

And what happened when you returned from work that day?

This is very difficult to reconstruct. The feeling, and the agony, and the decision. I was 13, and I had to make a decision at that time. My friends, my school friends, surrounded me. My-- I was called Lilusha. Lilusha, don't do it today. He has an eye on you. Wait till tomorrow. Tell the woman to come tomorrow. And then maybe there will be a change of guard. You see, you see, he has an eye on you. He's a horrible, like a dog. Don't do it. Don't do it.

And I walked. We marched. We used to get our utensils for digging. And I was making the rounds of my life, and I figured, my father said, it's my duty to take care of my mother and father-- of my mother and my sister.

My sister is blond. She has blue eyes. She's a child. She has all the chances of survival. They will take her to Boryslav, nobody will know her.

I talked to myself. You, on the other hand, you are Semitic-looking. You have the black Jewish eyes. You will never survive anyhow.

This is your duty. That's what your father would want you to do. You had what-- her life is more worth your saving than yours, because you don't have a chance anyhow.

And the arrangement was such. This woman will stand with a chocolate-- because my sister didn't know her-- with a chocolate in her hand. And I will tell to my sister, go, this woman has a chocolate for you. And afterwards I would dig a big hole in the ground and will bury all her clothing in that big hole. And later at night, after we would be gone, this woman will come, her name was [Personal name] and she will pick up her clothing.

And that's what I did. We came there, and she appeared with a chocolate. I kissed my sister, and I said, you didn't have a chocolate for such a long time. And there is that good [Personal name] and she has a chocolate for you. Run for her. And she ran to her, she grabbed her, and she disappeared.

I walked. I gave a message through my friends to my mother. Just to tell-- not to tell her the story about the Ukrainian that my mother shouldn't feel guilty. Just tell her that he didn't like me, and he just singled me out. And I begged them to take care of my mother now, and tell my mother she has to leave the city too. And I walked with my head down, and I looked around the streets of my happy childhood, and I was saying goodbye to life.

But I cheated death, for a second time. Like with the car with the German. We arrived at the gate, and there was change of guard. The Ukrainian wasn't there anymore. And we marched to the ghetto.

It's many, many years later. And I'm not a very religious person. I [? do ?] believe in God. I still don't understand why I survived. Because many times, I cheated death. There must be some purpose for it. Maybe I didn't achieve anything, but maybe through my children, one day there will be the answer, why God spared me.

Anyhow, I came back to the ghetto. I was happy. I was alive. And then after, I told my mother already, I hope that nothing happens I could tell her a story.

And we decided that we have to escape to the city of my grandfather. But I have to go first, because that Ukrainian had an eye on me. And one day when he will be on guard again, he will ask me where my sister is. And by the way, there was that night an aktion for the children, so she wouldn't have survived if I would have hesitated.

And it was already September. And instead of working on the streets, they took us to wash the windows in a schoolhouse. I went to wash the windows, and I had arrangement to meet with this wonderful Christian woman who was sent from Boryslav. One of the people who were writing to a patient whose life was saved by my grandfather, Dr. Liga.

And she was supposed to meet me at that corner at a certain time, when we were already dispersing, going to the ghetto. I finish washing the window, I went to the bathroom, I took off my armband, and I had a letter in my pocket. My mother

gave me an address of her cousin, who lived in city of Drohobych.

Drohobych and Boryslav were two twin cities, like Hillside and Elizabeth. And my mother had the address of her cousin, the lawyer. And she knew somehow that he's working now for Judenrat for the-- I don't know in what capacity, but he's working there, and that the condition in Boryslav and Drohobych are not as bad yet as it was in Przemysl. Because in Przemysl, our ghetto was walled like in Warsaw, three policemen. And Drohobych and Boryslav people still lived among the Gentiles.

So she gave me the address. And she says, look, he was my beloved cousin. And when you come to him, he will take care of you. And then will come a few weeks later. By the way, my mother-- which her picture I showed before-- she was blond, she has the same eyes also but she was Aryan-looking. She had the Aryan nose. So it was less danger for her to travel than it was for me.

Anyhow, I entered the train, petrified, trembling. We sit down, and we had arrangement with this Christian woman that I will not talk to her, in case they capture me, that I will completely disassociate myself from her.

