

# LIVING AMONG THE DEAD

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MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOLOCAUST SURVIVAL  
STORY OF LOVE AND STRENGTH. EDUCATOR'S  
GUIDE

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HILARY LEVINE





Teaching with Adena Bernstein Astrowsky's  
*Living among the Dead: My Grandmother's  
Holocaust Survival Story of Love and Strength*

*A Guide for Grades 5-12*

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## ADENA'S INTRODUCTION

I am the granddaughter of two Holocaust Survivors. Their story of survival has influenced me in many ways and memorializing their story in *Living among the Dead* was my way to ensure the details of their survival became a living tribute. Since the book was published in March of 2020 it has subsequently won awards and become a bestseller, but more importantly, it has been read by students. Many schools and school districts have added my book to their curriculum, libraries, and classrooms, and young minds have had an opportunity to become acquainted with my grandmother's story, my beloved Bubbie Mania.



During the summer of 2021, a unique opportunity was bestowed upon me and I found myself in my grandmother's hometown in Europe. Prior to the trip it was really impossible for me to imagine the area my grandmother had talked to me about and written about in her many pieces of poetry. However, the black and white images that occupied my head were soon filled-in with color and depth; the sunflowers I pictured in my mind's eye physically engulfed me in their massive fields.

The trip included time spent on her street; in the space we believed her house once stood. I tried to picture what it must have been like for my grandmother to grow up in that area surrounded by her family, playing in the street with her friends and smelling the beautiful flowers. I looked up at the sky and wondered if I could be looking at the same space she saw as a child. Did she ever look up, when it was dark and starry, and make a wish? If so, how could a wish-filled sky become so dark and ugly?

The trip to my grandmother's hometown was a possibility because of a friendship with a Holocaust

educator, Hilary Levine. A teacher of close to thirty years, Hilary invited me on her pre-planned trip, and while in Europe, we discussed the need for an Educator's Guide to accompany my memoir/biography to help educators teach from the book in a more effective manner. Hilary had previously incorporated my book into her Holocaust Studies class and felt that a more comprehensive Educator's Guide would be helpful to new and seasoned educators when teaching this difficult topic.

In my opinion, there are few things more important than teaching about the systemic, bureaucratic, and state-sponsored persecution and murder of 11 million people, of which 6 million were Jews. Studying about the Holocaust contributes to civics and human rights education and aids in the fight against antisemitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance.

It is my hope that this Educator's Guide will enable you to continue to inspire critical thinking, societal awareness, and personal growth. You have the ability to influence young minds and help students foster discussions about individual and collective responsibility, the meaning of active citizenship, and deciding when to be an upstander versus a bystander.

I applaud each of you for making teaching your life's work, and I thank you for everything that you do.

All my best,

Adena Bernstein Astrowsky

## HILARY'S INTRODUCTION

I have been a teacher for almost thirty years. I would consider myself lucky with my career. I am an educator who loves to teach. It is my passion. There have been so many changes that have happened in education throughout my career. You learn to be flexible and change directions in mid-stream.

This is why when I noticed a friend's post on social media about a new Holocaust memoir entitled *Living among the Dead: My Grandmother's Holocaust Survival Story of Love and Strength*, I purchased it.

I teach an intensive history of the Holocaust class every year for high school students. I am lucky that I have a lot of discretion in the curriculum for the class, and after reading *Living among the Dead*, I selected it as one of the texts. Because I was so impressed with the book, I reached out to Adena, the author, and explained how I planned on using her book in my class and asked if she would be willing to speak with my students. Because we

were all online for school at the time, this was not difficult. Adena met online with my class one day and introduced the book, speaking about her grandmother and their relationship. Over the next two weeks, my class and I read the memoir together and discussed the Holocaust in sequential order using it as a guide.

*Living among the Dead* lends itself perfectly to the study and examination of the timeline of the Holocaust. Using this book as a guide, I could teach almost everything I would normally teach while pulling from other resources to add deeper context and historical perspective. On the last day of class, Adena once again met online with my students. This time it was for reflection about the book. The students loved the book and had many comments and questions for her. It was a very unique and rewarding experience for all of us.

Fast forward to the beginning of the summer of 2021, and I was scheduled to go on a trip to Poland and Ukraine, and at the very last minute, I had space to take someone with me. Adena volunteered to go. She was extremely excited because she knew from our continued correspondence that I had already planned on going to all of the places she had written about in *Living among the Dead*. What a perfect way to be able to dive deeper into such a difficult subject. Adena, her young daughter, and I visited all of the areas discussed in *Living among the Dead*.

In this guide, I hope to add Mania's voice and experiences to the vast amount of excellent educational resources on the Holocaust. I feel very fortunate that I was able to visit the places where Mania lived as a child and young girl

and see her history up close and in person. It was especially meaningful to make this journey with Adena and her daughter. I am excited to share those experiences with you and to hopefully help you teach this difficult subject to your students. I hope that this guide will add meaning to the experience of learning about the Holocaust both for you and your students.

I wish this guide to serve as a legacy and teach Holocaust history so we will "*Never forget.*" Furthermore, we hope future generations will remember and learn from the past for a promising future.



## MAJOR THEMES IN THE MEMOIR

Several themes are seen throughout the story of Mania Lichtenstein. The prominent ones are resilience, perseverance and the strength to live through adversity. Resilience is the capacity to recover from difficulties or obstacles in your way quickly. Perseverance is being able to persist through difficulties even though you may not achieve success. Finally, living through adversity, or one's misfortune, is a common theme throughout this memoir.

It is easy to see how the title of the memoir, *Living among the Dead; My Grandmother's Holocaust Survival Story of Love and Strength*, lends to the themes of resilience, perseverance, and living through adversity. One theme does not necessarily stand on its own. Mania's own experience of living in the dead ghetto would be an example of how she had to live through adversity.

By listening to Mania's testimony, you can hear the resilience and perseverance in her voice when telling her story. The link to Mania's testimony is: [shorturl.at/ftAS3](https://shorturl.at/ftAS3)

(Please note: it starts about 20 seconds into the recording).

After listening to the testimony of Mania you can ask students to point out parts in the testimony that deal with these themes.

To get students thinking about writing, a good activity is to ask them to write about an instance where they have had to show resilience or perseverance. Alternatively, ask students to identify a relative who may have shared an experience with them that relates to the themes outlined above.



*Mania Lichtenstein (Photo courtesy: Adena Bernstein  
Astrowsky)*

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### **Antisemitism**

Hostility toward or hatred of Jews as a religious or ethnic group, often accompanied by social, economic, or political discrimination.

### ***Aryan***

Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to non-Jewish and non-Roma (Gypsy) Caucasians. Northern Europeans with especially "Nordic" features such as blonde hair and blue eyes were considered by so-called race scientists to be the most superior of Aryans, members of a "master race."

### **Auschwitz**

The largest Nazi concentration camp complex, located 37 miles west of Krakow, Poland. The Auschwitz main camp (Auschwitz I) was established in 1940. In 1942, a killing center was established at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II). In 1941, Auschwitz-Monowitz (Auschwitz III) was

established as a forced-labor camp. More than 100 subcamps and labor detachments were administratively connected to Auschwitz III.

### **Bat Mitzvah/Bar Mitzvah**

Jewish coming of age ritual.

### **Birkenau**

Nazi camp also known as Auschwitz II (see Auschwitz above), Birkenau contained systematic mass killing operations. It also housed thousands of concentration camp prisoners deployed at forced labor.

