

I can't-- pills. Just a little phobia about pills. This time I don't take any medication. I like to count how many times I've taken medicine.

I remember that. I'll tell you how my mother got me to swallow pills.

I used to ground them up into food when I was little.

She used to give it to me chocolate syrup.

--clock. Well--

Let's pick up then from you're in the sanitarium trying to heal.

Oh. I thought I was out by then. Yeah.

What happened then?

Well, I thought I had got myself out already. It never did do me any good. I went back to my aunt and uncle, and they had heard-- I don't know how exactly. Maybe because of-- through my parents-- that I had to leave Italy, where I was. I very happy there, in a way, except for school.

And so this is when I-- and I had no time. I just threw everything together again, my stuff. And didn't know when I would see them. They've had a bad story too to tell. And to get to-- to meet-- to get to-- was it-- did I say Zurich or-- yeah. And meet then a family friend who had money for me and so I could get a ticket to get on the plane and that train that I needed to catch to get to the plane to Milan. Yeah. I had to get to Milan.

And this is when I told you the story. I don't know if that has anything to do with the price of cheese in China, as my first husband used to say. Where I had that miracle happen where I met-- and I had written to this man I loved from Italy so much. And I said, I don't know which train I'm coming on, which compartment I'm going to be on, but it'll be more or less that time or that between those two hours.

And then I would have to leave European soil for good. And so I had no idea there were 100,000 tracks. Don't know where I would get in. And I opened the door to my compartment, and there he stood. Actually, he was half Italian and half British, so he was tall and blond.

But as you travel through Italy, it's always been interesting to me. When you start way down south, they're all little and black, and then they get whiter and taller. And it's really quite--

And blonder.

And blonder. And it's really funny. And so that was-- and then we had two hours together and just talked about what was happening to us. And he was in the air-- I guess he had finished his engineering and was in the Air Force. And they all wear a big M for Mussolini, all the students. And he gave me that as a goodbye present.

And so when I had met him first, I think, on that cruise-- you asked me where I'd met him-- of course, that had something to do with the Nazis too. That was in '37. And my father had money in Germany. So he invited me to this fancy cruise. And I got special clothes. I remember they were not done by the little seamstress.

And that was the-- I had the time of my life. And there was a mixture of people who came from Germany and some-- a whole Italian contingent of young guys and some others. And in the boat that we had to take when we went into the fjords, for example, the boat had a swastika on it. And so every time those pictures were developed, I tore out the swastika right off the bat.

And when we came into the harbor in Hamburg-- we took the boat from Hamburg, for example-- they all stood out there, heil Hitler thing. And so my friend at that time, he knew I was Jew, said to me, why don't you do it? I said, I'm not for Hitler at all. So I stood there just like this, you know. Shoot me if you will, but I have nothing to do with it.

And so we went back to-- well, I just don't know which way to go. We also went to Norway, which was this important thing as far as the Holocaust is concerned in my family there, and met just a rather distant relative from Norway. And I knew I had a family in Norway.

And my grandparents, who loved Hamburg the way I loved Vienna-- I mean, my grandfather was just-- again, he was-- Hamburg, that was his world. And he learned how to speak that special language. I still know one thing in it. And so I just adored them.

And after Hitler came to Vienna, before I had to leave Vienna, I said, I have to see my grandparents. I just love them so, and I couldn't leave without seeing them again. And that was very dangerous to travel after Hitler was already in Vienna, to-- on the train. And it was one of those milk trains that stops at every place.

What was dangerous?

The traveling because you didn't know what could happen to me.

Were they rounding people up yet? Did you know--

Oh, yeah. I mean, they-- oh, yes. And all this. But I didn't care. I had to see them, because I loved them so much. And I knew I would probably never see them again. And so I did go to see them. I have pictures of it. And there again, an SA guy, because he wore khaki, came into the compartment. And he kept staring at me.

And I felt, God, now what? Now what? There was nothing I could do. I was sitting there, but nothing happened. But-- so that's one aspect of danger under the Nazis. And if you have to do something, as I said, you have to do it.

What do you remember of that visit to your grandparents?

Well, it's just that I went-- how beautiful a city it is. And also they used to live in a beautiful place. Of course, now they have no more family with them. And how much I enjoyed it, I mean, that aspect. And then going with my grandfather. And he loved the harbor and the boats. And he could speak there the language.

And he would tell me this is this, and this is starboard or this is some other board. I don't know. And he would introduce me to everyone he knew and he didn't know, his granddaughter from Vienna. And he was just a wonderful guy.

On the other hand, he was never indulgent. He was strict too and very-- the things have to be done just right. So he was just wonderful. And he'd given us a wonderful time when I was a child and we'd meet him once in a great while. But I think the-- I don't know which to talk about first.

Things were getting a little tough for the people in Hamburg. It was sort of the last holdout, in a way, against Hitler because it was such a tremendously cosmopolitan city that there were people from all over there all the time.

A strong trade union.

And a strong trade union and all that. So but finally the family that they had-- they had still three daughters left. And the middle daughter had married a Norwegian. I mean, he lived in Norway. He also came from Hamburg. They've gone to Norway.

And they had a paper, and they were making leathers, and they were dealing in furs I mean, they were doing OK, not wealthy ever. And yeah, in fact, that trip I got a fur coat, a Norwegian seal fur coat, my first fur coat, to realize they don't wear this in the United States at all. And that was funny.