And suddenly I look. The man who used to bring us milk is sitting in the same department. I froze. I made a signal to her. We walked out from the compartment. And I said, I have to finish the trip in the bathroom. It was -- Thank God he didn't recognize me. And we will meet at the station of Drohobych.

The trip seemed to last an eternity. People were knocking at the bathroom door, and I said, I'm very, very sick. Finally, I walked out because I realized that I'm arousing suspicion, sitting in the bathroom. And I went to another compartment.

But an angel, or God, or whoever he is, was watching over me. We arrived luckily in Drohobych. We hired a horse and buggy, and we gave them the address of Dr. Rosenblatt on such and such a street, I forgot the address. We dismissed the cab. We rang the bell, and the door opened.

And I said, excuse me, does Dr. Rosenblatt live here? He said, sure, sure, come in. Little did I know Dr. Rosenblatt doesn't live there anymore. His apartment was confiscated by the chief of Ukrainian police.

And when I mentioned the word Rosenblatt, in looking at me, he realized that I'm Jewish. And he locked me inside. And immediately he arrested me and he arrested that poor woman who risked her life taking me.

And we were put, the Gestapo and the Ukrainian police were building one next to another, and they put us in the cellar of the Gestapo.

I talked to her and I said, I swear to you, you risk your life to bring my sister. Now for me, for me it's no chance anymore. But I swear to you, no matter what they do to me, I'll say I never met you before. You were a woman at the station who I asked to take a horse and buggy with me because I didn't know Drohobych.

And remember when they question you, deny it. Because I will never, never admit. But when you are free, remember, go back for my mother. Because my mother and my sister, with their Aryan look, they have a chance to survive.

Luckily, we talk to one another, because they separated us. And I was put all night through cross-examination. I told them the truth. That my-- truth, half-truth. Again, because I didn't want to endanger my mother. So I said both my parents were killed. And I said, the reason I came because I knew I have a cousin and uncle in Drohobych. And I was all alone, so I ran away.

But the Ukrainian police and the Gestapo were sure, because this was after the three actions in Przemysl, that there is some Jewish organization which is smuggling children out of Przemysl. I was 13 at that time. And they promised me my life if I will admit that who is the leader of the organization that they smuggling.

I said, I could not admit. There is no organization. I'm telling the truth. Anyhow-- and who is this woman? I told the story. And I saw her light in the corridor when they were leading me next day. And I pretended I didn't recognize her.

And they kept me all night. They didn't let me sleep. And the minute I closed my eyes in the dungeon, they would bring again and they say, tell this story. Who are the organizers of the group, what are they doing? And so forth.

And the night-- and in the morning, the Gestapo officer disappeared. And only the Ukrainian chief of police, who was a sadistic man-- he was in every time asking me, when will you break down? You Jewish bitch. You Jewish bitch.

The date was September 8, 1942. Till today, when we have happy memories and something happened, and I'm at a wedding, I'm at a bar mitzvah, I'm sometimes-- very happy occasion. And September 8 comes, I'm pinching myself. I am alive. Was it a dream? Am I still there?

Because this guy, this horrible guy, brought me an [? hour ?] and hour to the window. And he said-- it was a beautiful autumn day, and there was a beautiful tree. The leaves were just turning.

And he said, even you, [NON-ENGLISH] you Jewish girl, you're still young. You're good-looking for a Jewish girl. It's a shame you should die because you are so stubborn. When will you admit who is smuggling this? And now I keep you the last half an hour of your life. Look how beautiful the world is. Look how the sun is shining. But you Jewish people, you were always stubborn, and you will always remain stubborn.

I said to him, what do you want of me? I would gladly admit story, I want to live. I'm so young. But there is no story. Why don't you summon Dr. Rosenblatt here? He will corroborate my story, and maybe he'll be very grateful to you that you saved my life. What do you want of me?

He said, I give you half an hour. Think it over. I don't believe a minute. And once again, look at the tree. Because this tree, you will be hanging. And this will be sign to all your Jewish leaders who want to cheat us.

And again, on September 8, I said goodbye to sun, to beautiful leaves, to the tree. And then they blindfolded me half an hour later, and they brought me to the room. They took the blindfold away, and there was my cousin Dr. Rosenblatt, two other leaders of the Jewish community.

