



## ***The Devil's Arithmetic***

***Based on the book by Jane Yolen***

***Adapted for the stage by Barry Kornhauser***

***Commissioned and first produced by Prime Stage Theatre, Pittsburgh Pa***

***Directed by Lisa Ann Goldsmith***

***May 10 – May 18, 2014***



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## For Teachers & Students

### POST-SHOW CHAT SESSIONS

Stay after the school matinees to ask questions of both the actors and the production crew! During the post-show chat sessions, students may ask questions of the actors about the rehearsal process, theatre performance, and their experiences working on that particular production. No registration required

### THE LITERACY IN ACTION PROGRAM

Prime Stage Theatre's flagship education program strives to increase adolescent literacy through theatre in underserved and underperforming school districts in the Western Pennsylvania area. In this FREE program, schools receive tickets and books for each Prime Stage production, 10 in-school workshops, and professional development opportunities for teachers. If you would like your school to become involved, please download an application at our website, [http://www.primestage.com/files/pdf/literacy\\_in\\_action\\_application.pdf](http://www.primestage.com/files/pdf/literacy_in_action_application.pdf)

### TEEN DATING AWARENESS PROGRAM

Prime Stage Theatre is proud to offer a touring production of *You Belong to Me* a 45 minute play designed to identify the warning signs of teen dating violence that can help save the life of a friend, loved one or even you. Written and performed by Pittsburgh area teens this show will make an impact at your school or community center. If you would our *Teen Dating Awareness Program* to come to your school or community center, please visit our website, [http://www.primestage.com/education/teen\\_dating\\_awareness.html](http://www.primestage.com/education/teen_dating_awareness.html)

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS, FAMILIES AND ADULTS

Prime Stage Theatre offers opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with the theater. Check out our website to learn about the Teen Board, Mentorships, Volunteering, Book Readings and many other exciting events. There is something for everyone at Prime Stage! <http://primestage.com/>

# The Devil's Arithmetic

## Resource Guide



Volume 5, Issue 3  
5.4.2014

### Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre: Bringing Literature to Life!



*Fahrenheit 451, PST 2012-2013*

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2013-2014 season! We had a very successful season last year with acclaimed productions of *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Great Gatsby* and *Walk Two Moons*.

This year, we are pleased to bring you the thriller, ghost story of *Turn of the Screw*, one of the best comedies ever written, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and the world premiere adaptation of Jane Yolen's Newbery Award novel about the Holocaust, *The Devil's Arithmetic*.



*The Great Gatsby, PST 2012-2013*

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature. We hope it will inspire you to use theatrical games and creative thinking in your classroom in order to spark personal connections with the theme and characters in the stories.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in this guide, please contact me. I'm happy to help and welcome your suggestions!



*Walk Two Moons, PST 2012-2013*

Monica Stephenson  
Education Director  
mstephenson@primestage.com

#### Did you know...

\*Prime Stage is celebrating its 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

\*Prime Stage has brought over 60 stories to life!

\*In 2006, Prime Stage welcomed Mary Badham, the actress who played Scout in the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

#### Check out what's inside!

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## Curriculum Connections Corner

Prime Stage is committed to directly correlating our programs to the PDE Academic Standards. *The Devil's Arithmetic* and this Resource Guide may be used to address the following curriculum content standards:

**Arts and Humanities:** 9.1-9.4  
**Reading, Writing, Speaking, & Listening:** 1.1-1.9  
**History:** 8.1, 8.3



*"Live," he whispered.  
"For my Chaya. For  
all our Chayas. Live.  
And remember."*

*The Devil's Arithmetic;  
Tattoo artist, p. 100*

Hannah Stern is a young Jewish girl living in New Rochelle, NY. She and her family, including her parents and younger brother Aaron, are to attend a Passover Seder at her grandparent's home. Hannah has no interest in attending. She is tired of hearing about the past and is uncomfortable listening to her Grandpa Will rant about his experiences in the concentration camp.

When Hannah rises from the table to symbolically open the door for the prophet Elijah, she is transported to Poland in 1942. There she inhabits the life of Chaya Abramowicz. She insists that her name is Hannah and that she lives in America but Chaya's aunt and uncle, Gitl and Shmuel, dismiss these claims as effects of Chaya's ordeal with cholera, from which she barely recovered. The disease claimed Chaya's parents and the adults assume Chaya is probably still grieving from this loss.

A man named Shmuel is to be married to Fayge, a woman in a neighboring village. On their way to the village they are stopped by Nazi soldiers. The soldiers insist they must come with them to be relocated. Hannah is the only one who knows what is actually about to happen. She tries to explain why they must not go with the soldiers, but the adults explain that they have little choice. They are loaded onto trucks and driven off to a train station where they are herded into cattle cars with barely any room to breathe. The ride on the train lasts for days and several children do not survive.

Hannah and the others finally arrive at the concentration camp where they are quickly divided by gender and age. The women and children remain together while the men live in separate barracks. The prisoners are showered and their hair is cut short. They are also tattooed with prisoner numbers. They are not fed until the next morning and then they only receive a watery potato soup and some bread as nourishment.

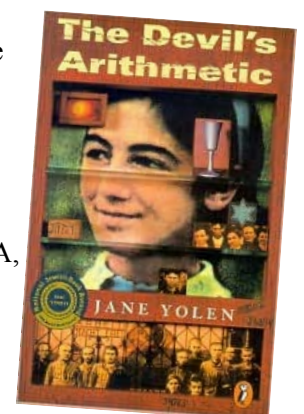
Hannah meets a young girl named Rivka who explains to her how to avoid being chosen for extermination. Rivka warns Hannah that when Commandant Breuer, the commanding Nazi officer, comes to the camp it is to identify those who are too weak to work so that they can be killed. Rivka explains that most of her family has perished in the camp. Only her brother, Wolfe, remains.

The prisoners form their own system to help their chances. Items are stolen when possible. Gitl is able to learn what is going on in the men's camp through her forced labor position in the storage shed. She learns of a plan to escape. Soon after, some of the men, including Shmuel Abramowicz, Chaya's uncle, attempt to escape from the camp. The escape attempt is thwarted but Yitzchak, a butcher from Chaya's village, is able to get away. The next morning those who were captured are executed in front of the others. Shmuel is among them. Fayge runs to be with him and they die together. Wolfe emerges from "Lilith's Cave", the name the prisoners have given to the doorway leading to the gas ovens. He carries Fayge's body away.

One day, while fetching water for the kitchens, Hannah has a vision of girls in school uniforms playing around a fountain. She begins to discuss this vision with the other girls around her, but a new Nazi guard catches them talking instead of working. He tells them that he needs

three more to be sent away (a euphemism for extermination). The guard chooses Rivka, Esther, and Shifre. Hannah is spared but decides to act to save Rivka's life. She takes Rivka's handkerchief from her head and places it on her own. She tells Rivka to run and hide until they are gone. Rivka goes without saying anything. Hannah then escorts Esther and Shifre as they are led to Lilith's Cave. She tells them that the Jewish people will endure this atrocity and have a country of their own one day. They will go to America as well and hold jobs as movie stars and politicians. The darkness of Lilith's Cave envelops Hannah and she finds herself alone in front of a door. She turns to look behind her and finds herself back in the dining room of her grandparent's home. Grandpa Will asks if the prophet Elijah is there or not. Hannah answers that no one is there and returns to her seat, her face pale from the experience.

At dinner Hannah notices the prisoner tattoo on Aunt Eva's arm and recognizes it. She explains the numerical relevance of the number to Aunt Eva, who confesses that when she was young she was known by another name: Rivka. After coming to America many of the survivors changed their names. Grandpa Will, Eva's brother, was known as Wolfe before. She tells Hannah that in addition to them, only Gitl and Yitzchak survived the camps. They both moved to Israel where Yitzchak became a politician. Gitl started a charity to help survivors of the Holocaust reunite with their families. She named the charity CHAYA, after her niece who perished in the camp.



## Jane Yolen, Author



“Take a step, breathe in the world, give it out again in story, poem, song, art.”  
— Jane Yolen

**Jane Yolen is an author of children’s books, fantasy, and science fiction, including *Owl Moon*, *The Devil’s Arithmetic*, and *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?***

**She is also a poet, a teacher of writing and literature, and a reviewer of children’s literature. She has been called the Hans Christian Andersen of America and the Aesop of the twentieth century.**

**Jane Yolen’s books and stories have won the Caldecott Medal, two Nebula Awards, two Christopher Medals, the World Fantasy Award, three Mythopoeic Fantasy Awards, the Golden Kite Award, the Jewish Book Award, the World Fantasy Association’s Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Association of Jewish Libraries Award among many others.**

Jane Hyatt Yolen was born February 11, 1939 in Manhattan, the first child of Isabell Berlin Yolen, a psychiatric social worker who became a homemaker upon Yolen's birth, and Will Hyatt Yolen, a journalist who wrote columns at the time for New York newspapers. Isabell also did volunteer work, and wrote short stories in her spare time.

When Yolen was barely one year old, the family moved to California to accommodate Will's new job doing working for Hollywood film studios. The family moved back to New York City prior to the birth of Yolen's brother, Steven Hyatt Yolen. When Will joined the Army as a Second Lieutenant to fight in England during WWII, Yolen, her mother and brother lived with her Yolen's grandparents in Newport News, Virginia. After the war, the family moved back to Manhattan until Yolen turned 13. She attended PS 93, where she enjoyed writing and singing, and became friends with future radio presenter Susan Stamberg. She also engaged writing by creating a newspaper for her apartment with her brother that she sold for five cents a copy. Her family also moved to Westport, Connecticut, where she attended Bedford

Junior high for ninth grade, and then Staples High School, where she sang in the choir, was captain of the girls' basketball team, was News Editor of the school paper, and vice president of the Spanish and Latin Clubs. After graduating she attended Smith College. Though she says she did not have the highest grades, she wrote a book of poetry, was President of the Press Board, and participated in school musicals and other shows as an actress and by writing song lyrics. After graduating she moved back to New York City. Although Yolen considered herself a poet, journalist and nonfiction writer, she became a children's book writer. Her first published book was *Pirates in Petticoats*, which was published on her 22nd birthday.



Jane and brother Steven mugging for the photographer on a paino bench in the family's New York apartment.  
<http://janeyolen.com/biography/>

## Jane Yolen, Author

### *About The Devil's Arithmetic in Jane's Words*

I had thought about doing a book on the Holocaust for a long time, but quite frankly the idea overwhelmed me. Finally one of my editors, who was a rabbi's wife at the time, persuaded me to confront the task. Writers and storytellers are the memory of a civilization, and we who are alive now really must not forget what happened in that awful time or else we may be doomed to repeat it. This book is about a Jewish teenager who—much like me at that age—hated the idea of having to remember so much Jewish history and ritual. At a family seder, she opens the door to Elijah and finds herself whirled back in time to a Polish Jewish shtetl in the 1940s. There, though she alone understands what will happen to the villagers, she is taken with them to a concentration camp. This is a story of the quiet heroism in the camps and why we must bear witness to history. There is a German/Austrian edition of the book.

