



# imaginary theatre company

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CALERES

★ 5 ★



by Irene Kirstein Watts  
Directed by Suki Peters

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# imaginary theatre company



by Irene Kirstein Watts

Directed by Suki Peters

Scenic Designer	Scott Loebel
Costume Designer	Elizabeth Eisloeffel
Stage Manager	Mike Dowdy*
Director of Education	Marsha Coplon
Associate Director of Education	Sarah Brandt
Education Programs Manager	Suki Peters
Study Guide Writer	Laura Schlereth

## THE COMPANY

Melissa Gerth*	MRS. KOHN, SECRETARY, INGE
Alan Knoll*	MR. KOHN, MR. ALTMAN
Catherine Regan*	MARIANNE
Chris Tipp*	ERNST

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.



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# setting the scene



In 1938 Berlin, young Marianne Kohn's life is changing every day. The country is in a state of turmoil, and people are afraid. Marianne's no longer allowed to attend her school because Jewish students are forbidden from education. Her father has been in hiding for weeks, and her mother is keeping secrets. Neighborhood businesses are being vandalized on a regular basis.

Every day Marianne feels less safe as the world changes around her, and she never knows what the next day will bring. She's still a child, but the current situation in the country is forcing her to grow up fast. How can she summon the bravery to endure this dangerous time?

# who's who?



Marianne Kohn: an 11-year-old girl living in Berlin in 1938

Mr. and Mrs. Kohn: Marianne's parents

Ernst: a young boy who is temporarily staying in Marianne's building

Inge: a girl a bit older than Marianne

Secretary: a woman who works at Marianne's school

Mr. Altmann: owner of Altmann's Bakery, a friend to the Kohn family

# words to the wise



Landlady: a woman who rents out property

Punctuality: promptness or being on time

Demerit: a mark noting misconduct

Complimentary: expressing praise or approval

Diligent: persistent and hardworking

Recruit: a new member or trainee

Debonair: elegant or suave

Formality: an official or necessary procedure

# what's the story?



It's November 1938 in Berlin, Germany, and Marianne Kohn's mother is helping her get ready for school. The phone rings, but when Marianne answers, the caller hangs up. She's annoyed because this has become a regular occurrence, but her mother blames it on a wrong number and changes the subject. She tells Marianne to come straight home after school and not to dawdle, speak to anyone or draw attention to herself in any way. Marianne agrees, but is obviously tired of the increasingly strict rules her mother enforces. She knows the rules are important because the Kohns are Jewish, and Germany's Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, is prejudiced against Jews. The Nazi government is enacting new policies every day that strip Jews of their rights and is encouraging German citizens to ostracize Jews. Marianne hopes they won't have to continue living like this for much longer. Everyone assures her that things will change soon, but she can't see how that is possible.

Marianne's fears and doubts are deepened when she arrives at her school only to be told that Jewish students are now prohibited from studying at German schools. Marianne begins to walk home in disbelief. Adding to her sadness is the fact that she's missing her father, whom she hasn't seen or heard from in six weeks. Her mother tells her he's away on business, but Marianne fears he was taken by the Gestapo and sent to a concentration camp, which recently happened to her friend's father.



She soon runs into a slightly older girl named Inge, who assumes Marianne is also skipping school on purpose. They chat and jump rope together. They're getting along wonderfully until Inge sees Marianne's last name, which suggests her Jewish heritage, on her backpack. Inge scoffs, calls Marianne a name and shoves her. Extremely upset, Marianne walks home.

When she arrives, she meets a young boy named Ernst, who, along with his mother, is temporarily staying with the Kohns' landlady. Marianne and Ernst play a game using Ernst's toy motor horn. Then Marianne's mother arrives home. She's just heard on the radio about Jewish students being expelled. Ernst and Marianne say goodbye while she and her mother go back up to their apartment.

Marianne, still shaken from being kicked out of school and the incident with Inge, demands that her mother tell her where her father is. Mrs. Kohn is hesitant because she wants to protect her daughter, but Marianne is so adamant that she finally relents and confesses that Mr. Kohn was indeed taken to a concentration camp with over 1,000 other men. Luckily Marianne's father was eventually released because his employer insisted that he was needed. However, because he was still in danger, Marianne's father had to go into hiding. Mrs. Kohn is able to visit him every day but takes different routes each time in case she's being followed. Just then the phone rings. After a

Answer to history quiz  
on page 11:  
1. A; 2. C; 3. D; 4. B;  
5. B; 6. C; 7. A; 8. D;  
9. B; 10. C

brief conversation, Mrs. Kohn has to leave without telling Marianne anything about the call. She only tells her to lock the door and that she'll be back later.

