

Face Forward: Moments of Youth in the Third Reich.

A New Play by Brendon Votipka

Commissioned by
The Institute for Jewish Christian Understanding
Of Muhlenberg College, Allentown PA

Premiered at the IJCU's "Youth and Prejudice" Conference,
December 2009.

"The Nazis today aren't coming in uniform. Prejudice is sneaky."
-Manfred Bahmen,
Former Hitler Youth born in Saxony, Germany 1930.
Interviewed by the Playwright.

CAST:

REBECCA

MARIAN

ERNST

MAN- David, Marian's Father, Mr. Schmidt

WOMAN- Sara, Marian's Mother, Christine

The production requires only a few chairs and costume pieces to indicate a change in character.

This is a "collage play," the scenes and monologues fall like scraps of pictures, diary entries, and newspaper clippings.

Music popular in 1930's Germany should augment transitions. Maybe the sounds of Nazi ceremonies. Maybe the Hebrew prayers from holidays. A jarring blend.

The scenes take place in Germany between 1934 and 1938 in the hometowns of Ernst (Saxony), Marian (Berlin), and Rebecca (Nuremberg).

Prologue:

(a slash / indicates the next person begins speaking. It overlaps intensely.)

REBECCA

I remember the first time I felt Jewish.

ERNST

I remember when my brother joined the cause.

MARIAN

I remember when I realized my parents didn't have all the answers.

REBECCA

We live in Nuremberg / just me and my parents in a little apartment. And my cousin Benjamin came to visit and he was telling us all about how the Jews needed to organize because there was increasing importance for a united effort on behalf of our people. We're less Jewish than my aunts and uncles families. They all spend more time at temple than we do. We celebrate the holidays, but I don't always know what they're about. I'm more interested in all the delicious things we eat.

ERNST

Nobody cried when David left for the SS. / We were proud. We trust he'll return to us. David is invincible and I want to be like him. When he was my age he was much taller than me. But I'll grow. While the German army and navy is full of strong men, the SS has even stronger men, like my brother. I'm proud to be German and I'm glad I live in the country. My little town is the kind of place you see in postcards. Great political leaders like Adolf Hitler and others like to vacation here.

MARIAN

I was trying to do my homework /and I was stuck on this math problem. My Father usually helps me with homework. Father looks at this problem, but he has no idea what to tell me. I was staring at him in shock, because he always has an answer. Then on Sunday, we were walking home from our church service and I was trying to recall how this bible verse went, my Father couldn't tell me. He always had the answers, but not anymore. Are the questions getting that much harder?

MAN

Germany faced a time of great political change and upheaval in the 1930's.

WOMAN

As many places have in many times.

MAN

Hitler took the stage as Führer of a Third Reich. He claimed that he would restore the glory of the German people on the world stage.

WOMAN

But that's not what this play is about.

MAN

No, not really.

WOMAN

Influential men were busy making influential decisions that changed the course of history.

MAN

But that's not what this play is about.

WOMAN

No, not really.

MAN

Hitler's Nazi Party would unleash a holocaust of death across Europe, like none the world can remember seeing.

WOMAN

But that's not what this play is about. Not really.

MAN

Change only happens in the minds and hearts of people. Not in laws or legislation.

WOMAN

Power and Fear can rule the lives of everyone.

MAN

And that's kind of what this play is about.

WOMAN

It's really a play about some kids trying to grow up.

MAN

And they happen to be living in Nazi Germany.

WOMAN

Like everyone, they have stories to tell.

SCENE 1:

REBECCA

I never thought about my culture growing up. I'm German, but my family is also Jewish. We celebrate the Jewish holidays. My father says prayers, tells some stories, and each holiday ends with great food. But my aunt's and uncles families are much more Jewish than us. We don't even go to synagogue regularly. I never thought about it growing up.

