

*Voices from Yesterday: Letters for Tomorrow*

**Sheba Plamthottam  
Upland High School  
Upland, California  
Survivor Oral Testimony by Georgia Gabor**

**First Place, High School Prose**

February 7, 2007

Dear Mrs. Gabor,

I would like to thank you for turning the voices from yesterday into letters for tomorrow, for enabling each and every one of us to keep hope alive—to prevent the truth about the Holocaust from being buried by denial. Your incredible struggle for survival echoes Professor Elie Wiesel’s statement, “The opposite of love is not hate; it’s indifference.” Indifference—the true word that was the Holocaust. There were far more villains than saints, there were far more Nazis than rescuers, and there were far more cowards than those brave enough to take a stand. When we remember the courageous deeds of the few righteous gentiles, we must not forget the silence of the many bystanders.

Like poison gas it crept under their noses, invisible to the naked eye—suddenly choking, suffocating—torture, death—the Holocaust. It advanced slowly but rapidly. It engulfed a continent—first Germany, then Austria, Poland, Denmark, Norway... finally Hungary... Budapest—where the last remaining large Jewish population existed. Your family and fellow Jews were taken aback by the sudden mass murder committed. Yet, you would not give up hope.

The odds of a Jew surviving during this time were one in a million. The odds of a Jew surviving, unscathed, were even less. You, Georgia Gabor—a voice from the past—were captured three times by the Nazis, but miraculously managed to escape. Miracle

after miracle, you escaped untouched—perhaps saved by God for the sake of keeping your story alive—for the sake of keeping hope alive. You stated, “I do believe God had preserved me. . . to leave for posterity the documentation from my own experiences.”

By coming face to face with death and fending for yourself, you truly are an inspiration. Your eyes were witness to murder—so gruesome, so inhumane. Bodies hanging upside down; half-beaten, half-living Jews herded into a tunnel, the horror of the cries and screams, thousands of rats scurrying across your face in that tunnel—you described everything in a calm, controlled manner. One question I would like to ask if I ever had the honor to speak with you: How did you, as a girl only fifteen years of age, manage to keep your hopes high during this terrible time?

As you stated, “We honestly believed it couldn’t happen to us.” Your story taught me that indifference is the epitome of evil and that the shock of the Holocaust was also a result of naiveté, which must be avoided today.

The passionate message you conveyed about the Holocaust can only have significance if people respond. I hope to do my part by spreading the word about the Holocaust.

Your story clearly portray Professor Wiesel’s message: “Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings.”

Thank you for sharing your memoir with the world.

Sincerely,

Sheba Plamthottam