### **Concentration camp**

Throughout German-occupied Europe, the Nazis established camps to detain and, if necessary, kill so-called enemies of the state, including Jews, Gypsies, political and religious opponents, members of national resistance movements, homosexuals, and others. Imprisonment in a concentration camp was of unlimited duration, was not linked to a specific act, and was not subject to any judicial review. In addition to concentration camps, the Nazi regime ran several other kinds of camps including labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and killing centers.

## **Crematorium**

A facility containing a furnace for reducing dead bodies to ashes by burning.

## **Criminal Police (Kripo)**

German police detective force responsible for investigating non-political crimes.

## **Einsatzgruppen**

Mobile units of the German Security Police and SD augmented by Order Police and Waffen-SS personnel. These units followed the German army as it invaded the nations of central and eastern Europe. Their duties included the arrest or murder of political opponents and potential resistance. In Poland in 1939, these units were assigned to shoot Polish intellectuals and to concentrate the Jewish population into large cities. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Einsatzgruppen personnel killed Jews, Soviet political commissars, Gypsies (Roma), mentally disabled persons, and other perceived "racial" and ideological enemies, usually by mass shootings.

## **Euthanasia**

"Euthanasia" (literally, "good death") usually refers to the inducement of a painless death for a chronically or terminally ill individual. In Nazi usage, however, "euthanasia" was a euphemistic term for a clandestine program of the systematic killing of mentally and physically disabled patients, without the consent of themselves or their families.

## **Fascism**

A political movement that exalts the collective nation, and often race, above the individual and that advocates: a centralized totalitarian state headed by a charismatic leader; expansion of the nation, preferably by military force; forcible suppression and sometimes physical annihilation of opponents both real and perceived.

## **Final Solution**

The Nazi plan to annihilate the European Jews.

## **Gestapo**

The German Secret State Police, which was under SS control. It was responsible for investigating political crimes and opposition activities.

## **Ghetto**

A confined area of a city in which members of a minority group are compelled to live. The first use of the term “ghetto” for a section of a city in which Jews lived was in Venice, Italy, in 1516.

## **Gypsy**

A traditional term, sometimes perceived as pejorative, for Roma, a nomadic people whose ancestors migrated to Europe from India. Nazi Germany and its Axis partners persecuted and killed large numbers of Roma during the era of the Holocaust.

## **Gymnasium**

A school preparing students for university.

## **Hasidic**

A subgroup of Judaism that comes from a spiritual revival movement in the Western Ukraine.

## **Heydrich, Reinhard (1904–1942)**

SS General and chief of the Security Police and SD. Sometime in December 1940, Heydrich was tasked with developing a "Final Solution" of the Jewish question in Europe.

## **Himmler, Heinrich (1900–1945)**

*Reichsführer* SS (Reich Leader of the SS) and Chief of German Police, a position which included supreme command over the Gestapo, the concentration camps, and the Waffen SS. After 1943, Himmler was Minister of the Interior of Nazi Germany, principal planner for the aim of Nazi Germany to kill all European Jews.

## **Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)**

*Führer* (leader) of the National Socialist (Nazi) movement (1921–1945); Reich Chancellor of Germany 1933–1945; *Führer* of the German Nation (1934–1945).

## **Holocaust**

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims. Six million were murdered.

## **Kaddish**

The name of a 13th-century Aramaic prayer said in every Jewish service, it is a prayer praising God.

## **Kapo**

A concentration camp prisoner selected to oversee other prisoners on labor details. The term is often used generically for any concentration camp prisoner to whom the SS gave authority over other prisoners.

## **Killing centers**

The Nazis established killing centers for efficient mass murder. Unlike concentration camps, which served primarily as detention and labor centers, killing centers (also referred to as "extermination camps" or "death camps") were almost exclusively "death factories." German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers either by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting.

## **Kosher**

The term used to describe dietary rules in Judaism. Not all Jews follow the Kosher rules.

## **Kristallnacht**

Usually referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass." It is the name given to the violent anti-Jewish pogrom of November 9 and 10, 1938. Instigated primarily by Nazi party officials and the SA (Nazi Storm Troopers), the pogrom occurred throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.



## **Matryoshka doll**

A traditional doll that represents the mother carrying her child or chain of mothers carrying their child.

## **Mikvah**

A bath/pool of water, it is for observant Jewish women, they bath monthly as a cleansing ritual.

## **Orthodox Jew**

The traditional branches of the Jewish religion. These Jews are very devout and follow the Torah.

## **Passover seder**

A dinner that is the most commonly celebrated Jewish meal that represents the Jews exodus out of Egypt.

## **Pogrom**

The organized massacre of a particular ethnic group, especially referring to the Jews in eastern Europe.

## **Red Army**

The army of the Soviet Union.

## **Resettlement**

A Nazi euphemism for deportation and murder.

## **Rosh Hashanah**

The Jewish New Year. One of the holiest days of the year for Jewish people.

## **SS**

German abbreviation for *Schutzstaffel* (literally, protection squads). A paramilitary formation of the Nazi party initially created to serve as bodyguards to Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It later took charge of political intelligence gathering, the German police and the central security apparatus, the concentration camps, and the systematic mass murder of Jews and other victims.

## **Shabbat**

A Hebrew word, the seventh day of the week, the day of rest.

## **Shtetl**

A small Jewish town or village in eastern Europe.

## **Synagogue**

In Judaism, a house of worship and learning.

## **Weimar Republic**

Name for the parliamentary democracy established in Germany from 1919–1933, following the collapse of Imperial Germany and preceding Nazi rule.

## **Yellow star**

A badge featuring the Star of David (a symbol of Judaism) used by the Nazi regime during the Holocaust as a method of visibly identifying Jews.

## **Yiddish**

The language used by Jewish people in central and eastern Europe before the Holocaust, originally a German dialect.

## **Yizkor**

The opening word of the memorial prayers that was recited for the dead.

## **Yom Kippur**

The Day of Atonement is considered the most important holy day of the Jewish year.

*Author(s): United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,  
Washington, DC*

## **THE BEGINNING: WHY TEACH THE HOLOCAUST?**

Jews make up only 2% of the U.S. population - but antisemitism accounts for 60% of religious hate crimes. We must reach young people to teach the dangers of intolerance of the past and the present and continue the fight against Holocaust denial and religious bigotry.

Learning the lessons of the Holocaust has never been more critical or more challenging. Nevertheless, even as we try to preserve and magnify survivors' voices, we find ourselves called to combat increasingly blatant antisemitism in the current American and worldwide landscape.

Learning about the Holocaust inspires students to resist in-group pressures toward racial and religious bigotry. In addition, the information will equip students with the tools to respond to bullying by becoming more morally aware, better-informed, and caring citizens.

## HISTORY

Nine million Jews lived in Europe in the year 1933. They lived in Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Romania, to name a few. Many lived in predominantly Jewish *shtetls*, or small villages, living their culture, language, and customs, and existing as a minority within the larger national culture.

Some Eastern European Jews were very modern, while many older people were not and dressed in traditional clothes - men in hats and women covering their hair was customary among Orthodox Jews. They spoke Yiddish, which was different from Hebrew. They attended school, conducted business, read, and attended different cultural events. Many Jews were not formally educated, and so they owned small businesses. Religion was very important, and formal education was primarily devoted to studying religious texts like the Torah.

In contrast, the Jews of Western Europe, coming from areas like Germany and France, were less religious. As a result, they fit in more with society. They lived in cities and were more interested in education and art. With the rise of the Nazis, however, all Jews became victims.

