

SCHINDLER'S LIST

A NOVEL

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KENEALLY

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SCHINDLER'S LIST

Thomas Keneally

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TO THE MEMORY OF OSKAR SCHINDLER, AND TO LEOPOLD PFEFFERBERG,
WHO BY ZEAL AND PERSISTENCE CAUSED THIS BOOK TO BE WRITTEN

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In 1980 I visited a luggage store in Beverly Hills, California, and inquired the prices of briefcases. The store belonged to Leopold Pfefferberg, a Schindler survivor. It was beneath Pfefferberg's shelves of imported Italian leather goods that I first heard of Oskar Schindler, the German *bon vivant*, speculator, charmer, and sign of contradiction, and of his salvage of a cross section of a condemned race during those years now known by the generic name Holocaust.

This account of Oskar's astonishing history is based in the first place on interviews with 50 Schindler survivors from seven nations—Australia, Israel, West Germany, Austria, the United States, Argentina, and Brazil. It is enriched by a visit, in the company of Leopold Pfefferberg, to locations that prominently figure in the book: Cracow, Oskar's adopted city; Płaszów, the scene of Amon Goeth's foul labor camp; Lipowa Street, Zablocie, where Oskar's factory still stands; Auschwitz-Birkenau, from which Oskar extracted his women prisoners. But the narration depends also on documentary and other information supplied by those few wartime associates of Oskar's who can still be reached, as well as by the large body of his postwar friends. Many of the plentiful testimonies regarding Oskar deposited by Schindler Jews at *Yad Vashem*, The Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, further enriched the record, as did written testimonies from private sources and a body of Schindler papers and letters, some supplied by *Yad Vashem*, some by Oskar's friends.

To use the texture and devices of a novel to tell a true story is a course that has frequently been followed in modern writing. It is the one I chose to follow here—both because the novelist's craft is the only one I can lay claim to, and because the novel's techniques seem suited for a character of such ambiguity and magnitude as Oskar. I have attempted, however, to avoid all fiction, since fiction would debase the record, and to distinguish between

reality and the myths which are likely to attach themselves to a man of Oskar's stature. It has sometimes been necessary to make reasonable constructs of conversations of which Oskar and others have left only the briefest record. But most exchanges and conversations, and all events, are based on the detailed recollections of the *Schindlerjuden* (Schindler Jews), of Schindler himself, and of other witnesses to Oskar's acts of outrageous rescue.

I would like to thank first three Schindler survivors—Leopold Pfefferberg, Justice Moshe Bejski of the Israeli Supreme Court, and Mieczyslaw Pemper—who not only passed on their memories of Oskar to the author and gave him certain documents which have contributed to the accuracy of the narrative, but also read the early draft of the book and suggested corrections. Many others, whether Schindler survivors or Oskar's postwar associates, gave interviews and generously contributed information through letters and documents. These include Frau Emilie Schindler, Mrs. Ludmila Pfefferberg, Dr. Sophia Stern, Mrs. Helen Horowitz, Dr. Jonas Dresner, Mr. and Mrs. Henry and Mariana Rosner, Leopold Rosner, Dr. Alex Rosner, Dr. Idek Schindel, Dr. Danuta Schindel, Mrs. Regina Horowitz, Mrs. Bronislawa Karakulska, Mr. Richard Horowitz, Mr. Shmuel Springmann, the late Mr. Jakob Sternberg, Mr. Jerzy Sternberg, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Fagen, Mr. Henry Kinstlinger, Mrs. Rebecca Bau, Mr. Edward Heuberger, Mr. and Mrs. M. Hirschfeld, Mr. and Mrs. Irving Glovin, and many others. In my home city, Mr. and Mrs. E. Korn not only gave of their memories of Oskar but were a constant support. At *Yad Vashem*, Dr. Josef Kermisz, Dr. Shmuel Krakowski, Vera Prausnitz, Chana Abells, and Hadassah Mödlinger provided generous access to the testimonies of Schindler survivors and to video and photographic material.