It won the Sydney Taylor Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries, the Jewish Book Council Award, the Maud Hart Lovelace Book Award, and was a Nebula Honor Book. It was also on the 1992 Kentucky Bluegrass Master List, a Florida Children's Book Award nomination in '91-92 for grades 6-8, and was on the 1994 Illinois Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award master list. In 2007 it was named the Children's Literature Association's 2008 Honor Book for the Phoenix Award "given to the author. . .for a book for children originally published in English that did not win a major award at the time of its publication twenty years earlier" but has stood the test of time.



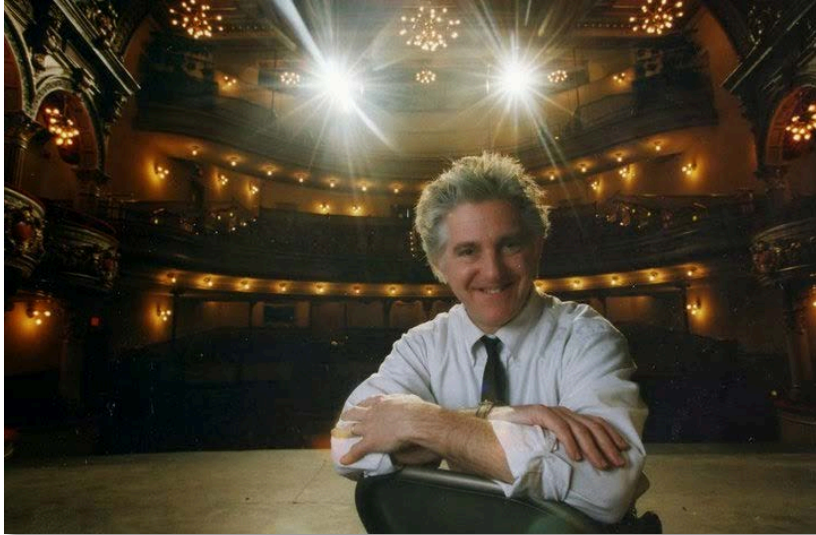
(c) Holly Stein/Showtime

Brittany Murphy, right, and Kirsten Dunst, left, star as Rivkah and Hannah in the movie version of *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

The book was made into a movie for the Showtime TV channel by Dustin Hoffman and Mimi Rogers. It starred Kirsten Dunst. Robert Avrech wrote a very strong and moving screenplay and Donna Deitch directed it brilliantly on a shoestring budget. For their work Robert won an Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Children's Special and Donna won an Emmy for Outstanding Directing in a Children's Special. The film also won "The Wilbur Award." This is given for outstanding communication of religious values in public media: print, film, video, broadcasting and cable. The Wilbur has been given since 1949. The video is available from Blockbuster.

Learn more from Jane Yolen on her website [www.JaneYolen.com](http://www.JaneYolen.com)!

## Barry Kornhauser, Playwright



BARRY KORNHAUSER recently joined the staff of Millersville University to spearhead the school's newly formed family arts collaborative and to develop campus-community artistic initiatives. Prior to this new endeavor, he served 30 years as the Playwright-In-Residence, TYA Director, and sundry other positions at the National Historic Landmark Fulton Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Barry is a recipient of the American Alliance for Theatre & Education (AATE) Charlotte Chorpenning Cup, honoring "a body of distinguished work by a nationally known writer of outstanding plays for children." Other accolades include the Twin Cities' Ivey Award for Playwriting (*Reeling*), the Helen Hayes Outstanding Play Award (*Cyrano*), Bonderman Prize (*Worlds Apart*), and two AATE Distinguished Play Awards (*This Is Not A Pipe Dream* and *Balloonacy*), along with Pennsylvania's "Best Practices Honor" (for his HIV/AIDS prevention T.I.E. project, *All It Takes...*) and the state's first Educational Theatre Award "for outstanding service by an individual for the advancement

TYA/USA, Doris Duke Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and Pennsylvania Performing Artists on Tour (PennPAT).

His plays have been commissioned and produced by such Tony Award-winning theatres as the Alliance, Children's Theatre Company, La Jolla Playhouse, and Shakespeare Theatre, and have been invited to such festivals as One Theatre World, NYC's Provincetown Playhouse New Plays for Young Audiences, the international Quest Fest, San Diego Theatre of the World, the Bonderman, the Playground, and the Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices. The Kennedy also commissioned him to author a piece (*Of Mice And Manhattan*) based on newly discovered children songs by Broadway legend Frank Loesser, and invited him to take part in and report on its 2012 "International Convening of Thought Leaders in Theater, Dance, Disability, Education, and Inclusion." Barry is one of three playwrights (along with David Ives and former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky) to be

of theatre education in the Commonwealth." He has also received fellowships/grants from the National Endowment for the Arts,

commissioned by The Shakespeare Theatre to create new "American" adaptations of lesser-known classic dramas. He has also served as a guest dramaturg at the Denver Theatre Center. In 2008, Barry was selected as the United States nominee for the "ASSITEJ International Award for Artistic Excellence" and his *Youtheatre* program for at-risk teens and those living with disabilities was honored at the White House as one of the nation's top arts-education initiatives.

For his work with this ensemble, Barry also received the AATE's 2011 Youth Theatre Director of the Year Award. Over the years he has conducted theatre residencies everywhere from a one-room Amish school house to universities across the country, including several stints as the "Luminary Guest Artist" of the University of New Mexico's Wrinkle Writing program endowed by *A Wrinkle In Time* author, Madeleine L'Engle. (He was the only guest artist invited more than once). A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Franklin & Marshall College, Barry has served on the TYA/USA board, various panels of the NEA, the Heinz Endowment, and three state arts councils. Currently, he is an AATE State Representative, a member of the Dramatists' Guild, and sits on the board of the Lancaster Education Foundation. His lovely wife Carol and great kids Ariel, Sam, and Max (with Turkish bride Sena) complete his real-life cast of "characters."



## Barry Kornhauser, Playwright

What does it take to adapt *The Devil's Arithmetic* into a play? PST Education Director, Monica Stephenson recently sat down with Barry Kornhauser to discuss his adaption and his creative process.

**Monica: We are so happy that you are adapting Jane Yolen's novel for the stage! Could you tell me what inspired you to write this or how the idea of making the novel into a play came about?**

Barry: The impetus for the idea came from Prime Stage Producing Artistic Director Wayne Brinda. We have talked for some time about working together on a project. Wayne, of course, is also a Teaching Fellow of the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum and he has a strong interest in this watershed event of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so this novel was familiar and important to him. Being Jewish and a fan of Jane Yolen's work, adapting this particular novel was a meaningful, though daunting opportunity for me. I own a first edition of the book, one that was read and admired by my own family, and I'm looking forward to having it autographed at long last!

**Monica: What is the difference between adapting a play and writing a brand new play?**

Barry: There are many differences, but perhaps the most significant one is your obligation to honor the intent of the original author and to maintain the integrity of that artists' vision and voice rather than just your own. You are, in a sense, the servant of two masters – your own imagination and someone else's. And you have to use the former to complement the latter.

**Monica: What were some of the challenges that you and director, Lisa Ann, discovered during the adaptation process?**

Barry: It is always challenging to convert a work on the page to one on the stage, particularly when the work is as substantial as *The Devil's Arithmetic*. You only have stage directions and dialogue to tell a large and complex story that is wrought on paper with beautiful narrative revealing character's inner thoughts and emotional states. And you have the challenges of staging difficult moments that we are left to see only in our mind's eye as we read, but must be rendered visible on the stage. So how do we depict the sheer magnitude of degradation and



PST 2014, *The Devil Arithmetic* cast press photo by Rebecca S. Antal

pain in the camp, of the horror of the Holocaust portrayed so honestly and graphically in the novel? For that matter, how do you stage the time travel moments? Then, of course, we can't hire hundreds of actors; we can't cram them into a stinking sweltering boxcar or starve them. Even the staging of the shaving of their heads presents technical difficulties that require creative solutions. But working from a story as effective and affective as Jane's, the biggest challenge has been meeting the need of having to edit and alter some situations and characters so that the piece can be performed in a reasonable time frame with a manageable-sized cast while keeping the book's heart and guts intact.

**Monica: What exciting discoveries were made while bringing this work to life for the stage?**

Barry: It was exciting to recognize how playable Jane's story is on the stage despite its formidable staging challenges. It was also exciting to be reminded how an historical moment of such magnitude, one impacting millions, can be so well brought to life through the story of a single young person, and how it can be made so real by the juxtaposition of past events with the protagonist's knowledge of the present.

# Barry Kornhauser, Playwright

## Interview Continued

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### Response of Jane Yolen to the adaptation by Barry Kornhauser:

"I am sitting here sobbing, having finished reading the play. I have to say that I have seen the movie that was made of the book, and several other treatments for plays based on it, but this script honors the book more than any other one attempted. You . . . got to the heart, the blood, the bone of my story.

Thank you.

Now I have to get some more Kleenex."

Jane

### Monica: What advice do you have for students who are interested in writing plays or working in the theatre?

Barry: It may not be the easiest or best way to make a viable living, but its rewards far transcend the financial. Your life will be enriched in so many invaluable ways by the opportunity theater provides to examine your own life, that of others, and the world that we all share. It will help you become smarter because you can't help but learn about a myriad of subject matters, cultures, and people, and to become a better human being because of the empathy you'll develop by creating and coming to understand characters whose lives may be very different from your own. I would advise students to read and see lots of plays, to volunteer to work behind the scenes at theaters in all sorts of capacities – lights, sound, costumes, props, pinrail, etc.; to intern as assistant stage managers and assistant directors, and even to act. The more you learn about theater and all its aspects, the better you inform your writing or help discover your passion.

## The Characters

*The Devil's Arithmetic* is considered historical fiction. While it is based on historical events during of World War II, the characters are fictional. Jane Yolen's novel has many characters and scenes that describe thousands of people. Below is a list of only the main characters from the novel.



Curriculum  
Connections

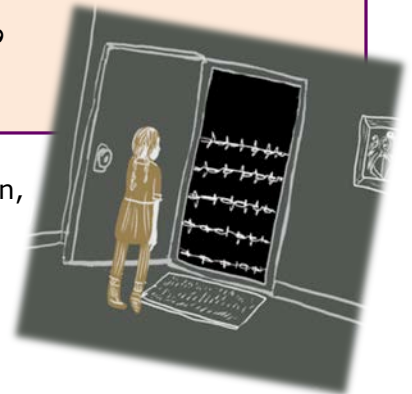
### Classroom Activity

Look at the descriptions on the page and think about how you might choose a cast to portray these characters.

