

Daniel Half Human Study Guide

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Plot Summary

"Daniel Half Human" is a fictional account of Daniel Kraushaar, a German teenager who is caught up in the rising Nazi movement in the 1930s until his life is turned upside down by the revelation that he has Jewish ancestry. Daniel lives with his affluent parents Rheinhard and Sophie in Hamburg. His father is a prominent attorney and decorated World War I veteran while his mother is the daughter of Jewish parents who have never belonged to the Jewish community. Daniel and his best friend, Armin, dream of one day joining the Hitler Youth and are arrested one night for painting Nazi slogans on buildings.

Both boys attend a prestigious school, which begins to teach racial theories of Aryan supremacy and Jewish inferiority after Hitler comes to power. Daniel, who only recently has learned that he is half-Jewish, conceals his ancestry while other Jewish students are expelled from the school. His secret is eventually exposed. However he is allowed to stay on at the school out of deference to his father, a prominent German. As the Nazis consolidate their influence and pass anti-Jewish laws, Daniel is persecuted more and more by his schoolmates and ostracized by his teachers.

Matters become even more tense when Daniel's cousin, Miriam, who has been raised Jewish, comes to stay with his family after her father is imprisoned for his socialist political beliefs. She takes up a relationship with Armin, who has now joined the Hitler Youth and has to see her secretly. Armin is also told that he cannot associate with Daniel.

Daniel's father is forced to abandon his law practice and the family must move from their large comfortable house to a cramped apartment. Daniel's father refuses to consider leaving Germany or allowing Daniel and his mother to leave. He is certain the Nazis will not retain power and their persecution will end.

When Armin's relationship with Miriam is discovered by his superiors, he is told that he will be given a chance to make up for his transgressions. Fearing that Daniel and Miriam are in danger, Armin warns them. They escape and hide during the night of November 9th, 1938. This is the night when Jewish businesses, homes, and synagogues are smashed and burned by the Nazis.

Daniel and his parents are fortunate enough to leave Germany and go to America. Daniel becomes an interpreter for the British Army and is stationed in Hamburg, near the neighborhood where he had grown up, which has been flattened by bombs. While interrogating German officers after the war, Daniel meets again with Armin, who has been captured. Although he has an opportunity to allow Armin to be released, Daniel does not help him.



Part 1: 1933, Pages 1-25

Part 1: 1933, Pages 1-25 Summary

The novel opens with a chapter called "June 1945 I." An unnamed soldier working for the British Army drives a jeep through the streets of Hamburg, which has been devastated by bombing in World War II. He is familiar with the city and it soon becomes clear he grew up there. He steps through the rubble into a cafe he recognizes from his childhood and speaks with the owner. On the wall of the cafe is an old sign that reads "Jews Not Invited." The soldier points to the sign and says to the owner that he has forgotten to take it down. The owner begins unscrewing the sign from the wall as the soldier leaves.

The soldier continues on to the house of a former friend, a boy named Armin. The house stands amid rubble and broken glass. As he looks down at a shard of glass, he is reminded of an episode from his youth that involved his friend.

The first part of the novel is entitled "1933." The first chapter is called "Painting." Two boys in their early teens named Daniel and Armin are walking through the streets of Hamburg carrying brushes and paint. The boys are supporters of the Nazi movement, which opposes the Communists and are planning to secretly paint Nazi slogans over Communist posters. In the next chapter, called "Battle," the boys begin to paint their slogans but soon hear the sound of marching feet and voices singing a Communist political song. As the footsteps grow closer, they run and climb over a courtyard wall, with the Communists in pursuit. Armin hurts his ankle dropping from the wall and is soon surrounded. Daniel, who has a chance to get away, instead turns back and joins the fight.

The next chapter is called "Blood Brothers." The scene shifts to a small jail cell where Daniel and Armin have been taken for the night after having been arrested for fighting. Armin is grateful to Daniel for not deserting him and proposes that they become blood brothers by cutting their arms and mixing their blood. He finds a shard of glass on the floor of the cell, which they use to complete the ceremony.

Part 1: 1933, Pages 1-25 Analysis

The main character Daniel Kraushaar is introduced in the first section of the book called "June 1945 I," although his identity is not known until the following chapter in which it is implied that the soldier working for the British is the same young German boy who twelve years earlier was painting Nazi slogans on the walls of Hamburg. This stark contrast immediately raises interest in the character's story. It is also a cue to the reader that Daniel somehow survives his ordeal and leaves Nazi Germany to fight against the country in World War II. Armin's fate is hinted at, as there is apparently no trace of him or his parents in his old house in 1945, but the story of his character is not yet revealed.



The format of the novel is established in this section. The chronological story of Daniel, beginning in 1933 and leading up to his emigration from Germany in 1939, is divided by sections told from the vantage point of 1945, several years after the events.

The close friendship between Daniel and Armin is illustrated as the boys fight for one another and ultimately become "blood brothers." Daniel's loyalty to his friend and Armin's recognition of that loyalty establish a theme that will run throughout the remainder of the book.

The political opposition between Communist and National Socialist groups is established from the beginning as well. It is a time before the Nazi Party has gained control of the German government, and bands of political supporters sometimes clash in the streets. This dynamic will change as the Nazis gain more power and influence after Hitler is named Chancellor.



Part 1: 1933, Pages 26-42

Part 1: 1933, Pages 26-42 Summary

The next chapter is called "The Next Morning." Sunday morning at the Kraushaar house, Daniel's parents Sophie and Rheinhard are having an uncomfortable conversation with Sebastian, Sophie's brother, and his teenage daughter, Miriam. The tension arises from Sebastian's socialist political views, which Rheinhard disagrees with. Sophie tries to keep the conversation from turning to politics, but soon the two men are disagreeing about the German government. Sophie is also concerned that Daniel has not returned home from Armin's house, where he said he was spending the night. There is a knock at the door and it is a policeman, bringing Daniel home.

"Armin's Sunday" is the title of the next chapter. At school the next day news of Armin and Daniel's arrest is exciting news. They are officially reprimanded by the schoolmaster, who adds after his scolding that they should try not to get caught the next time.

After school, Armin tells Daniel about his father's reaction to learning about his night in jail. His father had locked him in the basement and then gone out to drink, as usual. Armin grew so hungry as the hours passed that he opened a jar of roast goose that his mother had canned for special occasions and ate the whole jarful. When his mother came to let him out of the basement, she was furious and dragged Armin and the empty jar before his father, who had a heart attack and had to be taken to the hospital. Armin threw up from eating all the rich goose fat.

The next chapter is called "Family Court." Daniel tells Armin about his own family's reaction. His father treats transgressions like criminal charges and expects Daniel to explain his actions and then decide on a punishment for himself. His father warns him against spending time with Armin, whom he considers a bad influence. Daniel explains that he must head home since his grounding has started, but adds that his mother may let Armin come visit.

Part 1: 1933, Pages 26-42 Analysis

The characters of Sebastian and Miriam are introduced in this section, and some of the political ideas of the day are expressed through the remarks of Rheinhard and Sebastian. Sebastian is a socialist and is skeptical about Hitler. Rheinhard does not like Hitler, either, but has faith that the Kaiser, who is the nominal leader of the country, will not allow Hitler to gain too much power. Rheinhard's denial that the Germany he has grown up in is changing is evident here, and it will be a source of future conflict with Sophie. While Sebastian's political views are learned, it is not mentioned that he and Miriam are observant Jews, although it must be known to the family.

In "Armin's Sunday," more is learned about Armin's home life and his widely differing background from Daniel's. These differences are further emphasized in the chapter called "Family Court," which contrasts the different reactions of Daniel and Armin's fathers.



Part 1: 1933, Pages 43-67

Part 1: 1933, Pages 43-67 Summary

Daniel and Armin return to Daniel's large bedroom in the next chapter called "Onslaught in Papier Mache." Daniel has a large table with a papier mache battlefield. Armin finds some dramatic classical music on Daniel's radio and turns it up as the boys set up painted lead soldiers in a re-enactment of a 1916 battle at the Somme between the Germans and French. Afterward, Daniel tells Armin that his father had been at the battle and nearly struck by a stray bullet.

