

# ANNE LEVY AND LILA MILLEN: SELECTED QUOTES

## ANNE'S QUOTES

“I remember the pleasant, the most pleasant time that I remember is Sunday afternoons with my father, going for ice cream, and balloons, and enjoying things that children enjoyed.”

“We looked like everyone else. You’ll see the pictures. Looked like any other normal Polish children. Except that we were Jewish.”

“My first memories of that the beginning of war is when everybody in house that was there was very upset crying and looking out the window. Out of curiosity I did too, and what was happening was that there was large reform orthodox temple across the street.”

“Very different. That’s when the difference began. That’s when I felt we were different. And being Jewish was something that caused grief. And you know was just part of the struggle that began.”

“You would see a wagon picking up all these corpses and trying to clean up. The worst thing that I remember is that seeing people that just dropped in street, they were dead, but because maybe they had a sock or a shoe, or a pair of pants, or some kind of clothing on, somebody then would be passing by and would see these articles and just a dead body who doesn’t need it any longer, and they would cover up the body with a newspaper and take whatever possession this poor soul had.

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“I wouldn’t be sitting here telling you this story if he hadn’t shown up. And I remember my father saying that when he saw us he was afraid to touch us. He was afraid to touch us because we looked so frail. And he brought us back to life because he brought with him bread, butter, and he cut up the bread into little cubicles, and he gave us that a little at time, knowing full well that if he gave us too much and our stomachs were no longer used to it, that we would become ill.”

“But underneath he had built two little chairs, two little benches, or two little seats and a potty and when they went to work, they left with us whatever they had, some water, whatever bread they had, and they would put us into this piece of furniture, and put it against the wall and go to work. There were times that because when everybody went to work, older people, or able people had to go to work, the Germans would come through building, and you could hear them walking up the stairs. And they came into the room, you could hear them talking, and yet we weren’t found.”

“Unexplainable. It makes you think why us? Why not somebody else? You just can’t explain some of these things.”

“And the only way you could explain it was God was watching over us.”

“As my mother later on in life tried to explain it, she told everyone that she had two very obedient daughters. And I think it was - we knew. We grew up very fast and realized that this was a matter of life and death.”

“I’m olive complexioned and have dark, curly hair. My sister was fair, she still is, and had lighter hair. She looked very Polish. And I looked Jewish.”

“They looked at her like she was mad, because the Germans had killed a

million and half children. There were no children. My sister and I were an oddity.”

“And that little plaque that said ‘colored only,’ people would get on the bus much older than I, and I’d been brought up where you were supposed to give your elders your seat, you know, you’re the young one, somebody older comes in, you’re supposed to be polite, and I couldn’t do it.”

“You have to embrace, and be willing to listen to the other side. I mean, we’re all the same.”

## LILA’S QUOTES

“I remember he came in, and my mother opened the front door, and I remember she just fainted, she couldn’t believe that he came back, because nobody usually comes back from something like that. And he came in and she was telling me that’s my father. I said, ‘Who is that man?’ She says, ‘That’s your father.’ I said ‘No it’s not,’ because I didn’t remember him. I was so young when he left, that I did not recognize him or remember him, she says, ‘Yes, this is your father.’ I kept telling her, ‘I don’t know that man.’ She tried to persuade me that it was. Then he started giving that he brought with him, like candy, chocolate, bread, jelly, all kinds of things that he hid inside his clothes because he knew we needed food. And after a while he all these things he gave us, not having had before, little by little I got to believe my mother that maybe that it was my father, which it was.”

“From what mother has said he cut up little bitty pieces to give us so that we wouldn’t overeat. Because you know, when you overeat and you haven’t eaten for a long time you can get very sick.”

“And we were undernourished. It was very obvious, from looking at us you could tell that we didn’t have much food. Little by little we tried to get our

strength back, because we didn't do anything. No activities or anything, just sitting around. Not being able to go anywhere, not having enough to eat, after a while, we just sit there, nothing else you can do. But he tried to get us back on our feet, get us back to feeling like we were human, even though we couldn't go anywhere, do anything, or play with anything, we didn't even have any toys, we didn't have anything to do. He wanted us to look more healthy than we did, and he managed to do that."

"Well, he made this vegetable bin that had I thought it was like old vegetables, onions and potatoes and carrots on the top. It was empty in back. And my sister Anne and I would hide back there during the day when they went work, and we'd just sit there. They were gone five or six hours at time at least. We'd just sit in the back, and we use to run back there if we heard noises coming up the steps. The Germans used to come with their boots, you know how they walk, and with their dogs sniffing. If we heard footsteps, we used to run in there real quick, and used to hide and keep quiet. And we were just trained to do that, so that's how we survived during the day."

"I think if I recall correctly they did come up there, but they never found us, because we were real quiet, we were just trained to be very quiet."

"Not a word. Everywhere we hid we couldn't talk, because you couldn't be heard."

"The Germans used to come with their boots, you know how they walk, and with their dogs sniffing."

"Yeah, they came in with the dogs. But somehow they didn't find us. It's a miracle they didn't... They could smell us but we were hiding some place where they couldn't get to us, so it's by a miracle that we're here. There were lots of experiences like that, very close calls. If it wouldn't been thought of the way my daddy thought of to hide us, we wouldn't be able to make it."

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“My mother was always thinking of tomorrow.”

“You have to have the rosary, you have to have the prayer book, you have to have the beads. I knew those prayers by heart just like they did.”

“And I believed until after war that I was a Christian. I didn’t know I was Jewish. My parents didn’t tell me I’m Jewish.”

“I thought I was Catholic like they are, went to church with them. I had an Easter basket. I did everything they did.”

“I have a lot of respect for them. I think they risked lives for the Jewish people. A lot of Jewish people wouldn’t be alive today if it wouldn’t have been for them.”

“They said the war was over. But we had nothing. We were absolutely stripped of everything.”

“And he told me that we are Jewish and I am Jewish. I said, ‘What is Jewish?’ I had no idea.”

“And I believed until after war that I was a Christian. I didn’t know I was Jewish.”

“So my instinct, automatically, I knelt by the bed on my knees and prayed like this for Thanksgiving. Everybody said, ‘Why did you kneel down and pray like that to take a picture?’ I don’t know. I just, I thought that’s what I was supposed to do.”

“And by the way, the teachers in my school were just...I can't even praise enough those teachers, they were just wonderful. We came here, we didn't know the language, we were like really, really, starting from scratch, and my teachers were wonderful, they stayed with me after school, they brought me books, they were just fantastic. Trying to catch us up to the grade we were supposed to be in.”

“Well, she wasn't only my guardian, but she was my best friend and still is, because we only had each other. That's all we had.”

“They know my childhood. I didn't have a childhood.”

“I wanted them to have a childhood like Anne and I never had, so I really never burdened them with any of those terrible, terrible years that we went through.”

“The lesson is that sometimes it's not what you do that you get punished for, but who you are.”