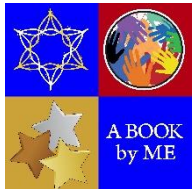


75th Anniversary: 1945-2020

A BOOK by ME Remembers the End of WWII

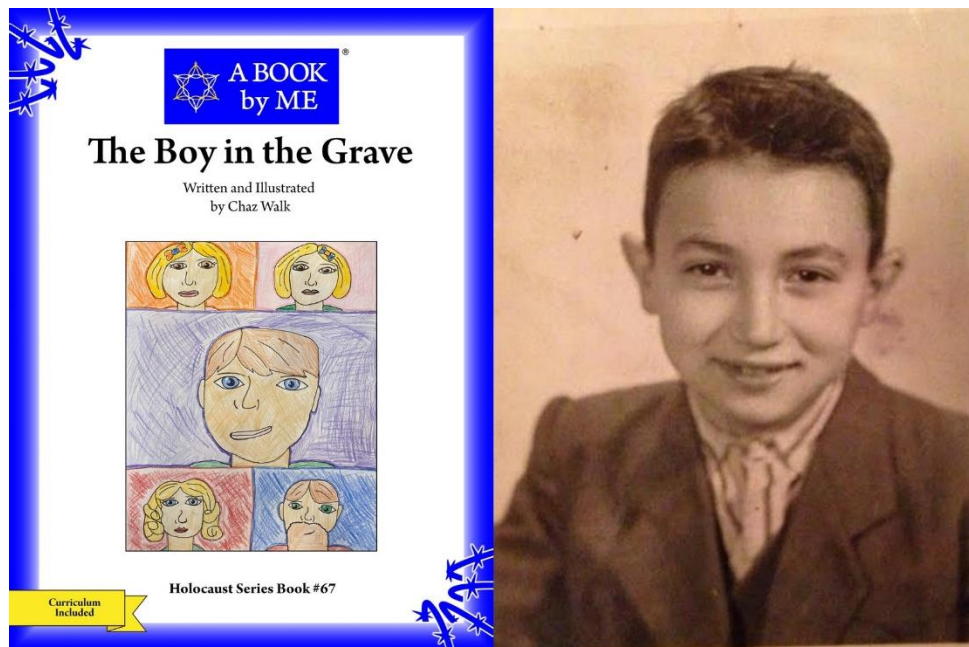
understandingworks.org

"If I told you my story, you would be amazed."



The Boy in the Grave Readers Theater

Based on the book by Chaz Walk
This title found in Victims to Victors book set
at understandingworks.org



#determination

Harold was a young boy whose wise Jewish parents knew they must hide to survive the war. They made arrangements with a farmer for their family of five to hide under the floor of their barn until the war ended. They called their hiding place the "grub," which means grave in Yiddish. Over nineteen months later they learned the war was coming to an end and it was safe to come out. They hadn't used their legs for so long that Harold couldn't walk and his mom could only crawl away.

Cast:

[Narrator](#)

[Miriam, Harold's sister](#)

[Harold Kasimow](#)

[Rita, Harold's sister](#)

[Mina, Harold's grandmother](#)

[Catholic Priest](#)

[Marsha, Harold's mother](#)

[Brave farmer](#)

[Norman, Harold's father](#)



Harold Kasimow with young author/illustrator Chaz Walk

Scene 1

Poland before the war

Narrator: I'm Chaz Walk, your narrator. I'm also the young author and artist of a book about a Jewish Holocaust survivor named Harold Kasimow. Today you will hear what I learned about Harold's amazing survival story.

Whole Cast together: We are never too young to fight against all kinds of hatred and discrimination.

Harold's grandmother: Our family lived in a small village in Poland. My grandson Harold was born in 1937. I loved all my children and grandchildren but there was something about Harold. He held a very special place in my heart and I believe I held a very special place in his heart too.

Harold: A Jewish grandmother is called a *Bubbe*. I always felt so loved and safe in my *bubbe's* arms.

Father: I was a fisherman which became a good business for me. We had two houses since I needed to be in many different places for my job. Before the war, times were good and we were a happy family.

Mother: We lived in a small village in Poland where Christians and Jews lived in peace. We worked hard and enjoyed watching our children growing up.

Sister Rita: We loved working together as a family to get all the chores done. Back in these days there were no modern conveniences like there are now.

Sister Miriam: We also had some time to play games together with other children in the village.

Scene 2

Poland, WWII

Narrator: When World War II started, times became very dangerous in Europe.

Harold: It was an especially frightening time for the Jews in Poland. I'll never forget when the town's Catholic priest came to us and told my father to run for our lives.

Priest: The Nazis are serious about killing Jews. You must take your family and run immediately. May God go with you.

Whole cast together: Hate and fear of the other led to the murder of millions of people. We must not forget the past so we do not repeat it.

Father: On April 2, 1942, I took my family and ran in the middle of the night. I had no idea where to go or what to do.

Harold: Because my father knew the area well, he found us a hiding place in an attic.

Sister Rita: That didn't last long and next we hid in a forest.

Sister Miriam: It was so frightening to be moving from place to place. I didn't feel safe anywhere.

Mother: It was hard as parents to decide which choice was best for hiding our precious children.

Father: Finally, I convinced a farmer to let us dig a hole and live under his barn. In exchange, I would give him our two houses after the war.

Brave farmer: I knew I was risking my own family to save this fisherman and his family. I can't imagine being a father unable to protect my family. It was the right thing to do.

Harold: As children we were told that living underground in a hole was the best chance we had to survive. It seems unbelievable now but it's true.

Sister Rita: It was like a grave and so frightening being underground. We were afraid to talk for fear of being caught.

Sister Miriam: We couldn't move around either. Day after day, this was our life.

Father: Occasionally I would have to go out to gather food for my family. It was always a very dangerous thing to do.

Harold: On rare occasions, my father would bring us a piece of bread to share. I would kiss my mother's hand on those days as a sign of my happiness.

Narrator: This was life for Harold's family for almost a year and a half. Can you imagine that?

Father: Finally, we got word that the war was coming to an end and we decided to come out of our hole.

Harold: I was now seven years old. My sisters and I were small for our ages and very weak from having so little food. But we were alive.

Sister Miriam: Harold and I hadn't used our legs in so long, we couldn't walk. Our father put us in a sack and carried us out. My mother and sister Rita crawled out of the hole.

Mother: My children could hardly remember what the sun looked like because we had been underground for so long.

Father: Our liberators were Russian soldiers. They crossed themselves when they saw my family come out of our hiding place. Perhaps because we looked so emaciated, and also out of respect to God for the resilience of humans in the face of suffering.

Narrator: Harold's family made their way to a Displaced Persons Camp in Germany run by the Americans. It was a safe place to be with food to eat and medication for those who needed it. There were many other Jewish survivors there. No one had money or ideas what to do next.

Scene 3

U.S.A.

Harold: My father's sister lived in America and finally in 1949, we were able to join her. My first school experience was in New York where I learned English. I didn't speak of the Holocaust for many years.

Harold's grandmother: I'm so proud of my grandson Harold who became a religious studies college professor in Iowa. His life work was bringing people of different faiths together as a path to peace. If anyone knows the importance of that, it's the Jewish people who were hunted and millions were murdered because they were Jews. My grandson is making a difference in this world.

Whole Cast together: We should always remember the power of words. Hateful words can lead to violence and genocide.

Narrator: Harold credits his family's survival to his father's determination to survive. In Poland, it's estimated there were around a million Jewish children before the war and approximately 5,000 survived. Three children were saved by their own father who never gave up.