But recently, this question of being Jewish is everywhere and it's all anyone can talk about. Now, I definitely know that I'm Jewish and it's apparently something I need to be aware of. There is no choice to ignore it.

Whenever I walk down the streets to run errands for my mother, I see these posters. Horrible cartoons of Jewish people. They show Jews as fat evil monsters steeling from Germans. They show Jews as criminals.

Maybe I don't know what it means to be Jewish, but I do know that I'm not what those posters show. I have this anxiety that someone will see me walking past a poster and point and say. "Her! That's a Jew, get her!" It's scary. Do strangers see these cartoons in their heads when they see me on the street?

SCENE 2:

MARIAN

I live in Berlin with my parents and baby sister. Berlin is one of the most important cities in the world. There are always things happening and things to talk about.

I go to a private school, and I'm very lucky to have good teachers and classmates from well off families. I used to have Jewish girls in my classes. I didn't notice everything that was wrong with them because I was just a kid.

When the Jewish children in my class finally stopped attending, I was relieved. My teacher Frau Strand, always said that the Jewish kids smelled weird, and they dragged the pace of our class, even Frau Strand said so. I feel better off without them.

SCENE 3:

(ERNST is shining his boots. DAVID supervises.)

ERNST

I'm glad you could be here David. It means a lot.

DAVID

It's opportune that my one week leave from SS service corresponded with your graduation to the Sr. Hitler Youth. It's a big day.

ERNST

I wish you could have been at my church confirmation too.

DAVID

This is more important. *(Indicating the boot.)* You shouldn't ignore the heel. The whole town will be there. You are ready for the ceremony?

ERNST

The Jr. Hitler Youth was fine and all, but I can't wait for all the activities we get to do now. The camping trips and seminars. *(DAVID takes off his boots and hands them to Ernst to polish.)* What's it like being in the SS?

DAVID

It's a serious and important duty. And that makes you feel fulfilled. I could have been part of the Army, like everyone else, but I'm more valuable because I joined the SS. My comrades are all outstanding.

ERNST

I'm sure you work harder.

DAVID

Let me hear you speak your speech! You must recite it perfectly for the ceremony.

ERNST

All the other boys will be saying it along with me. I just have to get through it.

DAVID

That's the wrong attitude. Each one of you must say it perfectly. You have to know it by heart. That's the only way to be the best. You have to watch out for other boys and their attitudes. If they act lazy or weak they will bring you down. You must decide to be the best.

ERNST

I will be the best.

DAVID

What will you do if you're running exercises say, and one of your friends isn't up to par?

ERNST

Help him to be better.

DAVID

The only way to do that is by showing him his weakness. Push it in his face. Remember when we stayed on Uncle Hans farm and he made us help with the Harvest. Our cousin Kurt was lazy and broke the machinery, so Uncle Hans let me use the machinery while Kurt had to do the same amount of work by hand. He learned the same valuable lesson that all my comrades learn in training. You have to push the weak ones to the ground. If they don't measure up- then forget them, they don't deserve to exist. Some of them will finally find a backbone. Then you've helped. Now let me hear your speech. (*ERNST hands DAVID his newly polished boots and stands forward to the audience.*)

ERNST

Young people stand here
On the threshold of their lives.
We enter joyfully
Through the open door.

DAVID

(*David adjusts Ernst's shoulders, taps his arm higher to the correct position. Raises his chin. Then sits down.*) Start over.

ERNST

Young people stand here
On the threshold of their lives.
We enter joyfully
Through the open door.
We face our fate courageously,
For while fate defeats the cowardly,
God helps the brave!
We the youth are the bridge
From ancestors to grandchildren.

Now let the banners fly...

SCENE 4:

MARIAN

I read the newspapers. My friends don't concern themselves with the news but I've decided it's good to know something about the world. It makes me more cultured. I want a very intelligent husband some day and knowing something about the world's affairs will make me extra appealing. My parents are so backwards, they don't keep up.

