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The purpose of this guide is to help educators find different ways to present material about the role of women as heroes during the Holocaust. With much of the prior emphasis on men as heroes, the role that many women played is often overlooked. The women portrayed in this project are a representation of the many different women who were heroes-the known and the unknown. Please encourage your students to research the women or others involved in the rescue efforts of the Holocaust and try to make connections to our world today. How can we honor these people who risked so much to help others? By making sure that events like these never happen again.

Most of these activities are geared towards 5th through 8th grade, but can be adapted to lower or higher grades, as needed. Please use the activities included in this guide as a resource, and adapt them to use in your own classroom.

1. Prior to the introduction to the “Girl Power” cards, ask the students to do a “QuickWrite”. Pose this question to the students: “What is the definition of a hero- be specific? When you think of a hero, who comes to mind? What does it take to be a hero?” Students should write a paragraph or more on the topic. From there, the teacher could begin a class discussion on what a hero is. Try to come to a class consensus on a definition, and write it out on the board or on a piece of paper.
  - Extension questions: Have you ever had a chance to be a hero by this definition? Do you know someone who is considered to be a hero by this definition? Describe the circumstances.

After the “Girl Power” cards are presented and discussed, go back to the class definition of a hero, and initially, ask students if the women presented on the cards were heroes according to the definition. If the answer is no, ask the students if they think the person(s) was/were indeed hero(es). Then ask if the class definition need to be modified, and modify it as needed. When students are happy with the definition, ask them to identify other times in history when people acted in a similar manner, therefore making them heroes by the class definition. Encourage the class to try to come up with a list of at least 10-20 people in history that would be considered to be heroes. Allow them time to look up information, if need be, or assign homework for them to come up with a mini list (3-5 people) and then add them all to a class list. There could even be another extension of a class discussion/debate of the list of heroes.

For the lesson- ask the students to answer the questions as fully as possible:

- a. How far would you go to help out a member of your family? Would you be willing to get in trouble to help them out? Or get hurt in the process of protecting them?
- b. How far would you go to help out a friend? Would you be willing to get in trouble to help them out? Or get hurt in the process of protecting them?
- c. How far would you go to help out a stranger? Would you be willing to get in trouble to help them out? Or get hurt in the process of protecting them?
- d. At what point would you stop trying to help someone else out?
- e. Ask the students what a hero is- have them write what they believe the definition of a hero is.

Ask the students to write the answers to the above questions on a piece of paper, and put it away for now, or the teacher could collect the paper from each student.

On the board, write the definition of a hero from a dictionary. Ask the students if they agree with the definition. Modify the definition based upon what the student consensus is.

Then show students the “Girl Power” cards, presenting information. If students have little prior knowledge of the Holocaust, the teacher should front load basic information about the Holocaust to insure understanding of material, and the importance of the resistance movement. (The attached Holocaust timeline might be useful to present or handout to students to gain a basic understanding of what was happening).

After the material is presented, ask the students to review what they wrote down to the introduction questions, and think about how the women presented in the cards might have responded to the questions.

students- a possible introduction or extension:

Ask the students to write down what they believe the characteristics of a hero would be. Allow students to work in groups to come up with a group list, and compile the list into a class list. If time allows, the teacher could lead the students in a class debate over the qualities of a hero.

After this, give the students a copy of the following excerpt:

### Psychology of Rescuers

“It has long fascinated psychologists why ordinary people take extraordinary risks to intervene and protect others from danger, including interventions during mass atrocities and genocide. What are the significant psychological dynamics or personality characteristics that contribute to the development of rescue behavior? While this is a complex question that cannot be adequately addressed in this forum, Nechama Tec (1986), as well as other social scientists (e.g., Monroe, 2008; Oliner&Oliner, 1988), assert that rescuers share similar personality characteristics:

- They have a strong sense of individuality (i.e., they are not followers and would not become bystanders);
- They are motivated by moral values that relate to the sanctity of life;
- Their behavior is grounded in self-approval rather than in approval by others, and,
- Their self-identity is rooted in empathy, altruism and a commitment to alleviate the suffering of others.

-<http://www.apa.org/international/pi/2013/03/un-matters.aspx>

Help students with definitions, as needed. Then ask students if they agree with what the article states, or if they believe there should be any modifications.



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anyone they know that share the characteristics  
discussion.

After the discussion, show students the “Girl Power” cards, presenting information. If students have little prior knowledge of the Holocaust, the teacher should front load basic information about the Holocaust to insure understanding of material, and the importance of the resistance movement. (The attached Holocaust timeline might be useful to present or handout to students to gain a basic understanding of what was happening).

After the material is presented, lead students through a discussion as to if they believe the women presented met the shared personality characteristics of a hero. Ask students to cite specific examples that were presented that will verify what they are stating.

For a concluding activity, ask students to write at least a paragraph on why they believe that a person would be willing to risk everything, including their own lives to help others.

When presented with the “Girl Power” cards, and discussion to go over basic material, lead the students into a more in-depth discussion about related topics.