I heard that they paid a lot of money for me. The Ukrainian got smart in the last minute. What would he have from a Jew, another Jewish girl killed, when he gets some money.

Years later, when I studied to be a Hebrew school teacher, I realize what [NON-ENGLISH] mean. This was a law in Jewish tradition, the Jewish people when they were expelled from Spain, that Italian Jews would redeem them. [NON-ENGLISH] it means, redeem of those who are in prison. And Jewish people saved me there.

I went to the home of my cousin, and I-- strangely enough, I had still a diamond ring that my mother gave me, which I had hid, which they didn't find. I gave him the ring for safekeeping.

And the condition in Drohobych was still not bad, it was called Jewish quarter, but they still lived decently. They still ate with the linen on the table. They have sheets to sleep with. It was like a paradise for me. There was a Jewish konditeri where people, young people were buying cakes. And I felt, I'm dreaming. The bad times are behind me. Just now, the only idea is when my mother will arrive.

And then I was there maybe three weeks, but not full three weeks when my uncle-- or cousin, I called him Uncle-- summoned me to his room and said to me, Lilusha. When it was time to save you, I did everything in my power. Your mother was always my beloved cousin.

And I wish I could do something for you now. But now you have to do me a favor. We found out from Gestapo that there will be-- you had those aktions in [? think ?] and Przemyśl. It's coming one tomorrow in Drohobych. Gestapo is going to hide us, because we are very necessary workers. We are still running the Judenrat, but I am only allowed to take my wife, my daughter, and my son-in-law with me. I cannot take you.

I know, my child, you are going to perish. But please do me a favor. I do it with a sorrow. But go, take off your armband and hitchhike to the city of Boryslav. Because here, I'm working Judenrat, I don't want to be accused by your mother later on that I didn't save her child. In Boryslav, I have no influence, no jurisdiction. So she wouldn't be able to accuse me.

And the ring, if you want, I can give you. But maybe you will perish anyhow. So leave the ring for your mother, and I'll give it to your mother. And it was the evening. He says, nobody knows you. And try to hitchhike your way to Boryslav.

I stood there. I had two braids. And some [? auto ?] stopped. Hungarians. Maybe some Italians, I don't know. I know they were not Germans.

And they didn't recognize so much Jewish, Ukrainian. Some Ukrainians had dark hair. And I ask them. I joke, I smile. I said, could you give me a ride to Boryslav? And they did.

And I travel to Boryslav. And I remember in Boryslav a very good friend of my mother, because my mother grew up in Boryslav. I figure, let me go and die with this friend of my mother. And the name of the family was Hirsch.

And after I descended from the truck, I met a Jewish guy with an armband. And I said, could you tell me where the family Hirsch lives? Luckily they were alive, and he brought me to them.

And destiny, fate, works in mysterious ways. I walked in. The friend of my mother, [Personal name] Hirsch, embrace me. Says, my child, you are daughter of my beloved friend. My home is your home.

And she made me two sunny-side eggs. You have no idea-- I can't eat sunny-side eggs to today. Because at that time, this was a very special commodity. And I said, I cannot accept that gift. And I started playing with my plate.

When suddenly, somebody knocks at the door, and they call her younger son out. And he comes, pale. And he said, somebody warned me that is going to be an action also in city of Boryslav. I said, I was just going to tell you. That's why I came.

What are we going to do, where are we going to hide? I said, come with me if you know where is ulitsa [? vaska ?] 6. [? Vaska ?] 6 means narrows, the narrow street 6. There lives that Gentile woman who brought my sister, and she was dismissed because I was brave. And let's go to her. Maybe she will let us spend the night. So we marched, all of us. The family Hirsch with two sons, twin daughters. We knocked at their door, and they let us in and put us in the cellar.

And that night the aktion started, which lasted a whole month. And through me, they were saved, through that action. Even that I was a stranger to Boryslav. Survive. Later on, unfortunately, they all perished in Auschwitz, where my mother perished later too.

While we were in hiding, my mother was picked up, and she came. But my mother and my sister were hiding separately. My mother went with another woman, rented an apartment. She had false papers, a Gentile, because nobody remembered her in Boryslav. And she had this Aryan look.

And sad as it is, I was a leper In the family. Nobody wanted to be with me, because of my Semitic looks. So I had to hide separately, and I was separated from my mother and my sister.