Last month, Hitler and the Nazi party met in Nuremberg to pronounce new laws about the Jews. People are complaining about the behavior of the Jews, they are getting in the way of our progress, so the government has now passed laws for the protection of German blood and German honor. Jews make it harder for Germans to make money at good jobs. They are against the community.

The laws also outlaw marriages between Germans and Jews. Why anyone would want to marry a Jew in the first place is beyond me.

SCENE 5:

REBECCA

Adolf Hitler came to my hometown for the Nazi Party meeting at the Reichstag, and he pronounced new rules about Jews in Germany. My father's friends who are doctors and lawyers are getting their jobs taken away from them. My father is a locksmith, so he gets to keep his work. I'm not allowed to go to the library, the beach or the public parks anymore. But I still get to go to school. My father says I'm lucky. I don't feel lucky.

I just started high school and it seems like everyone is against me. Grade school was really problem free for me. I was one of the smarter girls in class, not the very smartest, but I did well. And I'm a fast runner, and I have a nice singing voice, and I'm fairly talented at drawing. But I don't feel good about anything anymore. I don't sing, and I never draw. I do feel like I should keep practicing my athletics, I never know when I'm going to need to run.

SCENE 6:

MARIAN

Mother, why don't we have a picture of Adolf Hitler in our living room?

MARIAN'S MOTHER

Well, I don't know. Why should we?

MARIAN

It's just that I notice at my friend's house they often have a red wax portrait of the Führer above their sofas or in their dining room. It's weird to not have one. Are you and Father against the government?

MARIAN'S MOTHER

No, Marian, your father is not against the government. Adolf Hitler is popular right now, and I'm sure he must be for very good reasons, I

just don't see any reason to worship him the way others do. Ever since you were born, it has been one political party and then another. Your father works very hard at his job and he doesn't have time to get attached to politics. But it does seem that Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party is really making their presence known.

MARIAN

Well I am proud to be German.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

I'm very proud to be German too.

MARIAN

Would it be alright if we got a picture of him, even to hang up when guests come over? I just don't want my friends to think I'm weird when they come over after Youth Meetings.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

There's no harm in it. Sure Marian. If it will make you feel better, we can put a picture of the Führer above the sofa.

SCENE 7:

ERNST

Nothing is more fun than Hitler Youth. I look forward to it even more than I do school. I'm smart and I used to want to be a teacher, study history, but even my favorite subject is boring in comparison to the Youth group. The past year and a half has been great. When we're lucky, in the summer months, our leaders take us out on these camping trips. We row these big boats out to an island where we gather wood and build shelter. Everyone has a job and place. I volunteer to chop the wood for our bonfires. It's the best job. I love the way the hatchet feels as it crushes through the logs.

I'm getting stronger. Not as strong as my brother David, but stronger. I can tell the difference in myself, so I work harder. And the girls in town notice how I've been excelling.

SCENE 8:

REBECCA

I'm sitting in Class and my teacher, Mr. Schmidt is asking us questions from the reading we did the night before. I'm raising my hand. And he calls on someone else. Every question he asks, I raise my hand. He doesn't call on me. Mr. Schmidt taught my mother and my older sister, but I've only been in his class for a month and I can't tell why he never calls on me. I know the answer to the question and I'm so fed up, I speak without being called on. "Mr. Schmidt, I know the answer."

MR. SCHMIDT

Keep quiet, Rebecca! You are a guest in our country.

REBECCA

I don't know what to do.

I'm a guest in this country? I'm German just like everyone else in my class. I always have been.

I stay quiet the rest of the day. I don't have any answers. It feels like class will never end.

MR. SCHMIDT

Wait after Rebecca, I will speak to you.

REBECCA

I wonder if maybe he'll apologize.

MR. SCHMIDT

Rebecca, From now on you will sit in the front of the class. To my side over there. I don't want you to contaminate the Aryan children. You will not speak out of turn again. Do you understand?