Possible discussion topics to extend material:

1. Define and discuss resistance and distinguish types of resistance.
2. Explain the difference between partisans and underground fighters/resisters.
3. Compare and contrast to recent world events. Discuss.
4. Discuss several reasons why Jewish armed resistance in the ghettos and concentration camps was difficult and, in many cases deadly and futile.

These topics might also be assigned as research topics for students to investigate and present their findings to the class.



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This project can be conducted either by pairs/groups or by individuals. The purpose is to understand the risks and responsibilities of those who chose to resist the Nazis, and incorporate research skills using primary sources at the same time.

Standards addressed:

LA.6-8.LACC.68.RH.1.1 -- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

LA.6-8.LACC.68.RH.1.2 - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions

LA.6-8.LACC.68.RH.3.7 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

LA.6-8.LACC.68.RH.3.8 - Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

LA.6-8.LACC.68.RH.3.9 - Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic

SOC.5.SS.5.A.1.1 - Use primary and secondary sources to understand history

SOC.9-12.SS.912.A.6.3 - Analyze the impact of the Holocaust during World War II on Jews as well as other groups

Students will need to have basic research skills and internet capability to conduct research. They should also have basic skills of using, analyzing, and interpreting primary source documents, and be able to write a bibliography.

Process:

Have students choose a Nazi resistor to research. It could be one of the women from the “Girl Power” project, or any other person who resisted. Students will need to use at least two primary source documents to incorporate in their project, and should have a minimum of at least 4 other sources. Help students find valid sources (a partial list will be attached). There are many different ways that the research could be presented: research paper, documentary, webpage, powerpoint/presi, and/or an art project.

Approx. time of project: 2-3 weeks (much of it could be done out of class, if desired)

research:

1. Basic biographical information (birth/death dates, family information, where they were from, religion-if any, education, etc)
2. Where did the resistance take place?
3. Were there any other people involved, or did the person act alone?
4. Describe the type of resistance. Make sure to describe the risks involved, if they had been caught.
5. What types of resources did they use? ( Social, emotional, intellectual, financial, physical)
6. Describe what they were fighting for.
7. What did they accomplish? Were they successful? How did you determine what defined their success?
8. Were they caught? If so, what happened to them?
9. Wrap up biographical information (what happened to them, did they survive the war, give life info.)
10. What difference could an individual make?

Presentation should be in an organized fashion; if a group project, all members should participate.

Useful websites for research:

[www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)- the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. There are many primary source documents in the archives.

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com>- Museum of Tolerance Online Multimedia Learning Center.

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust>- site for teachers and students, including section on resistance.

<http://english.gfh.org.il/index0.htm>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Points	1	2	3	4
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because ideas are disorganized, there is no sequence, ideas are unsupported, confusing, or incomplete	Audience has problems understanding presentation because student jumps around; weak intro and/or conclusion	Presentation done in a logical sequence that is easy to follow. Organization is good.	Presentation in a logical, interesting manner that is easy to follow. Ideas are well organized, and transitions are smooth. Solid intro. and conclusion
Content Knowledge	Information is not developed. Student cannot answer questions about the project, and has little grasp on the content.	Student is uncomfortable with the information; can answer a few questions, but info is sketchy, and repeated.	Student appears to be at ease with content, but few details or added information to the presentation. Main points may need clarification.	Student demonstrates full knowledge of material, with many added details. Ideas are focused and developed.
Visuals	Student uses no visuals.	Student uses visuals that do not support the material, or uses very few visuals.	Student uses several visuals related to the presentation.	Student uses accurate and several visuals to reinforce key ideas from the presentation (including pictures of primary sources)
Delivery	Student mumbles or doesn't speak clearly, mispronounces several words, makes no eye contact, shows lack of preparation	Student mispronounces several words, speaks quietly, and makes limited eye contact	Student speaks with adequate volume and eye contact, shows confidence and preparation.	Student speaks clearly and at a good pace, makes eye contact, and encourages engagement with the audience.
Bibliography	No bibliography present	Group turned in bibliography, but few sources listed	Bibliography turned in with adequate sources, but with a few errors in form	Student turned in correct bibliography

January 30, 1933: President Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany

March 20, 1933: SS opens the Dachau concentration camp outside of Munich

April 1, 1933: Boycott of Jewish-owned shops and businesses in Germany

September 15, 1935: Nuremberg Race Laws

March 16, 1935: Germany introduces military conscription

March 7, 1936: German troops march unopposed into the Rhineland

August 1, 1936: Summer Olympics begin in Berlin

March 11-13, 1938: Germany incorporates Austria in the Anschluss (Union)

November 9/10, 1938: Kristallnacht (nationwide pogrom in Germany)

May 13, 1939: The St. Louis sails from Hamburg, Germany

September 29, 1938: Munich Agreement

August 23, 1939: Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Agreement

September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland, starting World War II in Europe

September 17, 1939: The Soviet Union occupies Poland from the east

October 8, 1939: Germans establish a ghetto in PiotrkówTrybunalski, Poland

April 9, 1940: Germany invades Denmark and Norway

May 10, 1940: Germany attacks western Europe (France and the Low Countries)

