

The pianist



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The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945 by Wladyslaw Szpilman is a book that clearly describes the inhuman acts that were taking place during World War II. The author, having written the book immediately after the war, captured the situation on the ground in a vivid manner that grabs the attention of the reader. The writer depicts the human race as one which has been overtaken by the differences. They exist due to divisions on the basis of religion, ethnicity and political affiliation. As a result, people have become inhuman all in the name of belonging to different communities or subgroups in the society.

Since the author is a Jew, he largely focuses on the oppressions that his ethnic group had to overcome in their bid to survive through the war. In this book, the writer recounts about his life in the Warsaw Ghetto and how he escaped. He found himself in the middle of nowhere, without any certainties about his survival through those trying times. This is an indication that it was an extremely unsafe period. These facts from a one man's life also clearly show the misery that the rejected religions had to suffer. It was not until he came across a German soldier that he felt he had secured some refuge. The soldier helped him get liberated (Harwood, 2005).

The significance of the friendship with the German soldier is that it was by sheer luck that the author managed to sail through the hard times alive. It also illustrates that the people torturing the minority groups were the humans who had decided to forsake the calling of being good to the oppressed. On the contrary, they had chosen to gang up and harass them. This clearly shows how subdivisions, created in the human race, had

overpowered men and women at the time to the extent that they could not act on their conscience (Shirli, 2005).

The author goes on to describe how social classes affected the wrath of World War II. The poor did not cross paths of the rich. However, as for the writer, he managed to get through to the wealthy through playing the piano. He often encountered them at the bar. They discussed business, while the poor remained stranded not knowing what to do about the indigence they were experiencing. This element of the book's plot is significant as it shows that music was the only link between the oppressed and oppressors. Culture became a uniting mechanism since it was not based on one's status or social class. Thus, this is also another indication that it would have been possible to foster peace among people and stop the fighting.

The feature of the book which can not be omitted during the analysis is the objectiveness of the description. The writer allows a reader to see everything with his own eyes, but at the same time, his narrative is far from being a complaint. W. Szpilman gives a picture from his own life and leaves it to a reader to feel emotions and make conclusions.

The author's purpose of writing this book was to paint a clear picture of the situation during the war. I believe that he met the intention. The book helps readers add images to the events of the war. It depicts people who were neglected and abandoned. Moreover, it describes the suffering through which that they had to go. The only reason for their woes was belonging to a different minority group. The author's tone throughout the book captures the

attention of readers to the extent that they can feel what the tortured people had to endure.

Above all, the author emphasizes the fact that the oppressors had an option but chose to be ruthless. They could have helped the people being tortured, but they did not. The book teaches readers the lesson that it is important to follow one's conscience, just in the way the German officer did.

The book is a must read for anyone hoping to get a broader picture of the events that took place during World War II. a