Lastly, I would like to honor the efforts which the late Mr. Martin Gosch expended on bringing the name of Oskar Schindler to the world's notice, and to signify my thanks to his widow, Mrs. Lucille Gaynes, for her cooperation with this project.

Through the assistance of all these people, Oskar Schindler's astonishing history appears for the first time in extended form.

TOM KENEALLY



IN POLAND'S DEEPEST AUTUMN, a tall young man in an expensive overcoat, double-breasted dinner jacket beneath it and—in the lapel of the dinner jacket—a large ornamental gold-on-black-enamel *Hakenkreuz* (swastika) emerged from a fashionable apartment building in Straszewskiego Street, on the edge of the ancient center of Cracow, and saw his chauffeur waiting with fuming breath by the open door of an enormous and, even in this blackened world, lustrous Adler limousine.

“Watch the pavement, Herr Schindler,” said the chauffeur. “It’s as icy as a widow’s heart.”

In observing this small winter scene, we are on safe ground. The tall young man would to the end of his days wear double-breasted suits, would—being something of an engineer—always be gratified by large dazzling vehicles, would—though a German and at this point in history a German of some influence—always be the sort of man with whom a Polish chauffeur could safely crack a lame, comradely joke.

But it will not be possible to see the whole story under such easy character headings. For this is the story of the pragmatic triumph of good over evil, a

triumph in eminently measurable, statistical, unsubtle terms. When you work from the other end of the beast—when you chronicle the predictable and measurable success evil generally achieves—it is easy to be wise, wry, piercing, to avoid bathos. It is easy to show the inevitability by which evil acquires all of what you could call the *real estate* of the story, even though good might finish up with a few imponderables like dignity and self-knowledge. Fatal human malice is the staple of narrators, original sin the mother-fluid of historians. But it is a risky enterprise to have to write of virtue.

“Virtue” in fact is such a dangerous word that we have to rush to explain; Herr Oskar Schindler, risking his glimmering shoes on the icy pavement in this old and elegant quarter of Cracow, was not a virtuous young man in the customary sense. In this city he kept house with his German mistress and maintained a long affair with his Polish secretary. His wife, Emilie, chose to live most of the time at home in Moravia, though she sometimes came to Poland to visit him. There’s this to be said for him: that to all his women he was a well-mannered and generous lover. But under the normal interpretation of “virtue,” that’s no excuse.

Likewise, he was a drinker. Some of the time he drank for the pure glow of it, at other times with associates, bureaucrats, SS men for more palpable results. Like few others, he was capable of staying canny while drinking, of keeping his head. That again, though—under the narrow interpretation of morality—has never been an excuse for carousing. And although Herr Schindler’s merit is well documented, it is a feature of his ambiguity that he worked within or, at least, on the strength of a corrupt and savage scheme, one that filled Europe with camps of varying but consistent inhumanity and created a submerged, unspoken-of nation of prisoners. The best thing, therefore, may be to begin with a tentative instance of Herr Schindler’s strange virtue and of the places and associates to which it brought him.

At the end of Straszewskiego Street, the car moved beneath the black bulk of Wawel Castle, from which the National Socialist Party’s darling lawyer Hans Frank ruled the Government General of Poland. As from the palace of any evil giant, no light showed. Neither Herr Schindler nor the driver glanced up at the ramparts as the car turned southeast toward the river. At the Podgórze Bridge, the guards, placed above the freezing Vistula to prevent the transit of partisans and other curfew-breakers between Podgórze and Cracow,

were used to the vehicle, to Herr Schindler's face, to the *Passierschein* presented by the chauffeur. Herr Schindler passed this checkpoint frequently, traveling either from his factory (where he also had an apartment) to the city on business, or else from his Straszewskiego Street apartment to his plant in the suburb of Zablocie. They were used to seeing him after dark too, attired formally or semiformally, passing one way or another to a dinner, a party, a bedroom; perhaps, as was the case tonight, on his way ten kilometers out of town to the forced-labor camp at Płaszów, to dine there with SS *Hauptsturmführer* Amon Goeth, that highly placed sensualist. Herr Schindler had a reputation for being generous with gifts of liquor at Christmas, and so the car was permitted to pass over into the suburb of Podgórze without much delay.

