ESTHER

There was still some gasoline for cars or motorcycles... ,

REISAL

... but fuel prices were astronomical and rising hour by hour. My father hired a wagon.

ESTHER

To our dismay, when we got on the highway, we found the highway was jammed with wagons, soldiers, and people walking with packages on their shoulders. Traffic was crawling.

REISAL

Then to help our army, civilians were ordered onto the back roads.

(16. Show slide of Stuka Releasing Bomb. Also Stuka siren and machine guns.)

ESTHER

During the day time, the German planes would dive very low, screeching as they came down, and would bomb, and strafe us with their machine guns.

REISAL

Scharma and the other soldiers had told the truth.

ESTHER

People would hurl themselves into the ditches to avoid being machine gunned.

REISAL

Then, when the shooting ended

ESTHER

Many never got up.

REISAL

We saw some children wounded -- covered with blood.

ESTHER

Others were dead. They too were covered with blood.

REISAL

About half way to Warsaw, the owner of the wagon, who was a gentile friend, lost courage and dumped all our belongings on the road. He headed home.

ESTHER

He left the nine of us to fend for ourselves.

REISAL

The fact that we had my mother's 80 year-old mother, our grandmother, with us made things very desperate.

ESTHER

Nevertheless, we continued on foot until we were given a ride in another wagon by neighbors who knew us.

REISAL

After a long journey, tired, hungry, and thirsty, we finally arrived in Warsaw.

(17. Show slide of Refugees arriving in Warsaw in Horse Wagons)

ESTHER

Once we got to Warsaw, we were able to move in with my father's sister.

REISAL

She lived in a two room apartment in a big, tall building.

ESTHER

But, because there was almost nonstop bombing, we spent almost all of our time,

hiding in the cellar.

REISAL

It served as a bomb shelter.

ESTHER

When a bomb fell nearby, there was an ear-shattering, bone jarring explosion.

(17A. *Sound of Bomb falling close by*)

REISAL

Our whole building would shake and groan.

ESTHER

Between air raids we would sneak outside to take stock of what happened.

REISAL

There were fires everywhere.

ESTHER

Where a beautiful brick apartment building had been just minutes before, there would be a twisted, smoking pile of rubble .

REISAL

By the second week of September, food was getting scarce, but the bombing was still our main worry.

ESTHER

Then, near evening, a bomb scored a direct hit on our building.

(17B. *Sound of Bomb falling close by. Louder*)

REISAL

The noise of the explosion was indescribable --- more awful than anything that we had experienced before.

ESTHER

Ear shattering. Teeth jarring. I was scared stiff. Crying.

REISAL

Choking plaster dust filled the air everywhere - filled our nostrils. The building swayed and trembled. I was never so terrified in all my life.

REISAL

Walls gave way. As they did, it was like the sound of a big gun shot. It was a miracle that we survived.

ESTHER

But the blast left the building unsafe - on the verge of collapse. We were all in danger of being buried alive at any moment.

REISAL

Because the building was dangerously weakened and in imminent danger of collapse, we got out as quickly as we could.

ESTHER

We then went to another relative's home. That proved to be a blessing.

REISAL

There was a bakery in the building.

ESTHER

So as long as they had bread, the people in the bakery shared it with us.

REISAL

Counting mother, father and grandmother, there were nine of us. We were all alive.
We were all uninjured. We had all survived the initial ordeal.

(18. Show slide of Stukas over burning Warsaw)

ESTHER

But, as the days went by, the bombing grew worse.

REISAL

By then, we had very little to eat,

ESTHER

The Germans had seized all of Poland, except Warsaw, in just a matter of days.

REISAL

The Polish army had repositioned itself to defend Warsaw. Our brave soldiers held out for four terrible weeks. But the German attack was relentless.

ESTHER

The worst day of all was Yom Kippur - the Jewish day of Atonement - the day that Jews pray that God forgives their sins.

REISAL

We prayed all that day. As was customary, the men and women prayed in separate rooms. But that day, we prayed as we had never prayed before. We all knew the prayer we were saying might be our last. We hoped God would hear us.

ESTHER

I was terrified of the bombing, I did not leave my mother's side that whole day. Everybody's nerves were raw. All day, I keep asking myself, "why did Hitler hate Jews so much?"

REISAL

Then, near the end of the services what we feared the most, happened. A bomb struck our building.

(18A. Sound of Bomb falling close by. Louder)

ESTHER

Everything got dark. And this time, we were not so lucky.