But in any case, so they said, well, you better not stay in Hamburg. You can't really stay anymore. It's too dangerous. Come be with us, Norway. Norway is great. Well, so they left their beloved city with very little and went to Norway. And the family that was still left in Norway, they had tragedies with children.

Was a first cousin of mine who was their son that was my age almost exactly and a middle child, is still-- maybe I can't remember now. Anyway, there were two boys and then their mother and father. And I barely knew them at all because we never used to go there. And they never came to Vienna. And they spoke Norwegian, besides, and not German.

So I was already there in England waiting. Had gotten out, waiting for my parents in this horrible pension, I guess is what you call it. Is a boarding house. It was just awful, the worst time of my life, not knowing what was happening to my parents, waiting just to see, would they come out? Would they would be able to--

They knew where you were?

But they knew where I was.

You were in London?

Well, I was outside of London, Hampstead Heath. I do remember that name. I don't know if you know London or any one of these. and it's sort of a suburb. And I had no money, I think. What could I bring out? \$10 or something like that.

Why was it the worst time in your life?

Because I didn't know what was going to happen. I was not allowed to work. I was not allowed to do anything. I was waiting for my parents. I didn't know what my future was going to be like.

Did you know anyone there at all?

I did know someone there who also lived in that area. And that's really all. And they were-- I didn't see them too much, but should something happen. And I had not finished with my-- the boys. I mean, they were still bothering me. But not having any money for that-- I mean, none.

And so all I could do is walk every day from Hampstead Heath to downtown to the art gallery. I think it was the part of the British Museum, which took about two hours. And on the way, I had a tuppence for school or something. That was my lunch. And stay there for about an hour and then walk back again. I did that every day. And then we had a dinner there at this boarding house. And you had to walk across the street.

Were there other refugees there?

No.

No.

No, except that one other family that I knew from Vienna. He was a dentist, actually, a very nice-looking guy. They had a daughter, an older daughter who was-- nothing was good enough for her. Anyway, I didn't have that much contact with them.

And my brother was happily ensconced in his Oxford surrounding, where he had a special bedroom in-- Don, they call him, who lives in a living room of the bedroom, his own bath, who would lay out his clothes and-- I mean, talk about envy. Good lord.

And I think somehow-- I don't know how-- I don't know. There were several things happening in London. It's too much to think about. But once I did visit him in his fancy-- the best colleges they call it in Oxford where he was studying. And

so poor little me. And then I had to go back to my boarding house.

How did you get from-- you left Italy and went to Norway.

No, no, no, I never-- not that-- I was just talking about the trip before the year before in '37.

So I'm confused. You went from Italy to England.

Yeah. Yeah. I had to get to Milan. And from there, I flew for the first time.

Straight to England.

Yeah. Where did I fly? I can't think. Yeah, I think that's the-- I can't remember it. I did fly for the first time in my life in 1938. And I was totally petrified. And you don't ever fly very high, do you know, them days. And so you could see those sheer mountains on either side. It was something else.

And there happened to be a nice family on the same flight with me. And they realized I was so scared. And they tried to sort of take care of me a little.

You said you'd had English lessons. Did you know enough English to get by and get there?

Well, I've always heard English because of the many pupils my father had. And I remember the first sentence I learned to say is-- I was very proud, and I said, I am five years old or six years old. And she looks tired. And how are the patients. Those are the English I learned. That's one aspect of it. But we had private lessons where I was hiding way up top of the tree, fell on the ground. Or something like.

So there was no direct communication between you and your parents when you were in England?

I'm trying to think. I think-- when were things censored? I don't think so anymore. I don't think so.

You were miserable.

Yeah. I was totally freezing to death.

And your brother was doing fine.

Well, he was doing great.

Was he worried about your parents getting out?

I don't know. I really don't know. My father had a choice. I think he was asked to come to either the American University in Beirut. Can you imagine what fun that would have been? And I didn't want to. To them, a new hospital called the Beth Israel Hospital in Boston or stay in England someplace. Well, I always disliked England intensely.

Why?

Because they were totally provincial. You would say something about, well, where you from? And I said, I'm from Austria. Oh, Australia. And what do you eat in Austria? And who is the head? And I made up a wonderful story, just great, that they were a king and we eat eggs. And when you open them, they were blue inside. And I had just the biggest stories. I just loved that. But Australia.

And they still do that on the telephone now with my English. I always said, I don't have an accent. But where are you from?

Yeah, and then I was-- well, maybe the Holocaust would come next. I don't know how things are sort of mixed up. One thing is that I was at that boarding house when Chamberlain returned from his little tete-a-tete with Mr. Hitler. And the old ladies there were throwing themselves on the floor thanking God for that. That was-- and they were sending Czechoslovakia down the river at that point. And so that wasn't so good.

Do you remember how you felt about that meeting, and Chamberlain coming back and saying peace in our time?

Well, the first instinct was peace. And then I realized what was going on. I thought, oh, God, almighty, how horrible. And then the choice my parents had to make. I said, I'm not going to stay in England-- said to myself. I would love to go to America. That sounds good. And I certainly don't want to go to Beirut. God knows what it's like. Thank God. But so when we came-- so when my parents arrived, I don't think there was much time for anything.

Arrived in England?

Pardon?

