

My Survival

A GIRL ON
SCHINDLER'S
LIST

A memoir by
Rena FINDER with Joshua M. Greene

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October 1944-

AUSCHWITZ DEATH CAMP

IT WAS BITTER COLD the night German police forced me and my mother into a cattle car and sent us from Plaszow, Poland, to Auschwitz, the largest of all Nazi killing centers. The train was made up of two cattle cars. There were 150 women prisoners crammed into each of the two cars. I was fourteen years old, one of the youngest. We arrived at Auschwitz late at night. Guards slammed open the

doors of the cattle car and yelled at us to jump out. Then they marched us into a long wooden barrack with rows of benches along the walls.

“Take off all your clothes!” the guards shouted. “You will be brought back here to collect your things later—after your shower.”

The guards shoved us into a room maybe twenty feet by twenty feet. It was dark, but we could see pipes running the length of the ceiling. Back home in Krakow, we had heard scary rumors about what happened to Jews in concentration camps. What kind of shower was this? Were we going to die?



If you were not there in the death camp at Auschwitz, you cannot imagine it, and I cannot truly describe it. Still, for most of my adult life, I have been trying as best I can to teach about the Holocaust in middle-grade schools and colleges, in church groups and synagogues. Like many other survivors, I feel an

obligation to tell my story again and again. The Holocaust was the scientifically designed, state-sponsored murder of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany and its allies. The Holocaust should never be forgotten and should never happen again—but how can we protect against that? You, dear reader, can help. One person with courage to stand up for the innocent can make a big difference.

I should know. I'm alive thanks to someone who refused to stand by and do nothing. His name was Oskar Schindler.