*\*What physical characteristic would you look for in the actor playing each character? Why?*

*\*What vocal quality would you expect each character to have? Would they speak slowly, quickly, gravelly, squeaky?*

*Barry Kornhauser's stage adaptation of The Devil's Arithmetic has many characters and only 17 actors. \*Which roles might be shared by one actor? How would you make each character unique?*



**Hannah Stern** The protagonist of the story. Hannah is a young Jewish girl who lives with her family in New Rochelle, NY. She is disinterested in, and even embarrassed by, her Jewish heritage and family. During a Seder dinner she is suddenly transported to Poland in 1942 where she inhabits the life of her own distant relative, **Chaya Abramowicz**, who sacrifices herself to save Rivka. Through this process Hannah comes to appreciate her own history and that of her family.

**Aaron Stern** Hannah's younger brother. Aaron is naive and innocent.

**Grandpa Will** A Holocaust survivor who sometimes causes his family some discomfort when he rants about his experiences. Hannah comes to be somewhat afraid of and embarrassed by him. After her experiences in Poland in the past, Hannah learns that Grandpa Will is Rivka's brother, Wolfe.

**Grandma Belle** Hannah's grandmother and the wife of Grandpa Will. Hannah and her family come to her home for the Passover Seder tradition.

**Shmuel Abramowicz** Gitl's sister and the soon-to-be husband of Fayge. He is Chaya's uncle in 1942 Poland. Shmuel is strong and presents a brave face to the Nazi soldiers, leading an escape attempt from the camp. The attempt is thwarted and Shmuel is executed by firing squad along with Fayge.

**Gitl Abramowicz** Shmuel's sister and Chaya's aunt. Gitl is practical and headstrong. Though she never marries or has children of her own, she acts as a foster mother to Chaya during their time in the camp. Gitl is one of the few to survive, eventually moving to Israel and starting a charity to help Holocaust survivors reunite with family members. She names the organization CHAYA after her niece.

**Yitzchak** The butcher who is hoping to marry Gitl, though she has no interest in him. He is the only prisoner who manages to escape during a breakout attempt and joins a resistance movement to fight the Nazis. He eventually moves to Israel and becomes a politician, joining the Knesset, the Israeli Senate.

**Aunt Eva** Hannah's father's sister and Hannah's favorite aunt. Hannah learns that she is named after Aunt Eva's dead friend, Chaya. Aunt Eva has a quiet sadness about her. Hannah initially pities her for never having married, though Hannah acknowledges her beauty. It is finally revealed that Aunt Eva and Rivka are the same person.

**Rachel** A girl about Chaya's age who tells Hannah she will be her best friend. Rachel perishes before reaching the camp, resulting in Hannah's great guilt and sorrow.

**Shifre** One of the four girls Hannah (as Chaya) meets before Shmuel's wedding. She perishes in the camp.

**Esther** One of the four girls Hannah (as Chaya) meets before Shmuel's wedding. She perishes in the camp.

## The Characters



Shmuel (Andrew Miller) and Fayge (Jenny Malarkey).  
PST 2014, *The Devil Arithmetic* cast  
press photo by Rebecca S. Antal

**Fayge Boruch** The soon-to-be wife of Shmuel. Fayge is known to be very beautiful. She and Shmuel are executed at the concentration camp.

**Reb Boruch** Fayge's father and a Rabbi. He acts as a spiritual and community leader when the villagers are rounded up by the Nazis.

**Rivka** A young girl, about ten years old, whom Hannah meets in the concentration camp. Rivka hands out bowls to the newcomers. She is resourceful and intelligent, quickly discerning how she may improve her chances of surviving day to day. Though younger than Hannah, she takes Hannah under her wing and shows her the ways of the camp. Hannah repays this kindness by sacrificing herself to save Rivka. Upon returning to New Rochelle in the present, Hannah learns that Rivka and Aunt Eva are the same person.

**Wolfe** Rivka's brother in the camp. He has become a *Sonderkommando*. His job is to transport dead bodies to the ovens, a heinous task which he loathes and which makes him feel terrible about himself. It is later revealed that Wolfe and Grandpa Will are the same person.

**Sarah the Lubliner** A girl in the camp who can obtain medicine and first aid supplies for prisoners.

**Commandant Breuer** The commanding Nazi officer in the camp. His visits to the camp always bring dread as the prisoners know he may choose some of them for death. Commandant Breuer is cold and calculating, not above sending children to their deaths. He embodies the very inhumanity that the Third Reich's "Final Solution" came to represent.

**Leye** A woman in the camp whose baby Hannah saves when the Commandant comes to visit. Leye is also in charge of the kitchen crew.

**Reuven** Yitzchak's son, about three or four years old. Reuven is discovered and taken by Commandant Breuer, though Hannah risks her own life trying

**Tziporrah** Yitzchak's daughter, about three or four years old. Tziporrah dies shortly after reaching the camp.

**The Badchan** A comedian or jester initially hired to entertain the attendees at Shmuel's and Fayge's wedding. He correctly predicts that the Nazi officer who escorts the villagers away is not to be trusted.

### Classroom Activity



Curriculum  
Connections

As you read the book, consider character traits, actions, and thoughts of the characters. Choose a character, and design a **CHARACTER TRIANGLE** for your chosen character.

Here is how you do it:

1. Write the character's name.
2. Write two of the character's personality traits.
3. Write three words that describe the character physically.
4. Write four words that describe the character's favorite place.
5. Write five words that name the character's beliefs.
6. Write six words that name the character's skills, talents, or hobbies.
7. Write seven words about how this character has helped or harmed other characters.

**Example:**

Gitl  
motherly caring  
strong hardworking energetic  
country secluded comforting simple  
perseverance respect religion family children  
leading supporting organizing caring cooking helping  
friend honorable honest sister family model strength

On a separate sheet of paper, create and illustrate your **CHARACTER TRIANGLE** for your chosen character. You will display your triangle in your classroom.

Activity from: <http://pdf.thepdfportal.com/?id=45696&nocache#>

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

### The Passover Seder

"Passover isn't about eating, Hannah," her mother began at last, sighing and pushing her fingers through her silver-streaked hair. "You could have fooled me," Hannah muttered."

– Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*



**Passover (Pesach)** is a celebration of freedom commemorating the Israelites Exodus from slavery in ancient Egypt. It is an eight-day festival celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan.

"In the narrative of the Exodus, the Bible tells that God helped the Children of Israel escape from their slavery in Egypt by inflicting ten plagues upon the ancient Egyptians before the Pharaoh would release his Israelite slaves; the tenth and worst of the plagues was the death of the Egyptian first-born.

The Israelites were instructed to mark the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a slaughtered spring lamb and, upon seeing this, the spirit of the Lord knew to *pass over* the first-born in these homes, hence the English name of the holiday."<sup>(1)</sup>

**The main ritual of Passover is the Seder.** The Seder is a festive meal that involves the re-telling of the Exodus through stories and song and the consumption of ritual foods. The most important Passover practice is a set of changes to the usual diet, including the absence of hametz, or foods with leaven. The Hallel (Jewish prayer: Psalms 113-118) is recited both at night and day during the Seder and morning prayers.

To commemorate the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when they left Egypt, observant Jews don't eat or keep in their homes any hametz from midday of the day before Passover until the conclusion of the holiday. Hametz means leavened grain—any food or drink that contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives, and which wasn't guarded from leavening or fermentation. This includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta and most alcoholic beverages. Almost any processed food or drink is usually assumed to be hametz unless certified otherwise. Matzah a flat unleavened bread replaces any hametz the would normally be eaten. It is a mitzvah (commandment by God) to partake of matzah on the two Seder nights but during the rest of the holiday it is optional.

The Seder is observed on each of the first two nights of the holiday and is a fifteen-step family-oriented tradition.

"The Passover Seder plate (*ke'ara*) is a special plate containing six symbolic foods used during the Passover Seder. Each of the six items arranged on the plate have special significance to the retelling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The seventh symbolic item used during the meal—a stack of three matzah—is placed on its own plate on the Seder table.

The six items on the Seder plate are:

- **Morar and Chazeret:** Two types of bitter herbs, symbolizing the bitterness and harshness of the slavery which the Jews endured in Ancient Egypt. For *maror*, many people use freshly grated horseradish or whole horseradish root. *Chazeret* is typically romaine lettuce, whose roots are bitter-tasting. Either the horseradish or romaine lettuce may be eaten in fulfillment of the mitzvah of eating bitter herbs during the Seder.
- **Charoset:** A sweet, brown, pebbly paste of fruits and nuts, representing the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build the storehouses of Egypt.
- **Karpas:** A vegetable other than bitter herbs, usually parsley but sometimes something such as celery or cooked potato, which is dipped into salt water (Ashkenazi custom), vinegar (Sephardi custom), or charoset (older custom, still common amongst Yemenite Jews) at the beginning of the Seder.
- **Zeroa:** A roasted lamb or goat bone, symbolizing the *korban Pesach* (Pesach sacrifice), which was a lamb offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and was then roasted and eaten as part of the meal on Seder night.
- **Beitzah:** A hard-boiled egg, symbolizing the *korban chagigah* (festival sacrifice) that was offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and was then eaten as part of the meal on Seder night."<sup>(2)</sup>

1. "Passover." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 17 April 2014. Web. 17 April. 2014.

2. "Passover Seder." *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 16 April 2014. Web. 17 April. 2014.

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

### Shtetl Life

**Shtetl** literally means small town. It is the diminutive form of Yiddish **shtot** (town). Shtetls were small market towns in Central and Eastern Europe that shared a unique social community and culture during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Contrary to popular belief shtetl inhabitants consisted of both Jews and non-Jews alike.

Shtetls ranged in size from several hundred to several thousand residents. These small towns were usually surrounded by forests and fields. The streets were often unpaved, and the houses were constructed of wood.

Public spaces included synagogues, the yeshiva (study house), shtiblekh (smaller, residential houses of prayer), Jewish cemeteries, Christian churches, bathhouses, and the marketplace.

The Jewish community was typically governed by the kahal (community council). The kahal oversaw both civil and religious affairs, from collecting taxes to dispensing charity. While religion guided daily life, it was not, as is often portrayed in modern depictions of shtetls, the sole occupation of Jewish males. The religious scholarly class was a small, elite segment of shtetl societies, while the majority of shtetl Jews, both men and women, worked in commercial and artisanal trades.

"Not only did the Jews of the shtetl speak a unique language (Yiddish) but they also had a unique communication style, rooted in traditions of Talmudic learning.

The shtetl operated on a communal spirit where giving to the needy was not only admired, but expected and essential: The problems of those who need help are accepted as a responsibility both of the community and of the individual. They will be met either by the community acting as a group, or by the community acting through an individual who identifies the collective responsibility as his own... The rewards for benefaction are manifold and are to be reaped both in this life and in the life to come."<sup>1</sup>

Material things were neither disdained nor extremely praised in the shtetl. Learning and education were the ultimate measures of worth in the eyes of the community, while money was secondary to status. Even the poorer classes in the shtetl tended to work in jobs that required the use of skills, such as shoe-making or tailoring of clothes. Shtetl residents valued hard work and frowned upon laziness.

