

SIGNS *of* SURVIVAL

A MEMOIR OF THE
HOLOCAUST

RENEE HARTMAN WITH JOSHUA M. GREENE

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To my two children, David and Elizabeth,
and my nephew and nieces,
Ira, Hetty, and Sara

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The Sound of Boots

RENEE: IN 1943, GERMAN soldiers rounded up the Jews living in my city, Bratislava, and sent them to death camps to be killed. There would be eight to twelve soldiers marching together from house to house, knocking on doors, and yelling, “Get ready to leave! You have one hour!” I remember the stomping of their boots on the cobblestoned streets.

My parents, younger sister, and I lived in a fourth-floor apartment, and when I heard the sound of

those boots, I ran to warn my family. Then we rushed into a room at the back of the apartment and hid. When the soldiers knocked on our door, we didn't answer and stayed as quiet as possible.

I was ten years old then, and my sister was eight. The responsibility was on me to warn everyone when the soldiers were coming because my sister and both my parents were deaf.

I was my family's ears.