REBECCA

Yes, Sir.

MR. SCHMIDT

You will only participate when I instruct you to. My classroom is a place of learning and our progress will not be stopped by your poor behavior.

SCENE 9:

CHRISTINE

You look so nice in your uniform Ernst.

ERNST

It's the same uniform all the boys wear.

CHRISTINE

Yours fits so well. You're stronger than the other boys.

ERNST

I don't like to brag.

CHRISTINE

There's nothing wrong with being the best. I'm proud when I see you all doing your exercises in the square. Everything comes easy for you.

ERNST

I try my hardest, as we all should. My brother is such a good soldier. He's always the first, fastest, finest in the group. It's a lot to live up to.

CHRISTINE

I think you're the best. Doesn't that matter to you?

ERNST

Of course.

CHRISTINE

All the girls at school talk about you.

ERNST

Do they?

CHRISTINE

You never show any interest in them, which only makes them talk more.

ERNST

Let them talk.

CHRISTINE

As long as you're the best, I'm sure they will.

ERNST

Are they jealous of you?

CHRISTINE

Because I live next door to you, and you walk me home from school before going to Youth meetings? I'm sure of it!

ERNST

Well let them be jealous. You're my favorite.

CHRISTINE

Really Ernst? You aren't just saying that to flatter me? You're everything I want. You're strong and filled with determination and German spirit. You're almost perfect!

ERNST

Almost?

CHRISTINE

If only you were blonde and blue eyed like your brother, you'd be the perfect Aryan German. But don't worry Ernst, I still like you and I'm glad you feel the same about me. Thanks for walking me home.

SCENE 10:

REBECCA

One time each week, we all go to the auditorium to hear a speech. It is played over the radio and is usually by someone quite famous, often Hitler.

Me and the other Jewish students have to sit in the back, totally separated from the rest of the girls, on our own bench. It's mandatory. There is no way to get out of it. And in every propaganda speech, the speaker says something against the Jews. And every time the whole school turns around to see our reactions.

You can't let them know they're winning. You have to defend yourself. You have to maintain your dignity any way you can.

SCENE 11:

MARIAN

I worry my family isn't German enough. I go to meetings for the League of German Girls when I can. It's very fun and very interesting. My friends understand me much better than my Mother and Father. My parents grew up in such a different time. How could they understand?

MARIAN'S FATHER

I don't want this picture above the sofa anymore.

MARIAN

Can't we keep it up? We'd be the only house without one.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Things are becoming so complicated. We don't need politics in our home.

MARIAN

Papa, please. Keep it up for company. What would my friends think?

MARIAN'S FATHER

I guess it's important to keep up appearances.

MARIAN

(Addressing the audience again) Why can't he be like my friends' fathers? No one listens to me. My mother doesn't and my father doesn't. They're too busy arguing. They didn't used to fight, at least I don't think they did. They could have been hiding it. I feel like everyone in my family is good at hiding.

SCENE 12:

(SARA and REBECCA "Practice")

SARA

You smell awful. I don't want to be anywhere near you, you stink like every other Jew. Our country needs to get rid of you and everyone like you. You are an evil snake feeding on everything good our country could have. You're selfish and greedy. Everyone knows it. You are wicked.

Rebecca, you're showing!

REBECCA

Try again Sara.

SARA

You're not even human. You vermin. Your nose is hooked and your eyes bulge out. I can tell you smell like filthy garbage from just looking at you.

You're showing Rebecca, I can see it behind your eyes.

REBECCA

But my mouth doesn't show it anymore, right?

SARA

No, you're doing fine with your mouth.

REBECCA

Try again Sara. I can do it.

SARA

You are so evil, I have to pray whenever you're near me for fear that I will burn in hell by standing in your very presence.

That's it Rebecca! I didn't see it at all. You did really well.

REBECCA
Thanks.

SARA
Can you try me?

