

# *Contents*

1. Look at Me	9
2. A Time to Dance	23
3. Never Leave, Never Forsake	37
4. Peace amid Chaos	47
5. Shattered Fragments	57
6. Auf Wiedersehen	69
7. Erased from the Earth	85
8. A Time to Mourn	95
9. Summoned by Name	107
10. Sets the Prisoner Free	119
11. Valley of Death	129
12. All Things Together	145
Epilogue	159
Glossary	161
Acknowledgments	163

## *Look at Me*

Look at me. Look at me!” The delicate curve of the girl’s arm continued through the arc of her two middle fingers—a perfect ballet position. She pirouetted with a sense of grace and balance rare in a five-year-old. Blonde braids flew straight out as she turned. “Vati,” she said to her father, “Look at me.”

“Anita, stop showing off and quit making all that racket.” Her father turned to her mother. “Hilde, get that child out of here.” He sputtered in anger, his German words tumbling over one another, “It’s insult enough that you failed to give me even one son, but must I put up with two tiresome girls every waking hour?” He raised his hands toward the ceiling. “Whatever possessed me to marry a Jew?”

“Fritz! Not in front of the children.”

Anita stood frozen for a moment before she slipped into a corner, squeezing herself in between the wall and the chest.

Her slender arm reached out to pull nearby Teddy onto her lap. She hated it when her mother and father fought. Lately it happened all the time, but Anita never meant to start yet another argument.

“Hella, take your little sister out to the kitchen.” Mutti used her hands to gently hurry them toward the door.

Anita hung back, wanting to be near her mother, but Hella gave her a sharp jerk that left no doubt about the outcome. Once in the kitchen, Anita leaned her face against the doorjamb.

“Anita tries so hard to please you. Can’t you see that she only wants your approval?” Mutti’s voice could be heard in the kitchen almost as clearly as if they stood in the same room. The Dittman row house, located in the Breslau suburb of Zimpel, was spacious and luxurious, but it had one drawback—angry voices penetrated the walls as if they were made of paper.

“Don’t start with me, Hilde.” Vati paced the floor. “I have my own difficulties and I don’t need your complaints heaped on top of them.”

“Trouble crowds in on all of us these days, Fritz, but can’t we try to shield the girls as long as possible?”

“Hella does her best to please me—I have no problem with Hella, but Anita . . .”

Anita put her hands over her ears. Hella tried to pull her outside, but Anita scooted under the table, looking for refuge. Her stomach hurt.

“Why do you show such favoritism? Hella is ten years old. Of course she is more able to control herself.” Mutti’s voice tightened. “Anita may be tiny, but she is a bundle of energy and creativity. If you could just see her for herself and forget the boy you wished for . . .”

“I admit it—I wished for a boy. A lot of good that did. I shall discuss this no further.” Vati slammed a hand down. The sound made Anita flinch. “Do you know what I really wish?”

Mutti did not answer.

“I wish I had never married you. Whatever was I thinking? Marrying a Jew—it’s sheer madness for an Aryan!” Vati spoke each word with chilling precision. “Hitler is calling it ‘race disgrace’ now—the mixing of pure German blood with that of the Jew.”

Mutti’s quiet sobs carried to the kitchen.

“Let me tell you, Hilde, my wife,” the words *my wife* dripped with sarcasm, “that one stupid act has caused me no end of grief.”

Mutti still didn’t answer, but her responses never mattered to Vati. Once he got going, he could argue for hours all by himself.

“Not that you care one whit about my trouble. Things are changing—that’s a fact—and here I am, saddled with a Jewish wife and two half-breed daughters.”

Anita heard the door slam.

“Anita, Hella, come in here, please.” Mutti’s voice sounded sad.

Hella took Anita's hand and pulled her out from under the table.

"Mutti, I'm sorry." Anita put her arms around her mother's leg. "I never meant to make Vati angry."

"Hush, Anita," Mutti said in that soothing voice. "Hush." She put an arm around Hella as well. "Your father worries about things and takes that worry out on us."

"Vati hates me." Anita's stomach still hurt.

"Don't be silly, Anita." Hella's voice rang with impatience. "Fathers do not hate their own children."

"Hella is right," Mutti said. "Vati's anger comes out in mean words, but that anger is not really directed at you, Anita." She smoothed the flyaway strands that escaped Anita's braids.