Thousands of shtetls existed in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 20th century, and while many of these Jewish communities shared a similar organizational structure, they were not all the same. Politics, dialect, and religious customs varied widely. A clear example of this varied culture is what is known as the "gefilte fish line" -- an imaginary line that extends across Eastern Europe, dividing those Jews to the west who season their gefilte fish (a traditional Sabbath dish) with sugar from those to the east who season the fish with pepper. Each shtetl had its own recipes, stories, legends, and klezmer tunes.

Non-Jews often made up the majority of a shtetl's population. "It's a distorted picture of the shtetl which completely excludes its non-Jewish residents or reduces them to extras (e.g. the Shabes goyim, Gentile helpers for the Sabbath chores) in an all-Jewish saga."<sup>1</sup> In reality shtetls were characterized by daily contact between Jews and non-Jews. Jew and Christian, merchant and farmer, buyer and seller all conducted daily business transactions and maintained peaceful social contacts on a regular basis.

Modernization, migration, and emigration contributed to the decline of the shtetl, but the Holocaust and Nazi occupation eradicated shtetl life. During WWII it was not uncommon for the entire Jewish population of a village to be rounded up and murdered in a nearby forest. Shtetl inhabitants often were forced to dig a pit which served as their own grave, but sometimes a few escaped and joined partisans. Some survivors did eventually emigrate to Israel and the U.S. where some of the traditions were carried on, but shtetls were entirely wiped out by the Nazis of WWII.



*Life is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl* by Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog. 1962 edition.

<sup>1</sup>Retrieved from: [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Modern\\_History/1700-1914/traditional-jewish-life/Shtetls.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history/Modern_History/1700-1914/traditional-jewish-life/Shtetls.shtml)

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

"We are all monsters" Hannah said. "Because we are letting it happen." She said it not as if she believed it but as she were to repeat something she had heard before."

— Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*

### INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

"Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

**WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST?** In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that Nazi Germany would occupy or influence during World War II. By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the "Final Solution," the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. Although Jews, whom the Nazis deemed a priority danger to Germany, were the primary victims of Nazi racism, other victims included some 200,000 Roma (Gypsies). At least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled patients, mainly Germans, living in institutional settings, were murdered in the so-called Euthanasia Program.



Ethnic Germans in Saaz Czechoslovakia, greet German soldiers with the Nazi salute, 1938



Buses used to transport patients to Hadamar euthanasia center. The windows were painted to prevent people from seeing those inside. Germany, between May and September 1941.

— Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv

#### Ultimate WWII Timeline:

**July 1921:** Adolf Hitler becomes the leader of the National Socialist (Nazi) Party.

**September 1931:** Japan Invades Manchuria.

**January 1933:** President Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany.

**February 1933:** Nazis burn the Reichstag building to create panic and as a result emergency powers are granted to Hitler.

**March 1933:** Nazis begin opening concentration camps throughout Germany and the German Parliament passes the Enabling Act giving Hitler dictatorial powers.

**April 1933:** Nazis stage boycott of Jewish shops and businesses and the German Gestapo is created by Hermann Goring.

**July 1933:** Nazi Party is declared the only legal party in Germany.

**September 1933:** Nazis prohibit Jews from owning land in Germany.

**October 1933:** Germany quits the League of Nations.

**August 1934:** President Hindenburg dies and Hitler becomes Fuhrer.

**March 1935:** Germany begins re-armament, violating the Treaty of Versailles from the end of WWI.

**May 1935:** Nazis ban Jews from serving in the military.

**February 1936:** The German Gestapo is placed above the law.

**May 1936:** Italy conquers and annexes Ethiopia.

**October 1936:** Germany and Italy sign a treaty of cooperation.

**November 1936:** The Rome-Berlin Axis is announced. Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comintern Pact (directed against the Soviet Union and the international Communist movement).

**July 1937:** Japan invades China initiating WWII in the South Pacific.

**March 1938:** Nazi troops enter Austria and Hitler announces Anschluss (union) with Austria.

**April 1938:** Nazis order Jews to register wealth and property.

**July 1938:** The US convenes a League of Nations conference in Evian, France with delegates from 32 countries to consider helping Jews fleeing Hitler, but no action is taken as no country is willing to accept them.

Nazis order Jews over age 15 to apply for identity cards to be shown on demand to any police officer.

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

**WHAT WAS THE HOLOCAUST CONT.** As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Germans and their collaborators persecuted and murdered millions of other people. Between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans targeted the non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia for killing, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet civilians for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland, where these individuals worked and often died under deplorable conditions. From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, German authorities persecuted homosexuals and others whose behavior did not match prescribed social norms. German police officials targeted thousands of political opponents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses). Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment.



A Deutsche Reichsbahn "Güterwagen" (goods wagon), one type of rail car used for deportations

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE "FINAL SOLUTION"

In the early years of the Nazi regime, the National Socialist government established concentration camps to detain real and imagined political and ideological opponents. Increasingly in the years before the outbreak of war, SS and police officials incarcerated Jews, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred in these camps. To concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Germans and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps for Jews during the war years. The German authorities also established numerous forced-labor camps, both in the so-called Greater German Reich and in German-occupied territory, for non-Jews whose labor the Germans sought to exploit. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and, later, militarized battalions of Order Police officials, moved behind German lines to carry out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist Party officials. German SS and police units, supported by units of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS, murdered more than a million Jewish men, women, and children, and hundreds of thousands of others. Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany, from occupied territories, and from the countries of many of its Axis allies to ghettos and to killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities.

### Ultimate WWII Timeline continued:

**September 1938:** Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France sign the Munich Agreement forcing the Czechoslovak Republic to cede the Sudetenland (key military defense positions) to Nazi Germany.

**December 1938:** Herman Goring takes charge of resolving the "Jewish Question."

**January 1939:** Hitler threatens Jews during Reichstag speech.

**February 1939:** Nazis force Jews to hand over all gold and silver items.

**March 1939:** France and Great Britain guarantee the integrity of the borders of the Polish state.

**April 1939:** Italy invades and annexes Albania.

**August 1939:** Germany and the Soviet Union sign a nonaggression pact and a secret addendum dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence.

**September 1939:** Germany invades Poland, starting WWII in Europe and the Soviet Union occupies Poland from the east. **Jews in Germany are forbidden to be outdoors after 8pm.** US proclaims neutrality.

**October 1939:** Nazis evacuate Vienna Jews. A forced labor decree is issued for Polish Jews aged 14-60 and yellow stars are required to be worn by all Polish Jews over age 10. The Soviet Union takes military control over and occupies Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and part of Romania.

**November 1939:** The Soviet Union invades Finland.

**January 1940:** Nazis establish the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland near Krakow.

**February 1940:** Germany begins deportation of German Jews into occupied Poland.

**April 1940:** Germany invades Denmark and Norway.

**May 1940:** Germany invades France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg.

**June 1940:** Italy invades southern France.

**September 1940:** Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite (Axis) Pact.

**October 1940:** Germany invades Romania.

**November 1940:** Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia become Nazi Allies.

**March 1941:** Nazis occupy Bulgaria and German Jews are ordered into forced labor.

**April 1941:** Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

**June 1941:** Germany invades the Soviet Union violating the German-Soviet nonaggression pact.



## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

**THE END OF THE HOLOCAUST** In the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp inmates by train or on forced marches, often called “death marches,” in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, as well as prisoners en route by forced march from one camp to another. The marches continued until May 7, 1945, the day the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. For the western Allies, World War II officially ended in Europe on the next day, May 8 (V-E Day), while Soviet forces announced their “Victory Day” on May 9, 1945.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in displaced persons (DP) camps administered by the Allied powers. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews emigrated to Israel, including 136,000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe. Other Jewish DPs emigrated to the United States and other nations. The last DP camp closed in 1957. The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most European Jewish communities and eliminated hundreds of Jewish communities in occupied eastern Europe entirely.

Information about the Holocaust retrieved from

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005143>

Starving prisoners in Mauthausen concentration camp liberated on May 5, 1945.



A concentration camp victim identifies an SS guard in June 1945.

For More Info about the holocaust, stories of survivor and victims, timelines, photo and go to The United States Holocaust Museum website: <http://www.ushmm.org/>

### Ultimate WWII Timeline continued:

**September 1941:** German Jews are ordered to wear yellow stars and their deportation to concentration camps begins. Nazis take control of Kiev and shoot about 34,000 Jews at Babi Yar.

**October 1941:** 35,000 Jews from Odessa are shot and Germany begins attacks on Moscow.

**December 1941:** Japanese attack the United States at Pearl Harbor resulting in the US and Great Britain declaring war on Japan. Japan invades Philippines, French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), and British Singapore. Hitler then declares war on the US. The US enters the war in Europe and concentrates nearly 90% of its military resources to defeat Hitler.

**January 1942:** Mass killings of Jews using Zyklon-B (poison gas) begin at Auschwitz-Birkenau and the bodies are buried in mass graves in a nearby meadow.

**March 1942:** Belzec extermination camp in occupied Poland becomes operational and Lublin Jews are deported there. French and Slovak Jews begin to be deported to Auschwitz.

**May 1942:** Sobibor extermination camp in occupied Poland becomes operational. The British bomb Cologne, Germany.

**June 1942:** Jews in France, Holland, Belgium, Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania are ordered to wear yellow stars.

**July 1942:** The London Daily Telegraph reports that over 1,000,000 Jews have already been killed by Nazis. Berlin Jews are sent to Theresienstadt and Dutch and Belgian Jews are sent to Auschwitz. Operation Renhard begins with the mass deportation of Polish Jews to extermination camps.

**August 1942:** Croatian Jews are deported to Auschwitz and Germany attacks Stalingrad in Russia.

**October 1942:** Norway Jews are deported to Auschwitz.

**February 1943:** Germany surrenders to Russian troops in Stalingrad, marking the first big defeat of Hitler's armies.

**April 1943:** US and Great Britain hold the Bermuda Conference, discussing what to do with the refugees from Nazi-occupied countries but the Conference results in inaction. The Warsaw ghetto uprising begins resisting deportation to concentration camps for almost a month.

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

“We all have such stories. It is a brutal arithmetic. But I - I am alive. You are alive. As long as we breathe, we can see and hear. As long as we can remember, all those gone before are alive inside us.”

— Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*



### A STORY OF SURVIVAL By Linda Hurwitz

Both of my parents are Holocaust survivors. My father was born in Riga, Latvia in 1911. He was the 5th child and I believe his mother died when he was about 3 in her last child birth. His sisters and then a stepmother raised him with his father. He was from a working class family and became trained to be a skilled metal worker. This would make him valuable to the Nazis in WWII as they needed their captives to work for the needs of their army. Though his early life was disrupted by WWI and then the Russian revolution, he still recalled a pleasant active, hard-working family and Jewish communal life.