Then the family that was hiding us said that they cannot hide us anymore. And for a while I ran to my mother, and another Jewish doctor who was already hiding. At that time, we all knew if we don't hide, the rumors came about concentration camp. We didn't know about gassing. We thought that they are just shooting, perishing.

And we were hiding. Another three people were hiding there. And my mother and this other woman, officially as the Poles, and my sister was as a Polish child with her. And one day, my mother and this woman went to the market to buy something and with my sister.

And we had a hiding place in the floor. In the parquet floor there was a special square, but always somebody had to be there to close it from outside. And a little Persian runner, we used to put on top of it.

And suddenly we hear banging at the door. And only this doctor and his wife were there. I said, quickly, go in. And I pushed him in, and I closed that opening, and put the carpet.

And for me there was no time to hide, because somebody had to be from outside. So I slipped under the bed, and the German Schutzpolizei walked in. Somebody must have betrayed that there is some hiding place, because they started walking with their feet and, like, seeing if there is an echo.

And suddenly, and this was quite a large apartment, and suddenly one German soldier looked under the bed. And saw me. And I figured, oh, again? Goodbye, life.

But he was a righteous German. He whispered to me, we will leave now, I take him out. But disappear, because we'll be back. They know there is a hiding place here. And he left.

So after he left, my mother and that Christian woman returned. And they told me, you know, he was nice. But who knows, he can change his mind if they don't fulfill the quota. My child, you have to leave. Try again the first hiding place. Maybe he will take you.

But look, you are endangering our life. Mine, Roma's, which is my sister. Dr. Bexell and his wife. You know, one face and four lives, the decision is all yours. I was 15 by that time. And I said goodbye to my mother, and I left. And I went back to the house, the little house on [? Vaska ?] Street. But when I-- it was dark at night.

I arrive and I heard German singing inside, so I couldn't go in. Sister of that guy, the strange paradox of life, this woman who saved our life was dating German. Maybe good German, a soldier. She was his girlfriend. And evidently, he--

Did you know this at the time?

That she was dating? I think I found out later. She was a very complex person. She was hiding the Jews in memory of a Jewish boyfriend that she had before the war.

But you see, many Poles were dating Germans, and this guy was some decent guy who used to go to Russian front. It was very good for them. They had all those army rations. You know, food and cheese, and used to bring her. And she liked him.

So anyhow, I could not enter the house. But luckily, they had chicken coop outside. And I entered the chicken. And you would know, those chickens almost betrayed me. Evidently, chickens have some brain of their own. And they saw a stranger, and they started making noises. Terrible noises.

I figure, my God, now they will see-- they'll think a fox is in the chicken coop, and they'll come. And what happened, this man, the owner of the house, really got scared that some animal came to eat chicken. And he came, and I said, [Personal name] you don't be afraid, that's me.

He said, oh my God, what can I do? This German guy came for [NON-ENGLISH] This is like for vacation that they get from the army. And who knows, he can come here. He said, you know what? Tomorrow I'm going to work, and I will bury you in the hay. And I'll bury you in the hay, I'll bring you the food till he leaves.

And he took me with the hay and the wagon to the forest, to the fields, and I was buried in the hay. And a month-- and a week, it seemed a month, later, the Germans left. And he took me back to his house.

His wife was scared, they had a child. And she said, we are damned if we do, we're damned if we don't. Because we saved her. Now if they capture her, and she will betray where she was hiding. So it's very dangerous for us. So maybe she should hide. But I am leaving. I am leaving the town to my parents. I leave you alone with cash. I was hiding at the

attic at that time.

Strange irony. When I was hiding in the attic during the day, and at night, the cellar. I found a carton of books. And there, there was a Hebrew book and there was an English self-method to learn English, like Berlitz method, but this was something else.

And I was bored. I memorized that book. I didn't know how-- potato was "po-tah-to," tomato was "to-mah-to." So very old-fashioned book, but I learned my spelling. And I learned everything what was in that book. And also, I refresh my memory in Hebrew, because this house once belonged to the Jews. And when the Jews were chased out of there, that family took it up.

The reason I mention that English book, because later, after liberation, when I came back from my hometown, I was the only survivor of Przemysl who knew some English. So at the age of 16, I became the official letter writer to the relatives in America.

