

Mila 18 Study Guide

Mila 18 by Leon Uris

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Plot Summary

Taking place during the Nazi aggression in Europe and continuing through the end of 1943, the bulk of the story occurs in Warsaw, Poland. The Germans defeat a weaker Polish army and occupy the country. Once entrenched, the Nazis begin the implementation of Berlin directives to "solve" the "Jewish problem" in Poland. Alex Brandel is a Zionist Jew who begins to write a journal, detailing Nazi activities, so that one day the world will know of the treatment and suffering of his people. He is assisted by other staunch Zionists, as well as less radical factions of the Jewish population, who ultimately become radicalized and convince him, as well, that armed resistance is the sole means of restoring Jewish honor and dignity in Poland. Several Aryans assist the Jews, both in their efforts to obtain food and other necessities and to organize escapes, as Nazis step up their efforts to confine Jews to a single section of Poland, deport them to concentration camps, and ultimately, to exterminate all who remain in the ghetto. Eventually, the various Jewish factions unite to engage in a military uprising against the Nazis, managing to defeat the most elite of German soldiers, by attacking them from rooftops and windows with homemade bottle and pipe bombs and a few guns.

Ultimately, the Nazis use bombers to destroy and set fire to the entire ghetto. The few remaining in an underground bunker determine that it is time to attempt escape through the sewer pipe system. The primary goal is to get Italian-American journalist, Chris De Monti, out safely, for only he knows the location of all of the buried journals and will return after the war to retrieve them. Twelve individuals eventually make it out of the sewer, to be picked up by two assisting Aryans and taken to the forests of the Polish countryside. From there, they are able to make their way to Sweden, where, as the novel ends, Chris De Monti awaits the end of the war.

Against this backdrop, there are three love stories. Deborah Bronski, a conservative Jew falls in love with Chris De Monti but ultimately dies in the ghetto. Andrei Androwski, Deborah's Zionist brother, and Gabriela Rak, Catholic sympathizer, are romantically involved, and Gabriela works to assist the ghetto residents in efforts to obtain supplies and to escape. Wolf Brandel, son of Alex, and Rachel Bronski, daughter of Deborah and Paul, are teens when the struggle begins but fall desperately in love. Both Wolf and Rachel are among the final 12 survivors who escape through the sewer pipe system.



Part 1, Twilight, Chapters 1-5

Part 1, Twilight, Chapters 1-5 Summary

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce Christopher De Monti, a journalist from Switzerland, living in Warsaw and reporting on the war for his Swiss News Agency with his photographer, Ervin Rosenblum, a Polish Jew. The year is 1939 and Nazi Germany is on the offensive, having overrun Austria and Czechoslovakia. Most Poles believe that their country is next in line for invasion and indeed, reports of growing Nazi military forces at their borders tend to confirm this belief. Close friend to Chris, Dr. Paul Bronski, Dean of the College of Medicine at the University of Warsaw, has invited Chris to dinner at his home. Paul is married to Deborah who unlike her husband, practices her Jewish faith and has raised their two children in that manner.

Chapters 3-4 provide additional background and plot introduction. Paul invites Chris, a good friend, to dinner at his home. An additional dinner guest is Andrei Androfski, a Polish Army Captain and Deborah's brother, a Zionist whom Paul characterizes as a crazy radical. Since Poland has decided to resist German invasion, Paul has been drafted, a fact that pleases Dr. Franz Koenig, a colleague who has always believed that he deserved Paul's position at the university. Koenig is an ethnic German, who attempts to hide his anti-Semitism but certainly not his dislike for Paul.

Dinner at the Bronski's is not pleasant and Chapter 5 demonstrates the strength of feelings and personalities of these characters. Paul, a man who has virtually denounced his Jewish faith, wants only safety for his family. He turns over all of his estate accounts to Chris, in order that they may be taken to Switzerland and converted to other currencies and investments, an action that many Polish Jews have taken as well. In addition, Chris promises that, if Paul should die, he will get Deborah and the children out of Poland. Andrei and Paul argue over Zionism and the fate of Jews all over Europe, a battle that ends with Andrei leaving in anger and Chris following, in order to calm him.

Part 1, Twilight, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The purpose of the first five chapters is obviously to provide the reader with both the setting and the introduction of several characters who will play major roles in the work. Christopher De Monti obviously enjoys his work as a journalist and while not a Jew, seems to "run" in these circles. His photographer is a Jew, he is very close to the Bronski family, and is certainly willing to take on the protection of Deborah and the children, should Paul be killed defending Poland. The conflict between Paul and Andrei offers a microcosmic view of the Jews living in Europe during World War II. There are those who have achieved a comfortable economic status and lifestyle and who are quite secular. At the other extreme is Andrei, Deborah's brother, who is a Zionist and member of the Bathyrans, a group dedicated to raising money and purchasing land in Palestine for an ultimate Jewish state. The more secular Jews appear to be practical and many



are moving themselves and their money out of Poland as invasion by Germany approaches. Anti-semitism is introduced in the character of Dr. Koenig, an Aryan German, whose dislike for Jews has grown over time. A Jew has taken the position he feels should have been his and this can also be seen as a microcosmic view of anti-Semitic feelings throughout Europe at this time and certainly the rallying point of Hitler.



Part 1, Chapters 6-10

Part 1, Chapters 6-10 Summary

Gabriella Rak is a Polish Catholic who, because of her ability to speak several languages, is employed by the American embassy in Warsaw as a teacher and translator. She and Andrei are engaged in a torrid affair and Gaby is totally sympathetic to the tenuous situation of the Jews throughout Europe.

Chapter 7 finds Gaby searching for Andrei and Chris, who are found quite drunk, arguing over the fate of Poland. She takes both to her apartment, telling Andrei that they must marry. He refuses because if Germany succeeds in conquering Poland, the last thing she needs is a Jewish husband, certainly not one who is as radical as he.

The Bathyan Council is meeting under the direction of Alex Brandel, and Andrei is in attendance. Chapter 8 includes this meeting as well as a discussion between Brandel and Andrei regarding the fate of Jews in Poland. Brandel explains that the Christian gentry have managed to control the peasants by blaming their fate on the Jews. He believes that the only answer is for all Jews to ultimately leave Poland, while Andrei wishes to remain in Poland, working toward equal status in this country.

Chapter 9 shifts the focus from Jewish issues to the personal relationship between Chris and Deborah, who have obviously been engaged in an affair for quite some time. While completely in love with Chris, Deborah worries that this "sin" will eventually result in God's punishment. Perhaps that punishment is beginning, as Chris receives a phone call from Ervin, informing him that German troops are beginning to invade Poland. As Chapter 10 ends, the futility of Polish resistance is obvious, and Andrei's company, along with all other Polish units, has been destroyed. The Nazis move inward without much resistance.

Part 1, Chapters 6-10 Analysis

Two love affairs are revealed, both between a Jew and a Christian, including the difficulties involved in the political, economic, and social disparity between them. Against this backdrop, the reader is given the historical difficulties of Jews in Europe and the many factions of contemporary Jews. The range of viewpoints in the Jewish community is exemplified from the most committed Zionists like Alex Brandel, who believe that Jews cannot ever achieve status and equality in any European country to Andrei, who wants to remain in Poland as a Jew with parity, to Deborah, who practices her faith but engages in charity work as opposed to political activism, to many other Jews who appear to be in denial over their impending doom. The reader is also apprised of the Bathyan activity in Poland, in preparation for an ultimate exodus to Palestine. There are farms on which young people are being trained for this future occupation once in Palestine. There are also orphanages in which Jewish children are being raised as

future colonists to Palestine. There is a lot of fund-raising from all over the world, in order to support the movement to establish the Jewish state.



Part 1, Chapters 11-15

Part 1, Chapters 11-15 Summary

These chapters focus on the defeat of the Poland, including the description of German bombings that do not discriminate between military and civilian targets and the complete destruction by ground troops of any remaining resistance. Chapter 11 describes the escape by Andrei and his sergeant to a peasant home where they are nursed back to a modicum of health before attempting to return to Warsaw.

Preparing for ultimate occupation by Germans, Deborah, Brandel, and other friends go about the business of stocking an underground bunker for children in the orphanage during Chapter 12. Gaby is distraught over Andrei's failure to return and helps with bunker preparations, going to Andrei's apartment each evening to wait. Finally, Brandel brings a broken Andrei, who collapses onto his bed.

In Chapters 13 and 14, preparations continue for the occupation of Warsaw. All communication with the world has been cut off and Chris must send his reports out through evacuating Americans. There is pressure on Chris to close the news agency, but he will not leave Deborah. A strengthened Andrei has arranged for an American passport for Gaby, but she refuses to leave. Americans are leaving in droves and only a skeleton embassy staff remains. A truce is to be signed and the Germans have agreed to a prisoner exchange, in which five Poles will be given for each German. Andrei is quite suspicious and rightly so. As Chapter 15 closes, it is disclosed that all Poles sent for the exchange are amputees, one of them being Paul Bronski, who has lost an arm. Deborah is convinced that this is God's punishment for her affair with Chris.