"Victory Parade" is the title of the next chapter. Over Daniel's radio comes a news bulletin that Adolf Hitler has been named chancellor of Germany. It is January 30, 1933. The boys are excited that their Nazi hero has taken power, and they run into the street shouting. They see members of the SA, the Nazi paramilitary organization, handing out flyers announcing a victory parade to take place later in the day. The boys watch the parade, and Daniel looks on in admiration at the boys who march as part of the Hitler Jugend, or "Hitler Youth," called the HJ. Although he expects his parents will try to forbid him from joining, he knows that with Hitler in power they will not be allowed to.

"Unsigned" is the title of the next chapter. Sophie, Daniel's mother, is at home when her husband comes home from the office for the midday meal. He leaves an envelope on the table and Sophie understands that it is something he wishes her to read. It is an unsigned circular that Rheinhard has been given which describes the arrest, torture and suicide of a socialist journalist at the hands of the Nazis. The journalist is someone she knows was an acquaintance of her brother, Sebastian.

The next chapter is called "The Books." Sophie finds Rheinhard in his library, pulling some books from his shelves and putting them in a stack. He tells her he has decided he should turn the circular into the police and expects that when he does the house will be searched. He is removing books by Jewish authors from his shelves. Sophie is indignant, asking why he feels he must hide the books. He replies that he does not want to give the police any pretext for giving the family any trouble.

Suddenly the doorbell rings, startling them both. With a meaningful look, Rheinhard goes to answer it and is relieved that it is only Daniel. Daniel places a piece of paper on the dining table.

The paper is an application to join the HJ. In the next chapter, called "The Application," Daniel asks his father to sign the application giving his permission. Daniel's parents are reluctant, asking if he might not rather join a different youth group. Daniel presses them, but finally Rheinhard flatly forbids him from joining. When Daniel responds that they cannot forbid him, his parents speak to one another about telling Daniel something important. Daniel is unsure of what they mean.



Daniel discovers what his parents are discussing in the next chapter, called "The Grandparents." His mother informs him that they had never brought it up before because it never seemed important, but her parents were Jewish, making her Jewish and Daniel himself half-Jewish. Her parents left the Jewish community and she had been brought up as a Christian German, she tells him, but that makes no difference to the Nazis. This is the reason he cannot join the HJ.

Daniel is furious. He yells angrily at his parents for never having told him and insults his mother. His father slaps him and sends him to his room.

Part 1: 1933, Pages 43-67 Analysis

The chapter called "Onslaught in Papier Mache" depicts the boys at play, but their play is informed by a deep knowledge of Germany's military history and a patriotic fervor. The play ends with a remark by Daniel that his father had experienced the battle they just re-enacted, foreshadowing Rheinhard's account of his own experience in actual battle.

The chapter "Victory Parade" reveals a crucial turning point in the narrative. With Hitler's rise to power, the secret of Daniel's Jewish heritage is about to become very important to his fate. His devotion to the Nazi party and his admiration of Hitler will make his discovery of the truth about his own Jewish identity all the more dramatic.

A hint of how life for the Kraushaar family is about to change comes in the next two chapters. The unsigned circular describing the torture and suicide of a socialist begins to worry Sophie that her brother, Sebastian, will be targeted by the Nazis. Her fear becomes a reality later in the story. In the chapter called "The Books," a hint at Sophie and Rheinhard's secret is given when he begins removing books by Jewish authors from his shelves. Sophie's indignant reaction foreshadows her reaction to further persecution of Jews later in the story. The ringing of the doorbell that startles them, and which turns out only to be Daniel, foreshadows the invasion of their home near the end of the book when the family is targeted by the Nazis because of Armin's association with them.



Part 1: 1933, Pages 68-83

Part 1: 1933, Pages 68-83 Summary

Daniel sulks in his room in the next chapter, called "Volcanoes." He hears his mother crying downstairs but tries not to be moved by it. He daydreams that despite being half Jewish an exception might be made. Hitler himself might recognize him as an Aryan, allowing him to join the HJ and one day the SS, the special Nazi military unit. He finally loses himself in a book about the volcano Krakatoa

The next chapter is called "June, 1945 II." Daniel drives in his jeep to the large square where he and Armin had often met. He looks back at the period of his life after he discovered he was half Jewish. He did not tell Armin or anyone else, after his father had decided at a family meeting that they need not tell anyone.

Daniel recalls one of the teachers at his school, Dr. Knoppe, who the students referred to as "The Ape" because of his appearance. The Ape had kept a list of non-Aryan students and Daniel had wondered if his name was on that list. He had still longed to join the HJ, but it would have meant an investigation of his family's ancestry so he did not apply. Armin, whose father had also forbidden him, had joined secretly.

Part 1: 1933, Pages 68-83 Analysis

Part 1 ends with the young Daniel sulking in his room in the chapter called "Volcanoes," and the adult Daniel looking back at this time of his life in the chapter called "June, 1945 II." This chapter establishes the structure the author will follow throughout the rest of the book, ending each part with a chapter that changes the point of view to a period after the main action of the story. These sections provide an adult perspective on the events of Daniel's childhood and also serve to fill in gaps in the story that occur between the main events. The chapters looking back from 1945 also indicate that Daniel is somehow able to escape Germany and become a soldier in the US Army.

Part 2 is introduced with Daniel's reminiscences about Dr. Knoppe, one of the teachers at his school and also a member of the Nazi party who kept a list of non-Aryan students. With Daniel's secret now known to the reader, this introduction creates anticipation for the next section in which Daniel must try to keep his secret from his teachers and friends.



Part 2: 1935, Pages 84-112

Part 2: 1935, Pages 84-112 Summary

Part 2 is titled "1935" and opens with a chapter called "Racial Studies." In a class taught by The Ape, Daniel and his fellow students are told that some human races are inferior to others and that their inferior genes endanger the purity of the superior Aryan race. As a class assignment, the students are asked to investigate their own family histories and report them to the teacher.

The next chapter is called "Volga German." Daniel delays completing the family history assignment and is called in by the Ape. He is asked why he has not yet turned in the history and Daniel lies that his mother's parents were "Volga Germans," meaning they came from Russia without documents. The teacher tells him that this is acceptable and to write "Volga German" on his family tree.

The next chapter is called "Three Class Assignments" and is made up of papers handed in by three students in The Ape's racial studies class. The assignment is to relate a story of the student's or the student's family where they interacted with a Jewish person.

The first paper is by a student named Peter Mehlhorn. He tells a story about his grandfather who was cheated by a Jewish shoe salesman who rented his storefront. The teacher gives Mehlhorn a passing grade and remarks that he should have described the treachery of the Jewish businessman more completely.

The second paper is by Armin, Daniel's friend. Armin tells some vulgar stories that he has heard repeated about a Jew who lives in his apartment house. The teacher remarks that such vulgar stories are not appropriate for school, although they do display the vulgar nature of the people.

The third paper is by Daniel. He tells the story of a friend of his father's, a fellow soldier with whom he had served at the front in World War I. This friend had always been truthful and loyal to his father, but then became involved with a group of other soldiers who planned to rebel against the army. The friend had asked Daniel's father to join them, but his father refused and ended the friendship. Only after the war did his father learn that the man was a Jew and that he had joined the Zionist cause. Daniel's paper receives high praise from his teacher, both for its content and his excellent writing skills.

The next chapter is called "After the Game." After a soccer game, Daniel, Armin, and a teammate named Jurgen are eating ice cream and talking. The subject turns to the question of who at the school might be hiding their Jewish ancestry. Daniel is made uncomfortable by the talk. After Jurgen leaves, Armin hints that there have been rumors about Daniel's own heritage. He tells Daniel that he should just join the HJ, which will put a stop to the talk.



The next chapter is called "'Uncle' Karl." Daniel returns home and overhears his father in his library having a discussion with his law partner, Karl, who Daniel has always called Uncle Karl. Karl is telling Rheinhard that his marriage to a Jew is endangering their law practice. He suggests that Rheinhard divorce his wife, an idea that Rheinhard flatly rejects. He offers Rheinhard a different job working for Karl's brother's furniture factory, but Rheinhard again refuses. Karl is frustrated, and says at the very least, Rheinhard must make him head of the firm. Daniel runs upstairs before his father can learn that he has been eavesdropping.

Part 2: 1935, Pages 84-112 Analysis

Daniel does not keep his secret for long and the pressure that he faces is evident in the opening chapters of Part 2. In "Racial Studies," Dr. Knoppe's ridiculous racial theories are presented while Daniel hopes that he is not discovered. The chapter called "Three Class Assignments" gives the story an ironic twist when Dr. Knoppe praises Daniel's writing skills and intelligence without knowing that Daniel has a supposedly inferior ancestry according to Dr. Knoppe's theories.