My Mother has spoken much more about the joys, comforts, stability and sophisticated life she had growing up in the big industrial city of Lodz, Poland. Though she was the oldest in her immediate family, her mother was one of 8 siblings and her father the oldest of 7 so there were many aunts, uncles, cousins, grand-parents and great-grand-parents who gave her a rich loving childhood. She was adored and she was smart and encouraged to succeed in school, skipping first grade, being head of her classes in Polish schools and being one of a few Jews to be accepted into University in Krakow, Poland. She played volleyball, went hiking and kayaking in the mountains and enjoyed a full life despite growing anti-Semitism creeping over the border from Germany.

Here, life changed dramatically when the Nazis invaded her country, the leadership fled and the Jewish people of over 200,000 were forced to leave their nice apartments and move into the poorest part of town into very crowded and unsanitary conditions. Four years she and her family and all Jewish people who could work lived exclusively in this Littmanshtadt ghetto, as the Nazis renamed Lodz. During the next four years from 1940-44, she worked as a nurse in the hospital and then in her uncle's factory. These years required strength, ingenuity, hope and perseverance as the conditions worsened and transports began taking the younger and older people away for "resettlement", which now we know usually meant death. The crowded conditions created by the Nazis intentionally led to many dying of disease and starvation. My mother's mother died in the ghetto.

### Ultimate WWII Timeline continued:

- May 1943:** German and Italian troops in North Africa surrender to the Allies. Nazis declare Berlin to be cleansed of Jews.
- November 1943:** Nazis carry out Operation Harvest Festival in occupied Poland, killing 42,000 Jews.
- January 1944:** President Roosevelt creates the War Refugee Board to help Jews under Nazi control.
- March 1944:** Nazis occupy Hungary.
- May 1944:** Hungarian Jews are deported to Auschwitz.
- June 1944:** British and US troops land on the Normandy beaches of France opening a second front against the Germans.
- July 1944:** Russian troops liberate the first concentration camp at Majdanek where over 360,000 people have been murdered.
- August 1944:** Paris is liberated by the Allies.
- November 1944:** Nazis force 75,000 Jews to walk over 100 miles in rain and snow from Budapest to the Austrian border.
- December 1944:** Germany launches the Battle of the Bulge. Though they catch the Allies off guard, they are ultimately unsuccessful.
- January 1945:** Russians liberate Budapest and Warsaw. They invade eastern Germany and liberate Auschwitz where an estimated 2,000,000 people have been murdered.
- April 1945:** Allies liberate Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, and Dachau, and the Soviets launch their final offensive, encircling Berlin. Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker.
- May 1945:** Germany surrenders to the Western Allies and the Soviets. Allied troops conquer Okinawa.
- August 1945:** The United States drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Soviet Union declares war on Japan, invading Manchuria.
- September 1945:** Japan formally surrenders, ending World War II.
- October 1945:** The United Nations is created.
- November 1945:** Opening of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal.

## PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

### A STORY OF SURVIVAL CONTINUED



The Littmanshtadt (Lodz) Ghetto in Poland, 1940

My mother, her father, and her sister were taken to Auschwitz in August of 1944 in the last transport from the ghetto. Her father died in Auschwitz and she and her sister after 5 days of having their head shaven and being stripped naked were chosen to be sent to the concentration camp of Stutthuff. There her sister died and my mother was greatly weakened by typhus. My mother stayed with her sister when she died in February of 1945 rather than go on the death march. The Germans put

my mother and the remaining victims on a boat in the Baltic in April of 1944. They planned to blow the ship up with the remaining victims even though it was apparent that they were losing the war. However, after 5 days on the Baltic Sea with no food or water, they landed in Germany to let the Nazis off. My mother and her friend managed to get off the ship and get to a house where a woman gave them tea and some bread. The Red Cross was all ready in the town but the Nazis still tried to round the Jewish victims up and kill them. The British moved in just before the Nazis were going to put my mother back on the ship and blow it up. Thus, she was liberated and the war ended May 1945.

After weeks in a hospital my mother was placed in a displaced persons home and there she met my father. He had survived the Riga ghetto, Kaiserwals and Stutthuff and Buchenwald camps. His first wife and two children were killed. He met my mother in Hanover, Germany. They wanted to go to Palestine but the British would not let many refugees go to Palestine and help make the Jewish state of Israel. Relatives of my father in America finally were contacted and told my father survived. They sponsored my parents to come to America and they went to Baltimore, Maryland to join this aunt and cousin. I and then my two brothers were born and raised there. My father being a metal worker went to work for Chevrolet as a body mechanic. Most of my parents' friends were other survivors from Poland, Russia, Germany, Hungary, etc.

My parents are amazing and did not burden me with their suffering but I was inspired by their positive attitude towards life and the strength of all those I knew who started life again, had children, contributed to their community and thrived after all they suffered!

They both taught me that life is measured by how you face adversity and they focused on treating others with respect and dignity. The Jewish people had millions murdered but they continue to be strong in their belief that one must strive to appreciate life and act ethically. It is very important to study and know this history to understand the need for a Jewish State of Israel and to appreciate that, though millions suffered and died, right did triumph over evil.



Map of the Holocaust in Poland during the Second World War (1939-1945) at the time of German occupation of Poland.

# PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

## Photos for Remembrance



The arrival of Hungarian Jews in June 1944. Between May 2nd and July 9th, more than 430,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz

*This number of people could fill 12 Wembley Stadiums, 934 QEII cruise liners or 1654 tube trains.*

Hungarian Jews not selected as laborers were murdered in the gas chambers almost immediately after arrival. Photo from the Auschwitz Album (May 1944)



Entrance into Auschwitz main camp, 1945  
Arbeit Macht Frei  
(work makes you free)

Auschwitz survivors at liberation.  
January 27, 1945.



# THEMES

**Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. *The Devil's Arithmetic* contains many rich themes for exploration and discussion. Below are listed some prominent themes from the novel with supporting statements**

## The Past

Hannah initially demonstrates an apathy toward her own heritage. She has no interest in going to the Passover Seder dinner and sees it as something to be endured rather than to be celebrated. It is not until she is torn from her own family and transported to a dark period in history that Hannah comes to appreciate her heritage.

This concept, that the present is a living product of the events of the past, echoes throughout the novel. Consider how casually Commandant Breuer decided who lived and who died in the camp. Without any real consideration, entire bloodlines and family trees were destroyed. As a result the families of survivors have a greater appreciation of their own lives, knowing that their ancestors were able to survive a horrific ordeal and should not be forgotten.

## Family

Hannah's relationship toward her family shifts from one of detachment to one of great appreciation. While experiencing the short life of Chaya, Hannah grows close to Gitl and the other girls in the camp. Though they are not members of her immediate family, Hannah comes to see them as vital extensions of herself. Hannah comes to see how she must play a role in their lives and take more of an active role in her own family.

Hannah's sense of "family" also extends to those around her in the camp who are not her blood relations. Hannah sees her friends like Shifre, Rachel, and Esther as extended family, part of the greater human family now struggling to survive in the face of evil. She acts to save Leye's baby as well, not because she has to, but because she feels it is the right thing to do.

## Sacrifice

To survive their ordeal in the camp the prisoners sacrifice much. Many of them, including Hannah, give their lives in the hope of saving others.

In all these instances her selflessness and lack of concern for her own well-being echo Grandpa Will's words about sacrifice during the Seder dinner. Hannah pours out her entire glass of wine instead of the customary sip's worth for the prophet. Grandpa Will comments that Hannah's sacrifice is greatest because it was not asked for. Though Hannah knows she was simply getting rid of the wine she did not want, his words carry meaning in reference to the other instances in which Hannah acts only out of goodness and concern for others.

## Hope

Hope becomes the greatest ally to those imprisoned in the concentration camps. Without the belief that they may survive there is nothing to help them retain their sanity or will to live. Hope becomes their sole weapon against the Nazi plan to exterminate them.

Rivka's rules, which she shares with the other girls, are designed to help their chances of survival. This provides the Jews with some semblance of order and authority over their situation. They cannot control everything but there are things they can do, or not do, to increase their chances of survival from day to day.

### Classroom Activity



### Curriculum Connections

There are even more themes in *The Devil's Arithmetic*. Have the class break into small groups and discuss the themes that they consider important in the novel. Select two themes that the group can all agree upon and express each one, using the following phrases: *The Devil's Arithmetic* tells us that . . . We know this because . . ." Complete the phrases by giving specific reasons. Each group will present the statements of theme to the class to determine whether the class arrived at the same conclusions.

# SYMBOLS

“But as the scissors snip-snapped through her hair and the razor shaved the rest, she realized with a sudden awful panic that she could no longer recall anything from the past. I cannot remember, she whispered to herself. I cannot remember. She's been shorn of memory as brutally as she'd been shorn of her hair, without permission, without reason... Gone, all gone, she thought again wildly, no longer even sure what was gone, what she was mourning.”

– Jane Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*

**Symbols are objects, characters, figures or colors used to represent ideas or concepts. Below are listed some prominent symbols from the novel with supporting statements**

**The Name Chaya:** The name Chaya: The man in charge of tattooing numbers on the newcomers tells Chaya: “Your name means life.”

**Metal bowls:** The metal bowls represent life: “without the bowl, you cannot have food, you cannot wash, you cannot drink.” Rivka explains that all should memorize the special shape of their bowls; she calls them “Every Bowls.”

**Tattoos:** The tattoos represent ownership; the people are branded, or marked, just like cattle or other private goods. The Jews are imprisoned.

**Hannah's giving up the blue ribbons:** The blue ribbons are beautiful and are considered an extra, not a necessity. Hannah's giving them up represents her loss of freedom. Gitl remarks, “What do two little ribbons matter?” Although they are only hair ribbons, they represent the small things in life that the Jews will live without, as well as their loss of complete freedom.

**Shorn hair:** The barber cuts the women's hair, and “clots of wet hair lay all about: dark hair, light hair, short hair, long hair, and two pale braids.” The shorn hair represents the loss of individuality among the women and Jews in general. Hannah becomes frightened because “without their hair, all the women looked the same.”

**Laughter:** Laughter represents hope, and therefore, life. Gitl explains: “Without laughter, there is no hope. Without hope, there is no life.” (Pgs. 101–102)

**Smoke from the brick chimney:** The smoke from the brick chimney represents death. A soldier tells Gitl: “That's Jew smoke! Learn to eat when it's given to you, Jew, or you, too, go up that stack.”

There are even more symbols in *The Devil's Arithmetic*. Can you find them?



Curriculum  
Connections

## The Yiddish Language

The primary language spoken by the Eastern and Central European Jews at the time of the Holocaust was Yiddish, a language that can be traced back over eight hundred years. The language developed from an old German dialect, and at the peak of its popularity in the 1930s, it consisted of approximately 70% German, 20% Hebrew, and 10% Slavic words. In *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Yiddish is the language spoken by the prisoners at the concentration camps, and a number of Yiddish words and phrases are used in the dialogue.