Anita didn't argue with Mutti, but she felt Vati's rejection whenever she tried to put her hand in his hand or when she tried to sit in his lap. He always found an excuse to pull away or shoo her off. She'd become an expert at watching his face for reactions. When Hella came near, he rarely pulled away.

"Why does Vati get so angry these days?" Hella sounded confused.

"It's complicated." Mutti stood up and moved across the room to straighten out the folds of the curtain. "It's politics and his job mostly."

"Politics?" Hella took Teddy off the floor and sat him on Anita's lap.

"You know about all the trouble brewing with Hitler's ideas, neh?" Mutti asked.

“Some.”

“The newspaper Vati edited has been part of the movement they call the *Social Democrats*. Everyone expected things to get better after the financial chaos of the last few years, but here it is 1933 and Germany is more uneasy than ever.”

Anita poked at Teddy’s eye. She didn’t understand what Mutti said. She wished they would talk about things that she knew.

“Hitler hates the Social Democrats, and Vati now must join the Nazi party or . . .”

“What’s Nazi, Mutti?” Anita disliked the way the word sounded. When people said it, they pulled their lips back and it made their faces look angry.

“It’s not something you need worry about.” Mutti came and playfully pulled on Anita’s braids. “Your tiny head should be filled with ballet, pretty dresses, your fuzzy family of teddy bears, and—”

“You don’t need to tell her that, Mutti.” Hella lifted her hands in exasperation. “She cares for nothing but drawing and dancing anyway.”

“And that, *Mein Liebling*, is how life should be for a five-and-a-half-year-old. Come, girls, and let’s sit and talk while I turn edges on this chiffon ballet skirt for our littlest ballerina.”

Anita pulled a long, deep breath in through her nose, picturing how fluttery the petals of chiffon would look when she twirled. Just like the storms she loved, her gray mood passed

quickly and she once again resembled her aunts' nickname for her—Ray of Sunshine.



Teddy and his bear friends, along with pencils, drawing paper, and ballet continued to fill Anita's life. When Mutti knelt down after ballet lessons to remove Anita's ballet shoes, the little girl always cried. She never wanted to stop dancing. At night she slept with her well-worn ballet slippers tucked under her pillow and dreamed of a wooden stage ringed with lights. Though she was the smallest girl in her class, in her dream when the danseur lifted her high above his head, she towered over all the dancers on stage. The shimmering colors, the smell of chalk on the floor, the dust motes rising up from the gaslights, and the rhythmic sound of toe shoes making padded thuds and slaps against the boards made her dream seem more real than her waking hours.

It was mid-dream one night when she woke to a gentle shaking.

"Anita, *Mein Liebling*, wake up. It's Mutti."

She rolled over, trying to recapture the dream.

"Anita. Listen to Mutti." Her mother pulled her to a sitting position. "I must leave, but I will come to see you tomorrow."

*Leave?* Suddenly the dancers faded and Anita focused on her mother. "You cannot leave me, Mutti!" She reached arms around Mutti's neck and continued screaming the same phrase over and over.

“Anita, Anita. You are very nearly six years old. Please don’t carry on so. You are breaking Mutti’s heart.”

“I’ve had enough of this.” Vati came into the room. He sounded angry. “I want you out of my house, Hilde. I want you gone now.”

“But my daughters—surely you do not want them?”

“It’s not a matter of what I want. I am an Aryan and my daughters are half Aryan. Your Jew blood taints their veins and that’s bad enough, but I’ll not allow your Jew ideas to contaminate them any longer.” He stood with his arms crossed across his chest and his feet planted wide apart—an immovable force.

“You may have the right under Hitler, Fritz, but what about what’s right under heaven?” Mutti’s voice resonated through the house and a sleepy Hella came into Anita’s room.

“Don’t call on heaven, Hilde.” Vati’s voice cracked. “Surely even you are not hypocrite enough. You do not believe in the God of your people. You do not believe in the God of the heavens either. Admit it.” He stood with his hands on his hips and his feet apart. “That modern religion of yours believes in a weak concoction of Buddha, Mohammed, Jesus, animal gods, even—I don’t even know how many gods you have.” Vati straightened his back. “I am proud to be an atheist. In fact, I’m a devout atheist—I do not believe in God. Period.” When he said “God” he spat it out of the back of his throat, like it was a bitter mouthful. “Religion is for the weak and you, Hilde, are the weakest of all. You cannot even manage to



embrace one religion and stick there. You need to create your own little crutch made up of a hodgepodge of deities.”