Part 1, Chapters 11-15 Analysis

Clearly, the situation for the Poles is disastrous. Defeated by superior German military strength, they must now face a tough occupation, filled with rationing and fear. The situation for the Jews will be much worse, however, and they are carefully planning for the impending growth of discrimination and poor treatment. While the declaration of war on Germany by England and France is heartening, it will not change the situation in Poland, and even Americans are anxious to leave. Evacuation points are now controlled by German troops, moreover, so Jews will find it much more difficult to get out.



Part Two, Dusk: Chapters 1-3

Part Two, Dusk: Chapters 1-3 Summary

Chapter 1 begins with a journal entry of Brandel. He has been keeping a journal for quite some time, believing that someday it may be important for his people. Franz Koenig, a colleague of Paul Bronski's, is quite happy about the recent events, applies for Nazi membership and has a new office in City Hall. He has summoned Paul in order to appoint him the Deputy of a newly formed Jewish Civil Authority. Since Jews are inferior, they will be ruled by themselves and the Civil Authority is that arm of rule. As well, Bronski is informed that his neighborhood will be taken over by Nazis and he is to move immediately to a different section of Warsaw. Koenig will be moving into Bronski's home.

The Nazi Commandant of Warsaw is Rudolph Schreiker, a violent alcoholic who will rule Warsaw dictatorially. Throughout Chapter 2, Schreiker's brutality and hatred for Jews is displayed. First he calls the new Jewish Civil Authority before him, giving each appointee his tasks, including the complete registration of all Jews within Warsaw. Each day, new directives come for the Jews including neighborhood restrictions, prohibition of public education and religious practices, and complete segregation of Jews from the rest of Warsaw citizens. All Jews are given ration books and armbands, and Polish gangs now terrorize their neighborhoods, encouraged by Schreiker. By Chapter 3, all Jewish organizations are outlawed and the Bathyrans must go underground. Andrei is bitter and has determined that the Bathyrans can do nothing to stop the ultimate destruction of the Jews in Poland. His plan is to go to Russia with fifty of his best soldiers, obtain arms, and focus on disrupting the German supply lines into Poland. In the end, he remains in Warsaw, however, convinced by Gaby and Brandel to assist his people from the inside.

Part Two, Dusk: Chapters 1-3 Analysis

There is a clear divergence in thinking between Andrei and Brandel regarding the best means of resistance. Andrei believes that the only way to conduct an effective resistance is to fight the Germans. Brandel, however, believes that the Jews must remain in Warsaw and establish an underground organization. He thinks that they should attempt to undermine German authority over the Jews, obtaining whatever assistance they can from Jewish leaders around the world and using that assistance to maintain themselves until the war finally ends. He believes that, once the outside world becomes aware of the treatment of Jews under the Nazis, it will take the moral high ground and come to their aid. Andrei disagrees but remains with Brandel, feeling a moral responsibility to the three million Jews left in Poland. Koenig has taken particular pleasure in informing Paul Bronski of his new position with the Jewish Civil Authority and the directive that he must move out of his beautiful home. Koenig's revenge is now complete, but he must become and remain a good Nazi in order to maintain his new

status within the occupational government. He is the ultimate opportunist, a man who once disliked the Nazis but who now pursues membership for his own gain.



Part 2, Chapters 4-6

Part 2, Chapters 4-6 Summary

These three chapters describe the efforts of Andrei and Brandel to gain support for unity among the Jews in Warsaw, in order to more effectively defy the daily directives of the Nazi command relative to Jewish freedom and life quality. In Chapter 4, Andrei visits Paul Bronski in his new office as head of the Jewish Civil Authority, attempting to convince him that the Nazis have far worse plans for the Jewish people. Bronski has a much better apartment than that of most Jews, who have been relegated to a poor section of Warsaw, now called the ghetto. He has sent his fortune to Switzerland, while attempts to convince himself and Andrei that the situation for the Jews will not worsen.

Throughout Chapter 5, Alex Brandel is attempting to unify the various factions of Jews in an all out effort to resist Nazi restrictions. He attempts to enlist Rabbi Solomon, a man considered to be the foremost Jewish scholar and religious leader. Solomon counsels Brandel to simply have faith and remain a good Jew. After all, Jews have always been persecuted and always will be. They have always survived. Solomon is convinced that the Messiah will ultimately come and deliver the Jews.

Chapter 6 opens with new directives and restrictions and Brandel's continued efforts to solidify the Jews. There are four leaders upon whom he can count. They include himself, Simon Eden, the labor Zionist leader, Emanuel Goldman, a pianist and member of the Jewish Civil Authority, and David Zemba, Director of the American Relief Society. They set upon a three-pronged plan. First, Goldman bribes Koenig to set up a Jewish social service agency, separate from the Jewish Civil Authority, ostensibly to assist orphans and elderly. Second, Koenig agrees to allow Alex Brandel to head this newly-named Orphans and Self-Help Society. Three, the American Relief Society agrees to give emergency funds to Brandel, which he uses to lease property in the Jewish area of Warsaw, in order to set up soup kitchens and flop houses. Secretly, these centers operate as Zionist "fronts." Brandel now has money and operational centers.

Part 2, Chapters 4-6 Analysis

Clearly, there are three types of Jews in Warsaw during this time. The first, like Rabbi Solomon, cling to their religious beliefs, counting on their faith to get them through this difficult time. The second, typified by Paul Bronski, is the "realist," that Jew who simply believes that the key to survival is to cooperate with the Nazis as much as possible, to back away from religious fervor, and, in some cases, collaborate with the new rulers. Third is the Zionist radical, that Jew who believes that resistance and open sabotage is the only method to use against these Godless Nazis. The Bathyrans are alive and well. They have simply changed the name of their organization to the Orphans and Self-Help Society. Alex Brandel at least has money and an organization to use in the resistance

movement, and he obviously believes that the ultimate Nazi goal is to strip the Jews of all of their wealth and to enslave them.



Part 2, Chapters 7-11

Part 2, Chapters 7-11 Summary

These five chapters focus on Chris De Monti, his background and his stand on the latest developments in Poland. Chapter 7 opens with the arrival of Horst Von Epp, the Nazi in charge of propaganda and the press. From a wealthy family, Von Epp has lived a high lifestyle throughout Europe and is personally averse to policies of Nazism but accepts them for his own personal gain. He is shrewd and astute. Von Epp has the job of keeping bad news from Poland from leaking out to the rest of the world. In this endeavor, he "wines and dines" foreign journalists, to include Chris De Monti, promising Chris access to his home news agency with phone lines re-established. Despite his original demand that Ervin Rosenblum be fired, Von Epp relinquishes on this point and invites Chris for an evening of dinner and "girls." Chris passes on the girls, and Von Epp deduces that Chris has a mistress, possibly a Jew. Throughout Chapter 8, Rosenblum and Chris ponder Von Epp's true motives, both convinced that the man has already established quite a "file" on Chris and his associations. Chris has been carrying donation money from America from the embassy in Krakow and now insists that he will have to cease that activity, in order to avoid additional scrutiny.

Chapters 9-11 comprise a rather detailed history of Chris De Monti's life. Born to a wealthy American mother and an Italian count, Chris led a rather indulged childhood. Eventually, he parts ways with his fascist father and attends journalism school at Columbia University, accepting a position with the Swiss News Agency and traveling throughout Europe and Africa during the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy, and Spain. His reports of the horrific atrocities of fascist leaders fall upon deaf ears in the rest of the world and Chris is completely disillusioned. Eventually, Chris is sent to Warsaw, where he meets Andrei and Andrei's sister Deborah Bronski. The chemistry is immediate and a torrid love affair begins.

Part 2, Chapters 7-11 Analysis

This background information and characterization of Chris give the reader important insight into both the journalist and to the state of the world during the 1930's. While Chris is significantly affected by the violence and inhumanity he witnesses, he is truly disturbed that the reaction to the exposure of such behavior is met with indifference by democratic societies that should respond in some meaningful way. This must, as well, be seen against the backdrop of the Depression, during which most societies were forced to focus on their own needs. Disenchanted as he is, however, it appears that he is still attached to his basic principles, even secreting money from Krakow to the Jews in Poland, so long as it remains safe to do so. The extent of time spent on Chris can also be seen as the author's own foreshadowing. Perhaps he will have a bigger role to play as the novel progresses.

Part 2, Chapters 12-16

Part 2, Chapters 12-16 Summary

The five chapters comprising this section briefly summarize the continued arrival of Nazi officials, each one more cruel and violent and intensely committed to an aggressive "solution" to the Jewish problem. In Chapter 12, Brandel decides to move his wife and two sons into the orphanage at Mila 19, which is the street address, so that he may be closer to the operations of the Bathyrans. His older son, Wolf, has met Rachel Bronski, and a romance has developed. Rachel's father, Paul, walks a tightrope as Chapter 13 develops, and the Nazis tighten restrictions and rationing. On one hand, he must cooperate with the Nazis. On the other hand, his wife insists on their faithful practice of Judaism, including the preparation of their son Stephan for his bar mitzvah.