## WHAT IS... WHAT?

Many of Jane Yolen's characters in *The Devil's Arithmetic* speak Yiddish. Although the narration is in English, Yolen includes many German, Hebrew and Yiddish words and expressions to bring the text to life.

**Listed below are some of the challenging words in *The Devil's Arithmetic***

The meaning to some of the words and phrase can be found right in the text! For others, have students record and look up unfamiliar words as they encounter them while reading the book! Vocabulary activities can include a word wall, word ball or making a new sentence.

PDE Academic Standards 1.7-1.8

**Achtung** – A German word meaning attention

**Az m'fraygt a shyle iz trayf** - A Yiddish phrase that translates to, "If you ask permission, the answer is no." Gitl utters these words after giving Chaya a blue scarf she stole for her birthday.

**Badchan** - A jester or comedian who entertains guests at weddings.

**Bar Mitzvah** - A coming of age ritual for a Jewish boy. A Bat Mitzvah is the equivalent ritual for a girl.

**Bissel** - A Yiddish term for a little bit or small amount of something.

**Blokova** - A prisoner in charge at concentration camps during the Holocaust. These individuals were generally non-Jews.

**Chaper** - A Yiddish term for a kidnapper.

**Gottenyu** - A Yiddish expression translating as "Dear God" or "Oh God".

**Goy** - A non-Jewish person.

**Haggadah** - Translating from Hebrew as "the telling", the Haggadah is a Jewish text that sets forth the order of the Passover Seder. Reading the Haggadah at the Seder complies with the Scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" of the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the Torah.

**Kaddish** - Usually in reference to The Mourner's Kaddish, a mourning prayer in Judaism.

**Klezmer** - A musical tradition of the Ashkenazic Jews of Eastern Europe. The term refers both to the type of music as well as to the musicians who play it.

**Liebchen** – A German word meaning darling; sweetheart

**Lublin** - A small city in Poland where Chaya is from.

**Mikvah** - A Yiddish word for a ritual bath.

**Mishigaas** - A Yiddish term for "madness" or "craziness".

**Musselman** - A derogatory term used by death camp prisoners when referring to other inmates suffering from severe emaciation or starvation. The term itself is a German expression for Muslims. It is unclear why the term became used in this manner, but it has been proposed that such individuals lacked the strength to stand and were always on the ground in a prostrate position, much like a Muslim in prayer.

**Ominous** - Foreboding or foreshadowing evil.

**Organize** - The prisoners use this term instead of saying they stole something. For example, "I *organized* these shoes for you."

**Pervasive** - Existing in or spreading through every part of something.

**Schnorrer** - A Yiddish term meaning "beggar" or "sponger".

**Shabbos goy** - A Yiddish term for a non-Jew who performs work for Jews on the Biblical Sabbath, a day on which devout Jews are not allowed to perform any work.

**Shadchan** - A marriage broker or matchmaker.

**Shmatte** - A rag or anything that is shabby.

**Shul** - A term used by Jews of Ashkenazi descent to refer to a synagogue.

**Sonderkommando** - Work units of Nazi death camp prisoners, composed generally of Jews, who were forced to aid with the disposal of gas chamber victims.

**Sonorous** - Producing sound, usually rich or loud in nature.

**Yahrzeit** - A memorial candle lit in memory of the dead.

**Yarmulke** - A skullcap worn by Orthodox and Conservative Jewish males in the synagogue and at home.

**Yeshiva** - A Yiddish term for a school focusing on Jewish religious texts.

**Zugangi** - A Yiddish term that was sometimes appropriated by Nazi officers when referring to the latest newcomers to arrive at a concentration camp.

# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to approach literature with curiosity and personal relevance. The activities below are intended to spark enthusiasm, interest and inquiry into the story before they have read the text or attended the performance.

## Force The Circle

Experience being part of a majority group and being in the minority and analyse the strategies we use to be accepted by the majority group

1. Divide the group into subgroups of 6 to 8 people.
2. Tell the other members of the group to stand shoulder to shoulder to form as tight a circle as possible so as not to leave any space between them.
3. Explain that the 'outsider' must try to get into the circle while those who form the circle must try to keep them out.
4. After two or three minutes, and regardless of whether they managed to enter the circle or not, 'outsider' joins the circle and another member has a turn.

The activity will continue until all members of the group who wish have tried to 'force the circle'

Bring the class together and discuss what happened and how they felt. "How did it feel when you were the outsider?" "How did it feel to be a part of the circle?" "Do those who succeeded in 'forcing the circle' feel differently than those who didn't manage it?" "What strategies were used by both the outsider and the members of the circle?"

Consider the following: In real life situations, when do you like to feel an 'outsider' or a minority and when do you appreciate feeling part of the group or the majority? In our society, who are the strongest groups? And who are the weakest?

## Custom and Tradition

At the beginning of the book, Hannah's family was celebrating the Jewish holiday Passover. The family had specific customs and foods during the celebration. The main purpose of the Passover was "remembering". The events of the celebration were done every year in the same way. Think about a holiday or special event that your family celebrates or participates in year after year. Have your parents help you and list some things about it on the graphic organizer. Also, list the unique traditions of Hannah's Passover Seder. Are there any similarities? If so, write them in the middle of the graphic organizer. Finally answer this question:



Why do you think it is important to have celebrations and customs and traditions?

## What is Most Valuable?

The characters in this story lost all their possessions and the focus became on saving their very lives. Discuss your view of possessions and what you believe to be the most important items in life.

In chapter 10 of the book, the soldiers took the Jewish prisoners' prized possessions that they had brought from their homes: jewelry, baby toys, clothes, and personal items. They were never returned. Imagine you and your parents had to suddenly evacuate your home and each person in the house could only take 5 items with them. Think about what 5 items you would take and why you would take them.

Find out what your parents would take and write them on the chart. You do not know where you are going so chose carefully.

Finally, on a sheet of paper, write a paragraph explaining why you chose the 10 items.

From: [http://ndstatepirc.org/pdf/titlei/6th\\_Devils\\_Arithmetic.pdf](http://ndstatepirc.org/pdf/titlei/6th_Devils_Arithmetic.pdf)



# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to make personal connections to literature through meaningful, interactive exploration of the text and themes. The activities below are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich text as they read the novel.

## The Badchan

In the story sang a rhyming song for Hannah (chapter 7). The song is below:

"Pretty girl, with faraway eyes  
Why do you look with such surprise?  
How did you get to be so wise?  
Old girl in young-girl disguise."

In pairs, have students write a poem about each other. Make the lines of the poem have the following in them:

Line 1: Write a line to describe you

Line 2: Ask a question about a character trait

Line 3: Ask another question about a character trait

Line 4: Write a line describing you.

Students may share their poem with their partner or with the class.

Write the final copy of both poems in the poem sheet. Use a marker or sharpie.

From: [http://ndstatepirc.org/pdf/titlei/6th\\_Devils\\_Arithmetic.pdf](http://ndstatepirc.org/pdf/titlei/6th_Devils_Arithmetic.pdf)

## Figurative Language

Several characters in the story use expressions that are examples of figurative language. As a class, have students figure out what each of the following expressions means:

1. The snake smiles but it shows no teeth.
2. Better the fox to guard the hens and the wolves to guard the sheep.
3. Faye prefers the dark wolf she knows to the dark one she does not.



## Remembrance Collage

Use images to express and relate to a character's emotions

When Hannah arrives at her grandparents' house, her relatives are watching a TV program about the Holocaust.

The images bring Grandpa Will's memories of the concentration camps to the surface, and he becomes enraged. For as long as Hannah can remember, Grandpa Will has always had these "strange fits." She recalls an incident at her brother's bris, when she tried to please Grandpa Will by writing numbers on her arm, like he has on his arm. Hannah doesn't understand the meaning of the numbers, and she can't relate to Grandpa Will's feelings.

On poster board, create a collage of images that represent the Holocaust and the strong emotions it evokes in Grandpa Will. When designing the collage, consider what you have learned about the Holocaust. The collage can be realistic or abstract. You can use any images you want to reflect your ideas, whether they are photographs, pictures, or graphics from print media.

However, you do not need to use graphic images to convey meaning at all times.

For example, the color red or a picture of a storm can symbolize violence and/or anger.

From: <https://www.tpet.com/media/productPDF/devils-arithmetic-acts.pdf>

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## E-mail to Rosemary

Hannah finds herself transported to another time and place. She is in the country, where the people speak Yiddish, their clothes are simple, and every day life is very different from life in modern day New Rochelle. With this change comes a new identity; everyone calls Hannah *Chaya*, and she is told that she has come to live with her extended family after the death of her parents. Hannah is completely confused as to what has happened.

Hannah thinks that Rosemary would like Shmuel's leather boots. If Hannah had access to a computer, she would most likely e-mail Rosemary to tell her what has happened and express her thoughts and feelings about the situation.

**From Hannah's perspective, write an email to Rosemary describing and commenting on your surroundings.**



From: <https://www.tpet.com/media/productPDF/devils-arithmetic-acts.pdf>

## Character Portrait

Visualizing a character through images

The clothes in Hannah's new world are very different from the modern clothing she is accustomed to. She is shocked and appalled that she must wear what she considers to be really ugly clothes. She describes her dress as looking like "one of her grandmother's house dresses, shapeless, with faded roses." Hannah even insults Gitl by calling the dressier outfit she is to wear to the wedding "a rag, a *shmatte*." Hannah longs for her "real" clothes.

The author provides a detailed description of Hannah's clothes and other physical attributes (like how thin Hannah is), which helps give the reader a vivid image of the character and the way people in that time period lived.



Use the descriptions of Hannah and her "new" clothes and your imagination to create a portrait of her. You may use any medium to illustrate the character's image.

## Be a Journalist

Pretend that you have the opportunity to **interview Hannah** after her first meal in the concentration camp.

In small groups, think of questions you would like to ask Hannah. Include the following three in your list, and add five more.

1. When the woman demands you give her your hair ribbons, why do you reply: "No!...They aren't mine to give. You can't have them."
2. Why did you decide: "We are where we are"?
3. You promise Gitl that you "will *never* cry again." Explain how you plan to keep this promise.

**Present your interview to your classmates. Prepare your presentation, as a one-on-one interview between a reporter and Hannah or a news talk show with two or three interviewers and Hannah**

# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to reflect on their learning. The activities below are intended to provide opportunity to synthesize the learning and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.

## Writing Dialogue

Extract and summarize information from the novel by writing creative dialogue

Hannah gives Gitl and Shmuel information about her present life as she tries desperately to convince them that her name is not Chaya, and she is from New Rochelle, not Lublin. They don't take her seriously and attribute her comments to her recent illness, dreams, jokes, or the characteristics of city life (with which they are not very familiar). Hannah still believes that she's dreaming and decides that there's no use arguing with people in a dream. Imagine that in Hannah's dream, she discovers she has a cell phone that no one else can see. Hannah finds an excuse to be alone, and she calls her parents to tell them what's happening.