REISAL

Again, the dust was choking us. Ceilings and walls buckled and gave way.

ESTHER

In the darkness, people called - no, screamed - the names of their children, and spouses.

(18B. Sounds of people in terror)

REISAL

The anguished cries and the screaming that came from inside the building were unimaginably horrible. I will never forget.

ESTHER

My mother was frantic. Yet, somehow, our family was spared.

REISAL

Esther, are you all right?

ESTHER

Yes. How about you?

REISAL

I think I'm okay. But my shoulder hurts. I'm bleeding.

ESTHER

Can you walk?

REISAL

I think so.

ESTHER.

Let me help. We've got to get out of here, before the building collapses.

REISAL

When we got out, mother bandaged my arm as best she could to try to stop the bleeding. But we needed to find a doctor and shelter for the night.

ESTHER

(Continuing her narrative) Eventually, the mom, dad and the rest of us came to a bombed-out house.

REISAL

We hid in its cellar that night. It was as if we were spending the night in a cave.

ESTHER

Early the next morning, almost miraculously, we heard my brother, Scharma, in the street calling our names.

(Lights up on Scharma)

SCHARMA

Mother, *(Pausing between each name)* Father, Gietel, Froyum, Reisal, Esther....

ESTHER

Scharma! *(She greets him with a hug)* Scharma, Reisal's been hurt!

REISAL

It's my shoulder. *(Exhibiting her right shoulder. Scharma examines it)*

SCHARMA

It looks like shrapnel. I passed a medical booth. I'll take her there before it becomes infected.

ESTHER

Should I go with you?

SCHARMA.

(He pulls out a pad and pencil, and makes a short note) No. You go there *(Indicating the address in the note)*. You can stay with our relatives for a while. Their building is undamaged. The war is over. You should be safe there.

(Lights down on Scharma and Reisal)

ESTHER

(Continuing her narrative) By now, things were very bad in Warsaw. Besides being no food, there was no water. My mother and father and my brother and sisters all wanted to go home to Sochaczew. Their chance came one day while I was out with a cousin getting water from the Vistula. Scharma had found transportation. They left without me. They knew that I could continue to stay with our relatives and join them later.

(Light down on Esther)

Scene 5

ESTHER

(Light up on Esther)

A few days later, I made it back to Sochaczew.

(19. Show slide of Building During in Sochaczew)

The damage that had been done to our town was awful. The entire main street had been bombed and burned out.

(Lights up on Reisal)

REISAL

The whole Jewish part of the town had been burned to the ground -- except for a few non-Jewish homes and a few Jewish homes attached to non-Jewish homes.

ESTHER

Our neighbors said, the Germans had been angry when they found no Jews in town.

REISAL

So, in reprisal, they burned Jewish homes.

ESTHER

But the apartment building in which we had lived in had been spared.

REISAL

Our Gentile neighbors who lived in the other apartments had begged the Germans

not to burn building. We were among the fortunate few.

ESTHER

Because we had a home, we took in two other less fortunate families who had lost their homes. Mom and dad told us that the book of Leviticus said that we must “love our neighbors as ourselves.”

(20. Six pointed Star Arm band)

REISAL

A few days later, the Germans ordered us to wear white arm bands with the six pointed star of David.

(21. Order for Jews to Wear Arm Band with Star)

ESTHER

Almost over night, everything had changed in Sochaczew.

REISAL

If we dared walk on the sidewalk, the Germans beat us.

ESTHER

Once we put on the arm band with the six pointed star, it was easy for the Germans to identify anybody who was Jewish.

(22. Show slide of SS-Obergruppenführer and General of Police Reinhard Heydrich and his Gestapo chief, Karl Hermann Frank)

GERMAN OFFICER

(Lights up on German Officer and Polish Man)

(Pushing Reisal) The sidewalks are for people; not filthy Jew pigs.

ESTHER

Some of our Polish neighbors helped them.

POLISH MAN

(Kicking at Esther) You heard what the Captain said. Get off the sidewalk!

(23. German Soldier kicking Pole)

REISAL

There were bread lines.

GERMAN OFFICER

(Pulling her out of line violently) This food is for Christians; not Jews. Go find your own food.

POLISH MAN

(Pointing Esther out) Captain, that little one wears a star. She is a Jew.

GERMAN OFFICER

(Yanking Esther out of line) Food is scarce. We cannot waste it on stinking animals.