Arrived in England?

Yeah, when they finally did arrive in England.

When was that?

And we had-- well, that was in-- everything in '38.

So they did get out in the same year.

At the end of the year. And I think they've had the-- not sure if they had the Kristallnacht then or not, that famous-- '38.

Yeah. Yeah. So they got out just-- I think just before that.

Did you know they were coming?

Somehow I must have, yeah, because I did write to my mother to-- there really was no telephoning, but I did write to her saying I was freezing to death in England. There was a fog. You know how people come to San Francisco, how hot and beautiful. Well, it was foggy, awful. You could barely see. And I was freezing to death. And I wasn't all that well yet. And I remember she sent me a coat. So that's one thing.

Yeah, and then in London too, that's-- yeah, I'm still in London in this place. In this horrible boarding house. All of a sudden, there was a knock on the door. And I thought, well, no one but my parents really know where I am. Who would knock at the door?

And in came a guy with a gas mask. And they go to every place in England, London, and surrounding to show them how to use it. Well, that scared me half to death. And they showed me how to do it. So--

Did you have one?

Yeah, of course. So I had to put it someplace. And as I was-- and there was just room enough for my bed. That's all I had in this grandiose room. And I think the bathroom was across the hall. It was just terrible. And I don't know-- I put it as if it were the same day. I had another knock on the door that day.

And I thought, my God. Here I've been alone, alone, alone. Two knocks-- who could that be again? Open the door, and there was a man, pleasant-looking, and a young fellow. And so the man came up and introduced himself. Said, I don't

think you know who I am. But I'm your uncle from Norway, and I am here on business with my son. And that's your cousin, Rolph.

And I had heard so much, of course, about them. But I've never really known them particularly. And I said, oh, how wonderful. And so they came in, and we sat on the bed, the only place to sit down. And Rolph, who doesn't speak-- mostly speaks Norwegian, and I-- but he didn't-- I think he spoke English better than German. I mean, I don't know what languages we were talking. But it was thrilling.

And we got along just beautifully. We just loved each other. My age-- my old cousin. And we were talking about the future. And he-- they were afraid already, because the Quislings were coming into Norway. And they didn't know what was going to happen. And he and I were bonding. And I said, I don't know where I'm going to go from here. And will we ever see each other again?

And he also-- he loved skiing, but he was a ski jumper, and I was on the downhill. And so we had a lot of that in common. And the beauty of the landscape and how lovely it is. So we had a lot-- and they had to leave, and I was very sad. And after that-- well, it took a while. We-- then I met up with my parents. Never saw each other again.

And then all it was was Red Cross letters. And my grandparents were already with them. And I think too-- and I never could talk about it, because it affected me so terribly, because we never could be 100% certain-- they definitely were sent back on a boat.

Did they die already on the boat? Or did they get back to a concentration camp? We don't know. Somewhere in Germany. We didn't know. Nothing but Red Cross letters. And even they were censored. You could only say so much. And all they needed at that point was money.

And that was the end of that whole family. And just totally devastating. And for years and years I never really could talk about it. And my mother couldn't either. Were her parents. And so we never really talked about it.

So this was your mother's parents?

Yeah.

And your cousin and his father--

Well, and my mother's sister, the middle sister, who had married to Norway.

And her husband who was your cousin's father.

And her husband.

All of them had to go back.

All of them were sent. And there was another son that I never did meet. They all had to go, so there were four of that family and two grandparents. And they had already celebrated their 70th-- no, their 50th, their golden anniversary. And they got married when they were 20. My grandparents had a very happy marriage.

And my grandfather's like-- I always was-- my mother a little bit-- made verses for occasions. And I have several books of his. Charming, just charming.

They needed money to get out of Norway?

I have no idea what the money-- I think the money was taken away from them. I have no idea.

I see.

I have no idea. We really had no communication, except this, as I said, the Red Cross letter. And maybe they just needed to send the letters, the Red Cross letters. I don't know. I have no idea. No idea. So that was rough, terribly rough.

I'm trying to figure out how it came to be that they were sent back. Was there some sort of decree that people who had come from Germany had to be returned?

Well, that's another question. And maybe that's what the motives were too. They were actually living-- at that point, I'm not sure if living or under their chaperone of a family that they've known forever, a very dear family, a Norwegian family. And when the Quisling came, I think they might have told him that they were having these Jewish people stay with them.

Those things I'm not 100% clear on, because I think they are the ones, too, who informed us that they were taken away. I don't think they meant for them to have any harm, because I think they were told that they were taken away. And they did not know the answer exactly, what the story was. So this is a different kind.

How long were you and your parents in England?

I don't quite remember, but not long. Since the Kristallnacht, as you say, was November.

'38, yeah.

'38 November. And my father's birthday was November 14. And we arrived in the States on the 16th. That I remember. We didn't stay long at all in England, because we had to--

What were you allowed to bring in?

Pardon?

What was he allowed to bring out of Austria?

Well, actually, if he would have been honest, which he didn't want us to do-- or he gave some gold to someone whom I didn't trust at all in Vienna to take out to England. And that was another horrible people who supposedly took care of the children that came out of-- refugees, Jewish refugee children. And I was supposed to contact them.

Well, there was no sign of gold. There was barely a sign of money, nothing. And I had warned my father. I think I always had a feeling for people. I was very intuitive. And you don't know-- no great mind, but I had feelings. And I was rarely wrong still, to this day.