Chapter 14 brings Sieghold Stutze as the new SS commander in Warsaw. His first act is to break up the bar mitzvah training class and force Rabbi Solomon to urinate on the sacred Torah. The continued destruction of Jewish property and humiliation of the people themselves fills Brandel's journal entries. Rabbi Solomon's synagogue is burned and rationing has reached dangerously low levels. By Chapter 16, Alfred Funk, a direct appointee of Hitler, arrives, for the express purpose of moving all remaining Jews into the ghetto and confiscating their property. He expects the Jewish Civil authority members to assist in implementation. Only elderly Goldman objects and he is summarily executed.

Part 2, Chapters 12-16 Analysis

It is clear that the plan for the Jewish population of Warsaw is punishment and humiliation. The Germans are also emboldened by the lack of organized and clear resistance to their activities. The violent burning of a synagogue and the murder of Goldman prove to the Jews that response to any objections will be swift and final. They are therefore terrorized into submission and militants like Andrei cannot seem to convince Jewish leadership that the time to act is now.



Part 2, Chapters 17-20

Part 2, Chapters 17-20 Summary

The next four chapters continue to describe the worsening situation for the Jews in Warsaw and the responses of the various Jewish elements.

In Chapter 17, it is 1940, and all Warsaw Jews are in the ghetto. Further, Hitler is sending Jews in from Austria and Germany, and there is little room and not enough food and supplies for them. Most are forced to work in the now German-owned factories, two of which are in the ghetto itself. Jews who have enough money purchase "Aryan Papers" and live as non-Jews in nicer sections of Warsaw. Andrei, because of his blonde hair and Aryan features, has been able to obtain false papers and has freely traveled out of Warsaw to check on progress of underground presses he is building. He wants to begin a resistance movement but needs money that he knows Brandel will not provide. Gabriella, meanwhile, has taken a job as a teacher in a Catholic convent school and has moved to a small flat in order to become more anonymous. Andrei often visits her for respite from all that occurs in the ghetto.

In Chapter 18, the reader is introduced to Max Kleperman, a Jewish gangster, who has managed to establish a relationship with Koenig, by setting up houses of prostitution for German soldiers. He is summoned to Koenig's office and asked to organize the building of a ten-foot wall around the Jewish "reservation," now housing about 500,000 people. A Jewish police force has also been established among collaborators, generally composed of criminals and gangsters.

In Chapter 19, the Orphans and Self-Help Society provides the only assistance for residents of the ghetto, and most of its operations are run from the four-story building at Mila 19. Food is provided by farms they run in the countryside, but supplies can hardly meet the demand, and disease is rampant. Wolf Brandel is working on one of the farms, and life there is idyllic compared to the ghetto. He corresponds with Rachel Bronski, still living with her parents in a better section, due to Paul's position with the Civil Authority. Paul, however, is becoming increasingly irritable. His responsibility for carrying out the every-increasing directives of the Nazi leadership and his attempts to cover the needs of the Orphans and Self-Help Society have created both stress and discord in his household. Deborah spends every day at Mila 19 and continues to see that Stephan studies for his bar mitzvah with Rabbi Solomon.

In Chapter 20, Rabbi Solomon knows that Max Kleperman, although an opportunist, believes that he can somehow "buy" his place in Heaven by assisting the Jews. He is able to obtain property and cash from Kleperman to assist the deteriorating situation. Solomon is also close to Brandel, and Brandel trusts the Rabbi enough to disclose his journal writing. Acting on advice from Solomon, Brandel hides the journals in the basement of Mila 19 and encourages others to contribute to the volumes being produced.



Part 2, Chapters 17-20 Analysis

Conditions are obviously becoming worse in the ghetto. Children who have lost their parents live in the streets; food and medicine are scarce, and overcrowding forces many families to live in a single cramped apartment. Paul Bronski is obviously disturbed and ambivalent by the situation but feels trapped. He must continue in his position in order to ensure his family's situation. He is worried that his wife and children will, nevertheless, endanger themselves by their own activities. The importance that Brandel and Rabbi Solomon place upon the journals being kept indicate that, although they will not speak of it, the final solution for the Jews is yet to be determined. At this point, there seems to be no logical process for determining the work that Jews must do. Doctors are digging ditches; carpenters are working in the brush factory, and Brandel fears that the worst may still be coming.



Part 2, Chapters 21-27

Part 2, Chapters 21-27 Summary

In Chapter 21, Wolf returns to the ghetto and immediately finds Rachel providing a musical program to the orphanage children. She suggests that they go to Andrei's apartment, where they profess their love for one another. Just as intimate foreplay begins, Andrei arrives, furious with them both. Eventually, he calms and tells them that, from this point forward, they are to leave their armbands in his mailbox so he will not disturb them.

In Chapters 22-24, the reader witnesses the introduction of Wolf to Andrei's resistance movement. Although small, the group has managed to set up radio operations and a press for an underground newspaper in the attic of an abandoned theatre. Wolf becomes a part of the operation, learning all facets, delivering newspapers and eventually becoming a "runner." He is caught by the Gestapo during one such run and Alex Brandel must use Kleperman and \$3000 in order to secure his release. While negotiations for the release continue, news of the slaughter of Jews on the Russian front is received, and the Gestapo has begun raids on some homes in the ghetto, taking residents to the cemetery to dig their own graves before being shot. Jewish response is fear and silence which, of course, infuriates Andrei. Convinced that he must join the regular Polish resistance called the Home Army, Andrei leaves, and Rachel and Wolf have free use of his apartment.

In Chapter 25-26, Chris De Monti has been covering the war on the eastern front and returns to discover that Ervin's papers have been revoked and that he is now living in the ghetto. Further, the direct line to his news agency has been terminated. When he is finally able to speak with Von Epp, in Chapter 27, he is informed that his apartment and Von Epp's office have both been "bugged" and that they must talk by meeting at churches or taking walks. The phone line has been restored, but Ervin must remain in the ghetto, being a suspected resistance participant. During this meeting, Chris introduces the subject of getting someone out of Poland, specifically a woman and children. Von Epp states that it can be done, for a price and the price will be high. Chapter 27 includes a rather frank discussion between Chris and Von Epp regarding the atrocities of the Nazis and Von Epp's apparent ability to "live" with the "sins" of his country's leadership, so long as he can remain in a position of importance. During this meeting, Chris also requests a pass into the ghetto, leaving Von Epp to speculate that he must indeed have a Jewish mistress.

Part 2, Chapters 21-27 Analysis

Wolf and Rachel can no longer be considered children. The war and their new status as sub-human Jews force a maturity and a realization that, at any moment, either or both of them can be killed. With this in mind, they begin a love affair to which they believe



they are entitled. Andrei's anger and impatience, along with impulsivity, cause him to leave Warsaw in pursuit of the regular Polish resistance forces. He seems to be the only individual who is willing to fight rather than capitulate at this point. Everyone else appears to be following a path of denial, appeasement, and willingness to use negotiation and money in efforts to stave off Nazi persecution.

Von Epp and Chris's discussion about the Nazi policies and activities reveals that Von Epp, just as Paul Bronski, is a realist. He tells Chris that nothing is wrong if one is on the winning side, and, given the obvious fact that Germany will soon rule all of Europe, he will do whatever is necessary to remain a good German, even ignoring the continued and escalating persecution of the Jews.



Part 3, Night, Chapters 1-3

Part 3, Night, Chapters 1-3 Summary

In Part 3: Night, Chapters 1-3, the flow of aid and money into the Orphans and Self Help society has dried up. The farm at Wework has been raided and a number of the youth being rescued from deportation by the efforts of an Aryan-looking Zionist named Ana Grinspan. Many runners have been captured and killed. Wolf Brandel is now a lieutenant in Andrei's make-shift army, making bottle and pipe bombs in the basement of Mila 19. It is clear that a new contact on the Aryan side must be found. When Gabriella Rak is suggested, Andrei is livid and attempts to thwart the plan, to no avail. Thus, Gaby throws her full effort into assistance, including obtaining fake Aryan papers and money from the Polish government in exile, in London. By Chapter 2, Gaby meets with the Archbishop of Warsaw, pleading with him to take a stand. He refuses and is met with her accusation that he has defiled the meaning of Christianity.

Chapter 3 finds food and supplies being delivered by the Germans, all in anticipation of a visit from the Red Cross. No one can testify to the truth, moreover, for fear of reprisal once the organization is gone. In an attempt to neutralize the militant efforts of Andrei, Paul Bronski requests a meeting. He offers to intervene with Koenig and get more rations into the ghetto if Andrei will give up his efforts at a military resistance. Furious, Andrei calls Paul naive and sends him away. The Bathyrans, in fact, are not as much in need now, because American money is coming in from Switzerland, and it appears that the Germans are suffering defeat in Russia. The general mood is more optimistic.

Perhaps the most telling fact in this section is the refusal of the Archbishop to speak out against Nazi activities and to take a stand for human decency and rights. This, in fact, appears to be the stand of the Catholic Church throughout Europe during this time, and Gabriella is both appalled and angered. Gaby is, indeed, comparable to Deborah where her altruism and willingness to place herself in great danger demonstrate her commitment not only to Andrei but to an entire group of people whose dignity and rights have been destroyed.