We cannot waste it on rats! Get! (*Throwing her to street and then kicking her*)

(*Lights down on German Officer and Polish Man*)

REISAL

It was worse for our men. The Germans beat and kicked them, and cut off their beards.

ESTHER

One night, a group of drunken men broke into our apartment looking for Jews to beat up. In the process they destroyed everything in our home they could find.

REISAL

Esther and I fled out the back door. Almost immediately ran into a police patrol.

ESTHER.

Because no "*Kristallnacht*" had been ordered by the authorities, the police arrested the men.

REISAL

"*Kristallnacht*," the "night of the broken glass," was the night during which Jewish homes, business and synagogues had be destroyed in Germany in November of 1938.

ESTHER

But then, they were quickly released and not punished.

REISAL

But still, my family was lucky. We had Polish Christian friends who helped us get food and coal. Indeed, many Polish Christians tried to help the Jews.

ESTHER

Through their kindness, we survived the winter of 1939.

(23. Hans Frank Orders Jews to Wear Arm Band with Star)

(Lights down on Esther and Reisal)

Scene 6

(Lights up on Esther and Reisal)

ESTHER

In January 1940, the Germans organized the Jewish Committee - the *Judenrat*.
(Pronounced, Yoo'-den-rat.)

REISAL

The *Judenrat* was required to provide Jews for labor. The Germans needed slaves to work in train stations, on construction projects, and on the farms.

ESTHER

If the *Judenrat* failed to meet its quotas, the committee members would be dragged from the homes and beaten.

(24. Show slide of SS-Obergruppenführer and General of Police Reinhard Heydrich and his Gestapo chief, Karl Hermann Frank

(Spot up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

To: Chiefs of all Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police.

Subject: Jewish question in the occupied territory

(Light down on German Officer)

(25. Slide Show . Heydrich Directive of September 21, 1939 to Chiefs of all Einsatzgruppen of the Security Police)

ESTHER

We tried to adjust to the German occupation by avoiding the Germans whenever possible.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

I refer to the conference held in Berlin ... and once more point out that the planned ... measures for dealing with the Jewish problem are to be kept strictly secret.

(Light down on German Officer and up on Reisal)

REISAL

For a while, the occupation seemed as if it would be tolerable.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

For the time being, the first prerequisite for the “final aim” is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside into the larger cities. This is to be carried out with all speed.

As such, it is to be borne in mind that only cities which are rail junctions, or at least are located along railroad lines, are to be designated as “concentration points.”

(Light down on German Officer)

ESTHER

We were unaware of what the Nazi S. S. men were planning for us.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

As far as possible, Jewish communities of fewer than 500 persons are to be dissolved and the residents are to be transferred to the nearest city of concentration.

(Light down on German Officer)

(25. Show slide of Heydrich Directive to Einsatzgruppen of Security Police)

REISAL

We could not even imagine what had in store for us.

GERMAN OFFICER

(Light up on German Officer)

For general reasons of security, the concentration of Jews in the cities will probably

necessitate orders completely barring Jews from certain sections of cities, ... forbidding them to leave **the ghetto....**

(Light down on German Officer)

REISAL

But it was not long, before we first learned what the Germans had in mind.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

Actung! Actung! Jews and all persons of Jewish descent are hereby ordered....

(Light down on German Officer)

ESTHER

In January of 1941, the Germans ordered that all Jews leave their homes and go to designated assembly places in Sochaczew.

REISAL

This was the beginning of the ghetto in Sochaczew.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

Actung! Actung! Jews and all persons of Jewish descent are hereby ordered....

ESTHER

The night before we were to go, there was terrible shooting, screaming. *[Sound effects. Rifle and machine gun noises. Screaming terror]*

(26. Kristallnacht in Germany. November 1938. Jewish businesses destroyed.)

REISAL

(German Officer drags Reisal into Street) The Germans were going through houses, and beating and killing the residents, and taking whatever they wanted.

GERMAN OFFICER

Schnell! Schnell! Out! Out! Get into the street!

(Light down on German Officer)

ESTHER

(German Officer throws Esther into street, and kicks at her as she falls) Early in the morning we departed with our bundles and walked to the train station.

(27. Slide show of Frank “Ordinance on the Limitation of Right to Residence.”

REISAL

But, our family was sent instead to a ghetto in Zyrardow. We were each allowed just one suit case.

ESTHER

They beat and kicked us as we marched.

REISAL

Our family of nine was assigned a single room, along with a second family. Our only food consisted of potatoes, flour, and beans. And that winter was very cold.