July 10, 1940: Battle of Britain begins

April 6, 1941: Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece

June 22, 1941: Germany invades the Soviet Union

July 6, 1941: Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) shoot nearly 3,000 Jews at the Seventh Fort, one of the 19th-century fortifications surrounding Kovno

August 3, 1941: Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen of Muenster denounces the "euthanasia" killing program in a public sermon

shoot about 34,000 Jews at BabiYar, outside Kiev

November 7, 1941: Einsatzgruppen round up 13,000 Jews from the Minsk ghetto and kill them in nearby Tuchinki (Tuchinka)

November 30, 1941: Einsatzgruppen shoot 10,000 Jews from the Riga ghetto in the Rumbula Forest

December 6, 1941: Soviet winter counteroffensive

December 7, 1941: Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and the U.S. declares war the next day

December 8, 1941: The first killing operations begin at Chelmno in occupied Poland

December 11, 1941: Nazi Germany declares war on the United States

January 16, 1942: Germans begin the mass deportation of more than 65,000 Jews from Lodz to the Chelmno killing center

January 20, 1942: Wannsee Conference held near Berlin, Germany

March 27, 1942: Germans begin the deportation of more than 65,000 Jews from Drancy, outside Paris, to the east (primarily to Auschwitz)

June 28, 1942: Germany launches a new offensive towards the city of Stalingrad

July 15, 1942: Germans begin mass deportations of nearly 100,000 Jews from the occupied Netherlands to the east (primarily to Auschwitz)

July 22, 1942: Germans begin the mass deportation of over 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka killing center

September 12, 1942: Germans complete the mass deportation of about 265,000 Jews from Warsaw to Treblinka

April 19, 1943: Warsaw ghetto uprising begins

October 1, 1943: Rescue of Jews in Denmark

November 6, 1943: Soviet troops liberate Kiev

March 19, 1944: Germans forces occupy Hungary

May 15, 1944: Germans begin the mass deportation of about 440,000 Jews from Hungary

June 6, 1944: D-Day: Allied forces invade Normandy, France

June 22, 1944: The Soviets launch an offensive in eastern Belorussia (Belarus)

August 15, 1944: Allied forces land in southern France



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August 25, 1944: Liberation of Paris

December 16, 1944: Battle of the Bulge

January 12, 1945: Soviet winter offensive

January 18, 1945: Death march of nearly 60,000 prisoners from the Auschwitz camp system in southern Poland

January 25, 1945: Death march of nearly 50,000 prisoners from the Stutthof camp system in northern Poland

January 27, 1945: Soviet troops liberate the Auschwitz camp complex

March 7, 1945: U.S. troops cross the Rhine River at Remagen

April 16, 1945: The Soviets launch their final offensive, encircling Berlin

April 29, 1945: American forces liberate the Dachau concentration camp

April 30, 1945: Adolf Hitler commits suicide

May 7, 1945: Germany surrenders to the western Allies

May 9, 1945: Germany surrenders to the Soviets

Author (unless the material is attributed to a particular person, list the Museum as the author)

Title of the article

Title of the webpage

URL of the webpage

Date you accessed the information



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## **Fierce Candles of Light**

The year was 1944, and the Nazis were losing World War II. Hitler's death camps had already killed millions, but Germany's leader wanted to finish the job he had set for himself many years earlier- to rid his empire of Jews, Gypsies, and other "subhumans."

His attention turned to Hungary, where 600,000 Jews still lived and worked and hoped to survive the war. "Round them up and ship them to the death camps" ordered Hitler-and his well-oiled extermination machine began to hum.

Jewish leaders in the United States and other nations saw what was happening. They asked officials in Sweden, a neutral nation not involved in the war, to do what they could. Those officials, in turn, asked a young Swede to go to Hungary.

His name was Raoul Wallenberg. He was 32 years old, and he came from a wealthy family known as the "Rockefellers of Sweden." He had led a privileged life and had every chance for a future full of luxury. He was not tall and blond like many Swedes- but of medium height with dark, thinning hair. He seemed frail and shy.. People who didn't know him well considered him a bit like a wimp.

They were wrong. Although he was modest and quiet, Wallenberg had an iron will and a fierce sense of compassion. He didn't hesitate when he heard a request. Within days,, he was on a train to Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

Once there, he set to work. He began issuing Swedish passports to Jews in Budapest, allowing them to claim the protection of the Swedish government. The Germans quickly saw what was happening, but a neutral Sweden was useful to them in many ways-as a source of raw materials among other things. Reluctantly, the Nazis decided to keep hands off.

Wallenberg kept pushing. Using his own money, he sheltered Jewish families in houses he had bought or rented. He was always on the go. One day, he'd use his bicycle to rush medicine to a hospital in the Jewish ghetto. The next, he'd speed across the city in his car to prevent an arrest.

