

# The pianist by roman polanski: analyzing the character szpilman

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After seeing the Pianist, directed by Roman Polanski, I was amazed that the protagonist, Wladyslaw Szpilman was able to survive the Holocaust. Critics and historians base his survival on many different factors, luck, Szpilman's skills, and help from others. I believe that all these factors were responsible for the protagonist's survival. However, I do believe that luck was the main factor.

For example, although Szpilman was supposed to be sent to Treblinka with his family, his friend warned him to not aboard the train. The train was sent to Treblinka, were Szpilman's family was most likely executed. There are many times were Szpilman gets lucky and escapes death by just the string of a hair. As a viewer, I was amazed that he was able to survive the Holocaust and not get discovered by the Nazis. He almost got caught by the Nazis for supporting the Jewish resistance in the ghetto.

In one scene, we see that Szpilman, who is the cook for the Jewish workers in the ghettos, is helping smuggle weapons into the ghetto through bags of grains. When the skeptical Nazi official opens the bag, he does not find the pistols, instead he finds a bag of corn. He warns Szpilman to not lie to him again about the contents of the bags. Again, luck was able to help Szpilman escape death. Aside from luck, other factors help Szpilman survive the Holocaust. The support and help of other people is crucial to his survival.

As mentioned above, Szpilman's friend was able to prevent him from boarding the train to Auschwitz. Non-Jews also helped Szpilman amid the high risk of getting caught. Dorota, Szpilman's friend and colleague, and her

husband are incredibly crucial to Szpilman's survival. They offer him an apartment to hide in after the ghetto is liquidated.

Furthermore, Dorota calls a doctor to help Szpilman. Towards the end of the movie the SS officer hides Szpilman in the attic of a house, and offers him food, water, and clothes. This brings me to my last point. Although Szpilman's talents seemed to be little to no use for the Germans, his skill for playing the piano kept him alive. The Germans allowed the young, fit, and physically skilled men to work in concentration camps and ghettos until their death. When Szpilman drops the bricks at the work site, he proves that he's not capable of physical labor, and is told to work in the kitchen. However, towards the end of the movie the SS officer requires Szpilman to play him a song on the piano. The officer is so moved by the song and by Szpilman's talents that he offers Szpilman food, shelter, and clothing. With all these factors playing a crucial role in Szpilman's survival it is difficult to argue that only one factor contributed to his survival.