It is certain that by this stage of his history, in spite of his liking for good food and wine, Herr Schindler approached tonight's dinner at Commandant Goeth's more with loathing than with anticipation. There had in fact never been a time when to sit and drink with Amon had not been a repellent business. Yet the revulsion Herr Schindler felt was of a piquant kind, an ancient, exultant sense of abomination—of the same sort as, in a medieval painting, the just show for the damned. An emotion, that is, which stung Oskar rather than unmanned him.

In the black leather interior of the Adler as it raced along the trolley tracks in what had been until recently the Jewish ghetto, Herr Schindler—as always—chain-smoked. But it was composed chain smoking. There was never tension in the hands; he was stylish. His manner implied that he knew where the next cigarette was coming from and the next bottle of cognac. Only he could have told us whether he had to succor himself from a flask as he passed by the mute, black village of Prokocim and saw, on the line to Lwów, a string of stalled cattle cars, which might hold infantry or prisoners or even—though the odds were against it—cattle.

Out in the countryside, perhaps ten kilometers from the center of town, the Adler turned right at a street named—by an irony—Jerozolimska. This night of sharp frosty outlines, Herr Schindler saw beneath the hill first a ruined synagogue, and then the bare shapes of what passed these days as the city of Jerusalem, Forced Labor Camp Płaszów, barracks town of 20,000 unquiet Jews. The Ukrainian and *Waffen* SS men at the gate greeted Herr Schindler

courteously, for he was known at least as well here as on the Podgórze Bridge.

When level with the Administration Building, the Adler moved onto a prison road paved with Jewish gravestones. The campsite had been till two years before a Jewish cemetery. Commandant Goeth, who claimed to be a poet, had used in the construction of his camp whatever metaphors were to hand. This metaphor of shattered gravestones ran the length of the camp, splitting it in two, but did not extend eastward to the villa occupied by Commandant Goeth himself.

On the right, past the guard barracks, stood a former Jewish mortuary building. It seemed to declare that here all death was natural and by attrition, that all the dead were laid out. In fact the place was now used as the Commandant's stables. Though Herr Schindler was used to the sight, it is possible that he still reacted with a small ironic cough. Admittedly, if you reacted to every little irony of the new Europe, you took it into you, it became part of your baggage. But Herr Schindler possessed an immense capacity for carrying that sort of luggage.

A prisoner named Poldek Pfefferberg was also on his way to the Commandant's villa that evening. Lisiek, the Commandant's nineteen-year-old orderly, had come to Pfefferberg's barracks with passes signed by an SS NCO. The boy's problem was that the Commandant's bathtub had a stubborn ring around it, and Lisiek feared that he would be beaten for it when Commandant Goeth came to take his morning bath. Pfefferberg, who had been Lisiek's teacher in high school in Podgórze, worked in the camp garage and had access to solvents. So in company with Lisiek he went to the garage and picked up a stick with a swab on the end and a can of cleaning fluid. To approach the Commandant's villa was always a dubious business, but involved the chance that you would be given food by Helen Hirsch, Goeth's mistreated Jewish maid, a generous girl who had also been a student of Pfefferberg's.

When Herr Schindler's Adler was still 100 meters from the villa, it set the dogs barking—the Great Dane, the wolfhound and all the others Amon kept in the kennels beyond the house. The villa itself was square-built, with an attic. The upper windows gave onto a balcony. All around the walls was a terraced patio with a balustrade. Amon Goeth liked sitting out of doors in the summer. Since he'd come to Płaszów, he'd put on weight. Next summer he'd

make a fat sun-worshiper. But in this particular version of Jerusalem, he'd be safe from mockery.

An SS *Unterscharführer* (sergeant) in white gloves had been put on the door tonight. Saluting, he admitted Herr Schindler to the house. In the hallway, the Ukrainian orderly Ivan took Herr Schindler's coat and homburg. Schindler patted the breast pocket of his suit to be sure he had the gift for his host: a gold-plated cigarette case, black-market. Amon was doing so well on the side, especially with confiscated jewelry, that he would be offended by anything less than gold plate.