The Nazis grew more and more frustrated- and furious. Adolf Eichman<sup>i</sup>, whom Hitler had sent to Hungary expressly to destroy its Jews, ordered Wallenberg to stop. In response, the Swedish diplomat stepped up his efforts. He went to trains loaded with Jews being sent to prison camps and pulled them from the cars and gave them protective passes. If he saw German soldiers seizing Jews on the streets, he ordered them to stop. And so commanding was his presence that the soldiers obeyed.

Eichman tried to have Wallenberg assassinated. The plot failed, but Wallenberg expected other attempts. That didn't stop him. Just before Soviet troops entered Budapest, top Nazi officials decided to

By promising to track down and prosecute the Nazi officials  
to abandon the plan.

In all, he saved about 100,000 lives. Ironically, the Soviet “liberators” arrested him and took him back to Moscow. Two years later, Soviet officials said that he had died of a heart attack, but no one believed them. Even today, his fate remains uncertain, and some people believe he is still alive. A special committee led by Swedes is still trying to learn the truth.

Whatever the truth, Wallenberg is much honored as a man of courage and conscience. In 1944, when evil seemed to have triumphed in Hungary, Wallenberg was a fierce candle of light in a world swallowed by darkness.

Another fierce candle was in Hungary at the same time as Wallenberg. Her name was Hannah Senesh. She had grown up in a Jewish family in Budapest and then emigrated to Palestine (now Israel) to support the idea of a Jewish homeland. After World War II broke out and Hitler began his “final solution” to the Jewish question, Hannah felt she had to do something. In 1943, she returned to Hungary to save other Jews from Hitler’s wrath.

She found a way to return, a way that took toughness and courage.

1. Eichman escaped to South America after the war, but Jewish agents tracked him down and took him to Israel. He was tried, convicted, and hanged for his part in the deaths of many thousands of people.

(MAIN IDEAS IN BOLDFACE)

**NARRATORS 1, 2**

BRITISH OFFICER

**HANNAH SENESH (SEN-ish), a Jewish  
Girl**

**Reuven Dafne**, a paratrooper Resistance fighter.

Yoel Palgi, a paratrooper

Woman, a partisan leader

**Rozsa**, a Hungarian official

**Catherine Senesh**, Hannah's mother

German SS Guard

**Captain Simon**, Guard

Scene 1:

Tel Aviv, Palestine; June 1943.

**Narrator 1:** The British officer studies the young woman seated before him. She is young with wavy blond hair and blue-green eyes. Perhaps, he thinks, she is too young.

**Narrator 2:** But then he notices the toughened skin on her hands and the short, ragged nails. This is a woman who has worked hard in the fields of Palestine.

**British Officer:** Tell me what you think this secret mission entails.

**Hannah Senesh:** My first priority will be to contact local resistance fighters behind enemy lines and, with their help, locate captured Allied airmen and help them escape from the Nazis.

**Officer:** And your second priority?

**Hannah:** To rescue the Jews from Hitler's ghettos, as many Jews as I possibly can.

**Officer:** And if you are captured?

**Hannah:** (confidently) I'm afraid of nothing. I'm ready for anything.

**Officer:** What if you had to choose between saving your mother's life and the lives of 20 British soldiers?

**Narr 1:** Hannah looks directly at the officer. Does he know what she has not seen her mother since the day Hannah left Hungary for Palestine, five years ago.

Hannah is tormented with worry that her mother  
s?

**Narr 1:** Hannah's answer is firm and unemotional.

**Hannah:** I know my mother would forgive me for the choice I would have to make.

**Officer:** I see, if you are selected for this mission, you may have to pay with your life.

**Hannah:** Sir, I consider this mission a privilege, and a personal duty. I *must* help my people.

**Narr 2:** On the desk is a report on Hannah Senesh. The officer opens it and reads again the details- Jewish, 22 years old, unmarried, few friends, left Europe before the war began and so has not seen the destruction. She does not even know how to shoot a gun.

**Narr 1** Yet the officer is impressed by her determined confidence. He closes the report.

**Officer:** Very well. You shall begin your training with the others in Cairo.

**Narr 2:** Hannah's face is wreathed in a smile. Her excitement in being accepted is obvious.

**Officer:** Have you ever jumped out of an airplane?

**Hannah:** No.

**Officer:** You will learn.

## Scene 2

March 15, 1944

**Narr 1:** A few minutes past midnight on a clear, moonlit night, an airplane takes off for a secret mission in Yugoslavia.

**Narr 2:** Inside the airplane, the specially trained paratroopers wear heavy winter clothing, weapons, and harnesses on their backs. For months, the troopers have trained together in the desert near Cairo, Egypt.

**Narr 1:** Hannah is the only female in the group. She is a radio officer, and her code name is Hagar.

**Narr 2:** Like the men, she has learned judo and the use of basic weapons- knives, clubs pistols, tommy guns. She can take apart and reassemble the guns quickly and silently-while blindfolded.

**Narr 1:** And she has learned how to parachute out of a plane.



trained and longed for has finally arrived. The conversation almost impossible. Even so, Hannah

leans close to Reuven, one of her comrades.

