

JUDITH EXCERPT

JUDITH

In the ghetto of Shlabotka, the Nazis dig trenches and slide the bodies down a shaft into the trenches, where the bodies pile up. Once a week the Nazis fill the trenches with dirt. We children stand and watch the bodies slide down. It becomes our gruesome game of counting the bodies and running to tell our families who we recognized as dead. Occasionally the Nazis add to their fun by including a few live people.

I become quite good at cutting the barbed wire of the ghetto, running into the city, and standing in long lines to buy bread with the valuables we managed to hide from the Nazis. I am always afraid that some of the neighbors might recognize me. One day someone does.

JUDITH (AS NEIGHBOR)

Aren't you the Jewish girl who lived on our street? What are you doing here?

JUDITH

As I stand terrified of being found out, another person speaks.

JUDITH (AS SECOND NEIGHBOR)

She doesn't look Jewish. What church do you belong to, little girl?

JUDITH

I mention the name of the Catholic church near my home.

JUDITH (AS SECOND NEIGHBOR)

You see, why frighten the little girl?

SOL EXCERPT

SOL

Two German soldiers spot me and drag me off to the Nikolav work camp. I work on the railroad construction in the unbearably hot summer with no water provided. My arm is injured and, in the company of another Jewish boy, I stop to rest. The soldiers come up and I believe that the other boy and I will be shot as are the other prisoners who cannot work. Instead the soldiers motion for us boys to follow the soldiers. The Germans drink from clean water reserved only for them. The other Jewish boy and I are to load these water bags onto the truck.

Just then three Russian girls can be seen. The Germans ask me, "Do you speak Russian?" When I say yes, they say, "Ask those girls to come over." I say to the girls, "You'd better come over so you won't be shot." They refuse. I tell the Germans, "They won't come over." The Germans get incensed and charge over to the girls. I tell the other Jewish boy, "This is our chance. Let's run into the corn fields to hide!" The other boy says, "We'll be shot." I say, "We will be shot anyway." I run, dragging the other boy into the fields where the corn stalks stand higher than our heads. When the Germans finish raping the Russian girls, the Germans unsuccessfully search for us. The tall corn does indeed save us.

IRENA EXCERPT

IRENA

I smuggle children out of the Warsaw Ghetto and provide them with false documents and shelter with Polish families or in orphanages. The Nazis suspect me of involvement in the Polish underground and I am arrested by the Gestapo. I manage to hide the list of names and locations of the rescued Jewish children, preventing this information from falling into the hands of the Gestapo. Although I am tortured and imprisoned, I never reveal anything about my work or the location of the saved children. I am sentenced to death, and then on the day of my scheduled execution, the Zegota bribe an SS officer to obtain my release.

RADIO ANNOUNCER EXCERPT

RADIO ANNOUNCER

In September 1935 the Nazis pass the two Nuremberg Laws. The **Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor** forbids marriages and extramarital sexual relations between Jews and Germans. The **Reich Citizenship Law** declares that only those of German or related blood are eligible to be German Reich citizens. The Jews are classed as state subjects without citizen rights. Then the following month these racial laws are extended to include the Romani and black people. This supplementary decree defines the Romani as "enemies of the race-based state" of Germany in the same category as Jews.

PHYLLIS EXCERPT

PHYLLIS

Six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis. Yet this was only approximately half the planned death count. In January 1942, mid-way through WWII, fifteen high-ranking Nazi party and German government leaders met in a villa in the Wannsee area of Berlin to discuss the ongoing progress of the "final solution" of the Jews. The Nazi party leaders requested the German government leaders to help arrange for Jews to be transported from all over Nazioccupied Europe to the "extermination" camps in Poland operated by the SS. Following this meeting, Adolph Eichmann circulated the Wannsee Protocol to the participants.

Two years after the end of the war a single copy of the protocol was found by Robert Kempner, the assistant chief U.S. counsel at the Nuremburg war crime trials. According to the Wannsee protocol, the Nazis intended to murder a total of 11 million Jews. This number of 11 million included Jews in European countries such as England and Ireland that were not yet under Nazi control.

(Phyllis pauses, trying to wrap her head around the enormity of 11 million murdered Jews.)

My husband and I were forever changed by our experiences of living in Germany among the remnants of Jewish communities. We decided to start keeping kosher when we returned to the United States and to become more observant Jews. For us it was one thing we could personally do to demonstrate that Hitler had not destroyed Judaism even though he had murdered 6 million Jews.

When our two children were born we got each her own passport. We wanted them to be able to leave the U.S. with anyone who could save them if the U.S. suddenly took a turn to the far right. And we taught our children to always keep a current passport as adults.