REBECCA
I don't know if I can practice anymore this afternoon.

SARA
Come on Rebecca, you're better at it than me. My hands and legs still shake.
I can keep my face blank, but my legs just buckle, it makes it impossible to walk down the street. Just try.

REBECCA
We're going to get you. All of the boys in the Hitler Youth are going to get you as you go to school. We'll beat you to the ground. And no one will miss you.
I can see it in your hands, Sara. Take a deep breath.

SARA
More.

REBECCA
More?

SARA
I have to get better at it. We can't let the kids at school have the satisfaction of hurting us. If we get good enough, maybe it will stop.

REBECCA
You are so worthless. Your family is a guest in this country. You don't belong here. The only place you belong is dead in graveyard. You're the worst kind of Jew, a Jew that doesn't know she's a Jew.

SCENE 13:

ERNST
I don't know any Jews. Here in the countryside, a lot of people are farmers, and Jews get in the way of that kind of work. They dwell in cities and try to take money from our government. They aren't strong enough for agricultural work. I'm sure I wouldn't like them if I did know one. They're among the pathetic and feeble people who are trying to hurt Germany. They show us in science class how the Jews are degenerating our culture, they are making our blood impure and bringing diseases. All throughout history they have been doing so. Anyone that is not making Germany better should go.

SCENE 14:

REBECCA

I had a nightmare. But when I woke up and it wasn't a nightmare at all. I've just been dreaming about everything that's happened the last few days.

All over Germany and Austria there were riots for two days. I stayed in at home, sleeping on the floor of my parents' room. I felt like a child to be so afraid, but the destruction is horrible. In the night, homes and businesses were destroyed. The Synagogue we go to was burnt to the ground by the SS soldiers. They say every synagogue in Germany is destroyed. In some cities the Hitler youth were involved in the attacks. Boys younger than me.

The watch shop and the bakery on our street have the windows bashed in. Further into town you really see the destruction. As you walk around you find pieces of glass, shards of the windows from the homes of Jews. My mother and father are trying to count how many of their friends have been taken away. They're calling it Kristallnacht. The Night of Broken Glass.

Apparently, some polish Jew killed a diplomat and the Nazis sent word that it was time to attack.

I don't want to go to school anymore, but my Father says I have to. He thinks the routine is important to making me feel safe and normal.

A girl at my school was talking about Kristallnacht and said thousands and thousands of Jews were taken away on trains. To go work at camps. But we don't really know what happens there.

My father is a locksmith, and builds locks for his job. I always felt safe at home because he has the best locks on our house. Those locks let me sleep well every night.

Now I'm afraid that locks aren't going to keep the Nazis out. Locks won't help.

SCENE 15:

MARIAN'S FATHER

We have to do something. Someone has to. I believe in my heart that the Klein family, and other Jews won't survive unless people, people like us, normal people with a little power in our reach to help, must do something. It's what God would want us to do.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

God? You're making this decision because of God? They don't believe what we believe.

MARIAN'S FATHER

I need to believe that there are people who will do good and prevent the suffering of others.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

I'm sure I don't want anyone to suffer.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Then this is what we will do.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

We don't know that they're suffering! Each newspaper says something different. All we know is that some people are going to camps and ghettos to work. Everything else is just a rumor. It can't be that bad.

MARIAN'S FATHER

But the destruction and disappearances in the last several weeks- What if things are truly bad?

MARIAN'S MOTHER

What if they are? If they are, then our family will be in danger. Are you going to do that? To me and the girls? They will catch you in this stupid plan.

MARIAN'S FATHER

They won't.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

What if they do? And they take us away and our lives are ruined? The kind of danger you'll be putting us in...

MARIAN'S FATHER

Fear can't stop us. I have a faith that tells me not to fear.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

I can't let you do this to us.

MARIAN'S FATHER

You're my wife. The mother of my children. I hope you'll follow my decision.