Shortly after Mrs. Kohn leaves, Mr. Kohn arrives, and Marianne is beyond delighted to see him. He can't stay long, so he tells Marianne to tell her mother that he is being moved tonight and someone will be in touch with a new address soon. Before he goes, Marianne asks if he ever thinks they'll be together as a family again. He says they're together in their thoughts, if not in the same house. "Not even Hitler can stop us loving each other," he tells her. After he leaves, Marianne curls up on the sofa and falls asleep.

When she awakes the next morning, Marianne hears Ernst out in the hall. He tells her the Gestapo was just there asking for all the tenants' names. He overheard the landlady tell the Gestapo the Kohns were Jewish. Ernst had never met a Jewish person before. They start talking about Hitler and the Nazis, and it's clear right away they have very different opinions. Ernst says Marianne is just being a troublemaker, but Marianne insists that it's the Nazis who are the troublemakers. Ernst is called back to his apartment, and Marianne is angrier than ever.

She receives a call from her mother who tells her she'll be home soon, and Marianne delivers the message from her father. She then goes to Altmann's Bakery to pick up breakfast. When she arrives, she sees that the Gestapo has closed it down. She speaks with Mr. Altmann who reminds Marianne to be brave because "tyrants don't last forever." It's the first form of reassurance that Marianne has been given in a long time.

Two weeks later, Mrs. Kohn has the most wonderful news. She was able to get an exit visa for Marianne through the Kindertransports; she's planned for Marianne

to leave Berlin and travel to England and then onto Canada, where she'll live with an old school friend of her father's and his wife on their farm. The train leaves in a few hours.

Marianne is frightened. She's never met these people, and she'll be traveling all alone. What will happen to her parents? She can't imagine leaving them behind. Mrs. Kohn promises Marianne that she'll do everything she can to meet her in Canada with her father, but the transport is only for children right now, and they cannot pass up this chance to get Marianne out safely. Marianne understands that she must go, and she asks to have a moment alone in the apartment so that she can remember everything just the way it is. Ernst then enters. Marianne tells him she's leaving for Canada. He tells her he and his mom are leaving as well to go back home. He then hands her his motor horn as a goodbye gift and leaves. Marianne sees there is a card attached. In it, he's written: "We are not all the same. Goodbye Marianne. From your friend Ernst."

Marianne then tells the audience that despite her mother's best efforts to get to Canada, she was eventually apprehended by the Gestapo, and Marianne never saw either of her parents again. Marianne was able to make a life for herself in Canada. She made friends and learned to ride a horse. Finally, she reminisces about a letter from her mother she found in her suitcase. Her mother explains that sending Marianne away was the hardest thing she's ever had to do, but her life in Berlin was dangerous, and she wanted a different life for her daughter. "I send you away for a chance for life," she wrote. "I send you away because I love you, and with hope for the future. Goodbye Marianne."

# Face to Face: The Playwright



Like Marianne, playwright Irene Kirstein Watts was born in Berlin, Germany, in the early 1930s. Also like Marianne, she benefitted from the Kindertransport. Through the system's rescue efforts, Watts emigrated to Britain in December 1938 when she was seven years old. In Britain, she studied at Cardiff University and eventually moved to Canada in 1968, where she soon became a resident of British Columbia, living in Vancouver.

Watts published her novel *Goodbye, Marianne* in 1996 and adapted it into a play in 1997. She published two more novels revolving around Marianne's story, including *Remember Me* (2000), which describes Marianne's arrival in England, and *Finding Sophie* (2002), which is

set in the aftermath of World War II and reunites Marianne with her friend Sophie.

In Canada, Watts enjoyed a lot of success as a playwright with her plays produced at several theatres, including The Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, The Stratford Festival in Ontario and The Neptune Theatre in Halifax. She was also the first Program Director of the Vancouver International Children's Festival.

