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European Jews were persecuted for centuries and discriminated against well into the 20th century. When Adolf Hitler's militant, highly antisemitic Nazi Party grew in popularity in the early 1930s, the atmosphere was ripe for disaster.

1933: THE NAZI STATE BEGINS	52
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Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. Six months later democracy in the country was dead. The Nazis instituted a national boycott of Jewish businesses and began to enact laws that would push Jews out of German society.



1934: TRIUMPH OF THE WILL	72
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With the death of German President Paul von Hindenburg, Hitler stood as the unchallenged ruler of Germany. Meanwhile, "paper violence" against Jews continued, as new laws forced more and more Jews out of schools and the professions.

1935: STEPS TOWARD DESTRUCTION	84
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In the fall of 1935, the Nazis enacted the "Nuremberg Laws." Henceforth, citizenship would be granted to those of "German or related blood," rendering Jews stateless. Meanwhile, the German military flexed its muscle, retaking the Saarland.

1936: THE NAZIS' GAMES	96
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Hitler put on quite a show at the 1936 Summer Olympics. Evidence of the Nazis' blatant antisemitism, such as signs that stated "Jews are unwanted here," were removed, only to return as soon as the Olympics were over.

1937: QUIET BEFORE THE STORM	110
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In a secret conference, Hitler informed his High Command of his racial, geopolitical, and military plans to dominate Europe. Meanwhile, in the spring, Jewish merchants in Germany lost their businesses without justification.



1938: THE END OF ILLUSIONS	120
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In March 1938 the Nazis annexed Austria, bringing 190,000 more Jews under Nazi control. In November riots erupted throughout Germany. Scores of Jews were killed and thousands injured in what became known as *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass).

1939: THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS	148
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World War II began September 1, 1939, when German troops invaded Poland. On September 21 SS Security Chief Reinhard Heydrich declared that all Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland would be concentrated in urban ghettos.

1940: **MACHINERY OF HATRED**

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In 1940 German forces occupied Norway, Denmark, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, signaling doom for Jews in those countries. In Poland, the Warsaw and Łódź ghettos were sealed, while a concentration camp opened at Auschwitz.

1941: **MASS MURDER**

210

The German Army invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and on its heels were the *Einsatzgruppen*, special kill squads that would shoot to death hundreds of thousands of Jews in western Soviet territories and the Baltic States.

1942: **THE "FINAL SOLUTION"**

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At the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, top Nazi officials laid the groundwork for the "Final Solution": the complete annihilation of European Jewry. By summer six death camps were in full operation, gassing Jews by the thousands. In 1942 alone, 2.7 million European Jews were murdered.



1943: **DEATH AND RESISTANCE**

404

The Germans continued their systematic murder of Jews, Gypsies, and other targeted groups, shipping trainloads of victims to death camps on an almost daily basis. Aware that they were slated to die, Jewish prisoners revolted at many sites.

1944: **DESPERATE ACTS**

504

The Nazis continued deportations to death camps in 1944, including more than 400,000 Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz. As the year wore on, however, the Allied and Soviet armies pushed steadily into German territory.



1945: **LIBERATION AND REBUILDING**

578

With the Allied and Soviet armies closing in, the Nazis evacuated camps. At the liberation of the camps, Soviet and Allied soldiers discovered many thousands of emaciated prisoners. More than six million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust.

1946: **THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE**

638

At the Nuremberg Trial, the International Military Tribunal convicted 19 top Nazi officials, including Hermann Göring. Meanwhile, antisemitic pogroms continued, especially in Poland, while tens of thousands of Jewish displaced persons were still without homes.

Epilogue: **THE AFTERMATH**

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In 1948 the Jewish National Council proclaimed the state of Israel. In the decades that have followed the Holocaust, survivors—haunted by their memories—have struggled to understand their ordeals and rebuild their lives.

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