Part 3, Night, Chapters 1-3 Analysis

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Part 3, Chapters 4-8

Part 3, Chapters 4-8 Summary

These five chapters summarize the increased efforts of the Nazis to move Polish Jews into labor camps and the efforts of resistance groups to gather information about these camps. By Chapter 5, it is clear that the relocation of Jews in other parts of Poland has begun. Further, in the spring of 1941, the first raid occurs in the Warsaw ghetto, with 100 Jews taken and executed. Deportation begins for all Jews not working in factories and not family members of the Civil Authority or workers with the Orphans and Self-Help Society. The deported are loaded into cattle cars, and those who are crippled or too old simply taken to the cemetery and executed. Although the Nazis insist that the labor camps are for honest work, ghetto residents suspect not.

Chapter 6 brings the order for more Jews to report for deportation and results in ghetto residents digging secret underground bunkers beneath buildings, in order to hide, as troops crash into buildings and take everyone they can find. It is discovered that these camps cannot be far away and Wolf and others are sent to positions along the rail line to observe. Andrei proceeds to Lublin, site of the first Jewish ghetto and labor camps.

Chapter 7 describes Andrei's experiences in Lublin. Meeting up with a sergeant in his former regiment, Andrei is able to get a worker's pass into Majdanek, the labor camp close to Lublin. He learns firsthand of the atrocities and exterminations of the residents and is determined to expose this news to the world upon his return to Warsaw.

Returning to Warsaw in chapter 8, Andrei locates Chris De Monti, who is unraveling and drunk most of the time. Gabriella crashes a party, posing as a whore, in order to speak to Chris about the worsening situation and the full report that Andrei has comprised regarding the labor camps that have been found, in which tens of thousands of Jews are murdered daily. Chris is bitter and disillusioned, stating that, even if he were able to get the report out of Poland, the rest of the world will not respond, as he experienced with his reporting from Spain. Nevertheless, he reads the 200-page report with its complete listing of every camp found, the commander name of each camp, and the methods of extermination by a gas developed in a pesticide company. Once a person dies in the camp, all gold fillings are removed, their hair used for mattress fillings, and their bodies are boiled for fat to make soap. Most of the corpses, however, are burned in large ovens. The report includes the names of camps within Germany itself as well. Chris is sickened by what he reads.

The report is the final tool necessary to unify the many factions of Jews in the ghetto. It is critical now that stronger resistance must be planned if the remaining Jews are to maintain their dignity and honor. Brandel sees that a military resistance will indeed be necessary and that he, Andrei, and Wolf begin to recruit and plan activities for future raids in the ghetto by SS troops. Chris remains the only hope to get the report out of



Poland, however, and his willingness to do so is certainly in question. It is hoped that his love for Deborah will force him to take action.

Part 3, Chapters 4-8 Analysis

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Part 3, Chapters 9-12

Part 3, Chapters 9-12 Summary

Chapter 9 describes the continuing efforts of the Nazis to round up "volunteers" for deportation to the labor camps. When not enough people can be found, laborers are taken from the two ghetto factories and replaced by other inhabitants of the ghetto. Posters are distributed throughout the ghetto warning Jews about the labor camps, and the masses are focused on mere survival rather than resistance.

Nevertheless, the various factions have united, now called the United Forces. They have few weapons other than home-made bombs, but they are about 500 strong and committed. Paul Bronski has brokered a deal with Koenig for the release of a number of professional Jews, including doctors, scientists, and writers, for \$11.50 a head. Since there are not enough Jews for the Nazi quotas, however, night roundups are conducted. Alex now realizes that he should have supported Andrei long ago with money for weapons. Now, most Jews are in underground tunnels and moving about at night using rooftops for transport.

Chapter 10 finds a lull in the Nazi actions, following the execution of Max Kleperman and his gang, which land Koenig access to all of their money. This respite is short-lived, however, as, in Chapter 11, an orphanage concert is raided and the children loaded into boxcars. Susan Geller and other nurses go with the children, handing out poisoned chocolates to everyone.

By Chapter 12, conditions are only worse. The Civil Authority and the collaborating Jewish Security Force has been told that each must find three Jews a day for deportation. If these are not found, members of their own families will be taken as substitutes. At this point, Paul Bronski commits suicide and the ghetto leaders huddle in the attic of Mila 19 to plan their next moves. Some suggest mass suicide and the burning of the ghetto, but the more militant members are ready to fight to the end. From an initial population of 600,000, only about 50,000 remain, and the prospects of using them for a resistance, with little in the way of weaponry, are dim.

There is no discrimination now, relative to which Jews will be taken, and it is obvious that the Nazis have been given a quota from higher ups. Most Jews, moreover, seem to have accepted their fate and remain hidden in avoidance rather than angry and ready to fight. Even the leadership considers mass suicide. Orphans are given suicide candy as a better alternative to transport to the death camps. Roundups from the factories are being conducted by Jewish collaborators who themselves will ultimately be murdered, although they are in denial. The majority of remaining Jews remains intent upon survival only and lives in dark and filth in order to achieve one more day of life.



Part 3, Chapters 9-12 Analysis

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Part 3, Chapter 13

Part 3, Chapter 13 Summary

The final chapter of Part 3 comprises a final meeting between Von Epp and Chris De Monti, during which Von Epp admits that Germany will most certainly lose the war. He also informs Chris that he is aware of Chris's participation in the secreting of Alex's report to London. As well, he is certain that journals exist all over the ghetto, painting a horrible portrait of the Nazis that will live for years to come. Ultimately, Von Epp gives Chris fake papers and tells him to get "lost" in the ghetto before the Nazis discover his treachery. Wandering the streets of the ghetto, Chris is finally picked up by Andrei's men and taken to Mila 19. He thus joins the resistance.

Part 3, Chapter 13 Analysis

By the end of 1942, with Germany having lost on the Russian front and America fully prepared to launch powerful offenses, Germans like Von Epp realize that Germany will be defeated within a year. The concern now appears to be how to cover up the concentration camps and atrocities committed there so that the German population will not have to live with the stigma for years to come. There is every hint that many officials plan to use the "just following orders" defense, as they attempt to justify their own participation in the holocaust.



Part 4, Dawn: Chapters 1-4

Part 4, Dawn: Chapters 1-4 Summary

Chapter 1 summarizes the current situation in the ghetto. There are about 40,000 Jews left, hiding in underground tunnels and sewer pipelines. The military resistance forces have divided themselves into four groups, each hiding in a separate section of the ghetto. Food and other rations are stored secretly and dispersed as necessary.

The good Fellowship Club has a final meeting, providing for the burial of all of its 50 journals, along with photos, poetry, and essays. Ervin Rosenblum and Chris De Monti are the only two who know the location of all milk cans and metal boxes housing these materials.

Chapter 2 turns back to the Nazi leadership activities. The "final solution," or complete extermination of all ghetto Jews is now ready for implementation. Von Epp senses the beginnings of uncertainty and doubt among these officials. Funk, in particular, is concerned about the rumors of hidden journals and diaries, which Hitler wants found and destroyed. The decision is made to locate Alex Brandel first and try to force him to reveal the location of these materials.

Following the meeting, Von Epp and Funk have a frank discussion. Von Epp, the realist, is convinced that the journals must be found because, once Germany loses, there must be no record of the holocaust, which the victors could use to implement retribution. Funk still insists that Germany will win because, ultimately, it has the complete loyalty of its citizenry and complete obedience from all who serve their country.

Chapter 3 begins with the first "final solution" effort. SS militiamen move through the ghetto, attempting to round up as many Jews as possible. Chris, Andrei, Wolf and Simon Elder, emerging from a hiding place in roof rafters. They see Alex and Sylvia Brandel, Ervin, Deborah, and others, along with the orphans marching down the streets, surrounded by SS troops. Rabbi Solomon is with them. Andrei, armed with a new machine gun, and Simon begins to shoot the Germans with his pistol. Many are killed and others begin to flee. The remaining troops disperse, and the prisoners scatter.

Chapter 4 finds Funk and Von Epp discussing "damage control" in terms of reporting the rout of German soldiers by the "sub-human" Jews. They decide to claim that the battle was actually between SS troops and Communists and not Jews. This will be far more acceptable to Hitler.

Part 4, Dawn: Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The swift and successful rout of the SS troops by two individuals has been a great boost for ghetto residents. While it is probably clear that they will ultimately be successful against the German "machine," which outnumbers and out-guns the resistance, this



small victory is meaningful. It means that they will fight until the end, restoring the dignity of their race, even though they lose.

The conversation between Von Epp is particularly revealing, in terms of the various philosophies apparently held by the Germans during the Nazi period. Von Epp, certainly the realist, does appear to be bothered by the genocide. He believes that any country at war is justified in killing enemy combatants, but the wholesale destruction of an unarmed population goes beyond the pale. Funk's philosophy, however, is that "all is fair in war." Conquest is the "name of the game," and whatever is done in the name of conquest is justifiable. The wholesale extermination of the Jewish population of Europe does not bother him, and he has, indeed, witnessed gassing of Jews with no problem of conscience.