MARIAN'S MOTHER

We can't afford the risk.

MARIAN'S FATHER

We can't afford not to do this. What kind of world will our children grow up in?

MARIAN'S MOTHER

One in which they're safe.

MARIAN

Father, I agree with Mother.

MARIAN'S FATHER

This is not your decision Marian. This is for the best.

MARIAN

You don't care about us! You don't care about me or Mother or anyone.

MARIAN'S FATHER

I care about you very much. I love you Marian. But I also care about people I see in danger.

MARIAN

They're not people.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Mr. Klein and I went to school together. You know his wife and his sons. They are good smart boys.

MARIAN

Everyone knows that the Jews are a problem. It's on the radio and the newspapers and everyone has been talking about it for years, Father. I've learned about it in school. You are so backwards! You don't understand anything! You're awful!

MARIAN'S FATHER

A daughter doesn't speak to her Father that way.

MARIAN

Well I do. Because you listen to no one but yourself!

SCENE 16:

REBECCA

These girls in my class keep leaving copies of this magazine *Der Sturmer*, on my desk before class. It's a magazine by Julius Streicher filled with cartoons showing how evil Jews are. My dad said it's been around since before I was born, but now it's everywhere. And the pictures are more gross than the posters, they show Jews killing children, and Jews killing Jesus, and they sometimes show evil Jewish monsters attacking naked Aryan women. I can't help but open the magazine and stare at the pictures and the articles.

And I'm angry because I'm not those things, and my family is not those things. And I can see that it's all a lie. But I doubt myself. I'm not those things, but maybe I am not good enough.

SCENE 17:

CHRISTINE

Me and Elsa and Helen all have a little club, because we have the most handsome boys to walk us home.

ERNST

Are you not friends with Sonya anymore?

CHRISTINE

Sonya is a problem. Helen's mother told us that Sonya's father used to be a communist, and everyone agrees that we just don't need that kind of influence polluting our lives. She is so backwards. The way she dresses and the way she talks.

ERNST

I always thought she was nice. But, I didn't know about her father.

CHRISTINE

You wouldn't ever be interested in a girl like that, would you?

ERNST

I suppose not.

CHRISTINE

What are you saying Ernst?

Could you really befriend the daughter of a communist? That's not at all like you. You're the boy who knows everything in class and you don't see what an awful person Sonya is? She doesn't even attend the League of German Girls Meetings regularly with the rest of us!

ERNST

You used to be so close to her.

CHRISTINE

To think I played dolls at her house. With her father's affiliations. It makes me sick.

ERNST

You should encourage her to attend meetings instead of just dismissing her.

CHRISTINE

Her father is against everything we stand for and that means she can't really be trusted. I don't like this attitude, Ernst. It's really anti-German and it's very unattractive. You need to consider what's best for your country. Just because you're from a perfect German family doesn't mean that your immune to all of the disgusting influences of the corrupt.

ERNST

You're right. Of course you're right.

CHRISTINE

If you ever speak to her again, I'll never speak to you again and I'll tell everyone why, including our families.

ERNST

I just didn't know about Sonya is all. You don't have to worry.

CHRISTINE

Our country needs strong men with strong morals. I want the boy with the right point of view.

ERNST

Well you've got him.

SCENE 18:

MARIAN

Papa, I'm sorry I raised my voice. I know that you care about me.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Thank you, Marian. You are my daughter and I love you. You should listen to me.

MARIAN

But I still think you're wrong to try to hide Jews in our house.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Sometimes the world asks difficult things of us.

MARIAN

But everyone says—

MARIAN'S FATHER

Sometimes you can't listen to everyone else. You have to choose to listen to yourself. I've made a choice and our family will follow what I say.

MARIAN

I don't understand why you have to be a hero.

MARIAN'S FATHER

No. Not a hero. Hiding a family in our home while families are being deported and the SS is combing the streets to capture them takes bravery, but it's not heroic. It's not for show. Imagine what it would be like if our family were in their situation. If we were going to be murdered for no reason, just because of hatred towards who our ancestors are.