And then I was always joking with all my-- everybody came over on the Mayflower. I said, well, I went-- it wasn't the maiden trip, but it was the second trip of the New Amsterdam. And I came out on that. That's a lot better than coming out of the stupid Mayflower. You can turn around. I didn't say it in so many words, but--

So he tried to get assets out of the country, and--

He did. And wasn't very successful.

Wasn't very successful.

But he did have some money, obviously, someplace in Switzerland-- I don't know where-- where a lot of people do. But he was able to hide it from the Nazis under rather strain. And it wasn't all that much money left anyway. They kept most of it.

Was it enough to get you all to England and then to the States?

To at least buy the tickets. And then we had to live in the States without money, because every physician who came, in order to practice, although my father was already 61, has to take an exam to qualify. And like the sweet doctors, they would give those physicians-- now, my father was an ear, nose, and throat. They would give him something about the big toe or something totally removed from their own--

Specialty.

--specialty to make it more difficult for them. And so he had to study for that for a whole year. And so--

Did he pass?

And here we are.

Now, at that time did you need American sponsors to be allowed to come in?

Oh, yeah. I mean all along. That's why we had to wait.

Who sponsored you? What is it--

I will say-- you have to have two sponsors, as a matter of fact. And one, I never knew that they did it. And that was too complicated. But a family that we had met at that congress in-- that I told you about in Switzerland--

Where you met your future husband?

--an American-- yeah. And his family is the one that sponsored me without letting me know and we without realizing it. And those are people I like. Not the ones that say, look what I did for you. They do everything. And they've sponsored others too. But even so, they sponsored me. And through them I made some good connections.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

So each one of your family need two sponsors?

Yeah. Yeah.

So you needed two--

And I think at least one-- I'm not sure if they each needed two. That I can't answer. But we're definitely-- and the first I think I mentioned was this Catholic priest from Hackensack, New Jersey. And then some interesting things happened as we arrived there. And it was a fascinating experience.

So you ended up in Boston?

And so we finally-- we stayed in New York for two weeks to get used to the country, to try to get me over still my ailments. And then we went to Boston. And that was also a terrible disappointment. But my family and I have made a pact, and I was very proud of that. We will forget everything, the past. Don't ever talk about how it was and how it was.

And we won't speak German anymore. We'll speak English, because we've learned. And since my father taught in English, I thought he was a wonderful-- he could speak English very well. Well, he didn't at all. But Mother, who had stayed when she was young, for one year in London, spoke English well.

Did your brother join that pact?

Well, he was still in Oxford.

So it was the three of you.

Yeah.

We're putting the past behind us.

Yeah.

We're going to live in the present.

Right.

How did that work?

Lonely.

Lonely?

Yeah. That was not easy, but I-- it didn't matter. I think I wrote that someplace too, although I wanted to do away with myself when I was in Italy. I still wonder what is out there for me. What will happen to me? How will I enjoy life after all? Or will I be able to? And who will I meet that I will be madly in love with and all that kind of stuff?

How did you ever get to marry then the person that sat next to you at that conference?

And what?

Didn't you say that that conference you went to in Switzerland--

Oh, that. No, I was going to marry him. And he went to Harvard and Harvard Medical School as time went on. And I always wanted to know how is he? How has he survived there? And at that point, it was called the Harvey Cushing society. So he-- but then that was after I got out west.

But anyway, we kept in touch. And he did marry someone else. Poor little adorable me, as I call it.

Were you crushed?

I was totally crushed.

So your father studied, passed the exam--

Yeah.

--and became a doctor here.

Yeah.

How did that work for him?

In Boston. And we finally found a place through my many trials and errors in a very good location. I don't know if you people know Boston. Commonwealth Avenue, which was the--

The big one.

The big one. And there was a place, an ancient, horrible apartment, where we lived upstairs. And down below was a place, a space for my father's office. But of course, he had very few-- and he still had a pupil.

And the pupil was able to get back to Vienna when it became free and bring his files back. So he had some patient files. So that was a big help and on and on and on. Didn't work too much. He didn't make an awful lot of money. And then--

Did they adjust to life in America?

Oh, better than I did.

Better than you?

They were just unbelievable people, because there were-- well, there were bunch of refugees, which I hated with a vengeance. And they stayed together, those refugees, like the Matzosinsel that I was talking about. They all smoosh them together. And I'm totally against that. I mean, spread out.

And found if you wanted to, it was very hard. Wasn't money. It was being Jewish. They had a quota in the colleges. I don't know if you realize that, in the eastern colleges. And so the beginning was totally rough, and for me too. And I started out in--

Did you have illusions about America before you came--

Yeah.

--that you wouldn't be bothered with being Jewish anymore?

Well, certainly. In fact, when I passed the Statue of Liberty on the way to the harbor into Hoboken, I said, gad, What a horrible thing that is to look at. But I must love it, because it means freedom, freedom, freedom. And then I realized it didn't. I learned the hard way.

And so I-- it was very different at the beginning. Once the war was over and we did move out west, there was a lot less of that. They have those big Jewish names here and all that. And they're part of the scene. But in Boston, no matter how much-- I think I knew four brothers in Boston.