Hitler decided that he would promote ideas of the “Aryan race” through propaganda. He and the Nazis took their

ideas and put them onto posters, political cartoons and newspapers, and even children's books. Hitler applied the idea of the "Aryan race" to anyone who resembled a blond-haired, blue-eyed person. These people were considered superior. Originally "Aryan" was rooted in an ancient people who spoke a language with roots in a European language. If you were not a part of the "Aryan race," then you were not superior.

Antisemitism has been defined as racial hatred against the Jews. Hitler considered the Jews to be the most harmful of all "non-Aryan" people. Even if you chose to convert to a religion other than Judaism, you still had Jewish blood. You were therefore considered to be of Jewish ancestry, thus becoming a target of the Nazis.

In January 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany and immediately began to impose antisemitic policies. The Nazis claimed that German Jews were the ultimate source of Germany's problems (though they constituted less than 1% of the population). Jews were blamed for, among other things, the German loss in World War I, when in fact, Jews had been fiercely loyal to their country, and thousands of Jews fought, were injured, and even died fighting for Germany.

The Nazis also targeted other groups that they deemed to be threats or easily disposable. Homosexuals or people with disabilities and even Jehovah's Witnesses were murdered. Communists were also considered to be a threat to Nazis and were either imprisoned or murdered. Some of these people were sent to the first concentration camps.

The Enabling Act of 1933, formally titled: The Law to Remedy the Distress of People, was an amendment to the Weimar Constitution that gave the German Cabinet and Hitler the power to enact any law without the involvement of the Reichstag. It also took away all other political parties making Germany a one-party country. Thus began Hitler's dictatorship and shortly after, President Hindenburg died. With his passing, Hitler became the head of the Nazi party, no longer needing an election. At this point, there is no one in Hitler's way, and he begins to limit Civil rights, completely stripping Jews of their positions in the government.

The Nuremberg Laws (the Laws for the Defense of German Blood and Honor) quickly removed citizenship for any Jew, half-Jew, or quarter-Jew in the Reich and made them subjects to attack. They passed in 1935. The Nuremberg Laws are amendments that provided the foundation for defining a Jew by racial criteria and enabling the stripping of Jew's human rights. The primary aspects of the Nuremberg Laws revoked the citizenship of "non-Aryans" and prohibited "non-Aryans" from marrying Germans or engaging in relations with them. It is essential to realize that although these laws were against the Jews, the term "non-Aryan" also referred to Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) and a small number of Germans of African heritage.

Emigration was an option for many Jews in Germany, but it proved to be difficult because of laws in other countries. The number of Jews who were able to get the paperwork, visas, money, and sponsorships arranged became fewer

as the years went on. Coming to the United States was very difficult due to immigration laws and quotas. There were some Jews that were able to get to Ecuador, Shanghai, and even some people made it to Argentina. Whatever the case was, it became more and more challenging for the Jews to leave.

On November 9-10, 1938, the trajectory of the Holocaust changed when the Nazis organized an attack that took place both in Germany and Austria. This night would be named *Kristallnacht*, also referred to as the *Night of Broken Glass*. Many of the Jewish-owned businesses and synagogues were desecrated during these two days. Thousands of Jews were rounded up and taken to Dachau, which was the first concentration camp. Many political dissidents whom Hitler did not like because of their beliefs were also sent to the camps. Many of the people in this camp later died from the disease and torture.

Once again, the Nazis use of propaganda was used to help convince the public that the Jews were evil. The amount of propaganda spread made it difficult to ignore the false accusations about the Jews. However, if a lie is told often enough, it becomes difficult to ignore. Hitler also created his school groups of young boys and girls to be trained in the Nazi policies. Some of the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls were disguised as sports clubs to make it easier to indoctrinate them. In 1936, it was compulsory for all children between 10 and 17 years of age, to become members of these organizations.



By 1940-1941, Nazis were moving into many territories across Europe. In many larger cities the Nazis would take large groups of Jews and put them into areas in the cities referred to as ghettos. These areas were very crowded and most people shared living spaces. These ghettos became the center of Jewish life and they did everything they could to maintain their Jewish traditions. Many of the Jews were taken from the ghettos to transit camps where they were forced to work and many of them died. As the Germans entered into the Soviet Union, new decrees were put into place and mobile killing units established. This became a time known as the *Holocaust by Bullets*.

Antisemitism helped perpetuate the hatred of Jews which had become the center of the Nazi ideology. This made it easy for the Nazis and Hitler to continue the plan of complete Jewish annihilation. As a result, over many years, Hitler was able to murder more than six-million Jews.

It is clear that Hitler intended genocide. As a young man, he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, "I began to see Jews [...] and often grew sick to the stomach from the sight of these caftan-wearers." He believed Jews were a "moral stain" involved in every disreputable act or agency in the history of mankind. Thus, it seems that his aim was the total elimination of the Jewish people.

As you read the memoir *Living among the Dead*, it is easy to follow through the periods of history discussed here. You probably find this brief overview of the history helpful in getting started.

## **HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS FOR CALIFORNIA**

HSS 10.7.3 Analyze the rise, aggression, and human costs of totalitarian regimes (Fascist and Communist) in Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union, noting especially their common and dissimilar traits.

HSS 10.8.5 Analyze the Nazi policy of pursuing racial purity, especially against the European Jews; its transformation into the Final Solution; and the Holocaust that resulted in the murder of six million Jewish civilians.

### **Common Core State Standards Addressed in this GUIDE:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.10

## TIMELINE OF THE HOLOCAUST

Echoes and Reflections offers an excellent interactive online timeline. Try it out with your students and you will find many interesting facts not listed below.

<https://timelineoftheholocaust.org>

### 1922

Mania is born in Włodzimierz, Poland, which is now part of Ukraine.

### 1933

**January 30:** Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany by President Von Hindenburg.

**March 22:** The first official Nazi concentration camp opens in Dachau, Germany, a small village located near Munich. The first commandant of Dachau is Theodor Eicke.

**May 10:** Public burnings of books written by Jews, political dissidents, and others not approved by the state.

**July 14:** Law excluding East European Jewish immigrants of German citizenship.

#### **1934**

**August 2:** Hitler proclaims himself Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed forces must now swear allegiance to him.

#### **1935**

**May 31:** Jews barred from serving in the German armed forces.

**September 15:** "Nuremberg Laws:" first anti-Jewish racial laws enacted: Jews no longer considered German citizens; Jews could not marry Aryans; and could not they fly the German flag.

**November 15:** Germany defines a "Jew;": anyone with three Jewish grandparents; someone with two Jewish grandparents who identifies as a Jew.

#### **1936**

**June 17:** Reichsführer SS Himmler (chief of the SS units) appointed the Chief of German Police.

## 1937

**July 15:** Buchenwald concentration camp opens near Weimar, Germany.

## 1938

**March 13:** Anschluss (incorporation of Austria): all antisemitic decrees immediately applied in Austria.

**July 6:** Evian Conference held in Evian, France on the problem of Jewish refugees.

**August 1:** Adolf Eichmann establishes the Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna to increase the pace of forced emigration.

**November 9-10:** Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass): anti-Jewish pogrom in Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland; 200 or more synagogues desecrated or destroyed; 7,500 Jewish shops looted; 30,000 male Jews sent to concentration camps (Dachau, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen).

**November 12:** Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands.

**December 12:** In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, the Germans blamed the Jews for the pogrom and imposed a one billion Reichsmark fine on the German Jewish community.

## 1939

**August 23:** Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed: non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Germany.

**September 1:** Beginning of World War II: Germany invades Poland. In the following weeks, 16,336 civilians were murdered by the Nazis in 714 locations. At least 5,000 victims were Jews.