ESTHER

But our stay there was short. Before January was over, we were ordered to go to the Warsaw ghetto. The night before we left, we ate up any food we had left

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

Schnell! Schnell! *(Lashing out)* Move. Move! All stragglers will be shot!

(Light down on German Officer)

(28. Slide Show of Jews Deported to Warsaw Ghetto)

REISAL

When we reached the train, women and children were separated from the men. We were then herded like cattle into empty box cars.

(29. Slide show of Jews Herded into Cattle Cars)

ESTHER

It was very crowded. They provided us with a single bucket for our toilet needs. But the stench from that bucket, fouled the entire box car.

REISAL

When they closed the doors and locked them, the car odor became unbearable.

ESTHER

Minutes before, they had shot people who had not moved quickly enough to suit them. Now, that we were locked in a fetid box car, all that urgency vanished.

REISAL

So, why had we had been rushed -- indeed, driven -- to the train?

ESTHER

And that was only the beginning. The trip of 34 miles took days. We could have crawled faster.

(30. Slide show of Jews arriving at Warsaw Ghetto)

REISAL

When we finally arrived in Warsaw, they prodded us to a large place of assembly on the outskirts of Warsaw. As the did, they beat us and spat on us.

ESTHER

There, we found my father and brothers.

(Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

It is necessary for us to quarantine your baggage. You will all leave the things you

are carrying behind the white line on your left. You baggage will be fumigated and returned to you shortly.

ESTHER

They claimed their actions were to prevent the spread of lice and disease --

REISAL

but actually it afforded them an opportunity to steal all our valuables. When we reclaimed baggage later later, our cases were half empty.

GERMAN OFFICER

(Sharply and with pleasure) Now, you will all take off all your clothing. These women will direct you to the showers. *(He carries a whip or club)*

REISAL

We were forced at bayonet point to strip naked. With all the soldiers leering at us. They poked at our private parts with their bayonets. We were mortified and utterly terrified. .

ESTHER

Our guards made shameful lewd comments. They called us filthy Jewish pigs.

REISAL

We had done nothing wrong, and yet we were the ones who were embarrassed.

GERMAN OFFICER

Your hair will be cut short for sanitary reasons -- to eliminate the problem of lice so common among you filthy Jews.

ESTHER

The prettier our hair, ...

REISAL

... the more they cut off.

ESTHER

All my hair hair was shaved off. Of course, this too, they claimed, was to prevent diseases. We had no choice but somehow, and yet we were ashamed.

GERMAN OFFICER

You will now proceed to the showers.

ESTHER

The women who were helping the Germans pushed and shoved us into the showers.

REISAL

When the showers were done, to hide our shame, we made scarves from whatever we could find to cover our heads.

REISAL

Then, they marched us to the ghetto. They beat and kicked us all along the way. We were like sheep. Nothing we could do satisfied them.

(31. Show Slide of Entrance to Warsaw Ghetto)

(Light down on Esther and Reisal)

Scene 7

(Light up on Esther and Reisal)

REISAL

Our family was fortunate to have relatives in the ghetto.

ESTHER

My father's sister helped us find a room. At first, the nine of us shared it with another family of six.

REISAL

Living conditions were very bad. There were thousands of people forced to live within just a few blocks.

ESTHER

To make things worse, the winter of 1940- 41, was very hard and cold. And there was no work for my father. We lived on what the Germans gave us.

(32. Supplemental Ration Card for Children)

REISAL

People no longer made plans for the future.

ESTHER

Our only goal was to find bread for the day. We wanted to live.

REISAL

We quickly found that we could not survive on the meager rations we were given:
Frozen potatoes and stale bread.

ESTHER

Some Polish people tried to help, but what they could give was not enough.

REISAL

But every bit of food helped our family. For that reason, I would tutor younger children -- for a little money or food.

(33. Slide Show of Warsaw Ghetto Wall)

(Lights up on Scharma)

SCHARMA

(Entering) The Germans have assigned to me work outside the ghetto.

REISAL

Is that good or bad?

SCHARMA

The work is hard. But they feed me better.

REISAL

Then it is good.

SCHARMA

I have saved some. I have brought some food for you.

REISAL

What food they gave him above the normal ghetto ration, he shared with the nine of us.

ESTHER

Scharma, thanks to you, we're better off than the other family we lived with.

REISAL

(With black humor) Yes, thanks to you, we're just starving a bit more slowly.

SCHARMA

The worst part of life in the ghetto is the constant hunger.