At the double doors opening onto the dining room, the Rosner brothers were playing, Henry on violin, Leo on accordion. At Goeth's demand, they had put aside the tattered clothing of the camp paint shop where they worked in the daytime and adopted the evening clothes they kept in their barracks for such events. Oskar Schindler knew that although the Commandant admired their music, the Rosners never played at ease in the villa. They had seen too much of Amon. They knew he was erratic and given to *ex tempore* executions. They played studiously and hoped that their music would not suddenly, inexplicably, give offense.

At Goeth's table that night there would be seven men. Apart from Schindler himself and the host, the guests included Julian Schemer, head of the SS for the Cracow region, and Rolf Czurda, chief of the Cracow branch of the SD, the late Heydrich's Security Service. Schemer was an *Oberführer*—an SS rank between colonel and brigadier general, for which there is no army equivalent; Czurda, an *Obersturmbannführer*, equivalent to lieutenant colonel. Goeth himself held the rank of *Hauptsturmführer*, or captain. Schemer and Czurda were the guests of highest honor, for this camp was under their authority. They were years older than Commandant Goeth, and SS police chief Schemer looked definitely middle-aged with his glasses and bald head and slight obesity. Even so, in view of his protégé's profligate living habits, the age difference between himself and Amon didn't seem so great.

The oldest of the company was Herr Franz Bosch, a veteran of the first war, manager of various workshops, legal and illegal, inside Płaszów. He was also an "economic adviser" to Julian Scherner and had business interests in the city.

Oskar despised Bosch and the two police chiefs, Schemer and Czurda.

Their cooperation, however, was essential to the existence of his own peculiar plant in Zablocie, and so he regularly sent them gifts. The only guests with whom Oskar shared any fellow feeling were Julius Madritsch, owner of the Madritsch uniform factory inside this camp of Płaszów, and Madritsch's manager, Raimund Titsch. Madritsch was a year or so younger than Oskar and Herr Commandant Goeth. He was an enterprising but humane man, and if asked to justify the existence of his profitable factory inside the camp, would have argued that it kept nearly four thousand prisoners employed and therefore safe from the death mills. Raimund Titsch, a man in his early forties, slight and private and likely to leave the party early, was Madritsch's manager, smuggled in truckloads of food for his prisoners (an enterprise that could have earned him a fatal stay in Montelupich prison, the SS jail, or else Auschwitz) and agreed with Madritsch.

Such was the regular roster of dinner companions at Herr Commandant Goeth's villa.

The four women guests, their hair elaborately coiffed and their gowns expensive, were younger than any of the men. They were better-class whores, German and Polish, from Cracow. Some of them were regular dinner guests here. Their number permitted a range of gentlemanly choice for the two field-grade officers. Goeth's German mistress, Majola, usually stayed at her apartment in the city during these feasts of Amon's. She looked on Goeth's dinners as male occasions and thus offensive to her sensibilities.

There is no doubt that in their fashion the police chiefs and the Commandant liked Oskar. There was, however, something odd about him. They might have been willing to write it off in part as stemming from his origins. He was Sudeten German—Arkansas to their Manhattan, Liverpool to their Cambridge. There were signs that he wasn't *right-minded*, though he paid well, was a good source of scarce commodities, could hold his liquor and had a slow and sometimes rowdy sense of humor. He was the sort of man you smiled and nodded at across the room, but it was not necessary or even wise to jump up and make a fuss over him.

It is most likely that the SS men noticed Oskar Schindler's entrance because of a *frisson* among the four girls. Those who knew Oskar in those years speak of his easy magnetic charm, exercised particularly over women, with whom he was unremittingly and improperly successful. The two police chiefs, Czurda and Scherner, now probably paid attention to Herr Schindler

as a means of keeping the attention of the women. Goeth also came forward to take his hand. The Commandant was as tall as Schindler, and the impression that he was abnormally fat for a man in his early thirties was enhanced by this height, an athletic height onto which the obesity seemed unnaturally grafted. The face seemed scarcely flawed at all, except that there was a vinous light in the eyes. The Commandant drank indecent quantities of the local brandy.

