



The Risk of Sorrow: Conversations with Holocaust Survivor, Helen Handler

Valerie Foster

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What can the few remaining survivors of the Holocaust teach us before they are gone? What is it that hasn't yet been said? A high school teacher is given the opportunity to find out when one such survivor chooses her to preserve her final testament. In *The Risk of Sorrow*, Valerie Foster, an Irish-Catholic public school teacher, takes us on a compelling journey through her complex relationship with Helen Handler, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz in her eighties, who challenges her to listen as she bares her soul about one of history's greatest atrocities. More than a Holocaust memoir, *The Risk of Sorrow* is an intimate conversation between two women of different generations and cultures who together examine deep questions of faith, forgiveness, love and survival, and find a profound friendship in their mutual exploration. In Helen's words and actions, we discover a defiant public witness and philosopher of the Holocaust with a mission to teach our children values that should never be forgotten. But through Valerie's eyes, we also see the beautifully fragile woman, deeply traumatized by her experiences, and who must, each day, find the strength to love and to live with the risk of sorrow. "The Risk of Sorrow may well prove to be a classic of post-Holocaust survivor literature, as it transcends memoir and invites us to listen in on a conversation that is of a loving friendship, made from a telling of unimaginable loss and nearly incomprehensible rebirth. It celebrates the courage of life during and after the Holocaust, with unblinking candor of the horror and goodness of humanity." --- David Kader, co-founder of the Phoenix Holocaust Survivors Association and professor of law at Arizona State University "This is a beautiful, honest portrayal not only of survival, but of a friendship built from the telling of such a devastating experience. Foster brings Helen's voice to life, exemplifying her strength and drive to teach everyone she meets just how fragile life can be. Haunting, but a story that must be told." --- Kim Klett, Regional Education Corps, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum "Among the most powerful narratives on the Holocaust, a new and brilliant classic emerges: *The Risk of Sorrow*. Valerie Foster's interviews with Helen Handler, a survivor, are heart-wrenching, searing, and above all, real. The story pulls us back to a time that no one should forget. The powerful Foster/Handler stories will remain with me forever." --- David N. Bernstein, PhD "In *The Risk of Sorrow*," Valerie Foster reveals the story of her friendship with Auschwitz survivor Helen Handler. Conversation by conversation, they journey in recording Helen's inspiring biography, her legacy. A stirring reminder of the power of friendship and the strength of the human spirit." --- Emily S. Groeber, literature teacher at Red Mountain High School

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