Book 4, Chapters 5-7

Book 4, Chapters 5-7 Summary

These three chapters cover the proactive moves of the Joint Forces, composed of all Jews remaining in the ghetto, including some secretive members still working in the factories. Chapter 5 includes the moves against the Jewish Militia and the prison they maintain, in collaboration with the Nazis. Joint Forces members take the prison, free the prisoners and lock up all of the guards. They then take the prison director, engage in a bit of his own torture methods, and he provides a wealth of information, specifically the location of hidden stores and money and information about Nazi officials in Warsaw. He is eventually executed.

Chapter 6 finds Mila 19 destroyed during a raid, and the Joint Forces needs a new headquarters and bunker for the remaining three to four hundred Jews remaining in the ghetto. Alex is certain that smuggler Moritz Katz, who lives across the street in Mila 18, has a large bunker under his home. Proceeding through the Mila 19 underground bunker and the sewer pipelines under the street, Andrei finds the bunker and is shocked to find loads of food and medicine and five large rooms. Katz is there with his ill wife and he agrees to allow the remaining Jews to move in.

Several other operations are described in Chapter 7. At a pre-arranged time, Koenig's brush-making factory is invaded by Wolf and his soldiers, via the underground sewer pipe. Using grenades and guns, all guards are killed, the foreman committing suicide. Ana Grinspan commandeers five trucks and removes the slave workers, who are distributed to a few other bunkers, scattered around the ghetto. The Jewish militia barracks is raided, and these collaborators are brought back to Mila, forced to provide additional information and are either fined or executed. The uniform factory, guarded by Lithuanians collaborators is taken. Another group proceeds through the sewer pipe to the Aryan side, coming up through a manhole and emptying the German Exchange Bank, taking the payroll meant for German soldiers. The Civil Authority building is surrounded and family members are ransomed for its entire treasury. Members and their families are then released into the ghetto to live as their fellow Jews have lived.

Book 4, Chapters 5-7 Analysis

The determination and success of the Joint Forces and their operations has an immediate impact on the morale of all remaining ghetto residents. Finally, they are emboldened and intent upon holding out as long as possible. While the resistance leaders realize that it is only a matter of time until they are defeated and destroyed, at least they will die fighting. This new-found and infectious pride and sense of honor provides an optimism and commitment on the part of people who have lived in fear and degradation for three years. Once again, they see themselves as inheritors of the Old

Testament struggles of their race and vow to carry on the tradition of resistance and faith in God.



Part 4, Chapters 8-10

Part 4, Chapters 8-10 Summary

All of the Joint Forces successes have Funk both angry and worried because he must now decide how to successfully eliminate these remaining Jews, who will not go down without a fight. Chapter 8 also reveals that the war is going badly for Germany now, and there is the added concern that the entire story of the genocide will be made public to the world, should the journals remain intact. By Chapter 9, Funk is frustrated and embarrassed by his failures and turns the task of final liquidation over to Von Epp and Dr. Koenig. Koenig's first step is to arrange a meeting with Simon Elder, which takes place in the ghetto. His offer is the provision of safe passage to Switzerland for Joint Forces leadership and others of their choosing, up to two thousand. The remainder will be relocated to camps. Koenig is spit upon and marched out of the ghetto.

By Chapter 10, it is April of 1943 and Deborah is caring for forty remaining children in Katz's bunker. Each of the five rooms has a designated purpose such as housing the children, storing food and medicine, and maintaining weapons and supplies. It is time to get Chris out because he must survive and retrieve the journals. Deborah knows that the rest will not ultimately survive, including her.

Part 4, Chapters 8-10 Analysis

While there is not yet a Jewish state in Palestine, the remaining ghetto Jews see themselves as the beginning of such a state. They fly the Star of David flag and announce that the ghetto is the first capitol of Palestine. Solidarity among these suffering survivors is universal and steadfast. No one is willing to take Koenig's offer for transport to Switzerland. They realize, moreover, that with dwindling supplies and the Nazis commitment to their extermination, it is only a matter of time before a complete invasion of the ghetto takes place. They are ready to die for their dignity and honor.



Part 4, Chapters 11-13

Part 4, Chapters 11-13 Summary

Chapter 11 reveals Funk's plan for eradication of the remaining Jews, as he discusses them with Von Epp. First, his troops will surround the ghetto; certain of them will attack and take the two factories, in which many Jews are living. Manhole covers will be carefully guarded, to prevent escape through the sewers, with the additional actions of dropping poisonous gas into them and placing barbed wire at the access points to the manholes. It is a well-planned attack that should clean out the ghetto. Von Epp laughs at Funk, stating that continued action against the Jews will only compound the evil for which their future generations will pay.

Meanwhile, as Chapter 12 shows, resistance leadership is making plans of its own. Stephan Bronski and two other female orphans are secretly taken to a priest's rectory for handover to a rural Polish couple. While they will have to pretend to be Catholic, Andrei tells Stephan that at least a Bronski will survive to continue the family name and eventually settle in Palestine. Gabriella, who assists in the effort to get some of these children out, tells the priest that she is pregnant with Andrei's child. Knowing that Andrei will not survive, she will see that he lives through this child.

Alex's latest journal entry begins Chapter 13. The Joint Forces has knowledge of the military buildup on the Aryan side and is resigned to the ultimate defeat they all know will come. They continue their efforts, however, by cutting the sewer barbed wire and by finding as many homes as possible for the children, with Gaby's help. Wolf has placed a large land mine at the gate of the brush maker factory, convinced that the troops will march in formation and thus be killed when it is detonated. Word is received, as the chapter closes, that the German attack will occur the next morning, as Jews in all of the bunkers begin the celebration of Passover.

Part 4, Chapters 11-13 Analysis

Both short and long-term plans are now being made. While the Joint Forces prepare for the battle to come, they realize that ultimately such resistance will be futile since they are simply outnumbered and outgunned. Fighting until the very end, however, is the honorable way to be defeated, as opposed to mere capitulation. Long-term plans include the secreting out of as many children as possible. Only in this way, will families have continued life through their offspring. The single disagreement between Funk and Von Epp continues. Funk is committed to the murder of every remaining Jew, no matter what measures he must take to accomplish this. Von Epp finds his efforts humorous, at the least, but warns Funk as well that continued atrocities will only add to the horrible legacy piling up for future generations of Germans. One wonders why a few thousand Jews can be so important to Funk, but the psychology is relatively clear. Funk is a part of that population that he himself states will provide direct and complete obedience to its

leader. He does not provide this obedience for personal gain, so much as for the opportunity to be a part of a society that will conquer the world.



Part 4, Chapters 14-17

Part 4, Chapters 14-17 Summary

The Nazi attack begins with the sending in of the elite Reinhard Corps, a group summarily massacred from rooftops and windows. Funk then sends in tanks. The mass bombing forces the soldiers out of the tanks, gasping for air, and they are summarily killed, as Chapter 14 ends. When the next wave of Nazis is sent to attack the brush-making factory, Wolf detonates his huge land mine, killing most of the troops as the survivors scramble away in retreat. Chapter 16 summarizes four more victories for the Joint Forces, although they are reduced to rationing of water and street fighting. The Jews from both factories are forced to move into Mila 18 however, creating truly crowded conditions. With water, food, and munitions almost exhausted, the Communist faction of the Joint forces decides to attempt an escape through the sewer pipes to the Vistula river. They are exterminated by poison gas. As Chapter 17 closes, another Nazi offensive is met with determined Jews, fighting with clubs and rocks.

Part 4, Chapters 14-17 Analysis

Clearly, the Nazis have underestimated the commitment and determination of the Jewish resistance. The seven days of conflict reminds one of David and Goliath from the Old Testament, a battle in which severely limited resources prove overwhelming for the armed, trained, and professional soldiers of the German forces. Funk is angry and humiliated, especially because his premier fighting force has been so routed. The Jews, for their part, are not fighting for victory, but, rather, for their dignity and honor. None of them believes that they will be victorious. Indeed, there is little left with which to fight or to sustain themselves. The goal now is to fight as long as possible, hoping that the world will one day know of their experiences and their unalterable will.



Part 4, Chapters 18-21

Part 4, Chapters 18-21 Summary

Humiliated by continued defeat and berated by Himmler, Fund decides to use planes to bomb the entire ghetto, sending it up in flames. Fortunately, Mila 18 is far enough underground not to be impacted by this attack. As Chapter 18 ends, each section of the Joint Forces is on its own, attacking German troops as it can and taking weapons and water canteens from the dead. Chapter 19 opens with the live capture of Moritz and two of his men, leaving the residents of Mila with no choice but to attempt escape. By Chapter 20, 400 residents remain in Mila 18 and the Germans have found three entrances to the bunker. While most residents surrender, Simon takes his fighters, Deborah, and the children through a fake brick opening into the sewer and across to the old bunker at Mila 19.

As the first step in getting Chris out, Andrei has taken Chris to Wolf's bunker, where he finds the group completely out of water and ready to surrender. Andrei tasks Tolek, another resistance leader, with the job of getting Chris, Wolf, and the others out through the smaller sewer pipes, where Germans will not be looking for them. Andrei then returns to Mila 19 to find Simon and Alex dead and Deborah barely alive. He gives her a cyanide pill.