**Hannah:** You are thinking of them, aren't you?

**ReuvenDafne:** It's been nine years. Before today, I still had hope. But now-

**Hannah:** You *will* see them again.

**Narr 1:** Just yesterday, Reuven learned that his father and brother had been sent to one of Hitler's concentration camps.

**Hannah:** Soon we will be in Hungary. Our mission has begun! We will not fail. I know it.

**Reuven:** Sometimes, Hannah, I think you are the strongest one of us all.

**Narr 2:** The plane flies on through the moonlit night. Despite the tension, the troopers doze off. Even Reuven sleeps a little.

**Narr 1:** When he wakes, the crew is tossing parcels out of the hatch and the plane is circling its target. He is to jump first; Hannah, next.

**Narr 2:** Her face is aglow with excitement and something more- happiness, like a flame, is burning inside her.

**Narr 1:** As Reuven moves into position, Hannah gives him her favorite victory sign- thumbs-up.

**Narr 2:** Reuven jumps. The next instant, Hannah follows him. The

### SCENE 3

**Narr 1:** On the night that Hagar parachutes into Yugoslavia, the partisans are waiting in the forest.

**Resistance Fighter:** You are Hagar? The British officer?

**Narr 2:** Hannah nods. For the time being, she and Reuven must keep their Jewish identity a secret. The mission's first priority is to rescue British officers.

**Fighter:** Come. The other British agents are back to camp.

**Narr 1:** During the day, the resistance fighters, or partisans, hide in makeshift camps in the mountains of Yugoslavia.

**Narr 2:** at night, they steal into villages and military camps, setting explosives to blow up Nazi supply depots and railroad lines.

**Narr 1:** As a radio operator, Hannah has memorized a British communications code. She gathers the disassembled pieces of her radio transmitter, then follows the partisans into the safety of the dark forest.

**Narr 2:** A few days later, YoelPalgi enters the camp. He is another comrade with whom Hannah trained in Egypt. Now that they are together, the mission can proceed. They will cross the bordered.

er, when Hannah translates a radio message.  
happened?

**Narr 2:** for the first time, her comrades see her weep.

**Hannah:** Hitler has invaded Hungary. The mission is postponed.

**Narr 1:** Suddenly, she pulls out a map. Her fingers trace a route through the mountains.

**Hannah:** We must go at once.

**Yoel:** and break orders? You aren't thinking clearly. We must wait. A few weeks. Perhaps longer if necessary.

**Hannah:** What will happen to them, the millions of Jews in Hungary? They are in Nazi hands now- and we just sit there.

## SCENE 4

**Narr 2:** Weeks drag into months and still the British do not give the word for Hannah to cross the border. Still, the secret mission continues.

**Narr 1:** Reuven plots maps and sets up rescue parties for stranded aviators. Hannah sends out information by radio. And always, the British agents and the partisans keep on the move to escape capture by Nazi patrols.

**Narr 2:** Then one evening in a mountain village, machine gun fire explodes. Bullets rip through the village as German troops descend from the hills.

**Narr 1:** All is confusion. Women and children run, fall, take shelter, in gullies, behind rocks, anywhere they can.

Reuven: Hannah! Run!

**Narr 2:** The partisans flee for the safety of the nearby woods. Hannah follows across the open field. Reuven is ahead of her.

**Narr 1:** The gunfire does not quit. Hannah fixes her eyes on the trees ahead. They are her only hope of escape.

Reuven: Hannah!

**Narr 2:** At the edge of the forest, Reuven stops and turns. Gasping for air, Hannah dives into the shadows of the trees; then she and Reuven scurry deeper into the bushes.

**Narr 1:** Exhausted, they fall to the ground, hidden well by scrub and shadows. Around them are the cries and moans of the wounded, but the Germans are still in pursuit. Hannah cannot help the wounded.

**Narr 2:** Ready to defend herself, she removes her pistol and cocks the trigger. Reuven too is armed.

**Narr 1:** German soldiers step into view, searching the bushes. Reuven takes aim. Hannah (whispering): Stop it! Don't shoot.

he has forgotten- their mission is to rescue their  
nazi soldiers.

Hannah: If you shoot them now, you put the mission at risk.

Narr 1: Reuven nods slightly. A few feet away, the soldiers give up the hunt and return to the village.

## SCENE 5

Narr 2: On a cold, clear night in May, in a field high in the mountains, the partisans gather around a bonfire.

Narr 1: A woman, a partisan leader who is herself Jewish, tells the others what she has learned of the concentration camps.

Woman: They call them work camps, but they are death camps. The Nazis round them up in the ghettos- old men, women, children, even the babies- and ship them in railroad cattle cars to the camps.

Resistance Fighter: Can this be true? Death camps?

Woman: I tell you, the camps have gas chambers. Those cattle cars are transporting Jews- and others- to their deaths!

Narr 2: A few of the partisans begin to sing patriotic songs. They have come from different backgrounds, but they are united in their cause- to destroy Hitler. After a while, Hannah stands.

Hannah: Yoel, will you walk with me a little way?

Narr 1: Once alone, she confides in him.