**Write a dialogue of a least one page between Hannah and her parents. Think about the events of this chapter. What details would Hannah give her parents? Would she plead with them to bring her back? Would her parents believe her? These are some of the questions to consider when developing your dialogue. Keep in mind that this is a dream, so you can be as creative as you'd like.**

From: <https://www.tpet.com/media/productPDF/devils-arithmetic-acts.pdf>

## I AM Poem

Write an "I Am" poem for one of the characters in *The Devil's Arithmetic*. The following page includes a pattern with three stanzas for you to follow.

Pattern for "I Am" Poem

Title

I am...(two character traits)

I wonder...

I hear...

I see...

I want...

I am...(repeat first line)

I pretend...

I feel...

I touch...

I worry ...

I cry...

I am... (repeat first line)

I understand...

I say...

I dream...

I try...

I hope...

I am...(repeat first line)

## Hannah's Journal

The world changes for Hannah as a result of her daydream and experience in the concentration camp.

Imagine you are Hannah, and you have just had the private conversation with your Aunt Eva where she told you the end of her journey.

Using well-developed paragraphs, write a journal entry describing the thoughts this awakens in you.

Include how you now feel about your Jewish heritage, your feelings about your family, thoughts about the privileges and freedoms you have and your plans for the future.

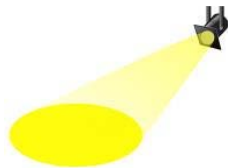


# CLASS ACTIVITIES

Prime Stage's mission, *bridging literature, life and learning*, encourages students to reflect on their learning. The activities below are intended to provide opportunity to synthesize the learning and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.

## Meaningful Moments Poster

Choose five-eight moments from the performance (or the book) that made the most lasting impressions on you. Using pictures and words create your own poster for the play. Try to capture the emotional quality of the performance as you experience it. Try to use the same colors, light quality and textures that you observed in the performance. Your final poster should give the viewer an authentic understanding of what it felt like to be audience member



## Surprising Choices

What surprised you about this production by Prime Stage Theatre? .....

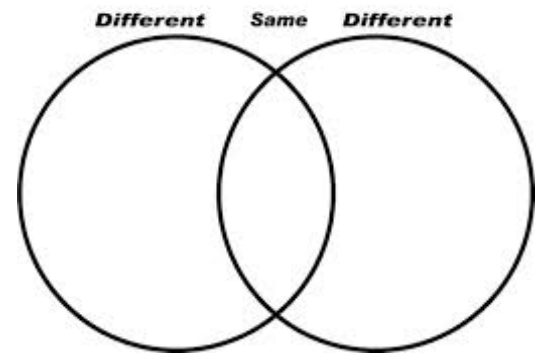
Consider the costumes, set design, music, lighting, special effects, acting and directing. What do you think motivated the production team or actors to make the choices that surprised you? Were they trying to solve a unique problem, create a strong response from the audience, make a creative statement or address some other need? Write a statement describing the surprising choice. Explain why you think it was a part of the production and whether or not you thought it was a good choice.

## Before and After

Create a Venn diagram comparing the experience of reading the book and seeing the performance. Is one better than the other? How does one experience inform or enhance the other?

You may also draw two pictures one showing you experience of reading the book and the other showing your experience of seeing the play.

### VENN DIAGRAM



## Set Symbolism

Discuss the imagery used in the set design. Why do you think the production team used these images? What impact did it have on your interpretation of the story? What impact did it have on the audience? What would you have done differently? Have student draw their interpretation of a set design for this or another story.

# PUTTING IT ON STAGE

## Meet the Cast



**Hannah: Julia Zoratto** Julia is currently fourteen years old and attends St. Bede school in Point Breeze. Julia is a CLO Mini Star and has trained at the CLO Academy for seven years, also training with Donna Belajac's Young Actor's studio and training in acting /speech at

Carnegie Mellon University and is currently with the Docherty Agency.



**Rivka: Chelsea Calfo** Chelsea is thrilled to be making her debut at Prime Stage Theater as Rivka. Chelsea is a student at the CLO Academy and Donna Belajac's Young Actors Studio. She is a member of the Civic Light Opera Mini-Star theater group. Her past

credits at the Benedum Theater are "Pepper" in the musical *Annie* and in the ensemble cast of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.



**Shifre: Lily Lauver** Lily is thrilled to be in her second Prime Stage production after her debut as Phoebe in last season's *Walk Two Moons*. Lily's other roles include Mary Lennox in *The Secret Garden* and Anne Shirley in *Anne of Green Gables* both at Little Lake Theatre.



**Rachel: Megan Krull** Megan is an 8th grade student at the Creative and Performing Arts Magnet School (CAPA) where she is majoring in musical theater. Megan has studied with Act One Theatre School for 5 years and is currently studying with Pittsburgh Musical Theater.



**Esther: Victoria Perl** Victoria returns to Prime Stage after playing Young Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*. Recently, she played Turtle Wexler in *The Westing Game* and Young Fiona in *Shrek, the Musical* at McKeesport Little Theater.

Victoria attends Pa Leadership Charter School and The Center

for Performing and Fine Arts where she is in the 7th grade. Victoria dedicates her performance to her grandmother, who was 12 years old in 1942 in Poland.



## Meet the Director



**Lisa Ann Goldsmith** – Lisa Ann's directing credits include *Walk Two Moons* at Prime Stage; the premiere of Amy Hartman's *Disinfecting Edwin*; *The Proposal/To Hell and Back*, *The Monkey's Paw/Happy Garden of Life*, and Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers* with The Microscopic Opera Company; *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Two Gentlemen of*

*Verona* for Pittsburgh Public Theater's Summer Shakespeare Intensive; the East Coast premiere of Allison Moore's *Eighteen* at Pittsburgh Playwrights; *Hidden Hurts* for Pittsburgh Playhouse; along with *Blood Relations*, *The Tempest*, and *The House of Bernarda Alba* for Seton Hill University. In New York, Lisa Ann directed *Into the Woods* at Fordham University and *Dark Lady of the Sonnets* for Protean Theatre Company at Primary Stages. Her regional credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Tulsa's Shakespeare in the Park; *The Butterfingers Angel* at the Tulsa Repertory Theatre; *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Centre Stage and *Pump Boys and Dinettes* for the Broadhollow Theatre.

For Lisa Ann's full bio check out

[http://www.primestage.com/shows\\_and\\_tickets/index.html](http://www.primestage.com/shows_and_tickets/index.html)



**Hannah's Mother/Gitl: Dana Hardy** Dana is excited to be playing Hannah's Mother/Gitl. Last year, she played Mrs. Winterbottom in *Walk Two Moons*. In addition to teaching at Shady Side Academy, her Pittsburgh credits include Tessa in *800 Words: The Transmigration of Philip K. Dick* (Caravan Theater of Pittsburgh), Deborah in *The Umbrella Man* directed by Robert Miller, Daisy in Amy Hartman's world premiere of *The Chicken*

*Snake* (The REP), and *Jane Eyre* in *After Mrs. Rochester* (Quantum).

# PUTTING IT ON STAGE

## Meet the Cast



**Hannah's Father/First New Male Voice/Guard 1: John Michnya** (Hannah's Father/Guard #1/First New Male Voice) is making his Prime Stage debut. Recent acting credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bottom) with Oakland Shakespeare Co., *Midnight Radio Jr.* (Voice Artist) at Bricolage, and *This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing* (Narrator) for Shakespeare in the Schools.



**Shmuel/Guard 2: Andrew Miller** is from Philadelphia. He has studied classical acting at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic art, as well as the Stanislavsky System at the University of Pittsburgh. He most recently played Romeo for Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks and is honored to take on such an important and necessary project.



**Fayge/Leye: Jenny Malarkey** is honored to be a part of this project. Her first appearance with Prime Stage was in 2011 as Ismene in *Antigone*. Recently, Jenny toured with The North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, and worked with The Virginia Shakespeare Festival. Locally, she has worked with Unseam'd

Shakespeare Co., Little Lake Theatre, Ghostlight Theatre Troupe, Gemini Theatre, CMU, and is a proud graduate of Wake Forest University.



**Nazi Officer/Barber/Cello: Max Pavel** is excited and grateful to be making his Prime Stage debut. He is a senior film and theater student at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as a graduate of the Stella Adler Studio of Acting. His credits with the U. of Pittsburgh Stages include Anthony in *Random Acts of Violence*,

Dad in *WASP*, Prep in *Columbinus*, and Chorus in *Venus* this past fall. He recently made his Quantum Theater debut in *Pantagleize*.



**Aunt Eva/Esther's Mother: Mary Quinlan** is thrilled to make her debut with The Prime Stage Theatre. Mary recently appeared in *The Mousetrap* with The Baldwin Players and *Motherhood Out Loud* and *Madeline's Christmas* at the Little Lake Theatre. Mary has also

performed with regional and community theatres in North Carolina, Michigan, and New York.



**Aaron/Reuven/Wolfe: Jonathan Parker** is an 11 year old sixth grader at Propel East Charter School in Turtle Creek, He has appeared in the Pittsburgh CLO production of *A Musical Christmas Carol* in 2013 (Turkey Boy and Cratchit Child), the Pittsburgh CLO Academy production of *The Little Mermaid Jr* in 2013 (Prince Eric). Jonathan enjoys musical theater, and attends the Pittsburgh CLO Academy.



**Grandma Belle/First New Female Voice: Lynne Franks** is thrilled to be working on another premier after being involved in Prime Stage Theatre productions of *Jack and Rochelle*, *The Westing Game*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and *Walk Two Moons*. She also enjoyed playing in the classics like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Inherit the Wind*, at Prime Stage, *The Subject was Roses* at Little Lake Theatre and *The Skin of Our Teeth* at Open Stage Theatre.



**Yitzchak/Commandant: Charles Beikert** is honored to make his Prime Stage debut. Previously he worked with Ms. Goldsmith in *The Rocky Horror Show* playing the role of Narrator. Other recent roles include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* with Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks and Stephano in *The Tempest* or *The Enchanted Isle* with the Unseam'd Shakespeare Company.



**Transport Train Mother/Blokova: Ivy Steinberg** is honored to help bring this important story to life. This is her 3rd performance with Prime Stage, previously playing Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter* and Sugar in *Walk Two Moons*. Ivy has performed across the country and locally with South Park Theatre,

Pittsburgh New Works Festival, Pittsburgh Savoyards, and McKeesport Little Theater where she won Best Actress for Suzy in *Wait until Dark*.



**Badchan/Second New Male Voice/Tattooing Prisoner: Tom Sarp** was recently seen in Pittsburgh in BMG Production of *The Rocky Horror Show* where he portrayed the role of Dr. Scott. He holds his BFA Degree from Point Park University and has performed Off-Broadway in NYC, as well as Regional theatres in NY, Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh.