**September 21:** Reinhard Heydrich issues directives to establish ghettos in German-occupied Poland.

**October 12:** Germany begins the deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland.

**October 28:** First Polish ghetto established in Piotrkow.

**November 23:** Jews in German-occupied Poland were forced to wear an armband or yellow star.

## 1940

**May 7:** Lodz ghetto, Poland (Litzmannstadt) sealed: 165,000 people in 1.6 square miles.

**May 20:** Concentration camp established at Auschwitz, Poland.

**November 16:** Warsaw, Poland ghetto sealed: ultimately contained 500,000 people.

## 1941

**February 1:** German authorities begin rounding up Polish Jews for transfer to Warsaw Ghetto. 10,000 Jews died from starvation in the ghetto between January and June 1941.

**March:** Adolf Eichmann appointed head of the department for Jewish affairs of the Reich Security Main Office, Section IV B 4.

**June 22:** The Jews of Włodzimierz, Poland were forced to live in a ghetto.

**June 22:** Germany invades the Soviet Union.

**July 31:** Heydrich appointed by Hermann Göring to implement the "Final Solution."

**July - August:** Thousands of Russians and Jews are murdered by the Einsatzgruppen (extermination squads) in the occupied territories. Here are some examples:

5,200 Jews murdered in Bialystok

2,000 Jews murdered in Minsk

5,000 Jews murdered in Vilna

5,000 Jews murdered in Brest-Litovsk

5,000 Jews murdered in Tarnopol

3,500 Jews murdered in Zloczow

11,000 Jews murdered in Pinsk

14,000 Jews murdered in Kamenets Podolsk



12,287 Jews murdered in Kishinev

**September 28-29:** 34,000 Jews massacred at Babi Yar outside Kiev, Ukraine.

**October:** Establishment of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) for the extermination of Jews; Gypsies, Poles, Russians, and others.

**December 7:** Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.

**December 8:** Chelmno (Kulmhof) extermination camp in Poland begins operations: 340,000 Jews, 20,000 Poles and Czechs murdered by April 1943.

**December 11:** The United States declares war on Japan and Germany.

## 1942

**January 20:** Wannsee Conference in Berlin, Germany: Heydrich outlines plan to murder Europe's Jews.

**March 17:** Extermination begins in Belzec, Poland; by the end of 1942 600,000 Jews murdered.

**May:** Extermination by gas begins in Sobibor killing center (Poland); by October 1943, 250,000 Jews murdered.

**June:** Jewish partisan units were established in the forests of Belarussia and the Baltic States.

**July 22:** Germans establish Treblinka concentration camp in Poland.

**September:** The first pogrom occurs in Włodzimierz.

**November 1:** The second pogrom occurs in Włodzimierz.

### 1943

**March:** Liquidation of Krakow, Poland ghetto.

**April 19:** Warsaw, Poland Ghetto revolt begins as Germans attempt to liquidate 70,000 inhabitants; Jewish underground fights Nazis until early June.

**June:** Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union.

### 1944

**March 19:** Germany occupies Hungary.

**May 15:** Nazis begin deporting Hungarian Jews; by June 27, 380,000 sent to Auschwitz.

**June 6:** D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy.

**July 20:** Group of German officers attempt to assassinate Hitler.

**July 20:** Mania is liberated.

**July 24:** Russians liberate Majdanek killing center in Poland.

**October 7:** Revolt by inmates at Auschwitz; one crematorium blown up.

**October 15:** Mania marries Joseph Lichtenstein.

**November 8:** Beginning of death march of approximately 40,000 Jews from Budapest to Austria.

## 1945

**January 17:** Evacuation of Auschwitz; beginning of death march.

**April 6-10:** Death march of inmates of Buchenwald.

**April 8- May 7** Liberation of multiple concentration camps.

**May 8:** V-E Day: Germany surrenders; end of Third Reich.

**July:** Mania returns to the ghetto after being in hiding in the forest.

**August 6:** Bombing of Hiroshima.

**August 9:** Bombing of Nagasaki.

**August 15:** V-J Day: Victory over Japan proclaimed.

**September 2:** Japan surrenders; end of World War II.

## CHAPTER GUIDE

*The following pages will help you guide your students through the chapters of Mania's life. Each chapter includes activities, essential vocabulary, and discussion questions. Many chapters also include links to videos and other online resources, along with easy-to-use lesson plans that will allow you to take a deeper dive into the themes and topics covered in the chapters.*

*Please make sure that you review the resources carefully before using them. You know your students best and there are very sensitive topics covered in the information provided.*

## Activities

1. The author has fond memories of time spent with her grandmother, Mania, who she also refers to as “Bubbie,” the Yiddish word for grandmother. If you have relatives you have grown up around, share a story about your memories with one of them. Or, if you have visited a special relative who lives in another city, state, or country, write a letter to that person, thanking them for the time they spent with you.
2. Music was a significant part of Mania’s life. Frederick Chopin was one of the most famous composers and pianists of the time. Expose your students to Chopin for an extra activity. Here are some resources: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/frederic-chopin-lesson-for-kids.html>

## Vocabulary

1. Bar Mitzvah
2. Bat Mitzvah
3. Shabbat

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is having children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren so significant for Mania?
2. The author is upset with her children when they say they are “starving” (6). Why does this bother her? Have your parents said similar things to you? Explain how trauma caused by hunger, homelessness or immigration, can be passed on through generations.
3. Discuss the “presence of absence” (2). Do you identify with this, or are you surrounded by family? How did the Holocaust affect families for generations?
4. The author ends this chapter with this: “By knowing your roots and remembering your history, I hope that we will all do our part to help achieve peace and to prevent further genocides” (13). How can knowing your roots and history help lay the foundation for a more peaceful future?

## Resources

1. A short video on the significance of Bar and Bat

Mitzvahs: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/bar-and-bat-mitzvah-101/>.

2. Discuss the Jewish practice of leaving rocks on a grave: <https://www.jewish-funeral-home.com/why-do-jews-place-stones-or-pebbles-on-a-grave/>
3. A video explaining Shabbat:
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjmjZWHXKFY>.
5. How to make Challah: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFD7\\_y9ux-U&ab\\_channel=TheCookingFoodie](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFD7_y9ux-U&ab_channel=TheCookingFoodie)

## Activity

- i. The website, <https://maps.geshergalicia.org/>, has a wonderful selection of maps from Europe, and the one below is just an example of what you can find.

This map shows where Mania lived and the distance to Lwow.

Using Google Earth, take your students on a tour of the area. There is lots to see.





## Vocabulary

1. Hasidic
2. Orthodox
3. kosher
4. gymnasium
5. Yiddish

## Discussion Questions

1. What did Mania do as a young girl that probably helped her later as a writer? What is the role of a school in teaching children reading?
2. What is the role of men at the beginning of this chapter? What are attributes or “signs of the times” that are different now?
3. Describe how Katya is both traditional and modern at the same time.
4. Mania states, “Having sisters makes you important and makes you belong somewhere” (20). Explain what this means.
5. Describe Rivka and what Mania admires about her. How is Rivka like her mother, Katya?
6. Why do you think the author chose to include a description of Rivka in Mania’s words (21-22)? What does this add to the story so far? When was it written, and why is the date significant?
7. Describe Nechamka. How is her relationship with Mania different from Rivka’s?



*Sunflowers of Włodzimierz (Photo Credit: Adena  
Astrowsky, 2021)*

This photo was taken driving through Ukraine. It was the most splendid thing thinking of Mania's words as we passed fields and fields of sunflowers.

Words cannot express the contrast between the beautiful countryside filled with sunflowers and the mass graves spread throughout.