Hannah: I cannot wait any longer. It is better to die and free our conscience than to live with knowledge that we didn't even try to stop this...this holocaust.

Yoel: And what of our orders?

Hannah: I understand the way the rest of you fell about discipline. But for me this is not a question that can be decided by a military order.

Yoel: you really are fearless. I realized that the first time I saw you jump out of an airplane. Do you remember how frightened I was? And you told me-

Hannah: I told you, "It's nothing. You go up in a plane, you jump, and then you are right back on the ground." Yes, I remember.

Yoel: And I thought if this young girl can do it, well so can I!

Hannah: I am going across the border. Tomorrow.

Yoel: Then I am going too.

Hannah: But not together. That is too dangerous.

Yoel: You know the synagogue in Budapest? (She nods.) We'll rendezvous there. I'll wait for you.

He presses a piece of paper into Reuven's hand.

Hannah: If I don't return, give this to our people.

Reuven: Of course you will return. And when the war is over, we will all go home to Palestine as heroes.

Hannah: (seriously) Reuven, give me a cyanide tablet. That way, if I am captured-

Reuven: No! You will not be caught. We will not fail. How often have you told me that?

Hannah: (smiling) 'Till we meet again then. Soon, I hope.

Narr 1: Yoel has already left. Now Reuven watches Hannah march confidently toward her unknown fate. On her back, she carries her radio equipment. In her head, she carries a secret code.

Reuven: (unfolding the paper) What is this- a poem? (reading)

*Blessed is the match consumed  
In kindling flame.*

*Blessed is the flame that burns  
In the secret fastness of the heart.*

*Blessed is the heart with strength to  
stop its beat for honor's sake.*

*Blessed is the match consumed  
In kindling flame.*

Narr 2: At the bend in the road, she turns and waves. As he waves back, Reuven wonders whether he will ever see her again.

## SCENE 7

Narr 1: Weeks later, Yoel waits at the synagogue. Like Hannah, Yoel is Hungarian, and his appearance does not arouse suspicion.

Narr 2: Still, he is careful not to linger long at this dangerous place.

Narr 1: The next day, he returns. And the day after that. But Hannah never appears.

## SCENE 8

Rozsa: Now then. Where do you *really* think your daughter is now- this minute?

Catherine Senesh: I already told you. On a settlement in Palestine. She left Hungary in 1939, thank God.

Rozsa: And you have not seen her since then?

Catherine (sadly): No. But I am happy she is not here to see such terrible suffering of the Jews.

ht to military headquarters in Budapest for  
civilian known only as Rozsa.

Rozsa: Well, if you really don't know, I'll tell you. Your daughter is here. In the adjoining room.

Narr 1: Catherine feels as if the floor were suddenly giving way under her. She clutches the edge of the table with both hands.

Rozsa: I'll bring her to you so you can persuade her to tell us everything she knows. Because if she doesn't –this will be your last meeting.

Narr 2: the door to the adjoining room opens. Four men lead Hannah into the room. She has been so badly beaten that Catherine can hardly recognize her.

Narr 1: Hannah's hair hangs in a filthy tangle. Ugly, purple-black bruises cover her face and neck. When she sees her mother, Hannah pulls away from her guards and runs to Catherine.

Hannah: Mother, forgive me!

Narr 2: As Catherine hugs her daughter, she feels Hannah's scalding tears against her own cheeks.

Rozsa: (roughly) Speak to her! Use your motherly influence to convince her she had better tell us what she knows about the British.

Narr 1: Suddenly everything-hope, faith, trust, the very meaning of life, everything Catherine has ever believed in-collapses like a child's house of cards.

Rozsa: Talk to her or you will never see each other again.

Narr 2: Catherine does not understand why Hannah is here or how, but she will not ask her daughter to reveal whatever secrets she holds.

Rozsa: (snarling) Well, why don't you talk?

Catherine: There is no need to repeat yourself. We both heard you.

Rozsa: All right. We'll leave you alone for a while.

Narr 1: All but one man leaves the room.

Catherine: Hannah, tell me, did you come back to Hungary to rescue me?

Hannah: No, Mother! No! You're not to blame for anything.

Catherine: But how did you get here?

I thought you were safe in Palestine.

Narr 2: Catherine sees that one of Hannah's front teeth is missing.

Catherine: Did they do that to you here?

Hannah: No, not here.

Narr 1: As Catherine embraces her daughter again, Rozsa bursts through the door.

Rozsa: Whispering is not allowed! Anyway, that's enough for today.

Narr 2: The guards take Hannah away. Rozsa scowls at Catherine.

but I'm taking your age into consideration. Go  
you, we'll telephone.

Narr 1: He moves to the door, then stops and turns.

Rozsa: Of course, if she refuses to speak, then we'll have no further use for you at  
all.

Narr 2: Shaken, Catherine understands his meaning-if Hannah doesn't give the  
Germans the information they demand, they will kill her.

#### SCENE 9

Narr 1: The police return for Catherine the same night. They take her in a police  
van to a nearby prison where a guard asks her for all her personal belongings.