Part 4, Chapters 18-21 Analysis

The end is approaching the resistance fighters, and the focus now is simple. They have to get Chris out because he is the only one with knowledge of the locations of all journals. He must survive in order to provide their story to the world. Selecting the sewer pipes is a dangerous escape route, but Andrei's suggestion that they use the smaller lateral pipes, as opposed to the main ones, is the one possibility remaining. Germans expect any escapees to come through the main sewer lines and may not have gassed and wired the many lateral pipes crisscrossing throughout Warsaw. The problem will be finding the correct route, however, as the network is complicated.



Part 4, Chapters 22-24

Part 4, Chapters 22-24 Summary

Wolf, Rachel, Tolek, Chris, and Ana Grinspa make their way through the sewer pipes and are followed by some twenty-three other civilians and children. Andrei runs a diversion above, a suicide mission of sorts, taking what forces remain and attacking German troops with anything they have. The commotion is heard by Funk, who assumes that the final extermination is complete. As Chapter 22 comes to a close, Gabriela has received a radio signal and realizes that some are coming through the sewers, although she does not know where they are to emerge. Wolf, Chris and Tolek do not know where they are either and members of the escape group continue to die from poisoned water, dehydration, and exhaustion. Finally, under cover of night, they open a manhole cover, determine where they are and send Tolek off to Rachel's apartment, in order to confirm a rendezvous point.

Chapter 23 finds Tolek at Gabriela's apartment, where bags of water, bread, and cheese are filled. A fellow Aryan resistor, Kamek, will go off to rent a truck. Tolek returns with the provisions and lowers them down into the manhole to the now twelve survivors. At daylight, Tolek arrives with his truck. They quickly extract the twelve from the sewer and drive off for the forests of the countryside.

Part 4, Chapters 22-24 Analysis

The resistance is over. From a strictly military standpoint, the Joint Forces has been defeated. Of 500,000 Jews initially in the ghetto, only 12 have survived the ordeal, but the infliction of death, injury, and humiliation upon the enemy has been the true victory. Completely outnumbered and out-powered, and lacking any formal training and organization, a group of Jewish leaders manages to unify and to rally thousands of Jews to fight a battle that is doomed to failure. These final members of the ghetto are so difficult to defeat because they are committed to the restoration of their honor and, of course, to the preservation of their legacy through the journals. History is full of instances in which the "underdog" overcomes overwhelming odds to emerge victorious against a stronger and more powerful enemy. In their own ways, the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto are just as victorious.



Part 4, Chapter 24

Part 4, Chapter 24 Summary

It is December, 1943, and Chris De Monti makes the final journal entry. He is in Sweden with Gabriela whose baby is soon to be born. When the war ends with German defeat, which is not a certainty, he will return to Warsaw and retrieve the journals. Wolf, Rachel, and Tolek fight with a Jewish partisan group and Stephan Bronski remains with his adopted Catholic family in Lublin. He closes the journal with thoughts from Alex Brandel. At the height of man's inhumanity to man, there are those who arise to great nobility.

Part 4, Chapter 24 Analysis

Chris has been profoundly changed by his experience. When he was first assigned to Warsaw, he was an embittered and frustrated journalist, believing that most of the world truly does not care about the suffering of fellow humans if that suffering is not in their own backyard. He will see to it that the story of the Warsaw ghetto and the ultimate uprising is revealed, whatever the world response may be. Further, he has realized that, as friend Alex Brandel said, that at the height of man's inhumanity to man, there are those who arise to great nobility. The Jews who fight in the Warsaw uprising are examples of that nobility of which man is capable in his finer moments.



Characters

Chris De Monti

Born to an American mother and Italian father, Chris grows up in America, but spends summers with his wealthy and fascist father in Italy. He has a wonderful relationship with his father until as a young adult, he refuses to become a part of the family business and opts instead for journalism school at Columbia University. At this point, he is disowned by his father. Chris accepts a position with the Swiss News Agency and begins to cover Europe during the 1930's, specifically the Spanish Civil War, during which time he comes to abhor the fascist Franco for the wholesale torture and murder of his opponents. Disillusioned by the world's lack of response to his reporting, Chris eventually takes an assignment in Warsaw. He is in Poland when Hitler invades and occupies the country. Under Nazi occupation, Chris, in love with a married Jewish woman, is faced with reporting on conditions in Poland and must tread carefully. In order to maintain his position and access to his home News Agency, he becomes friendly with Horst Von Epp, the Minister of of propaganda and news. Eventually, Chris realizes that he must assist the Jews in their resistance to continued Nazi efforts to isolate and ultimately exterminate them. He flees to the ghetto, where he assists Zionist friend Alex Brandel in the compilation and hiding of volumes of journals depicting the plight of the Warsaw Jews. Chris must survive the resistance battles because only he knows the locations of the buried volumes. He escapes the ghetto with eleven other survivors and makes his way to Sweden by the end of 1943. He will remain there until the war ends and then recover the journals to preserve the story of the Warsaw Jews and their insurrection against the Nazis.

Alex Brandel

A Polish Jew and former university professor of history, Alex Brandel is a Zionist or a person who works toward the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. He is the leader of an organization called the Bathyrans. The organization owns several farms in the Polish countryside, where young Jews go to learn the techniques of farming, so that they may use their skills to farm the land being purchased in Palestine. The Bathyrans run a Jewish orphanage as well, hoping to raise future colonists for Palestine. The Zionists are divided into many factions, and the Bathyrans constitute a more moderate and intellectual group. As the Nazis tighten their restrictions on Warsaw Jews, Brandel continues to oppose a military response, believing that quiet appeasement is the better response. Bathyran Council money must be used to buy land in Palestine and not to arm Warsaw Jews. Eventually, Brandel realizes that the dignity of his race depends upon an insurrection and he throws his support to the militants who are determined to fight the Germans. Throughout these horrific times, Brandel maintains a journal, describing in detail the plight of the Jews, Nazi atrocities, and the Warsaw uprising. he journals are ultimately buried so that they cannot be found and destroyed as the ghetto



is forcibly emptied. Brandel, his wife Sylvia and their youngest son, Moses, all die in the ghetto. His son Wolf however, manages to escape.

Gabriela Rak

Gabriela is the daughter of an engineer. Her father died young of a heart attack, and the family moved to Chicago, where her brother had immigrated years ago. She hated her life in America and when she is old enough, returns to Poland with her portion of her father's trust. Her ability to speak several languages, including English, lands her a job at the American Embassy as a teacher and then a translator of classified materials. She meets Andrei at a military ball and a love affair began. Gabriela is also a friend to Alex Brandel, leader of the Zionist movement in Warsaw and is appalled by the treatment of the Jews under Nazi control. Living on the Aryan side, Gaby is able to assist the Jews in efforts to secure supplies and to escape from the ghetto. She is instrumental in the final escape of the last twelve residents of the ghetto, although her love, Andrei, dies.

Deborah Bronski

Deborah is a traditional orthodox Jew, who devoutly practices her faith and raises her children to do likewise. She is a strong-willed and stubborn woman who criticizes her husband's capitulation to the Nazi leadership in Warsaw and spends her time taking care of orphans in the ghetto of Warsaw. She and Chris De Monti have a long-term love affair, but she is unwilling to escape when he provides the opportunity, refusing to desert those who need her. In the end, Deborah, near death, consumes a cyanide capsule to end her life.

Paul Bronski

Paul Bronski is a secular Jew, a man who has all but denounced his own religion in the name of career and later, the safety of himself and his family. A doctor, and Dean of the medical school of the University of Warsaw, Bronski loses that position when the Nazis take over. He is then appointed to head the Jewish Civil Authority by his old medical school rival, Franz Koenig, who now holds a position with the new Nazi administration. Paul's response to continued directives that restrict Jewish freedom and livelihood is to cooperate, justifying his actions by his concern for the safety of his family members, none of whom share his beliefs in cooperation. Ultimately, Paul commits suicide, unable to balance his cooperation with the Nazis and his loyalty to his Jewish background.

Andrei Androfski

Brother to Deborah Bronski, Andrei is a hot-headed Polish Army commander who loses his company during the Nazi invasion of Poland. Andrei is committed to the need to fight the Nazis and to resist their systematic persecution of the Jews but has a difficult time convincing other Zionists who hold the purse strings, specifically Alex Brandel. When it



becomes clear that the Nazis intend to exterminate the Polish Jews, Andrei finally receive the assistance he needs to form a Joint Forces Jewish army, although, by this time, there is too little money to secure the arms required to launch a major offensive against the Nazis. He does receive support and direct assistance from his lover, Gabriela Rak, a Catholic who resides in the Aryan section of Warsaw. Andrei dies in a fruitless battle with Nazi forces, attempting to create a diversion so that others may take themselves and Chris De Monti to freedom.