ESTHER

There was very little to eat. When you are always very cold and hungry, the hunger gnaws at you -- become unbearable.

(34. Slide Show of Child Dead in Street)

REISAL

Children and older people, who had become nothing but skin and bones, begged for food in the streets.

ESTHER

Others, with swollen bellies, just laid in the streets - and died slowly.

SCHARMA

And, of course, there were bodies - dead bodies everywhere.

(35. Slide show woman with dead child on Street)

REISAL

They just died on the sidewalks. On the streets and in the gutters

SCHARMA

You had to be careful as you walked, or you would trip over them.

(36. Slide Show of many dead on the street)

REISAL

Those without shelter - who lived on the streets - often died on the spot where they had been living.

ESTHER

When people died who lived in the buildings, others carried them from the buildings where they had died, and laid them along the street.

(37. Show slide of dead in mass grave)

SCHARMA

They covered them with paper until they could be picked up. They buried them in mass graves.

(38. Slide show of Bodies Being Carted Away)

REISAL

The starving people became desperate.

SCHARMA

Soon, it was everyone for himself.

ESTHER

You couldn't hold a piece of bread in your hand in the street because people would snatch it -- steal it from you.

(An unidentified player rushes across the stage, and tries to grab an orange from Esther. She struggles to keep it. Scharma, knocks the would be thief away)

SCHARMA

As the winter dragged on, we all became less human by the day.

REISAL

It was the only way you could bear to walk past the dead children and old folks whose bodies littered the city streets (*She trips over a body*) -- .

SCHARMA

- the only way to retain our sanity.

ESTHER

You got so conditioned to death that you just walked by.

SCHARMA

You became like a stone.

(Lights down on Esther, Scharma and Reisal)

(Lights up on Esther, Scharma and Reisal)

REISAL

The worst of it was, that without sufficient food, we will soon join them.

SCHARMA

The food I could bring was not enough for our whole family. And there is no other food in the ghetto.

(39. Slide Show of Jewish Workers Building Ghetto Wall)

ESTHER

Can we get out of the ghetto? How would we get past the high walls, the barbed wire and the guards?

SCHARMA

You would have to avoid the Jewish patrols inside the walls, and the Germans outside

(40. Slide Show of Children Scaling Wall)

REISAL

There has to be a way. Other kids are able to sneak out into the countryside, and beg for food. Let's watch them and see how they do it.

ESTHER

If we can find a way out, maybe, if we could get to Sochaczew?

REISAL

There are people who know us there.

ESTHER

Do you suppose they would help?

REISAL

I don't know. But if we don't take the chance, we will starve, too. And we have a couple things going for us.

ESTHER

What?

REISAL

You and I don't look Jewish. And we speak Polish well enough to at least fool the Germans.

(Lights Down on Scharma)

ESTHER

Reisal was right. We did not look Jewish. We had short noses, and medium colored hair.

REISAL

And we were too young to be afraid.

ESTHER

But it was hard work. Exhausting work. Some children used sacks.

(41. Slide Show of Child Food Smuggler with Sack)

REISAL

We opted to wear long peasant shirts with a rope tied around our waists. Any food we could get, we'd carry back in our shirts.

ESTHER

We'd carry a bundle in front and a second in the back.

REISAL

We'd get as much as we could carry. It was backbreaking work.

ESTHER

But I just wanted to live -- to live to see the day when Hitler was defeated.

REISAL

We all wanted to live.

ESTHER

Nothing else was important. I just wanted to live - until then.

REISAL

To get to the countryside, we had have to sneak through the wall and the barbed wire.

ESTHER

Then walk 34 miles into the countryside.

REISAL

While avoiding German patrols.

ESTHER

And their dogs.

REISAL

Through snow and mud.

ESTHER

Then, we had to make the 34 mile return trip ...

REISAL

... Carrying the potatoes, flour and and beans ...

ESTHER

... That the good peasants gave us.

REISAL

Finally, we had to sneak back it through wire fences and holes in the wall.

(42. Slide Show. Children Smuggling Food Through Hole in Wall)

ESTHER

Even then there was danger. Sometimes there were patrols and we'd be unable

to get back into the ghetto.

REISAL

At first, if they caught us, they just confiscated the food, beat and kick us, and threw us back in the ghetto.

(43. Slide Show of German Soldier Arresting Food Smuggler)

ESTHER

But later, it got worse. Our own desperate people would steal from us.

REISAL

It was heart breaking to walk nearly 35 out and 35 miles back for nothing.

ESTHER

To work so hard and risk so much only to come back without any food.

