



The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust

By Edith H. Beer, Susan Dworkin

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Edith Hahn was an outspoken young woman in Vienna when the Gestapo forced her into a ghetto and then into a slave labor camp. When she returned home months later, she knew she would become a hunted woman and went underground. With the help of a Christian friend, she emerged in Munich as Grete Denner. There she met Werner Vetter, a Nazi Party member who fell in love with her. Despite Edith's protests and even her eventual confession that she was Jewish, he married her and kept her identity a secret.

In wrenching detail, Edith recalls a life of constant, almost paralyzing fear. She tells how German officials casually questioned the lineage of her parents; how during childbirth she refused all painkillers, afraid that in an altered state of mind she might reveal something of her past; and how, after her husband was captured by the Soviets, she was bombed out of her house and had to hide while drunken Russian soldiers raped women on the street.

Despite the risk it posed to her life, Edith created a remarkable record of survival. She saved every document, as well as photographs she took inside labor camps. Now part of the permanent collection at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., these hundreds of documents, several of which are included in this volume, form the fabric of a gripping new chapter in the history of the Holocaust—complex, troubling, and ultimately triumphant.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Born to a middle-class, nonobservant Jewish family, Beer was a popular teenager and successful law student when the Nazis moved into Austria. In a well-written narrative that reads like a novel, she relates the escalating fear and humiliating indignities she and others endured, as well as the anti-Semitism of friends and neighbors. Using all their resources, her family bribed officials for exit visas for her two sisters, but Edith and her mother remained, due to lack of money and Edith's desire to be near her half-Jewish boyfriend, Pepi. Eventually, Edith was deported to work in a labor camp in Germany. Anxious about her mother, she obtained permission to return to Vienna, only to learn that her mother was gone. In despair, Edith tore off her yellow star and went underground. Pepi, himself a fugitive, distanced himself from her. A Christian friend gave Edith her own identity papers, and Edith fled to Munich, where she met and—despite her confession to him that she was Jewish—married Werner Vetter, a Nazi party member. Submerging her Jewish identity at home and at work, Edith lived in constant fear, even refusing anesthetic in labor to avoid inadvertently revealing the truth about her past. She successfully maintained the facade of a loyal German hausfrau until the war ended. Her story is important both as a personal testament and as an inspiring example of perseverance in the face of terrible adversity. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A well-written, tense, and intimate Holocaust memoir by an author with a remarkable war experience. Young Beer (ne Hahn) was a promising Viennese Jewish law student until the German Anschluss annexing Austria made her circle stop its laughing ("Hitler is a joke. He will soon disappear"). She was a Christmas-tree Jew with a Gentile boyfriend (dreaming of a socialist paradise), but Zionist siblings (who escape to Palestine), and the deadly follow-ups to the Nuremberg Laws send Beer into an underground existence as a "U-boat" in Aryan Germany. Beer took on an Austrian friend's documents and identity, got employed with the Munich Red Cross, and dated soldiers for the meals and cover—marrying one Nazi, Werner Vetter, with a good job and expertise in art. She admitted her Jewishness to him but lived outwardly as a normal Hausfrau. Beer talked her husband into pregnancy, even though under Nazi rule their baby would be considered Jewish. The baby was a girl, making Werner furious—"a Nazi who made a religion of twisted, primitive virility," Hahn comments. The losing Reich drafted the one-eyed Werner, made him an officer, and shipped him to Russia. The Nazi officer's wife discovered the Holocaust from forbidden BBC broadcasts and so learned the fate of family and friends. After the Russians conquered and burned her neighborhood, Beer retrieved her old identity papers and diploma, and this illegal fugitive was eventually transformed into a feared judge. Some embittered Jewish survivors cursed her for the way she survived the war, but Beer was still fearful enough to baptize her daughter. A returned Werner rejected the independent Edith who had replaced his servile Grete, so Beer divorced him in 1947, left the oppressive Russians, and emigrated to England, then, in 1987, to Israel. This engaging book goes deeper than psychologizing on the (Patty) Hearst Syndrome in explaining how the survival instinct allows one to sleep with the enemy. (Author tour) --
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Review

"A beautiful story of survival, an inspiring tale of overcoming fear." -- *Washington Jewish Week*

"In setting down her own tale of survival...Edith Hahn Beer provides a fascinating addition to the testimonial literature." -- *Dallas Morning News*

"Unusual and unusually eloquent." -- *The New York Post*

A "remarkable story." -- *Jerusalem Post*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Depew:

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style in this particular era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world can share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Lots of author can inspire their particular reader with their story as well as their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the information about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your sons or daughters, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their talent in writing, they also doing some research before they write to their book. One of them is this *The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust*.

Dixie Santiago:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you actually, why because this *The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust* e-book written by well-known writer whose to say well how to make book that can be understand by anyone who have read the book. Written within good manner for you, leaking every ideas and creating skill only for eliminate your personal hunger then you still doubt *The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust* as good book not simply by the cover but also with the content. This is one publication that can break don't assess book by its handle, so do you still needing one more sixth sense to pick this specific!?! Oh come on your examining sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Ruby Guillen:

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