## Activity

1. Looking at the photograph on the first page, what do you notice? Does the photo look similar to any in your family's collection of photos? This is a great place to help students make connections and add relevance to studying the Holocaust. So often, students see black and white pictures and think they are old and have nothing to do with them. But many of our students might have a photo (probably on their phones) taken at a beach or with a family member. Ask students to share a photo that reminds them of this one (literally, or the spirit of the photo) and discuss how people in earlier times and different places did many of the same activities we do today.

## Vocabulary

1. Yahrzeit glass

## Discussion Questions

1. Mania often talks of sunflowers. Have students research the symbolism of sunflowers and what they represent. Ask them to find the origin story for sunflowers. How and why have they been a symbol of happiness?
2. This chapter is in Mania's voice. Discuss the

difference and why the author chose to include her grandmother's words.

3. The chapter ends with two humorous stories about Nechamka. Why is humor important, even in a book about the Holocaust? Ask students to recall funny stories from their own childhoods and share, if they are comfortable doing so. Although we are reminded of Nechamka's death at the young age of 22, why does the author include these stories?

### Activity

1. In this chapter, Mania travels with her father to Lutsk, Ukraine by train. Have your students look this up on Google Maps. Ask them to reflect on the distance and the reasons Mania and her family traveled there only a few times.

### Vocabulary

1. Kaddish
2. mikvah

### Discussion Questions

1. The author mentions the preference in families for male children. Do we still see this in cultures today? What is the reasoning behind it? What do you think about this?

2. Discuss how difficult it must have been for Mania to not have answers to so many questions about her family, such as why her father took only her and not her sisters on the train to visit her grandparents.

## Resource

1. Video about Kaddish prayer:

<https://www.bimbam.com/kaddish/>



*The schoolhouse Mania attended. We were able to visit right before they tore the building down. See another photo of the school house on page 35 of the memoir.  
(Photo Credit: Hilary Levine, 2021)*

## Activities

1. Play the song “Tumbalalaika” for your students so they can get a sense of the music of the time. It can be found on YouTube, performed by The Barry Sisters: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYs6NlgcrVU&ab\\_channel=AlifLuna](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYs6NlgcrVU&ab_channel=AlifLuna)
2. To discuss the role of the Hitler Youth, see this

article: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/indoctrinating-youth>.

## Vocabulary

1. Shtetl
2. Passover
3. Seder
4. Yitzkor
5. gefilte fish
6. Challah
7. Haggadah
8. Purim
9. Grogger
10. Sukkot
11. Rosh Hashanah
12. Yom Kippur
13. Antisemitism
14. Russian Matryoshka doll

## Discussion Questions

1. How many Jews lived in Włodzimierz, Poland, when Mania was there? Look at a map of Poland at the time that shows how many Jews lived in the country. Now look at a similar map of Germany at the time and discuss the differences. Students will note how relatively few Jews lived in Germany and may ask if it was such a small number, why were they forced out? You might



- also want to discuss how German Jews were more assimilated than their Polish neighbors.
2. Describe Mania's elementary school. How did the Christian boys treat the Jewish girls? Why didn't the girls tell anyone? Were these boys being antisemitic?
  3. Why does Mania use the word "magic" to describe her garden in her poem?
  4. What would be the challenges if the language at your school were to change, as Mania's changed to Russian suddenly? What obstacles would you face? How did Mania adapt? Why is it easier for children to adapt to such events than adults?
  5. What does the radio provide for Mania and her family?
  6. This is also a good point to utilize the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum timeline if you haven't already. The author points out that while Hitler came to power in 1933, it didn't affect Mania or her family until much later. Therefore, it is important to contextualize the history of the book against what was happening in Nazi Germany and elsewhere in Europe, as well as to look at United States and world reaction to these events.
  7. What is the play about that Mania's family attends at Christmas time? What does this tell us about the attitudes of most people at Rivka's school?
  8. When her family begins to worry about the

antisemitism they see in their town, discuss some of the reasons they don't leave.

9. As a child, how did Mania feel about the war?

## Resources

1. Show the map at <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/german-invasion-of-poland-september-1939> to discuss how Poland was taken over and divided by the Germans and Russians.
2. Timeline link: <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/USHMM-Timeline-Activity-Instructions.pdf>



*Photo taken in 1918 on a busy street near Mania's home. (Photo Credit: Tomek Wiesnewski archives)*

## Activities

- I. Propaganda is a large part of the Holocaust and talking about it with your students can give insight into the Holocaust. These are some easy lessons on propaganda, including good examples of it during the Holocaust:  
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/arti->

cle/ministry-of-propaganda-and-public-enlightenment.

2. To study more about propaganda, see the activity using propaganda directed toward children at <https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-2-antisemitism/?state=open#content> and/or the propaganda online exhibit at <https://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/> which includes many images and some activities for the classroom.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why did Mania's town become overpopulated? What remedy did the Russians find for this (48)? How would you feel if someone came and took your business without any notice?
2. What happens to Mania's father's store? What does he do next for work? How is that a hardship on his family? What was Mania's reaction to them taking her father's business?
3. What happens to Rivka's husband?



*The Building on the left corner is the pharmacy that Mania's father owned. (Photo Credit: Tomek Wiesnewski archive)*

## Activity

- i. The dead ghetto and living ghetto are two places that Mania spends time in. The concept of the ghetto may be difficult for your students to understand especially due to the current use of the word ghetto. This activity will give background to life in the ghetto. Look at the ghetto system by using the Echoes & Reflections' unit on the ghettos <https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-04-the-ghettos/?state=open#content>, which includes lessons, activities, primary resources, and survivor testimony on the ghettos. There is also an excellent article students can read at <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/types-of-ghettos>.

## Vocabulary

1. Pogrom
2. Ghetto
3. Pfennigs
4. Judenrein

## Discussion Questions

1. Talk about the phrase “Holocaust by Bullets,” coined by Father Patrick Desbois.
2. Discuss the setup of the ghetto in Włodzimierz. What is the difference between the “living ghetto” and the “dead ghetto”? How does Mania’s home change? (If students have read Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, they may see the similarities to what he experienced).
3. What kind of jobs are done in the ghetto?
4. What are the Jews forced to wear, and why? Show students a picture of the armbands. Why is the armband later changed?
5. Discuss the role of the Jewish police. This is an interesting place to discuss why Jewish men would choose to be ghetto policemen, and why they were reviled for this role later, adding to the complexity of the topic.
6. When rounding up the Jewish people of Kiev, Ukraine, what were they told to bring with them? Why? This is also a good place to discuss what happened in Babi Yar.

## Resources

1. History of Jewish armband: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/artifact/krakow-ghetto-armband>
2. Jewish Police: [https://www.yadvashem.org/odot\\_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206386.pdf](https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206386.pdf).
3. Learn more about Babi Yar: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kiev-and-babi-yar>.
4. Holocaust by Bullets: [yahadinunum.org](http://yahadinunum.org) and <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/desbois>
5. Documentary about Babi Yar appropriate of 11-12th grades. *The Road to Babi Yar*, <https://movie-discovery.com/movie/the-road-to-babi-yar-en/1036>



### Activity

- I. Alexandra Zapruder (Alexandrazapruder.com) collected multiple diaries written by victims of the Holocaust and published a book named *Salvaged Pages*. There are several diary entries that can be used with different grade levels. There are also many additional resources to use with your students. Using diaries, first-hand accounts can be a powerful tool to teach the Holocaust. The film that was produced to go along with *Salvaged Pages* can enhance the diaries. Use parts of the documentary and not the entire film at once. <https://www.facinghistory.org/teaching-salvaged-pages> <https://alexandrazapruder.com/documentary>

## Vocabulary

1. Payos/sidelocks
2. Orthodox

## Discussion Questions

1. What is daily life like for Mania and her family in the ghetto? What changes have taken place? How is the family adapting to those changes? What creative ways do the sisters find to spend their time?
2. Why do you suppose their parents “numbly looked down at us hopelessly” (57)?
3. How does the family get a place in the living ghetto?
4. When the young boy from a neighboring village tries to tell the news of the slaughters he has witnessed, why do people believe he lies? (Students who have read Wiesel’s *Night* might connect this to Moishe the Beadle).
5. What is the symbolism of the pickle from Mania’s grandmother? How can something so seemingly insignificant be so important?