I met them-- I mean four my parents' age. And they wore the traditional-- they came from Russia with-- and sold papers on the streets and started to make money, sort of-- not really like the Rothschilds, because they never learned anything. Married women who were already a little bit more educated. But they couldn't make the society at all.

I mean, they had gorgeous places, very close on Commonwealth Avenue. And I don't know, whatever. But they were still Jewish brothers who had used to come from Russia and sold newspapers. By that time, they were, I think, at least multibillionaires if not more.

And they had three children. I became very close to them. And they always were supposed to go to college. Didn't want to. They took their money, and one went to Yale and ended up marrying an Episcopal-- the father was a minister in the Episcopal Church for Indians, American Indians. And they had twins. So that was his Jewishness-- bang, away.

And the middle daughter loved skiing, and she was an excellent skier. So instead of going to wherever, Vassar, or wherever the parents wanted, she took her money, went to Europe, and Hitler was already there, and helped the ski teachers, the non-Jewish ski teachers get over the border to-- over Switzerland to come to this country. And they--

Skiing over the mountains?

Yeah. And the youngest one was supposed to go to whatever, he went there, too. But she took her money and became a skater, taught skating at Sun Valley. So that was another big thing.

How about your Jewishness?

Yeah.

What happened to it when you came to America?

Well, I've never liked it, ever. And then I realized-- and I've tried to write about that, that the Jewish people over here are more prejudiced than the non-Jewish people. You mean you go out with someone who is not Jewish? I said, well, we never asked him. It never occurred to me. But you can't go with someone who is not Jewish. You are Jewish, aren't you?

I said, maybe. I don't know. That was in Boston. So I didn't want to have it at all. Then I had an interesting experience about actually doing away with it and why.

With what?

Doing away with my Jewishness and why.

OK. Can you tell us?

[LAUGHS]

Let's see. I was not a citizen yet. And I was-- I had graduated from Radcliffe, as I told you, cum laude, and all this. And through-- other good connections, otherwise I don't think I could have done it, I was able to take graduate's course. I was thrilled with my studies.

But the war started. And I remember exactly where I was when the war started, Pearl Harbor. And I had to do something to pay back this country. And so I decided I'd try to go into the war work of sorts. And they were interviewing Radcliffe graduates for an aircraft plant called Chance Vought.

And what slot would you fit this? And since I was not exactly brilliant at anything, I was a-- said you become a draftsman. But before you become a draftsman, you have to go five months to the-- I can't think of the name now-- at LaGuardia Field, School of Engineering at LaGuardia Field, wear your monkey suit and learning about engineering and also take courses in my favorite subject, engineering and--

Physics.

And physics. And it was very funny. And mathematics. But what kind? The kind I did like, because it's like a--

Geometry?

Not the geometry, nothing to do with drawing. Well, it might not have been. Algebra, because to be algebra was sort of a little puzzle, if it didn't get too complicated like we had to do it in school in Vienna. I had to have integral, for heaven's sakes. I don't even know what it is anymore, so what good is that?

Anyway, so there were five months of that. And then when we finally got through that, we could wear our clothes again and get started at that Chance Vought. The only place to stay at were Quonset huts. So I had become friendly with a girl who was a Catholic girl from Worcester, a smaller town, provincial town. And her brother had been the first one on Guadalcanal in the war.

And so the first thing they asked us in these Quonset huts, which were hideous-- I don't know if you've ever even stepped-- God almighty-- is what is your religious preference or whatever? What is your religion, I think is the-- and she I looked at each other and decides none of their goddamn business.

And so we said, forget it. And I answered all the other questions. And then she and I decided we'd go to every single church available in that area and maybe a little beyond that-- Bridgeport was close-- to see what it was like. What's a Congregationalist? What's a Baptist? What's this? What's that? I mean, there are hundreds of different things. I've had my Jewish thing. She had been-- there's a Reform Jewish churches. I know one in Boston. Synagogues.

And so this was the first time I really stood my ground. So she brought me-- I don't care-- bring me any place. And Unitarian, of course, that appeals to any Jew. That's the easiest to get used to. So that was when I really did away with it.

Did you join any church?

No, because I decided-- I don't know what to join. Certainly not Jewish. I wanted to get rid of that. I mean, no doubt about it. I didn't want any more of it. I've had it. And Unitarian-- but God, I'm going to marry Catholic, so then what? I have no idea. And I'm going to wait till I get married. And that's what I did. I waited.

In the meanwhile I loved the Unitarian minister at a very nice area outside of Boston. I would go there by bus just to hear him and his wife. They were lovely, lovely people. And became very friendly with them. But he was Episcopal. And the Episcopal Church at Harvard-- he was going to college. I had finished college. Was not high Episcopal as they are here. Out here, some reason-- although they were. Not anymore.

And I went down the street at Cambridge and met a friend of mine from college, a college friend of mine. And she said, well, how are you doing? I said, well, as a matter of fact, right now I'm going to get married, and I don't know-- I haven't found anybody to marry us, because the only one I know is on a vacation, and we want to get married.

And I decided if I get married to Jack, I'm going to marry him now or forget the whole damn thing. And so I don't want to wait anymore. And do you happen to know a minister or somebody? Said yes, my husband is an Episcopal minister for students. So I went faithfully to the church to learn more about the faith and take a little-- I don't think they even ask you. They never asked me if I was Jewish or not, and that impressed me. And learn more about their religion. And then I was baptized.