On her website, Watts speaks of how her love of telling stories began when she was growing up in Berlin and how her grandfather gave her a puppet theatre as a young girl.

"A year later my family sent me to England on a Kindertransport," she says. "I left both family, and theatre behind. At age seven I discovered that stories can travel with you wherever you go. I carry them with me: stories I make up, stories I've heard or read, stories that grow as I tell them or write them down. Each one may be told in a different way, as a poem or play, through song, movement, as a story or novels, or as non-fiction."

## Kindertransport

Just before the outbreak of World War II, a program was authorized in Britain to transport Jewish children from Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Austria to the relative safety of England. A few days after the *Kristallnacht*, the plan was set in motion so unaccompanied minors, ranging from infants to teenagers under the age of 17, would be transferred to Britain and housed until they could rejoin their families.

A network of organizers worked around the clock to identify the children who were the most at risk: those who were in concentration camps or in danger of arrest, children in Jewish orphanages, or those whose parents had already been sent to a concentration camp.

The first transport from Berlin departed on December 1, 1938 and the last known group departed the Netherlands on May 14, 1940. In all, the operation brought approximately 10,000 children to safety.



# History Lesson: Timeline

Here's a timeline of the events that lead up to the tense atmosphere Marianne and her family experienced in 1938 Berlin.

**1918:** The end of World War I in 1918 results in a defeated Germany with a weakened economy and an injured national pride.

**1919:** The Treaty of Versailles is signed on June 28 disarming Germany, which is also forced to pay France and Britain for the huge costs of the war. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler joins the right-wing German Workers' Party and rises among the ranks thanks to his captivating speeches, which encourage national pride, militarism, anti-Semitism and a commitment to a racially "pure" Germany. Hitler changes the party's name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or the Nazi Party, for short.

**1929:** In Germany, the Nazi Party has grown to 108,000 members from 27,000 in 1925.

**1933:** German president Paul von Hindenburg appoints Hitler as Reich Chancellor. On May 10, only weeks after the Nazis come to power, Nazi Youth storm every main library in Germany and set fire to any books that are deemed "anti-German." More than 12,000 titles and the complete works of 149 authors are reduced to ashes.

**1934:** After President Hindenburg dies, Hitler combines the offices of Reich Chancellor and President, declaring himself Führer.

**1935:** Hitler announces the Nuremberg Laws, which strip Jews of their civil rights as German citizens and define them as a race separate from Germans legally and socially.

**1936:** Berlin hosts the Olympic Games and seizes the opportunity to promote Nazi ideals and propaganda. At first Germany plans to bar Jews from participating, but after a boycott threat from several nations, including the U.S., Germany relents and allows all ethnicities to participate.

**1938:** On November 9, the night that would become known as *Kristallnacht* ("Night of Broken Glass"), 191 synagogues are burned and destroyed as are hundreds of Jewish businesses. Brutal attacks, beatings, killings and arrests of Jewish men continue for days afterward.



GERMANY



FRANCE



BELGIUM

*Marianne, along with her family and friends, would have been forced to wear a badge identifying them as Jewish. The badges were usually yellow, and were in the shape of the Star of David, a common symbol representing Judaism. Above are examples of the badges from different countries.*

# History Lesson: The Holocaust

From around 1933 to 1945 (extending beyond the time period of World War II) some of the darkest and deadliest events in all of human history took place within Germany and across Europe. Individuals were ripped from their homes, tortured and even killed simply because of their ethnicity and religion. Children lost their parents, parents lost their children, and many more lost everything they had. These horrific events have become known as the Holocaust.

Over the 12-year period of the Holocaust, Hitler and the Nazis were attempting a complete genocide (killing an entire people based upon their ethnic group or country of origin) of the Jews. Frighteningly, they almost succeeded, as they wiped out around six million people—including around 2/3 of the European Jewish population.

Hitler justified these horrors through brilliant rhetoric (language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect on its audience, though often regarded as lacking in sincerity

or meaningful content), offering up the Jews as scapegoats for all of Germany's problems. He called them "ethnically inferior," portraying the Jews as greedy and having schemes to destroy the Germans. Jews secretly plotted to rule the world, Hitler argued, a world in which the good, common, decent German would suffer. According to the Nazis, the only way to reclaim German glory was to exterminate the problem—the Jews.