### Activity

1. There is a lot of information about the Einsatzgruppen on the USHMM website. Reading and learning about them is very difficult. It is only appropriate to teach about the Einsatzgruppen at a high school level. Please review the information first. You know your students best. Here are some basic suggestions:  
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/einsatzgruppen>.

You could also look at the resource below from Facing History. There are many choices for activities that are interactive and also appropriate, starting at grade 6.

### Vocabulary

1. Einsatzgruppen
2. Genocide

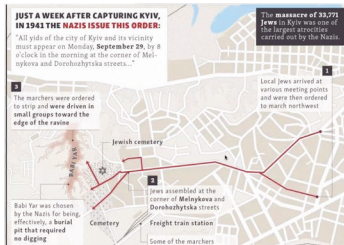
### 3. Torah

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why is Mania not with her family when they are taken? What is she worried about at first? What happens to Mania's family?
2. Discuss the use of euphemisms by the Nazis, such as "resettlement."
3. Using the testimony on pages 64 and 65, and testimony from Yahad in Unum, describe the typical process for the mass shootings.
4. Why is it essential to have eyewitness accounts of these events?
5. Why were the Ukrainians angry with the Jews?
6. When she returns to the ghetto, what does Mania find?
7. Where does Mania hide and for how long? What are the conditions as they hide?
8. What happened to those in the living ghetto?
9. How are historians able to arrive at the numbers of those killed; for example, historians at Yad Vashem named 15,000 from Włodzimierz. Why is it important to know such numbers?
10. Read the poem at the end of the chapter. How old was Mania when she wrote it? What does it tell us about her memories? What is the "silence" she hears? Discuss the irony of the title.

## Resources

1. Website on Mania's home: <http://chelm.freeyellow.com/piatydni.html?fbclid=IwARtS3IKiMiAlgoL6ooziFFY5ydqPJvhFbhiEMhWHj--mFHklsU6vIrtUoc>
2. More information about the mobile killing units: <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-9/mobile-killing-units>



*Information about the beginning of Babi Yar. (Photo credit: Dr. Naya Lekht)*



*The plaque outside of the memorial to the mass graves where most of Mania's family was murdered. The memorial plaque is in Russian and Hebrew and states that many innocent Soviets were killed at this site. It doesn't mention the Holocaust, nor does it mention the Jewish people. (Photo Credit: Hilary Levine, 2021)*



*One of three mass graves at this memorial site. It is believed that most of Mania's family is buried here. Out of the three mass graves, this is the largest, containing almost 15,000 people. (Photo Credit: Adena Astrowsky, 2021)*



*The monument at the memorial area of the mass graves built in 1989. (Photo Credit: Hilary Levine, 2021)*



*The “Red School” that Mania speaks of in this chapter. The building is still standing, although it is not used any longer. (Photo Credit: Hilary Levine, 2021)*

## Activity

In order to survive, many Jewish people ended up hiding. Some had neighbors who risked their lives to hide them in basements or barns. Other Jews ended up hiding in the forests near their homes. Many people hid in areas that were very remote. Some Jews were so isolated in hiding that it was many years before they found out the Holocaust was over. You could include a lesson that focuses on the difficult choices people made to hide Jews

during these extreme conditions. <https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/USHMM-Rescue-Hiding-Online-Lesson.pdf>

## Vocabulary

1. zwieback

## Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how people who hid their neighbors put themselves at risk. Would you consider them brave?
2. What ends the pogrom?
3. How long did Mania and the others hide in the attic? What is their condition when they come out?
4. After the pogroms, how many Jews are left? What do the Nazis do with those remaining?
5. What job is Mania forced to do? What does she find as she is working?
6. Why does Mania think of her deceased family members as “lucky”?
7. Why do you think Mania and Sania attempt to find their family members’ bodies? Why would this be important?
8. How many pogroms does it take to make Mania’s hometown *Judenrein*?



### Activity

1. There are many poems throughout the memoir. One of the best activities to analyze poems with students is SIFT. This activity goes over symbols, images, figurative language and tone/theme. This activity can help you discuss the poems with your students. (SEE Appendix)

### Discussion Questions

1. Why is the new ghetto created? With whom does Mania live?
2. Read Mania's poem, "The Little Brown Shoe" (77). What job is she doing when she finds the shoe? Why were they forced to do this job? Why were the Nazis not worried about her being a witness?
3. Clothes taken from executed Jews and others

were sometimes sent to Germany for Aryan use and occasionally were auctioned in the communities where the owner of the clothes were killed. This is a good place to talk about complicity among those who helped facilitate such collections and auctions. Explore the online link for more information USHMM *Some Were Neighbors*. (See Below)

4. This is also a good place to look at other works about the topic of shoes. One is a poem which is excerpted at the exhibition of shoes in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

## Resources

1. <http://somewereneighbors.ushmm.org/education/lesson/>
2. Another exhibit about shoes: <https://www.jta.org/2010/08/26/opinion/op-ed-the-shoes-of-majdanek>.
3. You could also discuss the poignant monument of shoes in Budapest, <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/shoes-on-the-danube-promenade.html>

## Activities

- I. Teaching students about the partisans is essential. The question is always asked, “why didn’t anyone fight back?” During these discussions, you can share examples of people who did fight back. The Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation (<http://www.jewishpartisans.org/>) has a number of excellent resources. Echoes & Reflections also has a unit on Jewish Resistance, including partisans (see resources). Prior to teaching this chapter, spend some time showing your students the Jewish partisan website. There are many first-hand accounts of what it was to be like a partisan.

## Vocabulary

- I. partisan

## Discussion Questions

1. How does the candlemaker help Mania? What does she have to change on the paper?
2. What does Mania find when she visits her family's home? What does she notice about her garden that makes her feel better? (Note: Students who have read Gerda Weissmann Klein's *All But My Life* may notice some connections to the way Gerda felt about her garden and the knitting.)
3. What does Mania do to emotionally get through the "dirty job" she is assigned?
4. How does Mania describe the third pogrom? Where does she hide? How many people hide with her?
5. Who is Janina Zawadzka? What arrangement had been made with her?
6. How does Mania differentiate the Poles and Ukrainians from the Germans? What does this mean?
7. Why would Janina's neighbors be suspicious that she locked her door? You may need to point out to students that this was not the custom, especially in small villages and rural areas.
8. Why had Janina taken in German soldiers at Christmas? What does this tell us about her character?

## Resources

1. <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/resistance-during-holocaust/jewish-partisans-resistance> More information on the resistance.
2. <https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-6/?state=open#content> Jewish resistance.

### Activity

- I. Learning about antisemitism is one of the key lessons to convey to students while teaching the Holocaust. Without antisemitism, there would be no Holocaust. There are multiple lessons available on the internet about antisemitism. The Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle has one of the best websites for lessons on the Holocaust. The lessons on the site about antisemitism are some of the most effective. You can choose to use one or more of the available lessons. <https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/antisemitism>

### Discussion Questions

- I. According to Mania, why were the Poles “tolerant” of the Jews?