So great. So here I am, a baptized Jew. And so then she became my-- and they were traveling around quite a bit. And they would come to see us all the time. We had quite a time together. And then they act the way they really liked to act and get drunk with my husband, who-- that was one of his problems.

And had a great time together. And then she became the godmother of my-- the daughter, one of the daughters that was born so suddenly and so forth and so on. So we have all these baptized children.

Did you feel that you paid back your gratitude to America?

Yes, because I have-- that's it. Because I have a monument from I had done. But this is a monument to all the workers in-- a Chance Vought aircraft. And I don't know if you know that Chance Vought was actually a marine plane that folded up the wings in an aircraft carrier. They fit on a aircraft carrier.

And I worked at the pilots' handbook department, where I had to hang over a drafting table 10 hours. It was absolutely miserable. I hated every minute of it. Then we was-- and I learned a lot of stuff from that time. I really had a good education from the Ivory tower down to that and what people do with their lives. And it was a fascinating education.

How long did you work there?

Till the war was over. And I got in there in '43, and the war ended when?

'45.

Yeah. And then started another miserable time for me. No marriage, no what to do, no place to live anymore. I had to

get back to this hideous apartment. And how to get out, how to make money to get out? I spent my last penny going on a ski trip.

And what happened after that?

I had no more money. And I had to save all my cards for my-- what do you call them-- the cards that you get for gas, for getting enough gas for the car-- to go skiing not very far, though, but still into-- and then someone who liked me very much had a brother where you could buy the material by the pound and they make it rather into a uniform, into a ski outfit. And so these are the ways I--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Your brother had eventually come over to America?

Well, he came, yeah, just before the war started. And he told us he was very unhappy at Harvard. Had no money and accused my father that he would pay for him, but he had to work at the International House doing dishes to make money and sell his stamp collection. He was a very unhappy guy.

Big adjustment from being pretty wealthy kids.

Was that part of the anger that he had toward your father?

I think that was part of the anger. And then against me, because he felt my father was privileging me and not him. And he-- and the one who created peace about my brother and me in a very, very interesting way was the man I really loved, the one I just lost this last summer. I still cry about that.

But he was a extremely brilliant guy. And my brother claims, you know, everything he-- his knowledge is unbelievable, my brother. He knows everything. And he was going to talk to Bob, my husband, and show him how brilliant, Erwin, he is, and that Bob isn't anything like he is. And then he came to me, my brother, and said, you know, this is the most wonderful man I've ever met.

So that coming from my brother-- and so we were supposed to be at ease again together, because when I was alone-- I was widowed at first, early on-- he would go back to our little village, which is another big story in itself, in Austria at the-- near Salzburg, yeah. And he would go there every year, because he loved it so much there, and all his memories, and blablabla.

And I said, oh, I would like to come too. I'm all alone. I would just love to go and stay there. And he said, no, I don't want you there. And if that doesn't hurt, I don't want you there.

Why was that?

Because he-- I think he-- turned out, he was jealous. He didn't want to be identified Jewish either. And he had married a wonderful girl. Without her, he couldn't exist. It was just one of those things. And he envied me, because I could make friends, and he never could. That was one aspect.

So by the time I finally did go there for the first time-- I had gone back to Vienna with my father the first time. That was a traumatic moment.

When was that?

That was to another-- he had to go to another congress in Italy. And I was still, at this point, I had started trying to do my business and working for the university. I was pretty busy. But he needed-- my mother had died totally unexpectedly two years before my father did. And she was 17 years younger than him, and no one expected her. And it was also hard.

So he needed somebody to go with. So he, lo and behold, invited me to go with him. And by that time, my kids were, I think, 12, 13, 14, something like that. And I had to make arrangements. I never had anybody to help me in the house ever. So I had to all of a sudden find someone, make arrangements, and get everything set up so I could be with him.

And I was gone five weeks. And that was the most exciting time for me that I can really think of, in spite of how we got along. And since I realized I couldn't do anything, in Italy on my own in the evening, I had all these things that the ladies were doing, and so I was part of it.

Because the minute I stepped out of that hotel-- it wasn't the best, but it was a lovely hotel. I just adored it. The minute I stepped out, I was surrounded by men. I mean, all you have to do is wear a skirt, and they come at you. They don't-- can't even see you or anything. And I couldn't do that. I mean, I couldn't fend them off, everyone.

So I came home, and I wrote about everything I'd seen. And there were some fascinating things. And then we got into Switzerland and Vienna.

What was it like to go to Vienna with your father?

Well, that-- it was already at the airport. And there Viennese have their own sense of humor and their own language, which I loved. And I could never speak it very well, because my mother came from Germany, where they speak another German, you know, maybe better. But the Viennese German, I just love it. And the minute I heard it, I started to cry already. Oh, what a pleasure to hear that.

And they were so much fun and so nice. And I was slightly younger, so they didn't-- just now they push me aside.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

What year was this?

Let's see. What year was it? Oh, right I was 42 or 43. So it was-- 40-- I think the congress was-- 43, I think, at this point.

So that would be around 1964?

Yeah. No, '63. Or was it in '62? I'm not as sure either, now I think. Yeah. Besides that, my mother was buried on my birthday, my 41st birthday. If that wasn't on top of all of these agonies I've lived through. But anyway, then we-- my father had already booked us into a hotel in one of the streets in Vienna which I love, and-- nothing as charming as the one in Italy which I adore.