The discovery of Daniel's secret is foreshadowed in the chapter "After the Game" when one of his teammates begins to drop hints that his ancestry is known. Armin seems to have doubts of his own, but stands by his friend. At the same time, he encourages him to join the HJ so the rumors will stop.

Pressure on Rheinhard begins to build when his law partner tries to make him choose between his family and his business.



Part 2: 1935, Pages 113-131

Part 2: 1935, Pages 113-131 Summary

The next chapter is called "Family Scene." Rheinhard tells Sophia about Karl's visit and Sophie informs him of a family they know who had just left Germany suddenly. Sophie also wants to leave Germany with Rheinhard and Daniel, but Rheinhard does not want to leave. He also forbids her from leaving with Daniel herself. As long as it is possible to stay in Germany, they will stay together, he tells her.

"Troubled Night" is the title of the next chapter. The doorbell rings late at night. It is Miriam, Sophie's niece. She has bags with her, but offers no explanation of why she has come or where her father, Sebastian, is. Sophie puts her in their guest bedroom and returns to her own room. After a short time, a letter is slipped under the door to Sophie's room.

The next chapter, called "The Letter" is made up of the text of the letter, which is from Sebastian. He writes that he feels he is a target of the Nazis because of his socialist beliefs. He says in the letter that he is writing it in the event that he is taken away with instructions for Miriam to go to her house and bring the letter.

The next chapter is called "Next Morning." Daniel leaves for school early and does not see that Miriam has come. He returns immediately from school because they are holding special HJ exercises which he cannot take part in. When he sees Miriam at the breakfast table, he treats her rudely and goes to his room. Sophie comes to Daniel and asks him to treat Miriam kindly. Daniel sulks and continues to brood about his Jewish heritage.

In the next chapter, called "A Letter Not Written," Daniel takes out paper and pen to write to Armin and tell him his secret. He imagines what Armin's reaction might be to learning he is half Jewish. He cannot bear to think about it and decides that he will never tell Armin or anyone else.

Part 2: 1935, Pages 113-131 Analysis

This section of the book is transitional as the members of the Kraushaar family are forced to face the consequences of Sophie's Jewish heritage. Sophie wants to leave, but Rheinhard continues to deny that things will get any worse. He is devoted to his family, but at this point he thinks that staying together in Germany while he continues to practice law is the best thing for his family. He does not recognize that he will probably be forced to give up his practice since he refused to give it up voluntarily. He feels his status as a decorated German veteran will continue to protect him and his family.

Miriam's sudden and unexpected arrival is another transition in the story. She is a very real reminder to Daniel of the Jewish heritage he wishes would disappear, and his



rudeness to her is shocking to his parents. His struggle with his own identity is heightened when he weighs what he ought to do regarding Armin. He imagines that Armin will abandon him once he learns he is half Jewish and decides that even though it means deceiving him, he cannot bear to tell his friend.



Part 2: 1935, Pages 132-157

Part 2: 1935, Pages 132-157 Summary

"A Letter Not Sent" is the title of the next chapter. It is a letter written by Miriam to her father, who has been taken away. She does not know where he is, and cannot send the letter, but writes it nonetheless. She describes living with Daniel's family. Daniel is rude to her, but does sometimes walk with her. She mentions his friend, Armin, who seems to be attracted to her.

The next chapter is called "At Soccer Practice." Daniel enjoys playing soccer and has been given a good position on his team because of his speed. As practice begins, his teammate Jurgen makes some remarks about Daniel and his possible Jewish background. Daniel ignores it at first, but Jurgen is persistent and finally knocks Daniel down and starts a fight. Armin comes to Daniel's defense, but Daniel admits that he is half-Jewish. Armin is astonished that Daniel never told him. Daniel turns and walks quickly away from the field.

The next chapter is titled "At the Intersection." Armin chases after Daniel and stops him to speak with him. He tells Daniel that they are best friends, blood brothers, and that nothing will change that. Daniel is upset knowing he will now be kicked off the soccer team, although Armin does not think he will be made to leave. Daniel is certain, however, and says his only option will be to play in the Jewish league. Armin replies that in that case, he will also join the Jewish league so they can play together. When Daniel tells him it would not be allowed, Armin is certain that if Hitler himself knew how unfair things were he would not allow it.

The next chapter is called "June 1945, III." Daniel returns to his jeep and finds it surrounded by German children. He locates a pack of gum in the glove box and hands it out. The children are surprised to hear him speak to them in German. One of the older boys asks him for some cigarettes for his father and Daniel gives him a pack.

Daniel thinks back to the incident after soccer practice. He had stayed away from the next game and stopped going to practices. When he saw some of his teammates in the street after the next game, they looked at him but did not greet him. He grew very angry at them, and imagined himself attacking them and beating them, and even attacking and killing Hitler. He decided at that time, in the autumn of 1935, that he was no longer a German.

Part 2: 1935, Pages 132-157 Analysis

Miriam's thoughts from a Jewish perspective are expressed in "A Letter Not Sent." Unlike Daniel, Miriam seems comfortable with her identity as a Jew and while she recognizes the prejudice and persecution that she is likely to face, she has insight into its causes and is able to find some comfort in reason.



Daniel's secret is finally confirmed after a fight with some of soccer teammates. While he imagines that Armin will immediately abandon him, Armin instead stands up for him against the other boys, then tracks him down to tell him he does not care about his Jewish heritage. While Armin appears to value friendship over the ideals of the Nazi party, his innocent opinion that Hitler would make an exception for Daniel if he knew how unfair it was to force the friends to play on different soccer teams shows that Armin does not fully understand the extent to which the Nazis will carry persecution of the Jews.

This is a turning point for Daniel, as his later self explains in the final chapter of Part 2. Still struggling with his identity, he decides on one thing that he is not, which is German. He feels betrayed by the country he was ready to fight for but which does not want him because of an accident of his heredity.



Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 158-174

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 158-174 Summary

The next chapter is called "Painting," and is written partly from Armin's point of view. He is from a lower-class family, but because he showed talent at school has been given a scholarship to attend the Christianeum school where Daniel and the sons of other affluent Germans are sent. He lives in two different worlds, with Daniel serving as the link between them. Daniel has always helped Armin, giving him food and school supplies without drawing attention to what he is doing.

The news of Daniel's confession at soccer practice reaches the staff of his school and he is called in to speak with Dr. Kammacher, the director of the school. Kammacher was in the army with Daniel's father and says he will protect him while he is at the school.

The main topic of conversation is the 1936 Olympic Games being held in Berlin, where a black man, Jesse Owens, beat several supposedly superior Aryan athletes on the running track. The city is temporarily cleaned up for the games and all of the anti-Jewish posters are removed.

Armin continues to drill with the Hitler Youth and hopes to be promoted to be a troop leader. One morning after some HJ night drills, Armin comes running to the front door of the Kraushaar house, terribly disturbed about something.

The next chapter is called "Shots in the Dark." Armin collapses in Daniel's bedroom and tells him about the previous night. His troop leader was a boy named Kolinski, who was very stupid. Kolinski had the troop members shooting bottles for target practice, but when it became too dark he made some of the younger members hold out their flashlights and shot at them. One boy was grazed by a bullet, Armin tells Daniel, but another, named Hans-Dieter, was shot in the head by Kolinski. He died almost instantly.

Armin is very upset at Kolinski's thoughtlessness and begins to cry. Daniel comforts him and Armin resolves to write a formal complaint about Kolinski.

Armin grows even more angry when it becomes clear Kolinski will not be punished. He is only transferred to another unit. Then Hans-Dieter's father is taken away by the secret police when he protests. When Armin presses the matter with his company commander, he is called to speak to the district leader, a man named Blohm.

The next chapter is called "My Honor Means Loyalty, I." Armin is admitted into Blohm's office and stands at attention. Blohm praises Armin for his intelligence and compassion, but says that these can be flaws if he wants to serve the Nazi party. He must learn to follow orders and take action without question. He tells Armin he has been watching him for potential promotion, but that he cannot until he is sure Armin has broken off his friendship with Daniel. Armin protests that Daniel is only half Jewish, but Blohm is insistent. Armin reluctantly agrees to end the friendship.