2. What do Mania and Popa think of the Lichtenstein brothers as a family? In describing this family, why does she always refer to “we” or “us”?
3. Why is it important for the group to move farther into the woods?
4. Look at the poem in the Polish language (top of page 91). Does anything look familiar? (probably not). Just by looking at it, how do you know it is a poem? Using google translate, try translating it from Polish to English. Is the translation the same as what is on the bottom of page 91?
5. Looking at the poem in English, think of a younger Mania writing this. Discuss her thoughts and feelings as she wrote this poem. How does she feel about spring? What is the irony of the beauty of spring? Depending on the age group of the students, you might discuss the concept of survivors’ guilt here.

## Activities

- I. Many students believe that the war ended at one time for everyone and that victims and prisoners in camps simply went home. A great resource to help teach the historically correct version of events is using the Echoes and Reflections website. You will find three lessons that address this topic, told from both survivors' and liberators' points of view, using primary source materials, visual history testimonies, and activities. There is another lesson found in the Appendix to use with these activities.  
<https://echoesandreflections.org/unit-8/?state=open#content>



## Discussion Questions

1. As they enter the liberated city, what do they expect? How are they treated?
2. Discuss the concept of liberation and freedom at the beginning of this chapter. How is Mania now both free and not free?
3. Mania knows her family is gone, so why does she go back to her hometown? How are they treated there by the Poles? There is an interesting article about the return of Jews to Poland (including the Kielce Program) in the resources.
4. Describe the circumstances of Mania and Joseph's wedding.

## Resources

1. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-survivors> Information about survivors.

### Discussion Questions

This chapter flashes back to the pogroms in the ghetto.

1. Why did the family have so much powder in the house?
2. What did Mania find when she left the ghetto in search of her old house? What is the irony she described seeing?
3. How does the tone of this chapter differ from those told from the author's point of view?

### Activity

- I. When the group is rejected admittance to Palestine, ask students if this surprises them. (Many will assume that what they know as Israel today would have been open to receiving Jewish Holocaust survivors). Find more information at <https://www.ushmm.org/exhibition/displaced-persons/emigrate.htm>. Also, If you aren't familiar with how the state of Israel came about, this is a brief article to familiarize yourself with the subject. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/postwar-refugee-crisis-and-the-establishment-of-the-state-of-israel>

### Discussion Questions

- I. Why does the group now go to Lodz?

2. Why does the group want to leave Europe? What drives their decision on where to go next?
3. Many students are interested in how the world reacted to the Jews and victims of the Holocaust after the war was over. A good article about The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration can be accessed below.
4. What is life like in Europe for the group? How are they treated in Germany?
5. What was the purpose of displaced persons camps? Again, utilize Echoes & Reflections (Lesson 8) for the complete lesson.
6. Mania has her first child in the displaced persons camp, a common occurrence in the quest for a “Return to Life.” Many also got married.

## Resources

1. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn13648> Interesting article of a wedding dress.
2. <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/displaced-persons> Information about displaced persons.

### Activity

- I. The poem *Dreams* at the beginning of this chapter is about Mania's hopes and wishes. You could use Found Poems when discussing poetry. The lesson on FacingHistory.org is recommended. There are multiple options for your class. You could use a poem like *Dreams* with your class as an example for Found Poetry and then move on to more complex poems. You will need to sign up for a free account on Facing History to access the lesson. <https://www-facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/found-poems>

### Discussion Questions

- I. The author's mother was born in Germany. Why

do Mania and Joseph decide they need to leave Germany?

2. What do you notice about the photograph on page 107 of Mania and her daughter? What stands out to you?

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The following Jews from the town Wladislaw (Ladislav-wolinski) survived  
 In the year 1939 Poland was still Polish, from 1939 till 1941 Russian  
 were there, from June, 20th 1941 till 1944 German were there, from  
 June 22nd 1944 up to this day Russian are there.

From 21,000 Jews of the town Wladislaw, the following persons remained  
 alive: (4,148)

1. Sluch Moses and wife	39. Szrja Leisor
2. Karchner Wolf and wife	40. Waisman Hans
3. Karchner Sarah and sister Cilla	41. Grinberg Grizna, brother Icko
4. Goldferb, Josef, wife and daughter	42. Szlanski Brandla and son
5. Goldferb David	43. Bardach Fira
6. Hassenberg, Fania	44. Sawodociss Junek
7. Grosserstein Abraham, brother Haim	45. Bojarski Janak
8. Goldstein Ida	46. Piles Wiga
9. Libers Sarah	47. Oks Moses two sisters
10. Szemkatal Vera	48. Waisman Rochla, wife
11. Borg Jankel and wife	49. Lisner Frol, wife
12. Haglins Sarah, sister Feiga	50. Orlitz Leisor
13. Boltstein Sorko and wife	51. Bergas Icko
14. Cuker Haim, brother Nadia	52. Mendelana Liba 2 sons
15. Fishman Spuka and 3 children	53. Wosin Sanja
16. Spud Kayla, sister Szandla	54. Fink, Mosk
17. Reiter Moses	55. Weng, Tobias
18. Ginsberg Aril, mother and son	56. Ben Szandla, sister
19. Loh Berka, wife and 3 children	57. Gercia David
20. Wilszka Siona D. (wife)	58. Lohner Dittel
21. Saluziner Jencia	59. Wainstock, Feiga
22. Kac Gerson	60. Wenberg, Abraham
23. Reiter Genia	61. Ditz, Kayla
24. Krawiec Malka, brother Pinia	62. Cypel Szandol
25. Bohner Icko	63. Szmagowicz, Fissel, brother
26. Lichtenstein, brother Hosen	64. Kac Malka
27. Riaz Maria	65. Wehrbater Abraham, brother
28. Goldberg Feli	66. Jakulis Aron, mother, sister
29. Hluch Hluch and 4 children	67. Puka Fyfa, brother
30. Szpiegel Smulin and daughter	68. Uger Leib, sister
31. Szrja Frol, wife and daughter	69. Tragenzon, David
32. Goldferb Abraham and brother	70. Lohris Hotel
33. Szwajzer Rikis and son	71. Bard Malka
34. Byk Heras and son	72. Gsenker Josef
35. Kac Hmasza	73. Gumernik, Freida
36. Lohris Wolf	74. Boltentoler Hotel, wife
37. Cuker Aron	75. Krop Odala, mother, sister
38. Zak Sayla	76. Milker Dina
	77. Waisman Miriam, 2 children
	78. Singer Rubina and daughter

Please send copies of this list to Baltimore, Hartford, Conn., Chicago, and  
 other towns.  
 We tell you that for those people in America who want to have information  
 about Jews from Wladislaw. All the other Jews of this town are dead.

List of people who survived in Mania's hometown.  
 See numbers 26 and 27. Note that the prewar Jewish  
 population of Włodzimierz, Poland was 21,000  
 people and only 78 Jews survived the war. (Photo  
 courtesy: Adena Astrowsky)

## Activity

Although Mania and her family immigrated to Canada, many Jewish families also immigrated to the United States. Many families lost everything in the Holocaust, but a few, like Mania, were able to save small parts of their history. Through the study of genealogy, we can trace our families' immigration journeys to their new homes. There are many records we can find and many websites that are available to help in this research. One such website is the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. Many families came through Ellis Island when they immigrated. If you have time, explore the website and look at the photographs of the people as they arrive. There can be some pretty powerful conversations in discussing immigrant journeys.