MARIAN

Aren't you putting us in their shoes by deciding to hide them?

MARIAN'S FATHER

Yes. It's the only decent thing to do.

MARIAN

None of my classmate or friend's families are doing this. Are you saying they're all indecent? Because that is ridiculous.

MARIAN'S FATHER

Each of us does what we believe we must do to get by. Sometimes things are chosen for us. But sometimes we get to make a choice. I've made a choice to see these Jews in our country as human beings in danger. Even if the consequences are dangerous, I'm asking you to also make that choice.

SCENE 19:

ERNST

I'm the strongest boy in my section of the Hitler Youth. I grab the oars and I'm the strongest rower in the boat. I tie the tightest knots. I chop wood twice as fast when we build a fire on our camping trips. My leaders praise me. I have the prettiest girl in school as my sweetheart, and she thinks I'm the best. I'm from a great family. But I get mad at myself for not feeling like the best at all times.

High school is almost over and I can do whatever I want when I graduate. All the opportunities in front of me. I have the highest marks in class so I could go to University, if I don't, then I'll be in the army serving Germany, which I would be proud to do. But I could also follow in David's footsteps and join the SS. The elite service to the Nazi Party. I would get so much respect. I would have so much power.

People are always telling me how to behave, how to stand like a soldier, how to be the best German I can be. And as far as anyone can tell these things come relatively easy for me. It's easy enough to fit in if you don't choose to stand out.

I feel like the pride of my family and my people, but also, sometimes I feel like I'll never measure up. If they make a poster of me and tell little boys, "this is what you must aspire to be" I can look the part. But will I ever feel it? Other boys feel it. I can see that they feel it. They feel the pride. There is nothing to be afraid of if you are the best German you can be.

My only fear is that they'll find me out. And I haven't even done anything wrong.

SCENE 20:

REBECCA

I don't know what I did to deserve this. If I was born to a different family. Or never born at all. I don't mean that. I love my parents. But I don't even think they know what to do anymore. I sometimes think they're more afraid than me. And that's scary. But you can't let them see it.

And I'm learning to keep my face and body still. Take control of the only thing I can really control. Myself. I'll survive this. I don't know that much about the Jewish people, not really, the synagogue I would have gone to for services and classes has been destroyed, but I know we're a people who survives. That's what I'm told. They might be able to destroy the locks on our doors, but they can't destroy my spirit.

SCENE 21:

MARIAN

Now the Klein family is moving in with us. How can they be doing this to us? Don't they know how much danger they are putting us in? The SS is going around, taking these people, especially the men, away on trains- but they get to take their things with them in suitcases. They usually get notices ahead of time. I don't want anything bad to happen to the Kleins. But I'm just terrified of being treated like a Jew if they find out we're helping some.

The little wax portrait of the Führer we hung above our sofa still hangs there. I was going to take it down because it felt like a lie to keep it there while we were hiding these Jews. But my mother told me we should keep it up. For protection.

Face

That little portrait of Adolf Hitler helps my Mother feel safer. I'm not sure anymore.

SCENE 22:

WOMAN

Kristallnacht was only the beginning of the organized exploitation, torture, and planned annihilation of the Jewish people in Germany and all of Europe.

MAN

By 1939, Germany had annexed Austria, occupied Czechoslovakia, and invaded Poland. England and France declared war on Germany and World War Two began.

WOMAN

During the Holocaust, more than six million human beings were deliberately and systematically murdered because they were Jews.

ERNST

I can't forget how powerful I felt the day I joined the SS and began protecting my country's honor.

MARIAN

I can't forget the night the SS came to our house, searched, and left empty-handed. I can't forget the look on the Klein's family faces. They were so grateful.

REBECCA

I can't forget the moment they came for us.

END OF PLAY