And even the Jews, the survivors, and the Gentiles, everybody realized now after the war that English is a very important language. And I became the first English teacher in our hometown of Przemysl. I was so busy. I was teaching from morning to night, even when I met my boyfriend. I didn't have time to date him, because I was giving the lessons.

My uncle-- of blessed memory, he's dead-- he always lived in a panic that the previous students would come one day to him when they arrived in this country, say, give us the money back. She taught us wrong English. Po-tah-to, to-mah-to and so forth.

But anyhow, while I was hiding in there, I won't go through all the details and all the agonies. But one day, this man, who was so righteous, comes up, climbs the ladder to the attic.

And he says, Lillian, I have bad news for you. I saw your mother. They were marching them, the whole transport, to Auschwitz. At that time, they thought it's Plaszow. I was trying to make signals to her. She recognized me. She waved. She put her hands together. But they are taking her away. And it was already July 1942, and this was the last transport from Boryslav to the concentration camp.

At the moment, I was stunned. Later on, I found out through people who survived in the camp, my mother never survived Auschwitz. Somebody betrayed them, and they were taken. They never had a chance.

Here is already July '42 and sadly, Germans, Germany starts being defeated. And the German soldiers are retreating. And they are placing-- they don't have enough accommodation for them-- and they start putting, sequestering homes, and putting Germans in the homes of the Poles.

And two young Germans are put in the house where I was hiding in the cellar. The woman who was hiding me says, my God, you have to get out from the cellar. Because those Germans are hungry, and they can go look for potatoes and for fruit. And they will discover you.

But we will dress you up and we'll say you are cousin from Krakow. They don't know, they don't distinguish too much between the Poles. And this. And you will be our cousin from Krakow.

They arrived on Saturday. The next day, Sunday, they dressed me up. And suddenly she says to me, my child, you have to go with me to the church. Because it was a very Catholic town. Because if those Germans-- they're afraid of that, they want to go to pray too, even that they are not Catholic. And they are if you stay home, this will arouse suspicion.

So you come with us to church. And you follow me, and whatever I will do, I will do. And you will kneel down and so forth. And let's hope nobody will recognize you in the church.

The trepidation, palpitation, going to church, not knowing what to do. I still remember vividly now. We entered the church. She tells me to kneel down, I kneel down. And suddenly from the pulpit, the priest appeared in his white garb,

and motions to me with the finger. Get up. I said, oh. He recognized I'm Jewish. You cannot cheat him. My Jewish eyes, my Jewish nose, long nose. I'm doomed. My heart stops.

But he summons me to get up. But after a minute I see, he takes other girls and he forms a procession. Something similar to our hakkafot and simhat torah. And he gives me a picture of Holy Mary. I'm holding in one side and the other girl on the other. And we are the first. I had a handicap that I didn't know what to do. How do you behave? Do you cross yourself? What do you do? Because I was the first.

So they had to do what I did, so I was just holding to the picture. I can't describe to you, the emotion, the fear. And we went all around the church in the procession. And after we finish, he said, go back to your place. When I came back to the place, the woman, Hella was her name, whispers to me. And the Germans were right next to her.

He said, my child, I have to tell you something. Tonight I was going to tell you that you have to leave us. I have a child, and with the German taking over the houses, and then neighbors would recognize you are Jewish, we cannot help you anymore. You should go someplace, maybe to the field. Maybe you'll survive somehow. But you cannot endanger our life anymore.

But after you were chosen by the priest to carry the picture of Holy Mary, I realized that this was a sign from God that Holy Mary wants you to live. And I'm not afraid to hide you anymore. You can stay with us, because Holy Mary gave me a sign that she wants you to live.

And that's how I survived. And two weeks later, the Russians enter the city of Boryslav. It was August 7, 1942. I stood alone in the field. If you ask me my emotion, I didn't know. I was lost. I asked myself, why? Why me? Do I have some role to play? Are there any other Jews? And slowly but surely, some of them started coming out.

I got myself a job. Boryslav was a city of refineries. I got that they needed people to work in the refinery. This was year '44 and I was 15, and I was working in the refinery.

One day, a Russian guy entered the refinery and said, is there anybody who can write a little Russian? I was a little more educated than the common worker in the refinery, and I volunteered. I made the list for him. They wanted when you were born, what are you doing, how many kids you have, how old you are.