As Armin is about to board the train home from Blohm's office, he sees a striking black-haired girl who commands his attention. He realizes he has seen her before at the Kraushaar's house. She is Daniel's cousin.

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 158-174 Analysis

More about Armin and his outlook is learned in the opening chapter of Part 3. Armin comes from a less privileged background than Daniel and perhaps sees the HJ and the Nazi party as a way for him to advance out of his circumstances and take full advantage of his intelligence. His confidence in his choice is shaken when he witnesses an act of thoughtless brutality by his troop leader, followed by inaction by the leaders of the HJ. He is told outright that his intelligence means little if he is not prepared to obey the orders of his superiors without question.

Armin's pivotal role in the fate of Daniel and his family is foreshadowed in the ultimatum given to Armin by Blohm. He must choose between his friendship and his membership in the HJ. He cannot advance unless he gives up his friendship with Daniel. Armin does not seem to fully appreciate the seriousness of Blohm's directive, or else he simply cannot help himself from making his situation even more complicated by chasing after Miriam.



Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 175-199

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 175-199 Summary

The next chapter is called "Pestilence." The Kraushaars and Miriam go on a relaxing vacation to Amsterdam in the Netherlands. They swim and hike and find many German families who have left the country. As they are returning to Hamburg on the train, Sophie begins to feel like a prisoner being returned to jail. It is like a sickness has spread among the people, who have become mistrustful and afraid.

Sophie learns that her brother Sebastian is being held in Fuhlbüttel, a former prison that is now a concentration camp. She is allowed to visit the camp once a week and deliver a letter and clean clothes, but not to see her brother. Rheinhard is disturbed by her visits, but allows them.

The Kraushaar family begins to experience money problems as Rheinhard is receiving fewer and fewer clients. His war service and Aryan heritage had protected him from discrimination up to this point, but this protection has started to erode. Things reach a turning point on July 6, 1937.

The next chapter is called "Trenches." July 6 was the day Rheinhard had been awarded the Iron Cross medal for valor in World War I. Every year since, he had taken that day off work and spent it with his family. Over the years, he had revealed a bit more to Daniel about what he had done to receive the cross. In 1933 he gave Daniel a more complete story. He and another soldier had been at the front with France, creeping through the darkness to scout enemy trenches. While they were scouting, an explosion collapsed a trench on them, burying them alive. Rheinhard had managed to dig his way out and pull his fellow soldier out as well, then carried him back to their own trenches.

Rheinhard takes July 6 off in 1937. Normally he would have gone with his family to a play or concert, but under the new Nuremberg Laws these were forbidden to Jews so they go instead to see a movie. Shortly before the film is to begin, an usher asks them to leave. A Nazi official and his friend want the seats. Rheinhard is indignant and refuses to leave. He is told by the manager that he will be forced to go if he does not cooperate. He stands up and leads his family out.

The next chapter is called "Thrown Out." Daniel notices his parents are quarreling more and more. Sophie becomes distraught at the stories she hears of Jews being mistreated and forced to leave and she becomes increasingly frustrated with Rheinhard, who sits quietly, seemingly not hearing her. She cries out for him to answer her one day and he calmly replies that he has been thrown out of his law office by Karl. He had been made to clean out his desk that day. Karl had told him it was not his choice but that he was forced to do it, but Rheinhard does not believe him.



The next chapter is called "Return." One day Daniel finds his mother standing in the entry to the house embracing a man and crying. He sees that it is Sebastian, her brother. Sophie brings him into the house and gives him some tea. He exchanges some pleasant words with Rheinhard, but is clearly distracted and wondering where Miriam is. Sophie explains she has gone to her Hebrew lesson and will be back shortly.

"Coincidence" is the title of the next chapter. Armin is waiting outside the building where Miriam takes her Hebrew lessons, watching for her to come out. When she does, he pretends to meet her by coincidence and recognize her as Daniel's cousin. He asks her what she is doing in that part of town and she lies that she is taking piano lessons. Armin knows she is really taking Hebrew lessons, but takes the lie as a sign that she may like him.

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 175-199 Analysis

The family trip to Amsterdam is a taste of the freedom that the family will soon lose under the Nazis. Sophie has a sense of this impending fate as she rides back to Germany on the train as if she is a prisoner being returned to jail.

More of Rheinhard's background and character is learned in the chapter called "Trenches." He is rightfully proud as a war hero, but he still clings to his naive notion that the new Nazi leadership will balance this against the fact that he has a Jewish wife and let them live a normal life. His life begins to change considerably, however, as he is effectively boycotted and loses business. The incident at the movie theater where he is forced to give his seat to a Nazi officer is a symbolic episode that points to the shift in climate. Things finally reach a turning point in the chapter "Thrown Out," when Rheinhard is officially removed from his law firm.

Even at this dark point, the family receives some hope when Sebastian is released from prison. He has a haunted air, and does not explain or describe his time in prison. Rheinhard is kinder to Sebastian, apparently recognizing the ordeal that he has been through and feeling some connection with him as he also is feeling the weight of the Nazi opposition.

Armin and Miriam's forbidden romance is sparked in the chapter "Coincidence," when Armin tracks her down after her Hebrew lesson. Despite having been warned about associating with Jews if he wishes to advance in the HJ, Armin initiates the contact with Miriam.



Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 200-229

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 200-229 Summary

The next chapter is called "Rendezvous." Armin offers to walk Miriam home, but she replies it is too far to walk and that she is taking the streetcar. He stammers out an invitation to come with him to a cafe for a hot chocolate, and she cautiously agrees. Armin talks non-stop about soccer as they walk to the cafe. Afterward, he takes her back to the streetcar stop and asks her bluntly if she has a boyfriend. Sensing that Armin is interested in her, she tells him quietly that she is Jewish, and he responds that he knows. He does not care about that, or the Nuremberg Laws that would prevent them from going many places together. He asks if he can meet her again the next week after her lesson. She does not answer completely, but climbs on the streetcar and waves to him as it pulls away.

The next chapter is called "The Loreley." With Sebastian back from prison, Miriam makes plans to go off to a Zionist training camp in preparation for leaving Germany to go to Palestine. Daniel finds he is saddened by this development. Although he had been angry when Miriam first came to live with them, they sometimes had enjoyable talks on the long walks they took.

in one such walk, Miriam speaks to Daniel about something his mother had asked her to mention. Daniel already knows the issue is "The Loreley," a popular German folk song written by an author named Heine, who is Jewish. At school, Daniel had caused trouble when he remarked to Dr. Kammacher that if the Nazis were burning Jewish books, they ought not sing Heine's song any more.

Miriam tries to convince Daniel not to cause such trouble or he will risk being kicked out of the school, where he is the only non-Aryan. He should try to blend in, she suggests. This prompts Daniel to tell her he does not know who he really is. He has decided he is not German any longer, but he is also not Jewish. Miriam tells him that because his mother is Jewish he could become a Jew himself and go to Palestine. He admits this might not be the worst thing, but that he really feels he has no identity.

The next chapter is called "Soaking Wet." It is the night before Miriam is to leave for Rissen, where she will attend Zionist camp. She has packed and sits up, nervously. She has broken a date with Armin earlier in the evening by not going to the place they had agreed to meet. Their relationship had deepened over the previous weeks and she felt she was on the brink of falling in love with him.

She is startled by a rapping at her bedroom window. It is Armin, soaking wet from the heavy rain, in a tree outside. She lets him in, and he asks why she did not come. She admits that she wanted to leave before she fell in love with him. They embrace and kiss and he tells her they do not have to stop seeing each other. His uncle has an apartment



that Armin takes care of while his uncle is away during the week. They could meet there, even after she goes to Rissen, he says. He asks her to come see the apartment.

The next chapter is called "June 1945 IV." Daniel drives his jeep up to his old house. He thinks back to the period after his father was thrown out of his law practice. At first he had put his savings into opening up a small law office of his own, taking on only simple matters so as not to draw attention to himself. Then the Nazis forced him to stop practicing law completely and he got a job selling cattle feed. The pay was much lower, and Daniel's family had to move from their comfortable house into a small apartment.

Daniel has an urge to walk up to his old house and ring the bell, but he is unsure what he would do if someone answered. He looks down the street and thinks of the thousands of times he had walked that street to and from school each day. He thinks back to the last time he made that walk, in March, 1938.