(Lights down on both girls)

Scene 8

(Lights up on Esther, Reisal and Mirium)

ESTHER

To make matters even worse, as the winter of 1940-41 ground on, a Typhus epidemic broke out in the ghetto.

(44. Slide Show of Children in Street)

REISAL

Thousands of Jews died.

MIRIUM

Esther and Reisal both contracted Typhus. *(To the girls)* We've got to get you to the hospital.

REISAL

Under the German regulations, everybody with knowledge of a Typhus case had to report it.

MIRIUM

The penalties for failing to report the disease are very severe.

ESTHER

Once there was a report, The Germans would take the infected person outside the ghetto.

MIRIUM

The said they were taking them to hospitals.

(45. Typhus)

REISAL

(Pause) But very few people ever returned.

ESTHER

Because we supported the family, my mother, at great risk to her own health, took care of us.

MIRIUM

But I knew my girls might die. I had no medicine.

REISAL

We all knew that everyone who had Typhus had to have their heads shaved.

ESTHER

Mother wanted to shave our heads.

(Lights up on Reisal)

MIRIUM

They say the disease is carried by lice, and that the lice hide in your hair.

REISAL

Mother, we cannot shave our heads, no matter what the Germans say.

ESTHER

We cannot go into the countryside for food with shaved heads.

REISAL

We will not be able to leave or enter the ghetto.

ESTHER

Everybody will know we're Jews.

REISAL

You are already violating one regulation by taking care of us here.

ESTHER

You were supposed to send us to the hospital.

REISAL

As we are already ignoring one German regulation, let's ignore a second, as well.

MIRIUM

What if you pass typhus on to the rest of us?

ESTHER

What if we are unable to bring back food? We face death either way.

ESTHER

Somehow mother found a doctor.

REISAL

He came to the house and gave us medication. By the mercy of God, we survived.

ESTHER

But then mother herself contracted Typhus.

REISAL

They took her to the hospital.

(Light down on Mirium)

ESTHER

She was one of the lucky few who came back home.

REISAL

Although we recovered, we desperately needed food to regain our strength.

ESTHER

So, my sister and I decided to go out again. It took all our strength, but we managed to contact friendly peasants.

REISAL

They fed us milk and bread. In time, we regained our strength.

ESTHER

They had been friends of our family, who had done business with my father. But they were scared, too. They knew that if they were caught helping us, they faced imprisonment or death.

REISAL

Had the Germans caught them, they certainly would have been punished severely

ESTHER

It took great courage for a Christian to feed a Jew, when the Christian knew that he would be sent to jail or killed if he were caught.

REISAL

So they could say they did not know we were present, they told us sleep in the barns.

(Lights down on Esther and Reisal)

Scene 9

(45. Show slide of Hans Frank Ordinance of October 15, 1941)

(Lights up on Esther and Reisal)

ESTHER

In summer 1941, the Germans declared war on Russia. Immediately, the Germans proclaimed that any Jew - man, woman or child - caught outside the ghetto would be shot on sight.

REISAL

People who hid Jews would no longer be jailed. They, too, would be shot.

ESTHER

At first, we were too terrified to go out. But then, as our hunger worsened, hunger overcame fear.

REISAL

I think we should go anyway.

ESTHER

What if they catch us?

REISAL

They say they will shoot us.

ESTHER

Do you believe them?

REISAL

Yes. But does it make any difference?

ESTHER

No. If we do nothing, we starve.

REISAL

We die either way. Quickly by a Nazi bullet. Or slowly by starvation.

ESTHER

I'd rather die fast. And with food we might survive. I don't want mother and father to die that way.

REISAL

We could take Sara or Seral with us.

ESTHER

Seral's only 7. If we're caught she might panic and give us away. And would Geitel even let Sara go?

REISAL

(Knowing the answer) Are you saying our dear older sister has a favorite?

(Lights down on Reisal)

Scene 10

ESTHER

The winter of 1941-42 was a terrible time.

(Lights up on Reisal)

REISAL

We shared our room at the time with a family that had three children. They had nobody to find food for them.

ESTHER

We watched them, one by one. We watched the children and their mother just lie down and die. They all just lay down and died.

REISAL

Starvation took their lives, one by one. The people of the ghetto simply lay down, closed their eyes, and died in front of our eyes. Had we shared our food with them, we would have died, too.

(46. Slide Show. Children on Street)

ESTHER

Their suffering made clear to us that we had to risk everything to get food.