And it was in walking distance to everything. And so all I could do is get out right away and look around and stood in the middle of the city that I remembered so well. By that time, things had been torn down and a new underground and it was a mess, Vienna, at that point. And I just stood there, and I cried, and I cried, and I cried, and I cried. It was all so different.

You were crying because it was different or because it was so familiar?

No, I think because it was-- all the beauty that I've loved so much had gone. And all the elegance had gone. And when I found out about it, I was proud of them. In order to defy the leftover Nazis and after the Anschluss was over, after the Germans were out, they wore their dirndls-- I'm sure you've heard of that-- their costumes in the city of Vienna.

But I mean, I would never have seen dead in that without gloves and a hat and so forth. But now this is to defy them to show we are the Austrians, and we dance in the streets, and we do all this kind of stuff. So that was quite interesting.

Did you at this point feel yourself Jewish at all?

I don't think I had-- only to do with Austrian.

That's what I wondered, whether you felt-- whether it felt eerie in any way to be back as a Jew after so many had been killed.

Well, this is what I didn't have. I think-- and I have friends here who would never, ever want to go back because of that. I didn't have it. I didn't have it because there have been so many good things. And then I still had a friend and a cousin and so forth and so on, people that were not Jewish in Vienna. So it was more the Austrian aspect of it.

So there were people there you were still in touch with after all those years?

Well, again, those-- the maids we had were so wonderful to us. And they wanted to come out to America and so forth. So we came back there. And I used to be the little nothing when I left. Actually, when I was 17, I didn't count, because of Hitler. But just before he came, I was 16, not quite old enough to go to all the fancy restaurants, only to one bar where you could wear your dirndl and special outfits for the men. So it had little to do with the Jewish thing.

How was it for your father to go back to Vienna?

Well, he had been back before several times with my mother at the time. And since he went back-- because they wanted him there at the university and so forth, he was again red carpet treatment. And he used to get that wherever I went with him. Very interesting.

Did you want to go back to the old house, the old neighborhood?

Yes, as a matter of fact, because it still was there. Now it doesn't stand anymore. And every time now, even, when I go back I go back to this-- the first place, the big apartment place.

District eight?

Yeah, the district-- no, that was eight, yeah, yeah. I remember everything we had. But the house had been bombed, our beautiful house. And so the only half of it was left, which is-- that was sad. And then the street-- that was sort of a corner street, Gregor-Mendel. Does that name mean anything to you?

Oh, and anyway, so there were beautiful poplar trees behind the house, all of them bombed out, big craters in the garden and stuff like that. So that wasn't the other-- but the other place was a art nouveau Jugendstil house. And that was never hurt, nothing ever happened to it. And so that still is the way it was.

And some of the palaces are still the way they were. And the opera house was all built up again. You wouldn't-- there is a difference. I know that.

Did they attempt to restore it to the way it had been?

Oh, they did it. Yeah. They did restore it, pretty much the way it was.

Lisa, what effect do you think all these experiences have had on your life?

Plus, a lot of plus. I call it miracles. I mean, everything that happened, really, all these things were miracles, including meeting my Bob, my husband. We have known each other 55 years. That's another story.

He married you. You had known each other for 55--

Yeah. I think at that point we'd known each other-- let's see. We got married in '88, and we met in '38. So that's 50 years. But we sent out invitations. It was a few announcements really, not invitations, because I insisted we go back where we met. And really romantic.

But one couple who was out here, we sent the announcements to, their answer was, what took you so long? I thought that was the best answer to anything.

You've been able to hold on to your romanticism all through your life, haven't you?

In spite of everything.

And the dreams tell me a few things too.

Yeah, I bet.

But it all makes me cry. And I've been in a deep, deep depression. And actually, that's why I went back for me. And when I was in this terrible depression-- to do with a man that I loved so dearly and-- we met, and he was going to get a divorce from his wife and his six children and his nine grandchildren. I said, you can't do that to someone. You're crazy. You're totally crazy.

Oh, yes, I love you. I love you. I love you. Well, it didn't work out. He went back and forth. And yes and no. It was awful. And so that was the end of that. And when it was the end, I got into a terrible depression, and I decided I've got to do something. I mean, I can't sit around here. What do my friends do with me? What do my-- God, my kids, they didn't want to see me like that.

So I decided I've got to do something. And so I thought, well, maybe I'll go back to the Sorbonne. Don't know anybody in Paris. Don't speak French well at all anymore. I'd forgotten it all. How about Vienna? Why not to Vienna? And everybody said, you're crazy, an old, lonely woman go to Vienna. They've got oodles of them. And also I had a-- had I then already? How old was I? I can't figure out the--

What year was this?

That was before I was 60. Yeah. So this is when I made the decision, then in 60. Yeah, and then I had to have another operation and treatment for that, and I was supposed to wait. And I was booked-- booked myself for a Greek tour, another cruise and so on and so on.

But wherever I went-- and they say, yeah, but don't go to Vienna. Too many old women there. And I said, well, I want to go see. And I did really. I had three names. That's all in Vienna. And God knows what happened to them. I had no idea. I hadn't kept up. And everything I touched, including the cruise, turned out positive for me.