I made that very neat list. When he finished, he says [NON-ENGLISH] which means good-looking girl. What are you doing here? Especially you have such a nice Russian handwriting. You belong in an office. And he elevated me to the office. I was working, so I was already elevated to the office in the refinery.

And I was saving the money. And I knew Poland was again divided. Przemysl again was a border town. The war didn't end up yet. I spent the whole winter in Boryslav.

And it was March. And suddenly, a rumor started that there is a group of survivors, Jewish doctors, who rented a truck, they are paying a lot of money. But I don't know if it was a Ukrainian guy or Russian guy. I think Ukrainian guy. They paid a lot of money, like 5,000 rubles. And he is going to take them over the border from Russia to Poland, which was easy because Przemysl was a border town.

So I packed my little belongings, and I came to that guy. It was 12:00 at noon. And I said, sir, I heard that you are going to Przemysl. This is the town where I grew up. Please, take me there. I want to go and look for my sister and my mother.

By the way forgot to tell, when our hiding place was discovered, a woman ran away with my sister. Was this other woman that was living with her, because they were afraid. And I didn't know exactly where, but she said she has some peasant friends between two cities. Jaslo and Krosno. And that she's running away to them. So I wanted to go get to the Polish part, and to find her and my sister.

So I offered him, I say, take 500 rubles. Please take me to Przemysl. This guy looked at me and said, are you kidding? Yeah, I will give away for free 500 rubles the place? Everybody's giving 5,000. When you come back, you Jews, you

always have money. You come back with 5,000 rubles, then I'm going to take you. This would be not the first transport. I said, my God, it took me almost a year to save 500 rubles. 5,000 rubles, I'll be gray till I save that.

At that moment, they called him away. And in the split of the moment-- you know, at that time, you learn to be like an animal. Because you are hiding in the forest, the chicken coop and this. I saw a truck. And there was some furniture in the truck. I figure, maybe this is the truck. There is some desk or pianos. Let me hide in the truck. And I jumped on the truck. I hid behind that piece of furniture. I was waiting, in case this truck would move, so I get out.

And then it got dark. And I started hearing voices. And the truck is going and moving and stopping, and picking up people. And I recognized voices. We start traveling, and I'm sitting and trembling. And it's night. And I hear that we are rolling and we are going.

And suddenly I hear the roosters. I can't still learn how to pronounce how the noise the rooster makes. In Polish, it was [NON-ENGLISH] I don't know how the rooster does it here.

And the truck stops, and I hear people giving-- He says, now I want the second half of the money. They made arrangement with those doctors that they gave them half of the money. He shouldn't trick them. And they tore the money in half. And the second half they would give.

And there, I hear they're counting the money and already I figured we must be already in Przemysl. And at that moment, I come out after the desk, and this guy suddenly sees me. And he says, what are you doing here? Do you have the 5,000 rubles? [INAUDIBLE] you cheater, [NON-ENGLISH] cheater. I mean, the Jewish cheater. You cheated me, I told you to come--

And I started crying terribly. And those people say, who are you? And I said, I am granddaughter of Dr. [Personal name] And all those doctors, these were friends of my grandfather, a little younger. And again, the Jewish people [NON-ENGLISH] they redeemed him. They took a collection. And they paid the guy, because he wanted me to descend right then and there, and we were not in Przemysl yet. And that's how I arrived in Przemysl. Penniless, standing, didn't know to turn left and right. And I went in my search of Jews.

There were out of 20,000 Jews, 500 Jews survived. And that is where I met the love of my life, my husband, Sam Ettinger. And when the war ended, May 8, 1945, we stood together in the marketplace in the city of Przemysl, and I was in love. And it was the first spring of freedom.

The war ended, and I said to my boyfriend, now I have to start searching for my little sister. And it's a very difficult task. The only way was to go with the Russian army trucks and to travel.

I was so naive. I turned 16, because April 11th was my birthday. And I asked one girl who survived in Russia, who knew fluent Russian and who sung nicely, please come with me. Come with me. And she was, her name was Yanka Rotenberg. Blessed memory, she's not alive. And we started our journey, going from town to town and asking the peasants-- not town to town, village to village.