“Fritz, my philosophy doesn’t matter here.” She looked at the two girls. Hella stood frozen. Anita wept. “Hella, take your little sister to the kitchen . . . please. I will be there to speak with you as soon as I am done speaking to your father.”

Anita grabbed Teddy and took Hella’s hand. Once in the kitchen, the shivering Anita crawled under the table again, listening. Hella pulled out a chair and sat down. Anita could see her sister’s foot rubbing up and down the calf of her leg. That’s what Hella always did when she was frightened.

“I want you out of here, Hilde, and that’s the end of it.” Father’s voice carried all the way into the kitchen. “I hope to cover my Social Democrat activities by joining the Nazi party and turning over the newspaper to them.” He made that har-rumphing sound he made to cover embarrassment. “After all, what good are ideals when one’s life is at stake?”

Mutti said something, but Anita couldn’t make it out.

“I may get away with my past by trying to fade away during this confusing time, but I’ll never get away with my continued ‘race disgrace.’”

Anita didn’t understand much of what Vati said. She only knew that Vati wanted Mutti to go away.

“Don’t leave me, Mutti,” she cried to herself.

“Hush, don’t upset Vati.” Hella said in a whisper. “Poor Vati; he must do it.”

Anita put her fist in her mouth to stop the cries. Hella

loved Vati above all else. Even though Anita understood little, she knew Vati loved Hella best and Hella returned that love with unquestioning loyalty.

Vati lived in their home, but he was a stranger to Anita—a stranger she longed to please, but never could.

“If I gave the girls to you, I would have to give you money for their care. I would have to get you an apartment.” Vati coughed. “This argument tires me.”

Mutti said something else, too low to hear.

“They can learn to take care of themselves. You spoil them. In fact, they can care for me.” His voice got louder. “Girls, come.”

Hella pulled Anita out from under the table and pushed her ahead into Anita’s bedroom where Vati and Mutti were. Anita still clutched Teddy.

“Your mother must leave, but you will visit her . . .”

“No! Mutti, don’t leave me.”

Hella pulled her little sister’s braid. “Stop it, Anita, stop it!” Hella moved to stand in front of Vati. “I will help you, Vati. I can cook.”

Anita looked at Mutti’s face in time to see her wince in pain as she started to reach her hand toward Hella, but then quickly dropped it to her side.

“Don’t leave me, Mutti,” Anita whimpered, quieter now but no less determined.

“Anita.” Her father squatted down in front of her. Anita had never seen him so close. He smelled of warm wool and

shaving soap. “Stop crying and I’ll give you a present.” Vati pulled Teddy out of her arms and threw him on the bed. He reached down into his satchel and pulled out the large golden teddy with jointed arms and legs—the very one she’d longed for each time they passed the toyshop window. “Look . . . a nice new teddy.”

Anita shook her head and pushed the bear away. She crawled up on the bed to retrieve Teddy. Without saying a word, she crawled back down and went over to Mutti and took her hand.

“Fine, then.” Vati took the new bear and flung it across the room. “You win, Hilde. Take her and leave. Hella will stay with me.”

Anita wanted Hella to take her hand, but Hella stood over by Vati. Her eyes didn’t blink, but Anita saw her lips quiver.



“Hilde. Open up, Hilde. It’s me, Inge.” The knocking on the door woke Anita from a deep sleep. *Why is our neighbor, Inge, knocking at our door?* Rolling claps of thunder punctuated the banging on the door.

*What a minute—Inge is no longer our neighbor. We left Vati last night. We’re at Tante’s house, not in our own house.* She thought of her sister. *I wonder if Hella is sleeping in my bed at home?* The knocking grew more insistent. *Why is Vati’s neighbor, Inge, knocking at Tante’s house?* Anita shook Mutti, lying

next to her on the cot. “Mutti, someone’s knocking on the door for us. It’s Inge.”

Mutti stood up and wrapped a shawl over her nightdress. Anita stayed in bed, listening to the claps of thunder. She loved storms. Her mother often told her about the ferocious thunderstorm that raged the night she was born.

Drawing back the lock and opening the door, Mutti greeted her friend.

“Oh, Hilde. You must come.” Inge’s breath came out in uneven puffs as she grabbed her friend’s arm with both of her hands. “You must come. Hurry.” She took up much of the doorway with her soggy woolen cape.

Anita slipped out of bed to get a better look.

“What time is it? Come where?” Mutti wrapped the shawl tighter around her shoulders.

