

Handout

We May Not Have Another Chance

Sonia Weitz was a young teenager in Poland when, in 1941, she and her family were forced to enter the Kraków ghetto. In 1943, Sonia, her older sister Blanca, and their father were sent to Płaszów, a slave-labour camp south of Kraków. In her book *I Promised I Would Tell*, she writes:

Although men and women lived in separate parts of the camp, the two groups did manage to have contact with each other. For example, on one occasion I was sent to the ghetto with a cleanup detail. While there I found a jacket, a precious warm jacket. I smuggled it back to Płaszów to my father. It was comforting to think that the jacket would keep him warm that winter. On another day, I sneaked into my father's barracks on the other side of the barbed wire fence. While I was there, I met a boy who was about my age—14 or 15. The boy was playing a harmonica, an offense punishable by death. My father and I listened to the music, and my father said to me, "You and I never had a chance to dance together" . . . and so we danced. It is such a precious image, a bizarre and beautiful gift.¹

Weitz and her sister were separated from their father soon after this moment. In December 1944, the two sisters were transferred to Auschwitz. They would never see their father again. The sisters were forced to march across Poland from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp in Germany. They were later transferred to two other camps and at last liberated from Mauthausen, in Austria, in May 1945 by US troops.

¹ Sonia Schreiber Weitz, *I Promised I Would Tell* (Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves, Inc., 2012), 35.