He was not, however, as far gone as Herr Bosch, Płaszów's and the SS' economic genius. Herr Bosch was purple-nosed; the oxygen which by rights belonged to the veins of his face had for years gone to feed the sharp blue flame of all that liquor. Schindler, nodding to the man, knew that tonight Bosch would, as usual, put in an order for goods.

"A welcome to our industrialist," boomed Goeth, and then he made a formal introduction to the girls around the room. The Rosner brothers played Strauss melodies through this, Henry's eyes wandering only between his strings and the emptiest corner of the room, Leo smiling down at his accordion keys.

Herr Schindler was now introduced to the women. While Herr Schindler kissed the proffered hands, he felt some pity for these Cracow working girls, since he knew that later—when the slap-and-tickle began—the slap might leave welts and the tickle gouge the flesh. But for the present, *Hauptsturmführer* Amon Goeth, a sadist when drunk, was an exemplary Viennese gentleman.

The predinner conversation was unexceptional. There was talk of the war, and while SD chief Czurda took it upon himself to assure a tall German girl that the Crimea was securely held, SS chief Schemer informed one of the other women that a boy he knew from Hamburg days, a decent chap, *Oberscharführer* in the SS, had had his legs blown off when the partisans bombed a restaurant in Czestochowa. Schindler talked factory business with Madritsch and his manager Titsch. There was a genuine friendship between these three entrepreneurs. Herr Schindler knew that little Titsch procured illegal quantities of black-market bread for the prisoners of the Madritsch uniform factory, and that much of the money for the purpose was put up by Madritsch. This was the merest humanity, since the profits in Poland were large enough, in Herr Schindler's opinion, to satisfy the most inveterate capitalist and justify some illegal outlay for extra bread. In Schindler's case,

the contracts of the *Rüstungsinspektion*, the Armaments Inspectorate—the body that solicited bids and awarded contracts for the manufacture of every commodity the German forces needed—had been so rich that he had exceeded his desire to be successful in the eyes of his father. Unhappily, Madritsch and Titsch and he, Oskar Schindler, were the only ones he knew who regularly spent money on black-market bread.

Near the time when Goeth would call them to the dinner table, Herr Bosch approached Schindler, predictably took him by the elbow and led him over by the door where the musicians played, as if he expected the Rosners' impeccable melodies to cover the conversation.

"Business good, I see," said Bosch.

Schindler smiled at the man. "You *see* that, do you, Herr Bosch?"

"I do," said Bosch. And of course Bosch would have read the official bulletins of the Main Armaments Board, announcing contracts awarded to the Schindler factory.

"I was wondering," said Bosch, inclining his head, "if in view of the present boom, founded, after all, on our general successes on a series of Fronts . . . I was wondering if you might wish to make a generous gesture. Nothing big. Just a gesture."

"Of course," said Schindler. He felt the nausea that goes with being used, and at the same time a sensation close to joy. The office of police chief Schemer had twice used its influence to get Oskar Schindler out of jail. His staff were willing now to build up the obligation of having to do it again.

"My aunt in Bremen's been bombed out, poor old dear," said Bosch. "Everything! The marriage bed. The sideboards—all her Meissen and crockery. I wondered could you spare some kitchenware for her. And perhaps a pot or two—those big tureen things you turn out at DEF."

Deutsche Emailwaren Fabrik (German Enamelware Factory) was the name of Herr Schindler's booming business. Germans called it DEF for short, but the Poles and the Jews had a different sort of shorthand, calling it Emalia.

Herr Schindler said, "I think that can be managed. Do you want the goods consigned direct to her or through you?"

Bosch did not even smile. "Through me, Oskar. I'd like to enclose a little card."

"Of course."

"So it's settled. We'll say half a gross of everything—soup bowls, plates,

coffee mugs. And half a dozen of those stewpots.”

