

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

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✓ Verified Book of The Nazi Officer's Wife: How One Jewish Woman Survived the Holocaust

Summary:

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Edith Hahn was an outspoken young woman studying law in Vienna when the Gestapo forced Edith and her mother into a ghetto, issuing them papers branded with a "J." Soon, Edith was taken away to a labor camp, and though she convinced Nazi officials to spare her mother, when she returned home, her mother had been deported. Knowing she would become a hunted woman, Edith tore the yellow star from her clothing and went underground, scavenging for food and searching each night for a safe place to sleep. Her boyfriend, Pepi, proved too terrified to help her, but a Christian friend was not: With the woman's identity papers in hand, Edith fled to Munich. There she met Werner Vetter, a Nazi party member who fell in love with her. And despite her protests and even her eventual confession that she was Jewish, he married her and kept her identity secret.

In vivid, wrenching detail, Edith recalls a life of constant, almost paralyzing fear. She tells of German officials who casually questioned the lineage of her parents; of how, when giving birth to her daughter, she refused all painkillers, afraid that in an altered state of mind she might reveal her past; and of how, after her husband was captured by the Russians and sent to Siberia, Edith was bombed out of her house and had to hide in a closet with her daughter while drunken Russians soldiers raped women on the street.

Yet despite the risk it posed to her life, Edith Hahn created a remarkable collective record of survival: She saved every set of real and falsified papers, letters she received from her lost love, Pepi, and photographs she managed to take inside labor camps.

On exhibit at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., these hundreds of documents form the fabric of an epic story - complex, troubling, and ultimately triumphant.

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