Wolf Brandel

Wolf is the son of Alex Brandel and a Zionist working on one of the Jewish farms outside of Warsaw. He is in love with Rachel Bronski and returns to the ghetto to participate in the activities of Andrei's Joint Forces. He becomes a "runner" for the resistance forces and, then, a commander of one of the Joint Forces groups. Wolf's major contribution to the uprising is to participate in the making of bottle and pipe bombs which are used to fight the Nazi troops invading the ghetto. Wolf and fellow Zionist, Tolek, are charged with the task of getting Chis De Monti out of the ghetto, and they do so by leading a small group out through sewer pipes under Warsaw. Wolf's love interest is Rachel Bronski and she is among the final twelve survivors of the final escape attempt. Wolf, Tolek, and Rachel continue their efforts as part of a Jewish partisan group, formed to fight the Nazis.

Rachel Bronski

Rachel has been raised in Warsaw by her Jewish parents, Paul and Deborah Bronski. Her mother, Deborah, has raised her to be an orthodox Jew as well as a musician, and Rachel provides piano concerts for the orphan children of the ghetto. She is stubborn like her mother, and begins a love affair with Wolf Bronski when he returns to the ghetto from a Bathyran farm. Together, they participate in the resistance effort and she manages to be a part of the last group of escapees from the ghetto. Along with Wolf, she joins a Jewish partisan resistance movement.

Horst Von Epp

Von Epp is the quintessential opportunist. An educated and cultured German, Von Epp is placed in the position of controlling the news that leaves Warsaw bound for world readership. While he finds the Nazi behaviors distasteful and crass, he nevertheless accepts them. He believes that the winning side has the right to do whatever it wants, and his future well-being depends upon his outward loyalty to the Nazi leadership. He develops a mutually respectful relationship with Chris De Monti. He assists Chris in getting into the ghetto in order to avoid his being found and executed by the Nazis once they discover that Chris has secreted out material damaging to them.

Alfred Funk

Charged with the implementation of the Nazi directives relative to the "Jewish problem," Funk is a loyal Nazi who is focused upon the wholesale destruction of the Jews and the ghetto in which they reside. He is committed to the Nazi cause and believes that Jews are sub-human and responsible for all the ills of Germany throughout history. He battles the resistance forces in the ghetto with all the military might at his disposal and is continually surprised and humiliated when such a small and poorly-armed force is able to kill and scatter his forces. Ultimately, he raids the ghetto by air, destroying it completely. The final efforts of the few survivors, however, provide an additional defeat for Funk, along with the failure of his efforts to locate the sites of the hidden journal volumes which depict the despicable acts of the Nazis.

Franz Koenig

A man of ethnic German descent, Koenig has always hated Paul Bronski, believing that he should have been selected as Dean of the medical school at the University of Warsaw. He has his chance for revenge, however, as the Nazis take control, immediately obtaining membership in the Nazi Party and setting about to humiliate Paul Bronski, who returns from battle with one arm amputated. Koenig is given an important post in the Nazi administration of Warsaw and uses it to commandeer Bronski's home for his own. He gives Paul a position as head of the Jewish Civil Authority, requiring that Paul implement directives from the Nazis.

Rabbi Solomon

The religious leader of the Jews in Warsaw, Rabbi Solomon is a peaceful man who believes that resistance to the Nazis is not the correct response for the ghetto residents. He truly believes that what befalls the Jews will be countered by God who will ultimately send their Messiah to free them from bondage, whether that occurs during his lifetime or not. He is content that Alex Brandel is maintaining a journal of events and even suggests that the volumes be hidden for posterity. Rabbi Solomon dies in the bunker under Mila 18 as an old man who is unable to survive the horrific conditions there.

Ervin Rosenblum

Ervin is Chris De Monti's photographer, as well as good friend to the journalist. Chris manages to save Ervin's position for only so long. In the end, Ervin is relegated to the ghetto, where he becomes a member of the resistance movement. He, along with wife Susan, die in the ghetto.



Max Kleperman

A notorious Warsaw gangster, Max has an organized crime group called the "Big Seven." He is an opportunist who takes advantage of both German and Jew, bargaining with both, and using his position to personally benefit at the expense of his fellow Jews.

Moritz Katz

A smuggler by trade, Katz lives in Mila 18. He has built a five-room bunker underground and filled it with large stores of food and supplies. He allows the residents of Mila 19 to move in when their property is destroyed.



Objects/Places

Warsaw

This is the capital city of Poland, subjected to Nazi administration once Germany invades and conquers.

Ghetto

This is the term used to apply to that section of Warsaw where the Jews were forced to live.

Labor Camp

This is the Nazi term for concentration camps for the Jews where Jews were exterminated by gassing.

Madjanek

This is a Jewish concentration camp outside of Warsaw.

Cheder

This is a Jewish school in which children are taught religion along with academics.

Ulnay

This is a Polish national army that fought against the invading Germans in 1939.

Zloty

This is a Polish dollar.

Good Fellowship Club

This is a group of Jews in the ghetto that contributed to the journals depicting the persecution and destruction of the Jews in Warsaw.



Joint Forces

This is the Jewish resistance force that fought the Nazis as they invaded the ghetto.

Zionism

This is the term for the movement of Jews to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.

Big Seven

This is the term for Max Kleperman's organized crime group.

Wework

This is the name of one of the Jewish-owned farms outside of Warsaw.

Orphans and Self-Help Society

This is a Jewish organization that was a "front" for the Bathyan Society and which accumulated supplies and arms for the ghetto residents and resistance members.

Jewish Civil Authority

This is a group of Jewish men, appointed by the Nazis, to implement the directives which came from Berlin, relative to the status and situation of the Jews in Warsaw.



Themes

Commitment to a Higher Cause

Throughout history, there have been instances of individuals or groups of individuals who, in the face of challenges and danger, sacrifice their personal lives and safety for a higher cause. Author Uris provides several examples of these individuals in *Mila 18*. Deborah Bronski and Chris De Monti sacrificed their love for one another, in order to participate in the Jewish resistance effort and to assist others with escape and survival. Deborah remains in the ghetto to care for orphaned children, even though she has an opportunity to obtain false papers allowing her to leave Poland. Ultimately, she pays for her commitment with death. Chris, an Italian-American who can leave at any time, takes major risks to secret money into the ghetto and information out. He secures false papers to get into the ghetto, in order to live and work among the Jewish resistance forces. Andrei Androfski and Gabriela Rak provide two more examples. Gaby is a Catholic Pole who is safe from danger on the Aryan side of Warsaw. She chooses, however, to participate in aiding ghetto residents, especially children, to escape and get to other parts of Poland where they can live in greater safety. As well, she vocalizes her anger over the failure of the Polish Catholic Church to condemn the Nazis and participate in assisting the Jews. Andrei, as a former military commander, wishes only to fight the Germans in any way possible. He organizes the ghetto Joint Forces to attack, invading German troops even though his group is woefully out-armed and outnumbered. In the end, Andrei sacrifices his own life, by creating a diversion, which allows others to escape into the sewer pipe system. Other ghetto leaders, to include Alex Brandel, Simon Elder, and Ervin Rosenblum, also sacrifice their personal safety for a cause that is doomed to failure, in order to preserve their story and the honor of their people.

Response to Adversity

Often, the true measure of a person is found in that individual's responses to adversity. Almost every possible response is found within Uris's work. Paul Bronski represents that individual who sacrifices his personal principles in order to survive at a better level than his fellow Jews. Thus, he accepts Nazi rule and the offer to head the Jewish Civil Authority, a position that allows him a better residence, more rations, and greater safety. Ultimately, he loses the privileges however and faced with the stress of his position and the disdain of his own family members, he commits suicide. Other individuals rise to greater personal heights when faced with adversity. Particularly relevant are the personalities of Alex Brandel, Deborah Bronski, and her daughter Rachel. They outwardly accept their new status as sub-humans, relegated to the ghetto but inwardly choose to engage in activities which help to sustain others. Alex works to unify the various Jewish factions into a cohesive group that can work to improve conditions in the ghetto, secure food, money and supplies for fellow residents, and to maintain a comprehensive record of the persecution and extermination of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis. Deborah Bronski rises to the occasion by caring for the orphans of the ghetto



and remains in this position long after it is safe to do so. Rachel chooses to provide a small amount of pleasure to the orphans through her piano concert, again remaining steadfast and only escaping with the final survivors. Other heroes of the adversity obviously include those who choose to become a part of the Joint Forces, who determine to forcibly resist Nazi extermination efforts. Nameless individuals responded with capitulation, unable to engender courage to resist. These individuals met their death in the gas chambers of concentration camps. Additional individuals, whose self interest determined their behavior, found ways to benefit financially. Max Kleperman, a gangster before the occupation, remained as such, bargaining with the Nazis and taking advantage of the plight of his fellow Jews to continue to line his own pockets. These characters form a microcosm of any society, as they represent the variety of behavioral types one may find anywhere.

Man's Inhumanity to Man

As Von Epp stated to Chris De Monti, man is the only species that murders its own on a wholesale scale. According to him, this inhumanity is within man's basic nature, as evidenced by history. Since the beginning of time, conquest of one group by another has occurred without concern for destruction and devastation caused. Thus, innocents, including women, children, and other civilians, are slaughtered by victors and vanquished alike. Von Epp's approach to the current genocide to accept the behaviors of his countrymen, so long as he is on the winning side. According to him, self-interest is the prime motivator. Thus, so long as he is not forced to witness the "dirty work" of his government, he is perfectly content to reap the spoils of victory. The response of the Catholic Church to such inhumanity appears to be the same. With obvious genocide occurring all around it, the Church remains silent, as does the rest of the world. Even though evidence is secreted out of Poland and presented to the world, there is no public outcry against Nazi activities relative to Jews, and Von Epp attributes this as well to human nature. No one truly cares about the pain and suffering of others as long as he remains insulated from it. Von Epp concludes that man will continue to pursue conquest and the power that accompanies it. In so doing, he will engage in inhumane treatment of others.



