

Cornelia liked the irregular green shapes scattered around the drawing. When she arrived home from the studio, she told her mother, "When I grow up, I'm going to make parks."

Her mother said, "You want to be a landscape architect."

"Yes."

"That's a difficult job." Since landscape architects in Germany at that time also ran construction companies, her mother added, "And you will have to drive a bulldozer."

Cornelia didn't miss a beat. "Good!"



By the end of 1932, Cornelia's parents were growing concerned about Hitler's rising power. On New Year's Eve, her father made her mother promise they'd leave Germany, and soon.

Twelve days later, he was killed in an avalanche while skiing. Cornelia lay in bed, numb, but her mother insisted she get up. Yes, Papa was dead, but life must go on. The family would even continue to go on skiing holidays in Switzerland, just as they had before. "He could as easily have died crossing a street," her mother said. "You can't stop living."

Two weeks after the tragic death of her father, Cornelia hurried in from the cold. Her mother was talking to the cook about whether to have roast beef or lamb for dinner. Before going to her room to work on the next chapter of a new book, she said, "Today President Hindenburg made Hitler Chancellor." Cornelia didn't know exactly what that meant, but she knew it wasn't good.

Determined to keep life as normal as possible, Mrs. Hahn allowed her daughters to continue English and French lessons and to go swimming in Lake Wannsee. Cornelia learned to ride dressage and do circus work on a horse inherited from Jewish friends who were emigrating. Mrs. Hahn arranged musical events for Cornelia and her younger sister to take part in – a performance of *Wir bauen eine neue Stadt* (We are building a new city), an opera by Hindemith, and Haydn's *Kinder-Symphonie*. Not musically talented, Cornelia played the triangle.

By the time Cornelia went to high school, there were no other Jewish

girls in her class because many Jewish families had already emigrated. It was not unusual, throughout Germany, to hear cries of "Heil Hitler!" and to see the Nazi salute.

In 1935, to exert even more control over citizens, the Nazis began burning books. Still Cornelia's mother expressed no concern that her daughter might run into problems with Nazi officers as she rode the six miles (10 km) to school on her bicycle. But as time went on, it became more and more difficult to ignore the fact that the Nazi regime was changing how they lived.

One Sunday in 1935, four officers of the most powerful Nazi organization in Germany came to the Hahn's home. They wore high, shining, black boots.

Their faces expressionless, they pushed into the dining room where the family was eating. They insisted on inspecting the kitchen, too, for evidence that the Hahns might be breaking a new law that dictated that once a month everyone must eat a one-pot soup – *ein Topfgericht* – instead of their usual Sunday dinner. If the Hahns were eating roast beef, or anything else they were used to having before the new law was passed, the officers would have an excuse to arrest them.



In 1935, to exert even more control over citizens, the Nazis began burning books. Still Cornelia's mother expressed no concern that her daughter might run into problems .

Throughout the ominously quiet ordeal, Cornelia held her breath, asking herself over and over how this could be happening. The family had done nothing wrong and was hardly even Jewish. They celebrated Hanukkah, but they had a Christmas tree, too.

But it was happening. The smell of the officers' uniforms was in the house, the marks of their boot heels on the floor, and Cornelia was terrified.

Finally the officers finished their inspection. Cornelia's mother politely asked them to leave.



When Cornelia was fifteen she could run – faster than all the other girls. With