The villages were burned. They were destroyed. Because the Germans and the Russians were fighting very fiercely in the last moment. And they burned all the food and all the fields.

But I knew in a village when I come to the head of the village, they always knew the stranger. So we went to every village, to the head of the village. And we asked, a year ago, a woman who looked like this and this came with a blond little girl named Roma. Did you see her?

And time after time again, they said no. And finally, after a week of traveling, and my friend Yanka was singing in Russian to the soldiers. And she struck a friendship with them. Later on I realized what a risk-- two young [? girl. ?] They said we were quite pretty at the time-- what risk we took. But we were naive. We played with danger.

And one day, we arrived in a little village. And again I ask my question. A year ago, a woman with a little child arrived.



The head of the village answers no. But there is a little girl standing, a little peasant child. And she says, and this girl just you talking about, does she recite a poem [NON-ENGLISH]. And does she recite the poem [NON-ENGLISH]?

And I realize, Because was 10 years' difference between me and my sister, I used to take care of her. And I told her those two poems. And she in turn told the child of this Polish-- Polish peasant child this poem. And through this poem, this girl led me to that little hut, to my sister.

Went to the hut, there was a deaf woman. And I remember, there were a lot of-- it was very early in the morning, it was 6 o'clock in the morning. Though this is what the Russians always [? dismiss ?] it. And a lot of children lying on straw. Not on mattress, on straw. All of them had blond short hair and blue eyes.

And this friend Yanka says, which one is your sister? And the woman in the room, we realized she was deaf. So she couldn't-- deaf and mute. And I said, I don't know. They are all emaciated. Their hair was cut. And I said, I don't know. They all look alike.

And at that moment, my sister remembered me. Jumped out, grabbed me, says [Personal name] I always dreamed that one day you would come and save me. She jumped on me. I fainted, and I fell back on my friend Yanka.

My sister, my beautiful little pampered sister, was all covered with wounds. They cut her hair. She was full of lice. I brought her back to our hometown.

The doctor that who used to be our doctor survived. He told me another two months, this child would have died from tuberculosis. I cannot blame those peasants, because they shared with her whatever food they had.

But the fields were burned, and there was no food. And the [INAUDIBLE] had the potatoes. The doctor-- blessed memory, he's gone-- he told me, you have to feed her cream and butter and eggs, because the children recuperate very fast, and she will come back to herself.

I was 16, and she was 6. I was giving lessons in English, and I was making good money. And I was buying in the market milk and cream and everything. And feeding my sister.

Little did I know how many children that I bring up in my life? I made her very sick. She got dysentery. I brought her to the doctor, and he said, you did it too fast. You should have started at a spoon at a time. Her stomach was not used to that rich food. How could you do it?

I was afraid. He scared me that she's not going to survive, after all those tribulations. At that time, a previous mate of ours, who had a goat, and people at the time didn't know about biology, enzymes. She said, bring your sister to me. I have a goat, and the goat has a special milk. Years later, I found out goat milk has enzyme milk.

And she saved my sister. And my sister is alive today. And somehow, I don't know why I survived. Maybe for my wonderful children. Maybe for my sister, who's married, who lives in Israel. Her son is a pilot for Israeli army. Her children are wonderful. I have wonderful children. And maybe that's why I cheated death. And that's why I'm alive.

If you permit me, I would like to read a letter that I wrote to my father, after my husband and I revisited Przemysl not long ago.

Please.

The letter was printed in Jewish Horizon on October 4, 1984. I felt an urge that I have to go back to the cemetery. My father had no sons. And I had to say Kaddish at the spot where he was-- where he was shot.

I returned to Przemysl, to the city where I was born. My father, my grandfather, his whole family before me. It took me many years to summon the courage. It took many soul-searching, agonizing dialogues with my inner self till I came to the realization that there is no other way but to face it now. Because tomorrow can be too late.

I have to admit, I was forewarned by all those who share our agony. I was told to leave the memories of the beautiful childhood intact. Remember Przemysl as it was. Remember the houses, the street, the school as they were. Enclosed and intact, in the rosy prism of childhood innocence. And forget the aftermath. They, the well-wishing friends and family members, reminded me that those memories are the only thing that the Nazis did not succeed to take away from me.