Style

Point of View

The entire work is written from the third-person perspective, but Uris moves among from a lack of omniscience to partial omniscience and then finally, to total omniscience, dependent upon the characters and the circumstances in which they are placed. In some instances, it is critical to relate the thoughts of characters in order to enhance the plot and allow understanding of their motivations. In other circumstances, it is not necessary, for conversation, and other methods are used to reveal personalities and motivations. For example, the reader is allowed complete understanding of Alex Brandel's thoughts through his journal entries, not through description or conversation. The thoughts and feelings of the other major characters are generally revealed, and the reader is occasionally allowed a look into the thoughts of less prominent characters, such as Alfred Funk. Many characters however reveal their thoughts and motivations through conversation. Von Epp, for example, once introduced with descriptive background information, reveals his character and his thoughts primarily through his conversations with others, specifically Funk and De Monti. Uris does an excellent job of providing background information on most characters, and these descriptions allow the reader to understand their personalities, psychological makeup, and behaviors, even though their innermost thoughts are not specifically described. Uris is obviously a master storyteller who weaves in and out of omniscience effectively and artfully, understanding that there are a variety of methods by which character may be revealed to readers.

Setting

The setting for historical novels is particularly critical as actual places, events, and times allow the novel its credibility. Virtually all of *Mila 18* occurs in Warsaw, Poland between the years of 1939 and 1943. The authenticity of the story is the result of accurate and detailed descriptions of the city and its landmarks as well as actual street names and addresses. Both the little and big ghettos are detailed, along with actual synagogues that were destroyed by the Nazis, as well as the two factories that actually existed in the ghetto. Adding to the setting are descriptions of arms used by the Germans, the bunkers in which the Jews hid from the Nazis, and the labor camps surrounding Warsaw. The time period is a matter of known history, and events are accurately noted, specifically the invasion of Poland, the declarations of war by England and France, the German defeat at Stalingrad, and the entry of the U.S. into the war. Significant research was obviously necessary in order to fully name and describe all of these places, and Uris weaves them artfully into his fictional story. The tale ends in the winter of 1943 and while the war is going badly for Germany, defeat would be almost a year later. Portraying the fictional story against the backdrop of actual places and event lends crucial credibility to both the characters and their actions.



Language and Meaning

In order to establish credibility, Uris must use language typical of the times, to include vocabulary that came directly from occupied Warsaw, German occupation officials, and from the Jewish faith. To the unschooled reader, some of the vocabulary may not have meaning. Words such as Passover, Cheder, Bar Mitzvah, and Torah are specific to the Jewish religion and the terms Zionism and Balfour relate to the Jewish movement in the 1930's and 1940's for a Jewish state in Palestine. The terms ghetto, labor camp, deportation, and "final solution," of course, refer to the Nazi policies regarding the Jews during World War II. Gestapo, SS, bunker, and partisan are additional terminology of the times. Beyond these, the language is twentieth century and certainly understandable to the contemporary reader. Characters use spoken language that is appropriate for their backgrounds and educational levels as well. Alex Brandel, for example, is a former professor of history, and his journal writings reflect that knowledge and education. Andrei Androfski is not an intellectual but rather a fighter and his language is seen as more coarse and gruff. The letters between Wolf and Rachel reflect typical teenage vocabulary and usage, although a contemporary teen would find it a bit formal. It is however correct for the times. The language is appropriate for the times and credible for the individuals.

Structure

The novel is divided into four chronological sections with each symbolically titled. Part One, "Twilight," encompasses the threat of German invasion through the fall of Warsaw and the establishment of Nazi occupational rule. Part Two, titled "Dusk," depicts the initial restrictions upon Jews such as the requirements to register and wear armbands and the closing of synagogues, to the eventual confinement in a single area, known as the ghetto. The Jewish Civil Authority is also established, comprising a group of prominent Jews who now have the task of implementing the directives, which increase each day. Part Three, "Night," comprises depicts the lowest point of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto. Ghetto residents are hiding in underground bunker in order to avoid capture by Nazis, who are intent upon emptying the area and sending all Jews to labor camps, the cleansed term for extermination facilities. Jews feel helpless and powerless and take no proactive action against the Nazis. Part Four, titled "Dawn," represents the unification of Jewish resistance efforts into the Joint Forces and the decision of the joint forces to take armed action against the Nazis. Although only twelve Jews manage to escape the continued Nazi assault, the restoration of their dignity and honor as a people is apparent.



Quotes

"From that moment, when she was consumed by his great and wonderful power, all the things she had considered important to her way of life ceased to be important...Gabriela knew with no uncertainty that there had never been nor ever would be again a man like Andrei Androfski" (Part 1, Chapter 6, pg. 48.)

"So, anyhow all your goddamn poets will write tired sonnets about the good old days when the noblemen kicked the piss out of the peasants and the peasants kicked the piss out of the Jews. Then, some half-assed piano player will play benefit concerts to the Poles in Chicago, and in a hundred years everybody will say-Jesus Christ, let's put Poland back together-we're sick of hearing Chopin concerts" (Part 1, Chapter 6, pg. 50.)

"The Nazis took bullies and bums and made them heroes. In exchange, the bums gave absolute obedience; there was no qualm or remorse or inner conflicts of conscience when Schreiker was asked to destroy a synagogue or murder an enemy of the party" (Part 2, Chapter 2, pg. 124.)

"I have learned that truth is not truth. Truth is only what people want to believe and nothing more" (Part 2, Chapter 11, pg. 180.)

"...don't be too hard on us. Conquerors have never won prizes for benevolence. We are no worse than a dozen other empires when they ran the show" (Part 2, Chapter 27, pg. 272.)

"Most sinister move in the German master plan is the creation of the illusion that the Jews are doing all this to one another. The dregs of society in the Jewish Militia, the emasculated Jewish Civil Authority, the smugglers. This is "final vindication" for the Germans-of themselves" (Part 2, Chapter 30, pg. 293.)

"All that Franz Koenig had known of truth and beauty was abandoned by him. A victim of fear, he had been purchased-soul, heart, and mind" (Part 3, Chapter 5, pg. 332.)

"He saw the smug eyes of the Home Army chief, Roman and all the Romans and the faces of the peasants who held only hatred for him. They had let this black hole of death in Warsaw's heart exist without a cry of protest" (Part 3, Chapter 7, pg. 340.)

"A terrorized Jewish Militia under Warsinski's obedient haranguing had long ago sold their souls; now they sank to a new depth of decadence. It became a common sight to see them dragging their own relatives to the Unschlagplatz for deportation when they were unable to fill their quotas" (Book 3, Chapter 1, pg. 377-78.)

"Man is the only animal which destroys its own species....you, dear Chris, are all the moralists in the world who have condoned genocide by the conspiracy of silence" (Part 3, Chapter 13, pg. 387.)



"Every people in every age have taken their turn. The world has only one standard for proof that one is better than the other and this is conquest" (Part 4, Chapter 2, pg. 402.)

"Is the killing of an armed man really less a murder than the killing of a child? We have learned that other conquests have failed because one cannot go to war with compassion" (Part 4, Chapter 2, pg. 403.)

"I look through the books of history and I try to find a parallel. Not at the Alamo, not at Thermopylae and two more unequal forces square off for combat. I believe that decades and centuries may pass, but nothing can stop the legends, which will grow from the ashes of the ghetto to show that this is the epic in man's struggle for freedom and human dignity" (Part 4, Chapter 24, pg. 562.)

"If the Warsaw ghetto marked the lowest point in the history of the Jewish people, it also marked the point where they rose to their greatest heights. Strange, after all the philosophies have been argued, the final decision to fight was basically a religious decision" (Part 4, Chapter 24, pg. 563.)



Topics for Discussion

What is the basic conflict between Deborah and Paul Bronski? What decisions do each of them make which ultimately destroy their marriage?

Given that he believes the world is unresponsive to the inhumanity of the Fascists, what experiences and factors cause De Monti to expose the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Warsaw?

What motivates Horst Von Epp? Do you believe that contemporary political figures are motivated in the same way? Provide examples to support your opinion.

Compare and contrast the responses of Andrei, Alex, Rabbit Solomon, and Paul Bronski to Nazi persecution.

Sacrifice for a greater cause is typified by a number of characters. Choose one and describe the sacrifices that are made, along with the outcome of those sacrifices.

Why do you think the world turned a "deaf ear" to the suffering of the Jews during the Nazi period of dominance in Europe? Can this "denial" be justified? Why or why not?

A number of characters compromised basic principles of human rights and dignity. Identify these people and describe the compromises they made.

Horst Von Epp states that man has a need to conquer others of his species and to do so via inhumane ways. Do you agree? Why or why not?