Part 3: 1936-1937, Pages 200-229 Analysis

Armin and Miriam's romance is further established in the chapter "Rendezvous." Both of them know their association is forbidden, but this seems to add attraction to the situation for both of them. This romance will be the cause of the Kraushaar family being singled out by the Nazis later in the story.

Daniel, having given up trying to hide his Jewish heritage and having giving up his emotional ties to being German becomes more outspoken about the inconsistencies in the Nazi propaganda. He makes his teachers uncomfortable by pointing out that the literature and music that was highly prized before the Nazi rise to power has suddenly become seen as inferior, and that some music that has been retained as especially "German" was written by Jews. It is Miriam, somewhat surprisingly, who tries to warn him against being so outspoken. He should try to blend in, she advises him.

The details of Armin and Miriam's visits are not included in the story, but it becomes apparent they have continued to see each other regularly when Armin comes climbing in to her bedroom window as she is about to leave the Kraushaar house for Zionist camp. The arrangement they make to meet at his uncle's empty apartment will lead to the end of their relationship, but it will also allow Daniel and Miriam to escape the Nazis.

This part closes with another chapter looking back at the events from 1945. Daniel explains how the family's financial situation continued to decline and indicates that something dramatic happened in March, 1938, which will be taken up in the next part of the book.



Part 4: 1938, Pages 230-244

Part 4: 1938, Pages 230-244 Summary

Part 4 opens with a chapter called "Assembly." Daniel is at the usual Saturday morning school assembly, standing next to Armin among the other students. Unlike other mornings, when Dr. Kammacher leads the assembly, this morning it is Dr. Knoppe, "The Ape" who addresses the boys. He is dressed in his Nazi uniform and tells the students that German troops have just "liberated" Austria and have been welcomed by the Austrians. He leads the boys in the usual salute of Hitler and in the singing of Nazi propaganda songs. Daniel notices that where the students had often kidded around during this part of the assembly before, everyone is taking it more seriously now, including Armin.

Daniel has noticed that Armin has changed physically recently, his voice gotten lower and his body thicker. While he has remained Daniel's friend, he has also seemed distant at times. When Daniel has pressed him about it, he has reluctantly admitted he has been thinking about a girl. Daniel is afraid that if Armin gets a girlfriend he will stop being his friend completely and he will have no friends at all.

Daniel is called again to speak with Dr. Kammacher, the director. Daniel has been critical of the Nazi leadership again in class by pointing out that the charity drive the boys are expected to participate in only raises money for purchasing weapons. Dr. Kammacher explains to Daniel that his presence in the school is disruptive and he is expelled. While his father wants to protest, Daniel tells him that it is not necessary. The next Monday, he goes himself and enrolls in the Jewish school.

The next chapter is called "October." the Kraushaar family has moved into a smaller apartment but kept many of their large pieces of furniture. Rheinhard has been scraping by as a wholesale grain merchant, but the rent is due and he does not have enough to pay. He thinks back on his successful law career and the changes in Germany that led to him being forced to give up his prosperous life. He remembers when he was just starting out, recently married, with little money, and decides that he is even worse off now than he was then. He looks around his crowded apartment and decides that he will have to sell something to get money for the rent.

Part 4: 1938, Pages 230-244 Analysis

Daniel's presence is no longer tolerated at his school and he is expelled. He seems to have accepted this would happen one day and he has not been afraid to confront his teachers. When his father wants to protest his expulsion, Daniel simply tells him not to bother and enrolls himself in the Jewish school. He appears to have accepted this fate and perhaps started to identify with his Jewish heritage.



Rheinhard still has difficulty accepting his own fate, but as he sits and wonders how he will raise the money for the rent, he runs through the milestones in recent years that have led up to his predicament. This chapter not only provides some insight into Rheinhard's background, but it also allows the author to describe some of the historical events that underlie the story, such as the rise of Hitler, the expansion of Germany, and the implementation of anti-Jewish laws and policies.



Part 4: 1938, Pages 245-262

Part 4: 1938, Pages 245-262 Summary

The next chapter is called "My Honor Means Loyalty II." Armin is called before District Leader Blohm, who is furious with him. He has been watched and it is known that he has been meeting Miriam secretly in his uncle's apartment. Armin protests that he has done nothing illegal, but Blohm silences him. He tells Armin he is lucky not to be expelled from the HJ. He hints that Armin soon will have a chance to make up for his transgression. Something is in the works, he tells him, that will allow him to get even with Miriam and her family. He tells Armin to wait to hear from him.

"Before the Explosion" is the name of the next chapter. It departs from the narrative and provides some historical facts about the time of the events being described. Beginning in 1938, all Jews in Germany are required to carry special identification. Germany begins to export Polish Jews to Poland, but Poland refuses to take them in, leaving thousands of them stranded at the Polish-German border. In France, a Polish Jew named Herschel Grynszpan who had fled Germany in 1936, learned that his own family was among the Polish Jews being mistreated in Germany. In an act of revenge, he went to the German embassy in Paris on November 7, 1938, and shot a German official named Ernst vom Rath. Vom Rath died two days later, on November 9.

In the chapter "Counting the Cracks" the stress has started to unravel the Kraushaar family. Daniel lies on the sofa while his parents quarrel. Sophie cries that Rheinhard should divorce her and let her take Daniel out of Germany. He continues to refuse, and says he has never considered it. Daniel wonders what he would do if his parents divorced. He could stay with his father and go back to being treated like an Aryan German, or go with his mother and be criminalized as a Jew. As he daydreams, the doorbell rings.

It is Armin at the door, in his full HJ uniform, as the next chapter, called "Final Warning," begins. Armin says he has to speak with Daniel about something important and they go into Daniel's bedroom. After some small chat, Armin, who seems uncomfortable, tells Daniel that he and Miriam are in danger. They should find someplace to hide, he tells Daniel. It is before vom Rath has died, and Armin hints that if he does die there will be trouble for all Jews. Daniel replies that he is only half Jewish and that Miriam is preparing to leave for Palestine, so he does not think they would face any trouble. Armin is insistent. He cannot tell Daniel any more, but begs him to do what he asks and find a place to hide.

Part 4: 1938, Pages 245-262 Analysis

The author repeats the chapter title "My Honor Means Loyalty," which is taken from a Nazi party motto. It is intended to remind members of the organization that they are



expected to follow orders without question and to remain loyal to the party. Armin's loyalty is tested in this chapter, when he promises to break off his relationships with Daniel and Miriam. In the chapter "Final Warning," however, his loyalty to his friends seems to overcome his loyalty to the party when he gives Daniel an urgent warning to find a safe place for him and Miriam to hide. This is the first inkling of the dramatic events to come.



Part 4: 1938, Pages 263-281

Part 4: 1938, Pages 263-281 Summary

The next chapter is called "Crisis: What to Do?" On November 9, Daniel goes to the camp where Miriam is staying and finds Sebastian is there, as well. The three of them go for a walk in the forest and Daniel relays Armin's warning. Sebastian is curious why Armin would want to warn Miriam, and Miriam admits that the two of them had been seeing each other, meeting secretly in Armin's uncle's apartment. Sebastian is angry at first, but soon realizes that if the Nazis had learned that Armin was involved with Miriam, that she and Daniel might indeed be singled out. He tells them their best option is to ask Rheinhard to ask a friend hide them for a few days.

On that same day, Armin is participating in a ceremony honoring Hitler's failed attempt to take power on November 9, 1923. The ceremony is described in the chapter called "The Notorious Ninth of November." Armin has been made a flagbearer, a position of honor. Afterward, he is taken by Blohm to a bar where several Nazi officers are meeting and drinking. It is not a place he would have been allowed if not with Blohm. Blohm sits him at a table, then goes into a back room with several other leaders for a meeting. Meanwhile, the other men in the bar drink and sing. Finally, Blohm comes out of the meeting and tells Armin he will have his chance to straighten out his situation that night.

The next chapter is called "June 1945, V." Daniel has returned to the hotel where he and some other German interpreters are staying. He watches distractedly as the other interpreters play a card game he himself had learned to play as a child with Armin. After a while, an officer comes into their room and informs Daniel that he is being moved to a new location, Neuengamme, where former German soldiers were being interrogated before being released.