Narr 2: Catherine gives him what little she has- her fountain pen, her watch, her  
wedding ring.

SS Guard: Have you no money?

Narr 1: In a little bag around her neck is the small amount of money that Nazis  
allows Jews to carry.

Narr 2: Catherine slips her hand inside her dress and removes the bag. Narr 1: At  
once, the guard slaps her hard across the face. Catherine spins completely  
around.

Guard: That's for taking your time to give it to me!

Narr 2: Catherine says nothing. She feels nothing. After seeing Hannah this  
morning, she is totally numb.

Narr 1: the guard puts her few belongings into an envelope.

Guard: When you are released, IF you are released, the items will be returned to  
you.

Narr 2: The guard leads Catherine to cell number 528. The lock of the heavy steel  
door creaks open and she is shoved inside.

#### SCENE 10

Narr 1: Yoel has been in Budapest for two weeks. He works with the Jewish  
underground, still hopeful that Hannah may even yet make their rendezvous.

Narr 2: But on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the police arrest him. In prison, they beat him  
savagely. Alone in his cell, he sobs.

Yoel: I have failed. But Hannah, she will succeed even yet.

Narr 1: Hearing the sobs, a prison guard looks in on Yoel.

Yoel: Hang me! What do I care!

Guard: We don't hang people so easily. We have a girl here from Palestine. They  
captured her in a village near the border. She was carrying British radio  
equipment. They haven't hung her...yet.

ears. Hannah is her. She is alive.

Narr 1: In an interrogation room, Captain Simon tries to break Hannah's spirit. He asks her the same question over and over again.

Captain Simon: What is your radio code?

Narr 2: The soles of her feet and the palms of her hands are bloody from the whippings. But the flame of resistance still burns inside her. She doesn't answer.

Simon: You think we will use it to send false information to the Allies. Well, you are right.

Narr 1: He moves closer to her so she must look at him..

Simon: But if you do not tell us, we will kill your mother.

Hannah: I will not betray my people.

Simon: But you would betray your own mother?

Hannah: Telling you what I know, that would betray my mother. She is a Jew. I am a Jew. We are all Jews.

Simon (shouting); Guards! Take her away (to Hannah). You are state property – and we dispose of property that no longer has value.

SCENE 12

Narr 2: Weeks pass, then months, Summer slides into autumn. Hannah manages at times to speak secretly with her mother during the exercise period outside the barracks.

Catherine: Can't you tell me why you are here?

Hannah: The less you know, the safer it will be for you. One day, when you find out what I have done, you will be proud of me.

Catherine: But I am proud of you now.

Narr 1: At other times, Hannah prints letters on tissue paper and holds them up in the window of her cell to communicate with the others in the prison. She spells out words, holding up one letter at a time.

Narr 2: She makes paper dolls for the children you are also imprisoned.

Narr 1: From the guards she learns that the war is going badly for the Germans. The Allies are advancing. Soon, she thinks, all the killing it will be over.

Narr 2: One night, a guard comes to her cell and drags her away to a waiting police van. Inside are other selected prisoners. As the van pulls away, one man lifts his head.

Yoel: Hannah?

Yoel: I waited for you, every day for two weeks, but you never came!

the night, the two comrades talk. At dawn, the  
Hannah to her feet.

Yoel: Where are you taking her?

Narr 2: The door slams shut. Yoel watches from a window. As the van pulls away, Hannah gives him the thumbs-up sign.

### SCENE 13

Narr 1: That next morning, the civilian prisoners are released. It is clear that the police are fleeing.

Catherine: What is happening? Where is my daughter? Where is Hannah?

Narr 2: One of the guards takes pity on her.

Guard: They took her away last night with the other political prisoners. She was tried and found guilty of treason.

Catherine: What is her sentence?

Guard: They did not pass sentence, yet.

Narr 1: For days, Catherine searches for Hannah's whereabouts. She defies the law that says Jews can be on the streets for only two hours during the day.

Narr 2: Finally, on a cold and cloudy day in November 1944, she learns that Hannah is being held at a military barracks on the other side of town. Catherine could be arrested again, but she doesn't care. She starts across town for the barracks.

Narr 1: Outside Cell 13- the cell reserved for those condemned to die- a prisoner is cleaning the floor. He overhears the voices arguing outside the cell.

Simon: Hannah Senesh, you have been sentenced to death. Do you wish to ask for clemency?

Hannah: Do you think I'm going to plead with hangmen and murderers? I shall NEVER ask you for mercy.

Simon: In that case, you may write your farewell letters. We shall carry out the sentence in one hour.

Narr 2: At 10 a.m., an officer steps into the cell and silently signals Hannah to follow him.

Narr 1: Two guards escort her across the courtyard to a sandbox. They tie her hands behind her back, then strap her bound wrists to a post that has been driven into the sand.

Narr 2: Still, Hannah says nothing, but she looks straight into the eyes of the officer.

Simon: So you wish a blindfold?



ntly and Simon steps away. She raises her blue-sky.

Narr 2: Inside the barracks, the prisoner cleaning the floor suddenly hears three quick shots.