Herr Schindler, raising his jaw, laughed frankly, though with weariness. But when he spoke he sounded complaisant. As indeed he was. He was always reckless with gifts. It was simply that Bosch seemed to suffer constantly from bombed-out kinfolk.

Oskar murmured, “Does your aunt run an orphanage?”

Bosch looked him in the eye again; nothing furtive about this drunk. “She’s an old woman with no resources. She can barter what she doesn’t need.”

“I’ll tell my secretary to see to it.”

“That Polish girl?” said Bosch. “The looker?”

“The looker,” Schindler agreed.

Bosch tried to whistle, but the tension of his lips had been destroyed by the overproof brandy and the sound emerged as a low raspberry. “Your wife,” he said, man to man, “must be a saint.”

“She is,” Herr Schindler admitted curtly. Bosch was welcome to his kitchenware, but Schindler didn’t want him talking about his wife.

“Tell me,” said Bosch. “How do you keep her off your back? She must *know* . . . yet you seem to be able to control her very well.”

All the humor left Schindler’s face now. Anyone could have seen frank distaste there. The small potent growl that arose from him, however, was not unlike Schindler’s normal voice.

“I never discuss private matters,” he said.

Bosch rushed in. “Forgive me. I didn’t . . .” He went on incoherently begging pardon. Herr Schindler did not like Herr Bosch enough to explain to him at this advanced night of his life that it wasn’t a matter of controlling anyone, that the Schindler marital disaster was instead a case of an ascetic temperament—Frau Emilie Schindler’s—and a hedonistic temperament—Herr Oskar Schindler’s—willingly and against good advice binding themselves together. But Oskar’s anger at Bosch was more profound than even he would have admitted. Emilie was very like Oskar’s late mother, Frau Louisa Schindler. Herr Schindler senior had left Louisa in 1935. So Oskar had a visceral feeling that in making light of the Emilie-Oskar marriage, Bosch was also demeaning the marriage of the Schindlers senior.

The man was still rushing out apologies. Bosch, a hand in every till in Cracow, was now in a sweating panic at the chance of losing six dozen sets of

kitchen ware.

The guests were summoned to the table. An onion soup was carried in and served by the maid. While the guests ate and chatted, the Rosner brothers continued to play, moving in closer to the diners, but not so close as to impede the movements of the maid or of Ivan and Petr, Goeth's two Ukrainian orderlies. Herr Schindler, sitting between the tall girl whom Schemer had appropriated and a sweet-faced, small-boned Pole who spoke German, saw that both girls watched this maid. She wore the traditional domestic uniform, black dress and white apron. She bore no Jewish star on her arm, no stripe of yellow paint on her back. She was Jewish just the same. What drew the attention of the other women was the condition of her face. There was bruising along the jawline, and you would have thought that Goeth had too much shame to display a servant in that condition in front of the guests from Cracow. Both the women and Herr Schindler could see, as well as the injury to her face, a more alarming purple, not always covered by her collar, at the junction where her thin neck met her shoulder.

Not only did Amon Goeth refuse to leave the girl unexplained in the background, but he turned his chair toward her, gesturing at her with a hand, displaying her to the assembled company. Herr Schindler had not been at this house for six weeks now, but his informants told him the relationship between Goeth and the girl had taken this twisted path. When with friends, he used her as a conversation piece. He hid her only when senior officers from beyond the Cracow region were visiting.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he called, mimicking the tones of a mock-drunken cabaret master of ceremonies, "may I introduce Lena. After five months with me she is now doing well in cuisine and deportment."

"I can see from her face," said the tall girl, "that she's had a collision with the kitchen furniture."

"And the bitch could have another," said Goeth with a genial gurgle. "Yes. Another. Couldn't you, Lena?"

"He's hard on women," the SS chief boasted, winking at his tall consort. Schemer's intention might not have been unkind, since he did not refer to *Jewish* women but to women in general. It was when Goeth was reminded of Lena's Jewishness that she took more punishment, either publicly, in front of dinner guests, or later when the Commandant's friends had gone home. Schemer, being Goeth's superior, could have ordered the Commandant to

stop beating the girl. But that would have been bad form, would have soured the friendly parties at Amon's villa. Schemer came here not as a superior, but as a friend, an associate, a carouser, a savorer of women. Amon was a strange fellow, but no one could produce parties the way he could.