Part 4: 1938, Pages 263-281 Analysis

The action picks up in the first two chapters of this section as Daniel and Miriam begin to realize they may be in real danger, and as the officers of the SA begin to put some kind of scheme into effect to take action against Jews. This event will propel the story to its final conclusion. In the last chapter of Part 4, Daniel is moved to a new assignment interrogating former regular German soldiers who are eligible for release because of a labor shortage on German farms. This re-assignment sets up his reunion with Armin, which will be the final event of the novel.



Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 282-308

Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 282-308 Summary

Part 5 opens with a chapter called "Waiting." Daniel and Miriam have returned to Daniel's apartment and are waiting for Rheinhard to return from asking some friends to hide them. It is 11:30 at night, and they wait tensely. Rheinhard returns to tell them his colleagues are all too scared to help and that Daniel and Miriam will have to stay in the apartment. It is getting dangerous outside, he tells them. Daniel is outraged at his father's apparent ignorance of the danger they are all in. He yells at his father, but their argument is interrupted when something is thrown through their window and they hear pounding at the front door of the apartment house. Daniel and Miriam leave by the kitchen window, but Rheinhard and the others remain.

The next chapter is called "The Hearing." Nazi soldiers break down the apartment door as Rheinhard pushes Sophie and Sebastian into the bedroom. The soldiers burst in and begin smashing the furniture and dishes. Blohm and Armin are also with them, and Blohm begin screaming at Rheinhard to tell them where Daniel and Miriam are. He replies he does not know. Blohm tells Armin to conduct the "hearing" with Rheinhard. At first, Armin is polite to Rheinhard, asking him to tell them where Daniel and Miriam are. At the urging of Blohm, however, he begins to yell and hit Rheinhard, who continues to deny knowing where they are. Finally, Blohm pulls a gun and points it at Rheinhard. Rheinhard is indignant, and tells him he is an aryan and a decorated war hero who has received the Iron Cross. Blohm insists on seeing the medal, and when Rheinhard produces it, he tells him he is lucky he was at the front or he would be dead. They leave the apartment in shambles.

The next chapter is called "In Hiding." Daniel and Miriam make their way through the streets of Hamburg toward Armin's uncle's apartment, where Miriam thinks they can hide. All around them, Jewish shops are being smashed and looted. They make it to the apartment and are sitting in the dark, talking, when they hear a key in the door.

The next chapter is called "Wiedersehen." A man comes into the apartment and sits in a chair. It is Armin, and he is surprised when Daniel and Miriam reveal themselves. Daniel is angry at Armin for leading the SA men to his apartment, but Armin replies that he had put his own career at risk so as not to betray their friendship.

In the next chapter, called "A Closer Look," Daniel and Miriam walk through the ruins of Jewish shops and synagogues as they return home. At home they learn about the beating the Rheinhard received and Daniel begins to feel his friendship with Armin die. On the radio, they learn that thousands of Jewish men had been rounded up and sent to concentration camps and that new laws restricting the activities of Jews were to be adopted.



Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 282-308 Analysis

This section describes the dramatic climax of the story as Daniel and Miriam are forced to flee from Armin and the Nazi officers out to harm them. The conflict between Daniel and his father reaches a climax, as well, as Daniel's frustration with his father's denial of the imminent danger becomes too much for him to stand. Rheinhard's belief that his status as a war hero will protect him proves to be true, to a point, but he suffers a beating before he is left alone by the Nazis.

Armin's choice to betray his friends comes to its conclusion when he accompanies the Nazi officers to the apartment of the Kraushaar family and takes part in the beating of Daniel's father. As he explains later to Daniel and Miriam when they are reunited in his uncle's apartment, he believes he has acted honorably toward his friends by warning them of the danger they are in. At this point in the story, Daniel does not yet know that Armin himself had mistreated his father.

The chapter "A Closer Look" describes the brutal reality of the Nazi persecution of Jews, which will finally convince Daniel's father that they must leave the country.



Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 309-325

Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 309-325 Summary

The next chapter is called "Waiting for a Visa." Talk of war increases in 1945 and Rheinhard tries hard to get visas for his family to leave Germany. He finally arranges Cuban visas that will allow them to possibly get to the United States via Cuba. Sebastian tries to get Miriam out, as well, but has not been able to by the time the Kraushaar's leave. Sebastian and Miriam come to see them off on the boat. As they leave, Daniel thinks about Armin and wonders if he knows they are leaving. He would like to see him again, but does not know what he would say.

The last chapter is called "June 1945 VI." Daniel explains that he does not know if Sebastian and Miriam ever made it out of Germany or if they were sent to concentration camps where they died. His own father died not long after they finally reached the U.S. He joined the American forces and was now an interpreter on assignment to the British.

His job at Neiangamme is to interrogate prisoners to see if they have ever belonged to the SS, the branch of the Nazi military that was responsible for the concentration camps where prisoners were killed. Regular soldiers who were not in the SS were being released, but those who had been members were kept in prison. The interpreters sat at a row of desks, conducting their brief interviews. As Daniel is interviewing one prisoner, he hears a familiar voice. He looks over at another desk and sees Armin standing there, answering questions. He goes to the interpreter and asks to see Armin's file, which shows that he was never a member of the SS. He asks Armin to roll up his sleeve where he sees evidence that an SS tattoo had recently been cut out. Armin continues to deny that he was in the SS, but Daniel calmly changes Armin's file to say that he was an SS member, then returns to his own desk.

Part 5: 1938-1939, Pages 309-325 Analysis

Most of the unresolved threads of the novel are drawn together in these final two chapters. Daniel and his family are able to leave Germany after considerable trouble, but the journey appears to weaken Rheinhard to the point that he cannot go on living. A large gap exists in the six years between the last two chapters, and only some of the intervening events are explained. Daniel becomes an American soldier and Armin apparently continues on his path to join the SS. The fate of Sebastian and Miriam is left unknown, however.

The final scene is a dramatic ending to the story, but one that ends on a note of resignation. Daniel has an opportunity to let his former friend escape his fate as a possible war criminal, but he instead chooses to "just do his job." He likens his decision to Armin's choice as a young man to prefer his duty to the Nazi party over his duty to his friends.



Characters

Daniel Kraushaar

Daniel Kraushaar is the main character of the novel. He is a boy in his early teens as the novel opens in 1933, and is a bright student at the elite Christianeum school in Hamburg, Germany. He lives with his parents, Rheinhard and Sophie, in a large comfortable house. His father is a prominent and successful lawyer. Like most of his friends, Daniel idolizes Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party as a boy and he wants to join the Hitler Youth organization along with his friends. He learns, however, that his mother is of Jewish ancestry, making him half Jewish and ineligible to join the Nazi organization. Daniel is angry after learning about his heritage, but comes to accept it.

Daniel is best friends with Armin Hillman, a boy in his same year at school who comes from a working-class background, and who eventually betrays his friendship. As Germany is about to go to war, Daniel and his family are able to emigrate to the United States through Cuba. In the US, Daniel joins the armed forces and at the end of the war is assigned to assist the British military in Hamburg as an interpreter. While he is performing this duty, he is briefly reunited with Armin, who has gone on to join the SS, the Nazi military branch responsible for the persecution of Jews.

Armin Hillman

Armin Hillman is a young teen living in Hamburg in the 1930s. He is the best friend of Daniel Kraushaar, the novel's main character. He is the son of a working class father who drinks heavily and sometimes abuses Armin. Because of his intelligence, he attends the elite Christianeum school on a scholarship, where he is in the same year as Daniel. Like most of his classmates, Armin joins the Hitler Youth and begins to rise through the ranks. His friendship with the half-Jewish Daniel and Daniel's Jewish cousin, Miriam, endangers his potential advancement in the organization and he is told by his superiors that if he wishes to stay in the Hitler Youth he will have to betray his friends.

Armin warns his friends they are in danger, but he also goes along with his superior officers to Daniel's apartment on the night of Kristallnacht, when many Jews are beaten and killed. Armin's fate afterward is not completely described in the book, but when Daniel encounters him later, after the war is over, there is evidence that he goes on to join the SS, the branch of the Nazi party responsible for persecuting the Jews. He is imprisoned by the British.

