

Sylvia's Story

At the juvenile age of sixteen, Sylvia, her family, and countless other innocent Jews in her town were captured and sent away to be brutally executed by vindictive and hostile Nazi murderers. But it didn't just happen in Sylvia's town, millions of people in areas all over Europe were being sent to concentration camps. These events eventually led to the loss of innumerable lives. Imagine knowing that death is so near, so close, and not being able to escape; just waiting to be killed. Imagine heartless monsters murdering *millions of HUMAN BEINGS*. Imagine watching your own family being taken away to a death camp, knowing that you will most likely never see them again. For Sylvia Indyg, this was a reality.

While she was waiting to board a train that would take her to certain death, Sylvia's (soon to be) husband, Morris befriended a German officer and eventually, they both avoided the train. Unfortunately, they were not able to get Sylvia's family released. She never saw or heard from them again. After escaping that fatal situation, Sylvia and Morris fled South and found a Catholic family who provided them (along with Morris's relatives) with shelter and food for over twenty months until the war was over. Sylvia's story, along with all Holocaust survivors' stories hit me hard because through all of the horrid and awful chaos that she lived, she still stood. She didn't crumble when her life fell apart. No doubt, she tripped, and she wobbled, but she continued to stand, and stand tall. She sustained a good life and passed her Jewish faith down to her children.

Just like today, my parents pass down their Jewish faith to my sister and me. Judaism is an immense part of my everyday life. It's in my thoughts, in my judgements, my morals, and in my decisions of everything that I do. Every step I take. To me, Judaism is more of a culture than a religion. Tradition plays a big part in this culture, from doing daily mitzvahs to making kugel with my bubbe, all of these moments are ones to never forget. It is crucial that we never forget what our ancestors had to endure. This is why we memorialize יאד ואשם (yad vashem), a day of remembrance for all of the lives that were taken from us. After reading Sylvia's tribulations, whenever I am facing a compromising situation, I will think of her and what she and countless others went through and it will give me strength. It will help me put things in perspective. I now realize that if Sylvia and many others lived through the horrendous events that they lived through, then I can do *anything*.