Next there was herring in sauce, then pork knuckles, superbly cooked and garnished by Lena. They were drinking a heavy Hungarian red wine with the meat, the Rosner brothers moved in with a torrid czardas, and the air in the dining room thickened, all the officers removing their uniform jackets. There was more gossip about war contracts. Madritsch, the uniform manufacturer, was asked about his Tarnow factory. Was it doing as well with Armaments Inspectorate contracts as was his factory inside Płaszów? Madritsch referred to Titsch, his lean, ascetic manager. Goeth seemed suddenly preoccupied, like a man who has remembered in the middle of dinner some urgent business detail he should have cleared up that afternoon and which now calls out to him from the darkness of his office.

The girls from Cracow were bored, the small-boned Pole, glossy-lipped, perhaps twenty, probably eighteen, placing a hand on Herr Schindler's right sleeve. "You're not a soldier?" she murmured. "You'd look dashing in uniform." Everyone began to chuckle—Madritsch too. He'd spent a while in uniform in 1940 until released because his managerial talents were so essential to the war effort. But Herr Schindler was so influential that he had never been threatened with the *Wehrmacht*. Madritsch laughed knowingly.

"Did you hear that?" *Oberführer* Schemer asked the table at large. "The little lady's got a picture of our industrialist as a soldier. Private Schindler, eh? Eating out of one of his own mess kits with a blanket around his shoulders. Over in Kharkov."

In view of Herr Schindler's well-tailored elegance it *did* make a strange picture, and Schindler himself laughed at it.

"Happened to . . ." said Bosch, trying to snap his fingers; "happened to . . . what's his name up in Warsaw?"

"Toebbens," said Goeth, reviving without warning. "Happened to Toebbens. Almost."

The SD chief, Czurda, said, "Oh, yes. Near thing for Toebbens." Toebbens was a Warsaw industrialist. Bigger than Schindler, bigger than Madritsch. Quite a success. "Heini," said Czurda (Heini being Heinrich Himmler), "went to Warsaw and told the armaments man up there, Get the fucking Jews out of

Toebbens' factory and put Toebbens in the Army *and . . . and* send him to the Front. I mean, the *Front!* And then Heini told my associate up there, he said, Go over his books with a microscope!"

Toebbens was a darling of the Armaments Inspectorate, which had favored him with war contracts and which he had favored in return with gifts. The Armaments Inspectorate's protests had managed to save Toebbens, Schemer told the table solemnly, and then leaned over his plate to wink broadly at Schindler. "Never happen in Cracow, Oskar. We all love you too much."

All at once, perhaps to indicate the warmth the whole table felt for Herr Schindler the industrialist, Goeth climbed to his feet and sang a wordless tune in unison with the theme from *Madame Butterfly* which the dapper brothers Rosner were working on as industriously as any artisan in any threatened factory in any threatened ghetto.

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By now Pfefferberg and Lisiek, the orderly, were upstairs in Goeth's bathroom, scrubbing away at the heavy bathtub ring. They could hear the Rosners' music and the bursts of laughter and conversation. It was coffee time down there, and the battered girl Lena had brought the tray in to the dinner guests and retreated unmolested back to the kitchen.

Madritsch and Titsch drank their coffee quickly and excused themselves. Schindler prepared to do the same. The little Polish girl seemed to protest, but this was the wrong house for him. Anything was permitted at the *Goethhaus*, but Oskar found that his inside knowledge of the limits of SS behavior in Poland threw sickening light on every word you spoke here, every glass you drank, not to mention any proposed sexual exchange. Even if you took a girl upstairs, you could not forget that Bosch and Schemer and Goeth were your brothers in pleasure, were—on the stairs or in a bathroom or bedroom—going through the same motions. Herr Schindler, no monk, would rather *be* a monk than have a woman at *chez* Goeth.