Rheinhard Kraushaar

Rheinhard Kraushaar is Daniel's father. He is a prominent and successful lawyer in Hamburg, living with his wife, Sophie, and Daniel in a nice house. Rheinhard is a



veteran of World War I, in which he was awarded the Iron Cross, a medal given for distinguished service. As the Nazis increase their power and their persecution of the Jews, Rheinhard continues to believe that his status as a prominent lawyer and war veteran will protect him and his family. He holds on to this belief even as he is forced to give up his law practice and his son is expelled from his school because of Sophie's Jewish ancestry. When Daniel's life is threatened and Rheinhard is beaten by the Nazis, he finally agrees to leave Germany with his family. He dies shortly after the family reaches the United States.

Sophie Kraushaar

Sophie Kraushaar is Daniel's mother. Although her own parents left the Jewish community before she was born and she was raised as a Christian German, her ancestry makes her a target of persecution by the Nazis. At first, her husband's prominent status protects her and Daniel, but as the Nazis gain power, the family is targeted more and more. She wishes to leave the country, but Rheinhard refuses for several years until the persecution becomes too great. Sophie finally leaves Germany with her family.

Miriam

Miriam is the daughter of Sebastian, Sophie's brother, and is Daniel's cousin. She has been raised in the Jewish community and intends to move to Palestine as part of the Zionist movement. When her father is imprisoned for his socialist activities, Miriam comes to live with Daniel's family.

Miriam meets Armin Hillman through Daniel and the two of them begin a romantic relationship. She meets him privately, sometimes in the empty apartment owned by Armin's uncle. Her relationship becomes known to Daniel and Sebastian after Armin sends her a warning through Daniel that they are in danger.

Sophie remains in Germant with her father in 1939 as Daniel and his family are leaving the country. Her ultimate fate is unknown, but Daniel later wonders if she was eventually sent to a concentration camp.

Sebastian

Sebastian is Sophie's brother. He is a bookseller and holds socialist political views which sometimes put him at odds with Rheinhard. After the Nazis assume leadership of the country, Sebastian is imprisoned for a time, then released. As war nears, he tries hard to get his daughter out of Germany, but is not able to by 1939, when he last sees his sister. His ultimate fate is unknown.



Dr. Knoppe

Dr. Knoppe is a teacher at Daniel's school. His appearance has given him a nickname among the students of "The Ape," which is how Daniel refers to him. Dr. Knoppe belongs to the Nazi party and teaches racial "theories" that hold that Jews are inferior. He keeps a list of non-aryan students, all of whom are eventually made to leave the school.

Uncle Karl

Uncle Karl is the law partner of Rheinhard Kraushaar, who Daniel has always called "uncle." Rheinhard takes Karl in as a young lawyer and teaches him the profession. When the Nazis begin to pressure Karl to force Rheinhard out of the practice because he is married to Sophie, Karl tries to convince Rheinhard to divorce her. He also offers Rheinhard a job at his brother's furniture factory, but Rheinhard refuses both proposals. Eventually Karl throws Rheinhard out of the practice.

Dr. Kammacher

Dr. Kammacher is the director of the Christianeum, Daniel's school. He is a former comrade of Daniel's father and out of friendship to Rheinhard he allows Daniel to remain at the school even after it is discovered that Daniel is half Jewish. In the end, however, Dr. Kammacher expels Daniel, partly because Daniel becomes outspoken against the Nazi regime.

Blohm

Blohm is the leader of Armin's Hitler Youth section. He sees potential in Armin as a future SS officer, but insists that he give up his friendship with Daniel. When he learns that Armin has been seeing Miriam, he gives him an ultimatum to either betray his friends or be thrown out of the organization.



Objects/Places

Hamburg

Hamburg is the large German city where Daniel Kraushaar lives and where most of the story takes place. It is partly destroyed by bombs in World War II, but portions of the city remain intact after the war.

Altona

Altona is a section of Hamburg where Daniel and Armin live.

The Christianeum

This is an elite school attended by the sons of prominent Hamburg families. Armin attends the school on a scholarship. Non-Aryan students such as Daniel are gradually forced out of the school as the Nazis gain power.

Zionism

This is a movement to create a homeland in Palestine where Jews can go to live. Miriam attends a Zionist camp intended to prepare people for moving to Palestine.

The Nazi Party

This is a political party led by Adolf Hitler that came to power in Germany in the 1930s. "Nazi" is short for "National Socialist." The Nazi party had a military security force called the SA, then later called the SS, which existed alongside the regular German army, called the Wehrmacht. The Nazis believed that Jews were an inferior people and adopted official policies and laws meant to persecute Jews and force them to leave Germany.

The 1914-1918 War

World War I is referred to as the 1914-1918 War in the novel. Daniel's father, Rheinhard, is a veteran of this war, having fought against the French.



Hitler Youth

This is an auxiliary organization of the SA which enlisted young boys and prepared them for military service. Called the Hitler Jugend in German, the group is referred to as HJ for short in the novel.

Neuengamme

This is a former camp where German soldiers are imprisoned by the British after World War II. Daniel is sent to Neuengamme to interrogate prisoners before their release and it is here he meets again with Armin, who has been captured.

Rissen

This is a region near Hamburg where Miriam goes to attend Zionist training camp. There is a forest nearby where she, Daniel and Sebastian go walking in one scene.

Nuremberg Laws

This is a series of laws passed by the Nazis that made it a criminal offense for Jews to engage in many normal activities such as attend movies or the theater. The laws also made it illegal for Jews to marry or have relations with non-Jews.



Themes

Loyalty

The author uses a Nazi motto about loyalty for the title of two chapters of the book. The motto reads "My loyalty is my honor." The intended meaning of the motto is to reinforce that members of the Nazi organization are expected to show their loyalty by obeying their superiors, no matter what. This is made clear to Armin when he complains about the dangerous and stupid behavior of his superior in the Hitler Youth. He is told by a higher commander that he is expected to follow the orders of his superior even if he knows him to be an idiot.

Armin's loyalty to the Hitler Youth is tested when he is told to forcefully interrogate Reinhold Kraushaar, the father of his best friend. Armin does what he is told, but he has also been loyal to his friends, Daniel and Miriam, whom he has warned about the danger they are in. These two acts of loyalty contradict one another, however, for each one is also a kind of betrayal. He betrays his loyalty to the Hitler Youth by warning Daniel and Miriam, but he also betrays his friends by supporting the Nazi regime that persecutes them.

The question of loyalty is further complicated at the end of the novel when Daniel once again meets with Armin after Daniel has escaped Germany and Armin has gone on to join the SS. Although Armin apparently denounces then denies his SS membership by removing the giveaway tattoo from his arm, Daniel decides his loyalty to his former friend does not extend to letting him escape responsibility for what he has done.

Self-Identity

At the beginning of the novel, Daniel identifies strongly with his German heritage. He looks at the Nazi movement as a patriotic movement that will bring glory to the German people. When he learns that he is technically half-Jewish, his self-identity is shaken, and his struggle to redefine it forms one of the central themes of the book.

Daniel's first reaction is anger at his parents for not telling him about his ancestry and then anger at his father for having married a Jewish woman. He is inclined to tell his best friend, but decides that he must keep his true identity a secret. His secret is soon discovered, however, and he is confronted at soccer practice by some of his teammates. After he admits his heritage to them, Daniel feels afloat. He does not identify with the Jewish community and he has been rejected by his German friends. He decides that he is no longer a German.

This decision is not an "official" decision, but a renouncement of his former identity. It is also a kind of rejection of his parents, who still identify themselves as German.



In contrast, the character Miriam has her self-identity strengthened by the persecution of the Nazis. Raised as a Jew, she never tries to hide her identity. Nazi persecution leads her to decide to join a Zionist training camp in preparation for emigrating to Palestine to form a new Jewish state.

Racial Theories

"Daniel Half Human" takes place at a time when the Nazi party was gaining influence and taking power in Germany in the 1930s under Adolf Hitler. A central part of the Nazi philosophy was based on a supposed racial superiority of so-called aryan races such as the Nordic and German people, and a serious inferiority of other "races" such as Jews. Under the Nuremberg Laws described in the book, Jews in Germany were persecuted and criminalized. During Kristallnacht, an event also depicted in the novel, Jewish homes and businesses were raided and synagogues burned in a deliberate action to intimidate Jews into leaving.

The novel describes several situations where these racial theories are contradicted. Before it is learned he is half Jewish, for example, Daniel is considered an especially bright student and an outstanding soccer player. Afterward, he is given lower grades and kicked off his soccer team. Armin and Daniel are taught at their school that Jewish men are especially predatory toward German women, but it is Armin who initiates the romantic relationship with Miriam.