I mean, I've met interesting people, although I could barely walk. It was after my first hip operation, before my second. And I had three operations in all. And one thing after another, plus other problems. So that's why I think my life has been a life of miracles, for which I'm very grateful.

And this meeting people, and I always say well, people seem to be attracted to me before they get to know me. Once they get to know me, they leave me. That's the end of that. Talking more about my girlfriends than boyfriends. But that's the way it is. Once they count my wrinkles-- if they ask me how old I was, I was like a Redwood tree. You can count the wrinkles. You can figure it out.

If you can still count them.

Yeah. That's right.

At your rate, I think you're doing wonderfully well. I want to go back just for a minute and hear the names of all your family and your relatives. We like to have a record of that.

OK. Where do I start.

Well, let's start with your parents and your grandparents and your brother.

OK. Mother was Eva. Father was Oskar, to my horror.

What was Mother's maiden name?

Heilbut, H-E-I-L-B-U-T, like the fish. And my father was Hirsch. This was another joke. Do you want me-- pronounced Hirsch, H-I-R-S-C-H. But you have to say-- God, that's annoying. If you don't say Professor Doctor Who's-he-blah, nobody knows who you're talking about. And I had to have an appointment with a well-known physician who was to check my breast thing.

And I knew him when he was a nothing in high school, when he went to the same class my brother did. And I played ping-pong with him or taught him how. And I had to see him at the Allgemeine Krankenhaus. I don't know if that means anything to you. If it doesn't, it should, cause a lot of things were going on there. Famous physicians came out of there.

And so I had to meet him there rather than his private office. And so I-- there's no one around to ask. And so I finally found a nurse or whoever she was. And I said to her, I said, you know where a Dr. Gitsch-- his name was Gitsch. Where's Dr. Gitsch's office? I'm supposed to see him.

Who? What are you talking about? She left. I'd never heard of such a person. Came somebody else finally after half an hour. By the time I was really late. And I said, I want to see this Dr. Gitsch. She said, do you perchance mean Professor Doctor whatever his first-- I can't-- Edward Gitsch. I said, yeah, that's the one.

If you don't say that first no-- he doesn't exist. Can you believe? And so Vienna hasn't changed all that much.

No way. [LAUGHS]

No way. So and--

So let's see. Let's get your brother's full name you mentioned? [LAUGHS]

His name is Erwin, Erwin, E-R-W-I-N. And then he puts an O for Oskar-- in spite of the fact he can't stand my father, he still holds on to something there-- Hirsch, the same.

And your grandparents?

And my grandparents-- which ones?

Well, all of them would be nice. Just for the record.

Well, the interesting one is the one who was done away in the Holocaust. Her name was Omega-- Omega, the last letter in the Greek alphabet. And Alpha-- no, yeah that's what it was. And she was called Nodel. Why? I still don't know. N-O-D-E-L. No idea.

So nobody called her by her last name. But she was Nodel or Lala, L-A-L-A, la la la, la la la, but Lala. So those were all the names for that grandmother. And she was just lovely. And she was not a pretty woman, but she was terribly sweet. And I think of all the noses that were in my family, none of them were Jewish noses, except Grandma Lala's was. And that's the one I inherited, of all the noses I could have had.

That's just to remind you that you're Jewish.

Exactly. And Grandfather was Julius-- Julius. My mother's-- my father's mother was Julie, not Julius Julia. I think it would have been Julia. And my grandfather's name-- I can't remember now his first name.

And your mother's maiden name? Her last name?

Yeah, I think I mentioned, Heilbut, H-E-I-L-B-U-T. And my grandmother's on the other side was-- I think it was Sonn, like S-O-N-N. And I have a family tree that goes way back to the 16th, 17th, something. And then that family--

And can you give us also the names of the relatives from Norway?

Yeah, let me think. The cousin was Rolph. Not Ralph, but Rolph, R-O-L-P-H. The other son that I don't remember was Eric, E-R-I-C. The father was-- Seligmann was their name, the whole family. And what was his name? Right now I can't think. It's on tip of my tongue. And her name was-- this is really just too many names right now.

Were-- were you able to find out after the war what happened to them?

Not exactly. And that's what got me. When I tell you about my experience in the Holocaust Museum. In fact, I like to send them my contribution. I didn't this time. But so--

Were you saying something about the museum? Were you trying to search for them there?

I was trying to search for something there, possibly a name.

In Washington, DC?

In Washington, DC. And it was very difficult for me to park at that point, because you know what Washington, DC is like. And we had a friend. And she took us around. And she stopped specially. I said, I just want to run it and see if I can find out about the name and where is the list. I understood there was a big list that you could see.

I got there. I was going to ask the receptionist. And I totally-- I'm going to do it now again-- totally blocked out, and I cried so hard I couldn't bring out a word. I went back to the car. I couldn't talk. And I could never, ever go back. I was just totally devastated.

That's how this Holocaust affects me. Pretty, pretty, pretty awful not to know the answers and loving them so much. So that was that. And I don't know why I can't remember the name of the parents of the Selig people.

Excuse me. I hope that's not on it. Is it on?

It is.

Oh, dear.

That's OK. We have four minutes left.

[Sneeze]

Lisa, thank you very much for sharing your story with us. We appreciate your honesty and your candor and your wonderful spirit and your belief in miracles.

I don't know why I cry. Forgive me. I'll be all right. Are there--