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Summary

This was an interview with Elise Garibaldi (Bahar), born in Queens, N.Y. on February 24, 1978, who told the story of her maternal grandparents who had met in the Theresienstadt Ghetto during the Holocaust. Ms. Garibaldi knew her maternal grandparents well, almost as second parents. Her paternal grandparents, on the other hand, lived in Istanbul and were Sephardic Jews whose ancestors had escaped from Spain during the Inquisition. As a child Ms. Garibaldi would talk regularly with her maternal grandparents who told her about their romance that was kindled in the Theresienstadt ghetto and would later end up in marriage after the war. In the seventh grade Ms. Garibaldi learned about the Holocaust but was so upset she decided that she would no longer face what happened. But she decided to come back to understanding the Holocaust after her grandfather died. She called her grandmother and told her that she wanted to tell the story, a love story, between her grandmother and grandfather. Her grandmother wanted to do it for her family, but Ms. Garibaldi wanted to publish it.

Over a year-and-a-half Ms. Garibaldi interviewed her grandmother and took copious notes on paper her grandmother supplied that had belonged to her father, Karl Katz. The story began when her grandmother was thirteen in Bremen, Germany during Kristallnacht and ended with her grandfather finding her grandmother after his return from Auschwitz. Her grandfather published his own memoir of his experience during the war, *The Face of Hell*. Ms. Garibaldi was able to publish her interviews with her grandmother under the title, *Roses in a Forbidden Garden*. Despite the fact that publishers were reluctant to publish another Holocaust memoir, the book became a best seller. Ms. Garibaldi also wrote a musical play based on the book. She claimed that the book was a love story in three senses: a personal love story, a community love story based on people helping one another survive, and a love of God.

She was invited to Bremen, Germany to speak and visit the former school of her grandmother who had had to sit in the back of her class and listen to Nazi harangues against Jews before she was removed from the school when she was thirteen. Ms. Garibaldi's book was also translated into German but not before the publisher put off publication while publishing a book by a known anti-Semite. While her experience in Bremen was mainly positive – the school, for example, may be renamed after her grandmother – Ms. Garibaldi said that questions from some journalists and others seemed to her to be based on antisemitic stereotypes. In part, this was based on accusations that her great grandfather, who had been very successful before and after the war and considered himself more German than Jewish, was as guilty as the Gestapo for Jews being deported from Bremen.