REISAL

Our father, mother, sisters and brother, and our mother's mother couldn't live without food. They depended on us.

(Lights briefly down on Ester and Reisal. Then, almost immediately back up)

ESTHER

Before the shoot-on-sight order had been entered, Reisal and I would go out together to forage for food.

REISAL

Esther, what if they catch both of us? What if they kill both of us?

ESTHER

Are you saying we should go out separately?

REISAL

Yes. That way they could only get one of us.

ESTHER

We've gone out often enough. We both know the way. I think you're right.

REISAL

And if they do get one of us, at least the other survives to continue the struggle to

keep our family alive. If that happens, then it will be Sara's turn.

ESTHER

Sara was the logical choice. She was the prettiest and she did not look Jewish. She had blond hair and blue eyes.

REISAL

Esther and I began to go out separately, ...

ESTHER

... but, it was getting harder to find shelter -- a place to sleep.

REISAL

The peasants wanted to help, but now they feared even more for themselves and their families. They knew what the Germans would do. To protect themselves they told us we could sleep in their barns, but that we should do so without first asking permission.

ESTHER

And even then, though they weren't Jews - even though they were Christians -- they were very good to us.

REISAL

Maybe, it was just a pay back. Before the war, dad had sold many of them coal during the winters on credit until their crops could be raised and sold the following summer.

ESTHER

The were good hearted people who remembered and tried ot help us.

(47. Slide Show of Polish Peasants in Field)

REISAL

But to better protect ourselves and the peasants, we spent many nights sleeping in the open fields. And we used the side roads.

ESTHER

German patrols seemed to be everywhere.

REISAL

Sometimes they had dogs - German Shepherds.

ESTHER

I became scared of the sound of my own breathing. Afraid it would give me away.

(Lights Down on Esther and Reisal)

Scene 11

ESTHER

(Lights up on Esther)

In the summer of 1942, it was my sister's week to get food.

(Lights up on Reisal who is laying down)

ESTHER

It's your week. Why aren't you ready?

REISAL.

I can't, Esther. I'm sick. You're going to have to go again.

ESTHER

But it's your week.

REISAL

They need food. You will have to go for me. I'm too sick.

(Lights Down on Reisal)

ESTHER

I did not believe her. I thought she was just scared. But I went out again for a second straight week. But this time, the danger came from an unexpected direction.

(Lights down on Esther. Light up on German Officer)

GERMAN OFFICER

(Banking knock on door) This family has been selected for resettlement in the work camps. You are allowed one case. You will all accompany us, please.

(Lights up on Esther)

ESTHER

While I was gone, the Gestapo, and their collaborators, surrounded the ghetto and began taking the residents. When I returned to Warsaw this time with my bundles of food, I saw what was happening.

(Light down on German Officer)

(48. Slide Show of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto are deported at the Umschlagplatz)

GERMAN OFFICER

You will proceed to the Umschlagplatz. There you will board trains for transport for work in the resettlement camps in the East.

(Light down down German Officer)

ESTHER

At the time, I didn't understand that the Germans were taking the Jews to the gas chambers. I didn't know what to do. I was stunned. So, I just knocked at a door of a big building.

(Lights up on old woman, answering door)

OLD WOMAN

What can I do for you?

ESTHER

I am a smuggler. I sell food to the Jews.

OLD WOMAN

What do you want, here?

ESTHER

I need a place to spend the night. I will give you food if you let me stay over night.

OLD WOMAN

I know a young couple that needs food badly. I will take you there. *(They cross the stage)*

ESTHER

The old woman kept her word. Again, I was lucky. The people were fine.

OLD WOMAN

Their apartment overlooks the ghetto. You will be able to see what the Germans are doing.

(49. Slide show Looking into Ghetto)

(Lights down on Old Woman)

ESTHER

I spent the night with a young couple. The following day, I was able to watch what was going on in the ghetto. I was still hoping that I could rejoin my family. I could see that the Germans were taking the Jews away. I guessed that they were just being taken to work. I wanted to go with them.

Later that day, after I have left the couple's apartment, I saw a group of Jewish men working on a barb wire fence near the wall. When there were no Poles around, I snuck closer and I talked to one.

(50. Barbed Wire Fence Around Ghetto)

(Lights up on Man)

ESTHER

I need a favor.

MAN.

What sort of favor?

ESTHER

I need to know if my family is safe.

MAN.

What can I do?

(Lights Down on Man)

ESTHER.