The extermination of an entire population would be no easy task, but Hitler devised a careful and complex plan that became a highly efficient death machine. First, all Jews had to be distinguished from the general population. This was accomplished by forcing them to wear yellow stars. These yellow stars would proclaim clearly who was the enemy and who was not.

From there, the Jews would be taken from their homes and forced to live in ghettos, further separating out the population. These ghettos

In March, 1933, Nazi SA Storm-troopers arrested members of the Communist and Social Democratic parties in Berlin.

Many of those arrested were murdered. The majority ended up in Dachau, the first Nazi concentration camp. *(Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin)*





were considered holding places for Jews before they were to be called to concentration and labor camps, though many would perish before ever leaving. Overcrowded and impoverished, the ghettos were breeding grounds for lethal diseases. And where sickness didn't prevail, hunger usually took over.

Those who were called to concentration or labor camps were sent (further yet from the general population) to be worked to exhaustion, tortured or simply killed (sometimes all three). As the Holocaust wore on, the camps came to employ gas chambers that could kill up to 1,000 people within 20 minutes.

When the Nazis invaded countries like Poland and the Soviet Union, they employed less discrete methods of extermination. Upon invasion they would round up all the Jews they could find and kill them all by shooting them.

Worse still, when ammunition was low, the Nazis would bury people alive.

Toward the end of WWII and even after its official end, the Nazis marched their prisoners to death (a tactic known as death marches). No matter how harsh the conditions or how far the distance, Jews were forced to march until they couldn't march any longer. Those who didn't die on the march had the grim fate of facing execution or a concentration camp.

While it is painful for us to look back on the atrocities of the Holocaust, it is important for us to recognize and learn about the injustices that took place. It is our responsibility to acknowledge the wrongs done and to make sure that these horrors don't happen again to any groups of people.



Families were split apart when the deportations began. Most would say goodbye to their loved ones and never see them again. The photo was taken by Mendel Grossman in the Lodz ghetto.

*(Photo: Yad Vashem, Jerusalem)*



Food rations for Jews were always insufficient for survival. Death by starvation was a daily occurrence. Warsaw ghetto, summer 1941.

*(Photo: Aperture Foundation, Inc., New York)*

*Images provided by the **St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center**. The Holocaust Museum and Learning Center houses a 5,000 square foot core exhibition that provides a chronological history of the Holocaust with personal accounts of Holocaust survivors who emigrated to St. Louis. Through its collections, exhibits and programs, the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center strives to educate all people about the history and consequences of the Holocaust in hope of preventing such events from happening again.*

# History Lesson: Important Terms

*Goodbye, Marianne* is not just one girl's personal story but is the story of a significant historical period—the beginnings of World War II and the Holocaust. In addition to a timeline showing the events leading up to the Nazi Germany that Marianne and her family lived in, it's also helpful to learn other terms to understand that time.



**Anti-Semitism:** Prejudice and hatred directed towards Jews.

**Aryan:** A name used by Nazis and others to describe the “race” of people speaking languages believed to derive from Sanskrit; the Nazis viewed Aryans as a superior race, the pure race of which the Germans were supposedly one.



**Censorship:** The strict control of literature, performing arts, behavior and morality, usually by government.

**Citizen:** A member of a state or nation to whom he/she owes allegiance and loyalty; the state in return ensures civil rights such as the right to employment, justice and education.



**Concentration camps:** Prison camps built by the Nazi government and spread throughout Germany and its occupied territories. Along with the Jewish population, prisoners included groups considered by Hitler to be “impure” or contaminating to the “superior race,” such as Communists, gypsies or anyone who opposed Nazi ideology. Starvation, physical torture, and murder occurred daily.



**Final Solution:** The name of Hitler's plan to eliminate the European Jewish population through genocide.



**Führer:** A German title that translates to “leader” and is most often associated with Hitler.

**Gestapo:** The official secret police force of Nazi Germany.

**Haman's pocket:** A triangular, filled-pocket cookie or pastry usually associated with Purim and the story of Haman and Esther.

**Heil Hitler:** A salute in Nazi Germany that meant “Hail Hitler!” and showed allegiance to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

**Juden Raus:** A phrase that translates to “Jews Out.”

**Kindertransports:** The lifeline created by the British government to save Jewish children from the Hitler's planned genocide; Kindertransports operated in many countries. The transports in Germany lasted for 10 months until the start of World War II.