He spoke across the girl to Schemer, talking about war news, Polish bandits, the likelihood of a bad winter. Letting the girl know that Schemer was a brother and that he would never take a girl from a brother. Saying good night, though, he kissed her on the hand. He saw that Goeth, in his shirt

sleeves, was disappearing out the dining-room door, heading for the stairwell, supported by one of the girls who had flanked him at dinner. Oskar excused himself and caught up with the Commandant. He reached out and laid a hand on Goeth's shoulder. The eyes Goeth turned on him struggled for focus. "Oh," he muttered. "Going, Oskar?"

"I have to be home," said Oskar. At home was Ingrid, his German mistress.

"You're a bloody stallion," said Goeth.

"Not in your class," said Schindler.

"No, you're right. I'm a frigging Olympian. We're going . . . where're we going?" He turned his head to the girl but answered the question himself. "We're going to the kitchen to see that Lena's clearing up properly."

"No," said the girl, laughing. "We aren't doing that." She steered him to the stairs. It was decent of her—the sorority in operation—to protect the thin, bruised girl in the kitchen.

Schindler watched them—the hulking officer, the slight, supporting girl—staggering crookedly up the staircase. Goeth looked like a man who would have to sleep at least till lunchtime, but Oskar knew the Commandant's amazing constitution and the clock that ran in him. By 3 A.M. Goeth might even decide to rise and write a letter to his father in Vienna. By seven, after only an hour's sleep, he'd be on the balcony, infantry rifle in hand, ready to shoot any dilatory prisoners.

When the girl and Goeth reached the first landing, Schindler sidled down the hallway toward the back of the house.

Pfefferberg and Lisiek heard the Commandant, considerably earlier than they had expected him, entering the bedroom and mumbling to the girl he'd brought upstairs. In silence they picked up their cleaning equipment, crept into the bedroom and tried to slip out a side door. Still standing and able to see them on their line of escape, Goeth recoiled at the sight of the cleaning stick, suspecting the two men might be assassins. When Lisiek stepped forward, however, and began a tremulous report, the Commandant understood that they were merely prisoners.

"Herr Commandant," said Lisiek, panting with justified fear, "I wish to report that there has been a ring in your bathtub . . ."

"Oh," said Amon. "So you called in an expert." He beckoned to the boy. "Come here, darling."

Lisiek edged forward and was struck so savagely that he went sprawling halfway under the bed. Amon again uttered his invitation, as if it might amuse the girl to see him speaking endearments to prisoners. Young Lisiek rose and tottered toward the Commandant again for another round. As the boy picked himself up the second time, Pfefferberg, an experienced prisoner, expected anything—that they'd be marched down to the garden and summarily shot by Ivan. Instead the Commandant simply raged at them to leave, which they did at once.

When Pfefferberg heard a few days later that Lisiek was dead, shot by Amon, he presumed it was over the bathroom incident. In fact it was for a different matter altogether—Lisiek's offense had been to harness a horse and buggy for Herr Bosch without first asking the Commandant's permission.

In the kitchen of the villa, the maid, whose real name was Helen Hirsch (Goeth called her Lena out of laziness, she would always say), looked up to see one of the dinner guests in the doorway. She put down the dish of meat scraps she'd been holding and stood at attention with a jerky suddenness. "*Herr . . .*" She looked at his dinner jacket and sought the word for him. "*Herr Direktor*, I was just putting aside the bones for the Herr Commandant's dogs."

"Please, please," said Herr Schindler. "You don't have to report to me, Fraulein Hirsch."

He moved around the table. He did not seem to be stalking her, but she feared his intentions. Even though Amon enjoyed beating her, her Jewishness always saved her from overt sexual attack. But there were Germans who were not as fastidious on racial matters as Amon. This one's tone of voice, however, was one to which she was not accustomed, even from the SS officers and NCOs who came to the kitchen to complain about Amon.

"Don't you know me?" he asked, just like a man—a football star or a violinist—whose sense of his own celebrity has been hurt by a stranger's failure to recognize him. "I'm Schindler."

She bowed her head. "*Herr Direktor*," she said. "Of course, I've heard . . . and you've been here before. I remember . . ."