**Third New Male Voice/Clarinetist: Ken Lutz** is a Prime Stage veteran, having appeared in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Of Mice and Men*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and *Walk Two Moons*. *The Devil's Arithmetic* gives him the opportunity to merge his passions of theatre and music. Ken plays clarinet in the East

Winds Symphonic Band and the Edgewood Symphony Orchestra.

## PUTTING IT ON STAGE

### An Actor's Journal



It is an exciting opportunity for any actor to originate a role for a brand new show! Actress and PST Education Coordinator, Ivy Steinberg give us a peek into her journal as she shares her experiences during the rehearsal and workshop process of *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

3/5 - Table work. Starting a new work. Really love being involved in something that's never been done before. As this is a new work based on true stories, true history, it is important that we as a cast fully understand what we are getting into...

3/15 - Blocked scenes 6-10. Exhausted! Emotionally and physically. This has been an extremely emotional night. We ended a little early as everyone seemed to have had enough crying.

Our director to one young actress as she gave her a comforting hug...  
"It's ok... it's good... that's where we need to go."

3/17 - About half way done with all the blocking. Feeling good about being really ready for the performances. Rehearsed the slap tonight. Poor Julia gets slapped a lot in this play!

3/23 - This is a very emotional show. I'm really being stretch as an actor with my 2 different characters in back to back scenes. How do I go from being a normal nice person into an extremely damaged hateful person in a snap?

3/29 - It's hard to pull myself out of the story. Just listening to it; I choke up.

As a person (not an actor), I have to focus on the hope! We do this because we must never forget, but also to remember the hope, the love. The survival of HUMANITY.

This process has me reflecting on what it means to be human. Human with a fragile mind.

Director's advice to our young star: "This is life or death. It's now or never - something in her subconscious mind is telling her that she will be leaving. Our subconscious minds have a way of slicing up what we see and making sense out of it."



3/30 - We literally lost an actor tonight. I've never experienced this before. We are all worried.

3/31 - New script and new Grandpa.

Our lost actor dropped out. The play was too much for him. Wow. Luckily we have another actor who is ready to step up to the challenge right away.



# PUTTING IT ON STAGE

## An Actor's Journal



4/13 - Everything is coming together. Our new actor is in place and we are starting to get a really a good flow. Today is our first day of running the show with the director taking notes. It's always a little scary making this jump.

I'm trying out a Russian accent today. I know it will need work, but it is really good to make this character different. I'm excited about this opportunity to stretch myself as an actor.

Thoughts... Being of Jewish heritage... does this affect me in a different way?

It's been hard for me to promote this show the way I do other shows I've been in. It is so important to tell this story but also so hard!

4/22 - Started rehearsal with notes. We had very few. Director: "We are a week ahead of ourselves. We need to be in the space to improve ourselves."

Got a taste of the music for the show... I'm so excited to music too. I'm a part of something... Unique... Important... Original. I'm helping make this amazing story come to life.

4/25 - Barry - the playwright is here this weekend. So, this is a "working" rehearsal... a rehearsal to make sure everything is working. Advice from the Artistic Director: "Do it at performance level."

Barry seemed pleased.

Noticed today... my Blokova character is talked about almost as much as she is on stage. Makes my character research easy.

Relieved to learn today that I don't have to wear a bald cap. This will make my preshow prep way less and way easier.

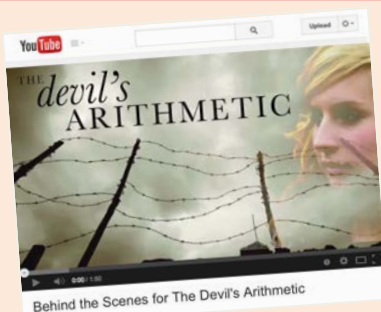
4/29 - One of our stars has bronchitis! Oh no!!!

Today we tested/experimented with the bald caps. Julia's looks amazingly real. As I am now lucky enough to not have to do the bald cap process, I've volunteered to help do the pin-curls and make-up and learn about putting on the bald caps. Looking forward to learning a new skill.

4/30 - Director's advice to everyone: "You have to be in the moment. Ready. In the now."



have original



Go to PST's You Tube Channel to learn more and to check out how a bald cap was fitted for the production of *The Devil's Arithmetic*

[www.youtube.com/user/primestagechannel](http://www.youtube.com/user/primestagechannel)



# ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE

## House rules (and we don't mean your mama's house!)

It goes without saying that when most children today hear the word "theatre" they think "Oh, MOVIE theatre." And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theatres: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there.

But live theatre is just that: it's LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience, something that we at Prime Stage think is the beauty of the theatre experience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one. As an audience member, **you** are the final and most important component of this production of *The Devil's Arithmetic*.

### Thinking Like a Critic

Critics play an important role in theatre. They are often the first to see the show and can write a wonderful - or horrendous - review for all the world to see. Prepare your students to attend the show by "thinking like a critic."

**Read** the following questions before the show.

**Think** about the questions as you're watching the show and write your answers in a notebook or journal during intermission or on the bus ride home.

**Write** a critique of the show based on your responses.

PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4-1.5



Curriculum  
Connections

**Please review the following "house rules" with your students prior to attending our production:**

- Please stay together with your group and wait for an usher to help you find your seat.
- Please turn all cell phones & pager **completely off** before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave. (FYI, the theater will be dark, and light from your phone shines up on your face when you text. Everybody, including the actors on stage, can see you!)
- No photography or videotaping.
- Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the play.
- No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance.
- We encourage active listening and appropriate responses such as laughing or clapping. Please do not talk during the performance!
- Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping. (FYI – the actors really love to see how much you enjoyed the show!)

PDE Academic Standards 1.6, 9.1

**Actor choices**—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

**Designer choices**—What design element captured your attention the most –the set, costumes, lights, or sound –and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? Were the design elements more descriptive or suggestive? What symbols were in the designs?

**Director choices**—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story?

**Interpretation**—Did the director make a statement about life now? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

**Evaluation**—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

**Remember—it's all about choices!**

Whether you loved the play or not, identify the specific choices that made you feel that way!





Prime Stage Theatre performs all of its shows at The New Hazlett Theater in Pittsburgh's Historic North Side.

**New Hazlett Theater**  
6 Allegheny Square East  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212



**PST Education Box Office**  
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## CLASSROOM RESOURCES

### INTERNET RESOURCES

A talk with Jane Yolen

[http://www.goodconversations.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=133:a-talk-with-jane-yolen&catid=40:good-conversation&Itemid=91](http://www.goodconversations.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=133:a-talk-with-jane-yolen&catid=40:good-conversation&Itemid=91)

A complete history of the holocaust, video, survival stories, WWII and much more at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org>

The Holocaust – The History Channel

<http://www.history.com/topics/the-holocaust>

### DVD or VIDEO RESOURCES

**Anne Frank Remembered** This documentary brings to life the writer of "The Diary of Anne Frank." The Holocaust documentary won an Academy Award for best documentary in 1995.

**As Seen Through These Eyes** This Holocaust documentary is narrated by poet Maya Angelou and recounts stories given by survivors of the time.

**Lodz Ghetto** This vivid Holocaust documentary may be disturbing to viewers. Created from news reels and photographs, the film shows daily life for the Jews from Lodz, Poland after being forced from their homes and into the ghetto region.

Did you enjoy reading *The Devil's Arithmetic*?

Check out this list of similar books!

***Behind the Bedroom Wall*** by Laura E. Williams

In 1939, ten-year-old Korinna Rehme becomes a member of her local a Nazi youth group. She believes that Hitler is helping the world by dealing with what he calls the "Jewish problem." When Korinna discovers that her parents are secretly hiding Jews in their house and helping them to escape the city, she is shocked. And her loyalties are put to an extreme test when a neighbor tips off the Gestapo

***Anne Frank and Me*** by Cherie Bennett & Jeff Gottesfeld

In one moment Nicole Burns's life changes forever. The sound of gunfire at an Anne Frank exhibit, the panic, the crowd, and Nicole is no longer Nicole. Whiplashed through time and space, she wakes to find herself a privileged Jewish girl living in Nazi-occupied Paris during World War II.

***Daniel's Story*** by Carol Matas

Daniel barely remembers leading a normal life before the Nazis came to power in 1933. He can still picture once being happy and safe, but memories of those days are fading as he and his family face the dangers threatening Jews in Hitler's Germany in the late 1930's.

***We Are Witnesses: Five Diaries Of Teenagers Who Died In The Holocaust*** by Jacob Boas

David Rubinowicz, Yitzhak Rudashevski, Moshe Flinker, Eva Heyman, and Anne Frank were all teenagers during World War II. They lived in different parts of Europe. They had different lives. But they all had something in common: They were Jewish, and therefore, under Hitler's twisted rule, they were five of the six million men, women, and children sentenced to death.



## COMPREHENSION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMON CORE

Prime Stage Theatre aligns with the Common Core State Standards

English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

Students attend theater performances of adaptations of Literature on the High School and Middle School reading lists.

**Reading** *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (2 & 3) **Language** *Knowledge of Language* (3)



Students participate in active discussions and Q&A sessions with actors, directors and designers after each performance.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)



Students warm-up and improvise during in-school workshops led by specialized arts education teachers.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)

Writing is an essential part of each workshop! Students create narratives, defend a claim and convey experiences. They even collaborate on original plays, stories and poems.

**Writing** *Text Types and Purposes* (1 2 & 3) *Production and Distribution of Writing* (4 & 5) *Research to Build and Present Knowledge* (7 8 & 9) *Range of Writing* (10) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1 & 2) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (6)



Our students read & analyze literature. They study and perform scenes! They examine characters and relate them to personal experiences.

**Reading** *Key Ideas and Details* (1 2 & 3) *Craft and Structure* (4 5 & 6) *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7 8 & 9) *Range or Reading and Level of Text Complexity* (10) **Writing** *Text Types and Purposes* (3) *Research to Build and Present Knowledge* (7 & 9) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (4 5 & 6)



Students present their own original ideas and observations in our workshops.

**Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 2 & 3) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 5 & 6) **Language** *Conventions of Standard English* (1) *Knowledge of Language* (3) *Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* (5 & 6)

Students use technology, including the Internet, to communicate with other students from schools in Washington and Allegheny Counties!

**Reading** *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas* (7 8 & 9) **Writing** *Production and Distribution of Writing* (6) **Speaking & Listening** *Comprehension and Collaboration* (1 & 2) *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas* (4 5 & 6)





Thank you for using this Resource Guide.

To make sure we are meeting your needs and those of your students, we would appreciate hearing from you about how you used this guide and if there are topics or areas you would like us to address in future ones.

You can email your comments to Monica Stephenson at [MStephenson@primestage.com](mailto:MStephenson@primestage.com). Thank you.