“It’s in the early hours of the morning—perhaps two.” Inge shivered.

“Forgive my manners. Come in. Catch your breath.”

The younger woman stepped inside, but did not sit down. “You must come back to your house. When you left yesterday, Fritz left soon afterward. We didn’t think anything about it, since he rarely stayed at home when you were there.” She poked a wet strand of hair under her hood. “Tonight, when the storm broke, we heard banging sounds from inside the house and thought perhaps Fritz had returned.”

Mutti began to wring her hands.

“When my Otto came home an hour ago, he heard the

knocking and banging sounds right through Fritz's door. As he went to the door to ask if all was well, Hella called out." Inge put her hands on her hips and shook her head. "Your Fritz had not yet been back since he left the night before—more than twenty-four hours earlier. The thunderstorm had terrified Hella, but the door was locked and she had no way to get help."

"Hella . . . oh, no. My Hella . . ." Mutti began to pull her clothes on over her bed clothes.

"She told me you were staying over here temporarily and asked if I would get you."

"Thank you, thank you." Mutti kissed her friend.

Without further conversation, a tired, wet Inge took her leave and hurried to go back home.

Mutti dressed Anita and the two of them followed, walking back to the only home Anita had ever known.

When they arrived, Mutti fitted her key into the lock and Hella practically fell out of the house into her mother's arms. Hella clung to Mutti, sobbing. Anita stood alongside, patting Hella's arm. As Mutti murmured comforting words, they gathered a few things and left.

As they walked down the silent street in the hour just before dawn, Hella let go of her mother's hand to shift her umbrella. "I should have left Vati a note." Her sobs had long since given way to sniffles. "Do you think he'll worry?"



Days later when the three of them came back to pack their things for the move to the tiny apartment they'd found on the other side of Zimpel, Anita's stomach ached the whole time.

Hella slowly packed her things, carefully smoothing out all the wrinkles and lingering over every memento. Anita figured Hella could finish much faster if she wouldn't keep looking to the front room where Vati sat, shoulders hunched, listening to the wireless.

As they gathered things for the last parcel, Vati walked into the room and put a tentative hand on Mutti's arm. "I . . . well, I realized it wouldn't have worked out caring for Hella after all. Sorry."

Hella kept her head down and moved toward the door.

As they stood there watching the movers loading the last box on the truck, Vati looked hard at Mutti. "I agreed to give you and the girls money each month against my better judgment. I don't have to, by law, you know, because you are a Jew." His eyes narrowed and he lowered his voice to a whisper. "I think I've managed to make a clean break from my political past. You see before you a proud member of the Nazi Party." He paused and then spoke with precision, "If you so much as breathe a word about my past, Hilde Dittman, you'll not get another cent. Do you understand?"

Mutti just looked at him.

"*Auf Wiedersehen, Vati.*" Hella ran and hugged him. "I love you."

Vati stood still, looking uncomfortable with his arms by his sides. As Hella moved away, Vati reached an awkward hand up to pat her head.

Anita stood nearby, wishing he'd say good-bye. *Look at me, Vati, Look at me.*

# Daughters of the Faith Series

*Ordinary Girls Who Lived Extraordinary Lives*

---

*Almost Home: A Story Based on the Life of the Mayflower's Young*

**MARY CHILTON** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-3637-5

*The Captive Princess: A Story Based on the Life of Young*

**POCAHONTAS** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-7640-1

*Courage to Run: A Story Based on the Life of Young*

**HARRIET TUBMAN** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-4098-3

*Freedom's Pen: A Story Based on the Life of the Young Freed Slave and Poet*

**PHILLIS WHEATLEY** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-7639-5

*The Hallelujah Lass: A Story Based on the Life of the Young Salvation Army Pioneer*

**ELIZA SHIRLEY** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-4073-0

*Little Mission on the Clearwater: A Story Based on the Life of Young*

**ELIZA SPALDING** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-2494-5

*Ransom's Mark: A Story Based on the Life of the Young Pioneer*

**OLIVE OATMAN** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-3638-2

*Shadow of His Hand: A Story Based on the Life of the Young Holocaust Survivor*

**ANITA DITTMAN** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-4074-7

*The Tinker's Daughter: A Story Based on the Life of Young*

**MARY BUNYAN** | ISBN: 978-0-8024-4099-0

Books for kids from



MOODY  
Publishers®

Books Kids Love and Parents Trust