**Lebensraum:** Translated literally as “living space,” Lebensraum in Nazi Germany referred to Hitler's planned expansion of German territory to neighboring western countries so as to provide more living space for the growing German Aryan race.

**Purim:** A Jewish holiday commemorating a story told in the Book of Esther, which takes place during the ancient Persian Empire and describes how the Persian queen Esther, who was Jewish, helps to thwart a planned genocide of Jewish people by the politician Haman.

# History Quiz

See how well you remember the noteworthy events mentioned in this study guide by answering the questions below:

1. What does the term *Lebensraum* literally translate to?
  - a. Living space
  - b. Superior race
  - c. Heil Hitler
  - d. Jews Out
2. What year were the Nuremberg Laws put into effect?
  - a. 1933
  - b. 1938
  - c. 1935
  - d. 1930
3. What was the name of the operation created by the British government to save Jewish children from the Holocaust?
  - a. Furder
  - b. Purim
  - c. Final Solution
  - d. Kindertransport
4. What does the term *Kristallnacht* literally translate to?
  - a. Night of Burning
  - b. Night of Broken Glass
  - c. Night of Destruction
  - d. Night of Chaos
5. What date in the year 1938 did *Kristallnacht* take place?
  - a. May 10
  - b. November 9
  - c. June 28
  - d. December 25
6. What does the term *Furder* translate to?
  - a. Hitler
  - b. Nazi
  - c. Leader
  - d. Fire
7. What was the Gestapo?
  - a. The secret Nazi police force
  - b. A German holiday
  - c. A group of concentration camps
  - d. Hitler's first name
8. What did the Nuremberg Laws do?
  - a. Legalized the burning of books deemed "non-German"
  - b. Forced the emigration of the Jewish population out of Germany
  - c. Ensured the right of free speech
  - d. Stripped all Jews of their rights as citizens
9. What term describes prejudice and hatred directed towards Jews?
  - a. Aryan
  - b. Anti-Semitism
  - c. Censorship
  - d. Haman
10. What is the name of the Jewish holiday commemorating the story of how a Jewish genocide was prevented in ancient Persia?
  - a. Synagogue
  - b. Haman
  - c. Purim
  - d. Hanukkah

# He Said/She Said

Read the quotes below from *Goodbye, Marianne*, and delve a little deeper into each character by answering the accompanying questions.

**Inge:** “(Your father’s) that funny! Lucky you! Mine yells at me all the time. He’s in the army and thinks I’m one of his recruits.”

What do you think this statement says about Inge’s family life? We find out soon after meeting her how she feels about Jews. How influenced by her father do you think she is? If she is yelled at “all the time” and treated like a recruit rather than a daughter, how do you think that translates into how she treats others?

**Marianne:** “You did lie to me. How do I know you’re not lying now? All these secrets, and whispering, and people phoning and not leaving messages. I have to know. Tell me where he is.”

Marianne’s mother is obviously trying to protect her daughter, but Marianne feels isolated from all the secrets. Have you ever felt like this? Parents often feel children are too young to deal with more mature issues. What do you think Marianne means by “I have to know”? What is she trying to prepare herself for?

**Ernst:** “Look what he’s done for us! My Dad was out of work for two years, but as soon as the Nazis got in power, he got a job.”

Although Ernst definitely likes Marianne, he still feels prejudice against her because she’s Jewish. He’s influenced by his government, which is ruled by Hitler and the Nazis who are running a hate campaign against Jews. While it may be obvious to us not to give in to such prejudice, Ernst sees his father having gotten a job because the Nazis are in power. Can you see why he may have mixed feelings? How does this statement show how a government such as Hitler’s was able to gain so much power?

## What the Grown-Ups Have to Say

Now that we’ve heard from the young people, read the quotes below from the adults in the story. They each seem to offer a sense of wisdom about what’s going on in the country. In the space provided, write what you think each adult is trying to tell Marianne.

**Mr. Altmann:** “Good and bad you find everywhere. Sometimes it’s very hard to be one voice against the others. But listen carefully, you will find a few.”

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**Mrs. Kohn:** “I send you away for a chance for life—just a life. There isn’t one here for us. I cannot keep you safe. I send you away because I love you, and with hope for a future.”

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