<https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/national-immigration-museum/>

## Discussion Questions

1. How do Goldie and Misha help the others get to Canada? Why did they have to lie?
2. Why does the author's mother eventually change her name?
3. What did people say about the war? Why do you think this was the case?
4. What does Mania do for work after her husband dies?
5. Discuss the wedding photo on page 113, and Moishe's role in the author's family.
6. Why does the author believe Moishe and Colette



did not have children? Again, if that is the case, what does that tell us about Moishe's character?

7. The author shares the story of Moishe being on *The Price is Right*. Why does she include this information? What does it add to his character?

### Activity

1. Jewish weddings are very festive, steeped in the tradition of dancing and singing. Jewish people did everything they could during and after the Holocaust to maintain important traditions. Even before the Holocaust, weddings were very festive events. There are many movies that feature Jewish weddings. *Fiddler on the Roof* has a great scene with a traditional wedding dance from the turn of the century. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGBG8mCt59s&ab\\_channel=Tom%C3%A1%C5%A1Pumprla](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGBG8mCt59s&ab_channel=Tom%C3%A1%C5%A1Pumprla)

### Discussion Questions

1. Looking at the title of this chapter, what do you think might have made a wedding day “odd”?
2. What is Mania feeling at the author’s bridal

shower? Why would a Holocaust survivor see everything from a different perspective?

3. Why is a new couple included in Mania's wedding? What is their role, and why would it not have been allowed in "normal" times?
4. Which aspects of a traditional wedding were carried out? Which were different?
5. What do the Russian soldiers do on the wedding day? Why was Mania's dress a good choice?
6. Talk about the metaphor of the tree in the poem at the end of this chapter. Why do we call it a "family tree"? How is that an appropriate description, especially for the author, who was pregnant at the time?

### Activity

1. Yad Vashem (Yadvashem.org) in Israel started a program to recognize people who took great risks to save the lives of those who were targeted by the Nazis. These people, like Janina from the memoir, have bestowed that title, Righteous Among the Nations. Learn more about the Righteous Among the Nations.
2. There is also an activity through IWitness that uses testimony from both survivors and Righteous. (See link below)

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do you suppose Mania and Popa fell out of touch?
2. Why did the author feel the need to nominate

Janina Zawadzka as Righteous Among the Nations.

3. Thinking back to the discussion on survivor's guilt, consider the feeling of shame and the inability to laugh that survivors like Mania face. Besides fate, what else does the author realize helped her grandmother? Think back on what you have read and list some of those "good decisions" and "desperate measures" Mania took.
4. Mania offers advice to future generations. Have students choose a piece of advice and write a paragraph about it, and how they can utilize this advice in their own lives. Or you might have them consider what Elie Wiesel said, "When you listen to a witness, you become a witness." Explain how, after reading this book, you are a witness.
5. Talk about the terms "upstander" and "bystander" with your students. What does being an upstander look like? Brainstorm actions they can take in their everyday lives. The author mentions standing against injustice. What examples do you see in your own school or community that you could stand up against and speak out about? If your school is not involved in ADL's program, No Place for Hate, you can get more information from their website.

## Resources

1. <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous.html> The Righteous website.
2. <https://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Activity/Detail.aspx?activityID=1875>. Short video on the Righteous.
3. ADL.org No Place for Hate program can be found here.

### Activity

1. Divide students into groups and assign each group one of Mania's poems. Ask each group to look at their assigned poem from two lenses: one, as writers: look at what Mania did poetically (metaphors, similes, symbols, etc.) and two, as a survivor: discuss what event(s) prompted her to write the poem, her purpose for writing it (catharsis, to commemorate, etc.), and what this adds to the story we already know from the rest of the book.

### Discussion Questions

1. What does the pickle mean to Mania?
2. Why is it inconceivable to us, today, that it would be so difficult to obtain water? Where else in the

world today do we see this problem? Why was there a need for water during the pogrom?

3. Have a conversation about the poetic devices in *Memories that won't go away* (129). Why would Mania choose poetry as a form to write about her feelings? How is Mania's poetry writing a metaphor for placing a wreath at a grave (131)?
4. Discuss the paradox in the poem "Life" and how we can relate to it.
5. After reading "1942—A Flashback," what does writing provide Mania?



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

### SIFT Literary Analysis Strategy

Directions: Use the table below to record examples of each of the poetic devices from the literary work

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Symbols</b> Examine the title and text for symbolism	
<b>Images</b> Identify images and sensory details (sight, sound, taste, odor, texture)	
<b>Figurative Language</b> Identify and analyze non-standard use of language, including metaphor, simile, repetition, omission, unusual word order, slang, etc.	
<b>Tone and Theme</b> 1) Discuss the tone taken by the author. 2) Message or moral: Why did the author create this work?	

## Primary Source Evidence

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What type of source is it?	2. Who authored/created it?	3. When was it created?
4. What historical events were occurring when it was created?		
5. Why was it created? Who was the intended audience?		
6. What point of view/position does the author/creator represent?		
7. How does the point of view/position shape the source?		
8. What evidence does it contribute to the topic you are studying, the narrative you are writing, or the argument you are making?		

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## Historical Significance

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Primary or secondary source</b> (page numbers, if relevant):
<b>Event or person (or people) that is historically significant in this source:</b>
<b>Brief description:</b>

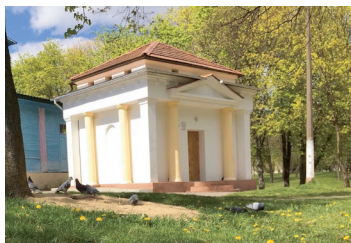
Significance Criteria In what ways is this event or person historically significant?	Does it apply? (Y/N)	In what way does this event or person meet the criteria?
<b>1. Resulting in Change</b>		
a) <b>Profundity:</b> How were people affected by the event or person?		
b) <b>Quantity:</b> How many people's lives were affected?		
c) <b>Durability:</b> How long lasting were the changes?		
<b>2. Revealing</b> How does this event or person shed light on enduring or emerging issues in history or contemporary life?		
<b>Of what larger story or argument might this event or person be a part?</b>		
<b>How might the historical significance of this event or person change over time?</b>		

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Here are a few more photos of Mania's hometown prior to and after the Holocaust.



*Synagogue in Włodzimierz prior to it being destroyed.*



*What the small Synagogue looks like today. (Photo Credit: Tomek Wiesnewski archive)*



*The cemetery of Włodzimierz in 1916. It was destroyed during the war. (Photo Credit: Tomek Wiesnewski archive)*



*What is left of the headstones, which are currently stored in a building. (Photo Credit: Hilary Levine, July 2021).*



## NOTES

### ALL OF THE SOURCES USED

Cabarrus Arts Council.

<https://cabarrusartscouncil.org/images/Students-take-part-in-arts/19-20/Violins-Of-Hope-Curriculum-Guide-Charlotte-Symphony.pdf>

Jewishgen.org

The Timeline of the Holocaust:

<https://timelineoftheholocaust.org/>

This Historical Thinking Project:

<https://historicalthinking.ca/>

Facing History:

[Facinghistory.org](http://Facinghistory.org)

Echoes & Reflections

[echoesandreflections.org](http://echoesandreflections.org)

Gilbert, Martin. *A history of the twentieth century*, volume 2, 1933-1951. New York: W. Morrow, 1998.

Shirer, William L. *The rise and fall of the Third Reich; a history of Nazi Germany*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. [www.ushoocaustmuseum.com](http://www.ushoocaustmuseum.com)

Violins of Hope Educators Guide Los Angeles: Susanne Reyto