SCENE 14

Narr 1: At 11:45 that morning, Captain Simon returns to his office. Catherine has been waiting outside. Now she brazenly follows him to the room.

Catherine: I must have a visitor's pass. I am the mother of Hannah Senesh.

Simon: (surprised) Her mother? Well, the case no longer has anything to do with me.

Catherine: Since when?

Simon: Since yesterday.

Catherine: Captain, please! I must see my daughter. Why is it so difficult for me to get a pass when relatives of other prisoners have been given visiting rights?

Narr 2: He does not answer.

Catherine: (suspiciously) Has a sentence been passed?

Simon: Your daughter joined the British Armed Forces and was a radio officer in the Parachute Corps. Last spring she flew from Cairo to Yugoslavia, where she was dropped and spent a considerable length of time fighting with partisans.

Narr 1: Stunned, Catherine reaches for a chair and sits down.

Simon: (continuing) From Yugoslavia she made her way to Hungary for the purpose of rescuing Jews and British prisoners of war. She was found guilty of major crimes against Hungary.

Catherine: That isn't true.

Simon: (agitated) She was found with a radio transmitter. The military tribunal demanded the supreme penalty.

Catherine: Then the sentence has been passed.

Simon: And carried out.

Narr 2: Catherine stares at him. He looks away.

Simon: Mrs. Senesh, your daughter was executed one hour ago.

Narr 1: Suddenly, Catherine's world goes black.

Catherine: No, it can't be. Can such things exist? I wasn't even allowed to see her?

Simon: She didn't want to see you. She wanted to spare you the shock.

Catherine: I don't believe that!

Narr 2: After a long silence, he speaks again. Admiration is in his voice.

Simon: I must pay tribute to your daughter's exceptional courage, which she displayed until the very last moment.

feet.

ave just come from the execution!

Simon: She was an exceptional human being. Pity she chose the wrong path. You can do nothing now but accept what has happened.

Catherine: (anguished) Accept it? Accept her murder?

Simon: (more harshly) She was a war criminal. She WAS guilty.

Catherine: My daughter stands innocent before man and God.

Narr 2: As Catherine turns to leave, blinded by her own anguish, Simon calls to her.

Simon: There are farewell letters. You will find them with her other personal belongings.

Narr 1: Later, alone, Catherine goes through the small parcel of Hannah's personal belongings. There are not many.

Narr 2: In the pocket of one of Hannah's prison dresses, Catherine finds two scraps of paper. One is a poem. The other is her farewell letter.

Hannah: (voice as memory) Dearest Mother- I don't know what to say- only this: a million thanks, and forgive me, if you can. You know so well why..

Catherine: ( reading the rest of the note)...words aren't necessary. With love forever, your daughter.

## EPILOGUE

The play you have just read is true. The details of Hannah's mission and her imprisonment, even most of the dialogue, are based on Hannah's diary (which she first began keeping at age 13); her letters; and her personal memories of ReuvenDafne, YoelPalgi, and Catherine Senesh, all three of whom survived the war.

In May 1945, six months after Hannah's execution, Germany surrendered to the Allied forces. Slowly, the truth about the concentration camps- the truth the partisan leader had related to Hannah in the mountains of Yugoslavia- was revealed to the world. In 1950, Hannah's body was returned to Palestine (now called Israel), where she was buried with full military honors.

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Literary Terms: Answer each question as indicated.

1. Characterization. Circle the word or words that best describe Hannah.
  - a. Passionate
  - b. Timid
  - c. Stubborn
  - d. Unmarried
  - e. determined
  - f. courageous
  - g. pessimistic
  - h. lonely
  - i. Arrogant
  
2. Conflict. Categorize the following lines from the play according to the following code: pp=person vs. person; pc= person vs. conscience; ps= person vs. society.
  - \_\_\_ a. What if you had to chose between saving your mother's life and the lives of 20 British soldiers.
  - \_\_\_ b. bullets rip through the village as German troops descend the hills.
  - \_\_\_ c. If you shoot them now, you put the mission at risk.
  - \_\_\_ d. At once, the guard slaps her face. Catherine spins completely around.
  
3. Foreshadowing. Check the statement that best foreshadows Hannah's fate.
  - \_\_\_ a. Hannah prevents Reuven from shooing the Nazi soldiers.
  - \_\_\_ b. Hannah breaks orders and crosses the border.
  - c. Hannah writes a poem that includes this line: *Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beat for honor's sake.*
  
4. Check he statement that includes this line:
  - \_\_\_ afterlearining
  - \_\_\_ it is better to die and free our conscience
  - \_\_\_ She was an exceptional human being. Pity that she chose the wrong path.

...ds should be circled:

*Passionate, stubborn, determined, courageous, unmarried*

2. A. *pc*  
b. *ps*  
c. *pc*  
d. *pp*
3. *c*
4. *a*
5. *b*



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<sup>1</sup>Eichman escaped to South America after the war, but Jewish agents tracked him down and took him to Israel. He was tried, convicted, and hanged for his part in the deaths of many thousands of people.