The characters struggle with these new racially-based policies. Armin continues to follow his attraction to Miriam despite it being illegal under the new laws. He also tries to maintain his friendship with Daniel despite it endangering his military career. Rheinhard, whose status as a decorated war veteran had afforded him a good deal of social respect, also tries to ignore the new laws, believing they will not be applied to him and his family because of his position.

Style

Point of View

"Daniel Half Human" is presented primarily from the point of view of Daniel Kraushaar during his early teen years in 1930s Germany. Interspersed between the episodes from Daniel's childhood are several chapters told from the point of view of Daniel as a young adult after he had left Germany for the United States and joined the American forces in World War II to fight against his former country. Throughout the novel, the author shifts points of view to other characters, providing differing perspectives on the events described in the book.

The author uses an omniscient narrative style that describes the thoughts and motivations of the characters. However he usually focuses on a single character at a time, emphasizing the point of view of that specific person. Very little background material is provided outside the direct experience of the characters. For example, the political rise of the Nazi party and the broader conditions throughout Germany are not thoroughly explained, but only mentioned as they relate to the personal experience of the characters. An exception is the chapter late in the book called "Before the Explosion," which presents a synopsis of the Nazi treatment of the Jews in the months leading up to "Kristallnacht," the violent attack on the Jewish community that is described in the book.

In a larger sense, the book presents a point of view that is sympathetic to the conflict that many German Jews faced in the 1930s when the country they felt a part of turned against them and systematically expelled or murdered them. The book condemns the phony racial theories of the Nazis and holds them accountable for their actions.

Setting

"Daniel Half Human" takes place almost entirely in the city of Hamburg in the years leading up to and then following World War II. The time frame begins in 1933 and leads up to 1939, when Germany has started its aggression toward its neighbors that results in World War II. The war years are not depicted, leaving a gap in the chronology that is taken up again in June, 1945, after the defeat of the German forces when Daniel, the title character, has returned to his boyhood home of Hamburg as a German interpreter working for the British army. In the intervening years, the city has been nearly destroyed. The adult Daniel drives through the neighborhoods he remembers from his own childhood, comparing the desolation he sees with his vivid and often pleasant memories from the earlier time.

The 1930s are a time of political and social turmoil in Hamburg. Communist and Nazi political parties have para-military groups marching through the streets, sometimes fighting one another. Adolf Hitler, who has failed an earlier attempt to take over the



German government, is made Chancellor and takes on increasingly more power until he is essentially a dictator. He begins to implement laws designed to persecute and marginalize German Jews, forcing them to leave the country or face economic ruin or death. The novel covers the time period from just before Hitler is made Chancellor until the persecution drives Daniel and his family out of the country in 1939. It also describes Daniel's return after the defeat of Hitler.

Language and Meaning

"Daniel Half Human" was originally written in German and translated into English. Some of the vocabulary and idioms are interpreted to fit the target audience. For example, Daniel loves to play the game of "football," which has a different meaning in American English and is interpreted as "soccer." There are also cultural references to German history and literature that might be commonly understood by German readers but which may be less familiar to American readers. Much of the story is told from the point of view of young people in their early and mid teen years. The dialogue they use and their outlook on the events of their lives are written in an appropriate and accurate style, including slang and sometimes vulgar words.

The story is written in the past tense and primarily in the third person. The exception is in the interspersed chapters told from the first-person viewpoint of Daniel as a young adult, returning to Hamburg after the war. The contrast between these two sections is not explained at first, leaving the reader to gradually realize that the person speaking in the first person in these chapters is the same person being described in the third person in other chapters. The effect of shifting voice and time frame is to deepen the interest in the main character by making the reader wonder what has transpired between the two time periods.

Structure

"Daniel Half Human" is divided into five parts, each taking place at a different time between 1933 and 1939. Each part is named after the year or years in which the events take place. Before the first part and at the end of each part are installments in a series of chapters called "June 1945" and numbered I through VI. These interspersed chapters shift the setting and point of view to a later period and provide perspective on the previous chapters from the main character as a young adult looking back on his childhood. These chapters are presented in a different voice and a different font than the other chapters, setting them off as a kind of commentary on the events of the novel. They also serve to explain the intervening periods not covered in the main portion of the novel and to introduce the chapters that follow.

The novel is further divided into several short, unnumbered chapters, each one given a name that refers to the events of that chapter. Sometimes the author reuses chapter titles, drawing attention to the changing meaning of the title as the story progresses. For example, an early chapter called "Painting" has to do with Daniel and Armin sneaking



out to paint Nazi slogans on walls. Later, a chapter by the same title refers to the somewhat false picture Germany presents the world during the 1938 Olympic Games in Berlin.

The chapters are presented in chronological order, but the chronology is not continuous. There are gaps in the story that are not described in detail, but are referred to in summary.



Quotes

"There was no more street, just a path through massive piles of rubble. My jeep couldn't get through. I put it in reverse, backtracked, and turned off to the right" (June 1945, I, p. 1).

"Daniel kept looking left and right. It was so cold, his eyes were watering. The teardrops froze hard on his cheeks. He wiped his face with his glove, and then he heard something - faint, still far away. It sounded like marching" (Painting, p. 10).

"Listening to his mother crying, he tried to steel himself against her. He told himself her tears were forced. 'Cry all you want,' he thought, 'but it's no use. You're a Jewess. the Nazis will stay in power. And the "mischief" won't be over soon'" (Volcanoes, p. 67).

"'It is well known,' he went on, 'that the Jew hankers obscenely after German women and that many German girls have fallen prey to his lust. This is the reason why there are so many mongrels, half-Jews and quarter-Jews, in Germany" (Racial Studies, p. 89).

"He was a prominent attorney, moving in high-ranking political circles, as Karl had correctly observed. Jews and half-Jews so much in the public eye were being regularly forced to resign their positions, whether they'd been front-line fighters in the World War or not" ("Uncle" Karl, p. 109).

"Now everything would soon be all too clear. Everyone would know that a Jewess lived with them. And that she was Daniel's cousin. And that Daniel's mother was a Jewess. And that he was a half-Jew" (Next Morning, p. 125).

"Armin bent forward, looked at the stone squares on the ground. 'So you're half Jewish? I don't care. I've known you for such a long time. You were never cowardly or deceitful'" (At the Intersection, p. 144).

"One thing was clear: If he got expelled from the HJ, he'd have no future in the Third Reich. And when he finished at the Christianeum, that would be the end of his education, too. . . . Merely thinking that far ahead brought on the dizziness again" (My Honor Means Loyalty I, p. 173).

"How many times had he imagined this meeting? 'Usually I'm not so shy,' he thought. 'Why now?' He didn't understand it. All he knew was, he wanted to know this girl better" ("Coincidence", p. 198).

"Daniel thought back to the day he'd come home early from school, and there she'd sat, at the breakfast table: Miriam, his cousin, quite grown up, quite pretty - and so unmistakably Jewish, he'd wished she'd disappear as suddenly as she had come. That was almost two and a half years ago now, but it seemed as far removed as if it had happened on another planet, in another galaxy" ("The Loreley," p. 208).



"Sophie watched them squeeze through and clamber down the wall. once on the ground they looked carefully around. No one in sight. They ran through the backyard to the rickety fence, scrambled over it into a parking lot, and disappeared among the cars. Meanwhile, Sebastian locked the door to the apartment. Jeers and insults came from the outside" (The Hearing, p. 288).

"I'd never quite understood this before. But suddenly I did, and it made sense to me. Armin, supposedly, had also just done his job. And now I did mine. I took the form about Soldier Armin Hillman, crossed out the 'No' in the 'SS membership' line, and wrote 'Yes'" (June 1945 VI, p. 325).



Topics for Discussion

How does Daniel struggle with his identity in the novel? Does he resolve anything by the end?

The author leaves the fate of Miriam and Sebastian unknown. Why do you think he chose to do this? Does it affect the story?

What choices does Armin make regarding loyalty? Is he loyal to his friends?

Discuss Daniel's final decision not to let Armin out of prison. Does he do the right thing?

Why do you think Rheinhard is so reluctant to leave Germany when his wife insists on it? Does he do the right thing?

Daniel decides at one point that he is no longer a "German." What does this mean to him?

Discuss the choice of the author to move backward and forward in time while telling the story. What limitations does this structure have? What advantages does it have?