I gave the man my address, and asked him to go there. To see if they were all right. He said he would meet me the following day. He keep his word.

(Lights up on Man)

MAN.

I did as you asked. I spoke to the janitor. *(He pauses)*

ESTHER

And? ... What did he say?

MAN.

He said he knew your family. He said the Germans had taken them away. All but your brother Scharma. They took him to work in an ammunition factory on Wolska Street.

(51. Deportation From Warsaw Ghetto, July - September 1942)

ESTHER

I was stunned. I didn't know what to do. *(To man)* What can I do?

MAN.

There is nothing you can do.

ESTHER

I knew he was right. I knew I would never see them again, and I never did.

MAN

They will die in the death camps.

(Lights down on man)

ESTHER

Gone was my father, Aurum Flaiszman, the strict orthodox Jew, who loved his family and raised them to love God and their neighbors.

Gone was my mother, a kind woman, who had devoted her life to her children and to helping neighbors who needed help.

Gone was my brother, Froyum, a brilliant student who had been selected to study at the prestigious Lubliner Yeshiva Center for the Study of the Torah - my mother's pride and joy.

And gone were my older sister, Geitel and my younger sisters, Sara - pretty blond, blue eyed Sara, -- and Seral.

Gone was my grandmother.

In an instant eight people that I had loved had been taken away to be murdered at Treblinka. We had survived bombings, starvation and typhus for three years , and now a loving God had let this happen. Why?

52. Slide Show of Jews at Umschlagplatz awaiting deportation. July 1942 - Sept. 1942)

(Lights up on Reisal who is across stage)

REISAL

Esther, there is nothing you can do for us. Do what you have to do to live.

(Lights down on Reisal)

ESTHER

Dazed, devastated, I went back to the friendly peasants around the village of Sochaczew. I continued to sleep in the stables with horses or in the barns with the cows. But I would never stay at the same place for more than one night at a time. I was deathly afraid of being caught.

(Lights down on Esther, and then back up)

Scene 12

ESTHER

One day, in the Spring of 1943, one of the peasants gave me a letter that had been given to him.

(Lights up on Another Man)

ANOTHER MAN

I have a letter from you - from your brother.

ESTHER

From Scharma?

ANOTHER MAN

Yes. He has again been taken out of the ghetto to work on the Polish side.

ESTHER

Do you know where?

ANOTHER MAN

In an ammunition factory on Wolska Street.

ESTHER

Does he say any more?

MAN

He has a made a good friend who lives outside the ghetto. He says you can stay with his friend. Scharma wants you to come to Warsaw.

(Lights down on Another Man and Esther)

Scene 13

(Lights up on Esther)

ESTHER

I did as Scharma suggested.

(Light's up on Scharma's Friend)

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

If you are going to survive, my little friend, you'll need identity papers. In case they stop you.

ESTHER

Where do I get them.

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

I have a friend -- in the underground. Pick a name you can remember, and I'll get them for you.

ESTHER

How about Marisa Rakowska?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

Marisa Rakowska? Why have you picked such a common name?

ESTHER

For that very reason. Because it is a common name.

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

I'll be back shortly.

(Lights down on Scharma's friend)

ESTHER

The birth certificate was good, but, I still needed food.

(Light's up on Scharma's Friend)

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

For that you need a ration card.

ESTHER

Can the underground forge one of those, too?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

No.

ESTHER

Then how do I get one?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

There is only one way. You will have to go to Gestapo headquarters.

ESTHER

Are your sure?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

I'm sure. You can't get a ration card for all the money in the world. The only way to

get it, is for you to personally go to the Gestapo headquarters and apply for it. .

ESTHER

How do I do that?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

First, you will need to come up with a good reason why your parents are not providing food for you.

ESTHER

Do I need any identification?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

That's the second thing. You'll need to prove that you are a citizen of Warsaw. You can use your new "birth certificate." And you've got two other things going for you.

ESTHER

What's are they?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

Because your not yet 14, they won't expect you to have other identification.

ESTHER

What else is in my favor?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

You don't look Jewish.

ESTHER

What if they don't believe me?

SCHARMA'S FRIEND

You have to take the chance. It's the only way to get food in Warsaw. And, your ration card will also have other uses. If I you're ever arrested. It is almost conclusive evidence that you're not Jewish.

(Lights Down on Scharma's Friend)

ESTHER

I knew my brother's friend was right. Others had told me the same thing. "You couldn't get a ration card any other way for all the money in the world." So, I decided to take the risk. I went to Gestapo Headquarters.