But I was haunted in my dreams. I was returning to Przemysl many a night. Father, I came back for you. To erect a symbolic monument on the very spot in the Jewish cemetery where they, the Gestapo, shot you and others the terrible morning of July 27, 1942. I came back 42 years later, searching for the common grave. I came to erect a tombstone, but I decided against it.

Forgive me, father. Maybe I am wrong. But after seeing the devastation and desecration of the Jewish cemeteries in Poland, I cannot do it. I do not want them to use your tombstone for their fences, sidewalks, or roads. They do not respect our cemeteries. They still hate the Jews. They still teach their children that we bake matzah with blood.

We were walking the streets of Przemysl, my husband and I, and searching for some signs of the beautiful childhood we once had in Przemysl. In vain. Przemysl is dead. And then I realize that you do not need a symbolic tombstone.

Przemysl, the town where once you lived and practiced law, is one great cemetery. Przemysl the town where 20,000 Jews lived, is dead. Father, the synagogue and the temple are replaced with some monument for famous communists. The Jewish quarter, once bustling with activity, is erased completely.

There is a little park there. The young people strolling there do not even know that 500 years of Jewish life was connected with that quarter. There is nothing. No monument, no mention what it was. All is gone, gone forever.

The streets of Przemysl are unpaved. The houses stood gray, sad, decaying. [Place name] street where Jewish merchants had their store is a sad street, with few poor stores displaying rags, or almost rags.

The Hebrew gymnasium still stands, because it is still used for a school. At least this building has some dignity. One of the remaining synagogues is a bus terminal. Father, can you imagine a synagogue turning into a bus terminal?

The Jewish hospital erected with such pride is a decrepit, old, neglected building. The walls are crying after all those doctors who once healed the sick in those walls. Everything is gray, even the sky. People do not smile. But still, I walk the streets of yesterday, of yesteryear, searching.

Father, there are no words in any language to describe my emotions, my feelings about Przemysl. How can I find the right words to describe entering the house on Volsky street where you, your father and the whole Landau family once lived? Seeing it devastated, neglected, gray. Windows spinning a tale of ancient glory, the courtyard where once you played full of weeds and rotting. Remnants of the wooden parquet floor telling a story of one-time elegance.

From there, I walk to the court. The new one on [? Konarski ?] street. It is still standing, one of the very few well-preserved buildings in our town. Some old Gentile still remembered you 40 years later. Some of your clients embraced me, even cried. Called you our champion, our defender. These were their words, and I cried with them. The magic of your name still worked.

They, the government, they let me enter the court even though it was on a weekend. They opened the courtroom for me, and I stood there in front of the podium where you used to stand in your black toga, erect and proud. Father, I still remember how you had to fight for the just causes, and to fight the anti-Semitic judges who hated you for your brilliance.

Father, standing there, I was again the little, proud daughter of Dr. David Landau. Father, you were taken away from me so early that I never had a chance to tell you how I worship you. How I loved those stories inspiring justice and love of justice that you tried to instill in me.

In the darkest hours of my life, your words and teaching were like a beacon of light and guided me all the way. Father, I summon the courage to go back to the ghetto. I climbed the steps once again to the tall building on [Place name] street, which had the windows overlooking the prison. Where I saw you alive for the last time, marching in the courtyard. 42 years ago, when my agony began.

Next morning, I went to the Jewish cemetery. It is still a cemetery, thanks to the eight remaining Jews in town. The eight consist of three old widows. One man who returned, nobody knows why. And four Jews who have Aryan names, and who are afraid to admit they are Jews. But they all have a key to the cemetery. And as long as they live, the cemetery will remain a cemetery.

I found three graves. Symbolic graves erected by the survivors. On the spot where you and others were shot on July 27, 1942. I said the Kaddish and I found my peace. I stood there and said goodbye to you forever.

Standing there, I realized sadly that I do not have to erect a tombstone. That you have a living memorial. That your teaching, your quest for morality and justice, will live forever in your grandchildren. David and Alan, the diplomat and the doctor.

I brought up two young, proud Jews who are good Americans, being Jews at the same time. They are the tribute to you and that monument in the city of Przemyśl.

Goodbye, Przemyśl. Godless city. Poor orphan, without the Jews.

I think that letter too is a great monument. Thank you very much, Lillian.

It was an ideal ending, too.