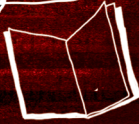


AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

# ANTHONY KESSEL

I remember  
from the glare she  
gave us ... I was  
genuinely scared.



those eyes

Life and death at

stake, including

her own.

# THE BOOK OF NAMES



*I won't be defeated  
now and into the future.  
Please never give up.*

Dangerous  
people.

People you don't  
want to cross.

.. reminded Edie -

as if she really

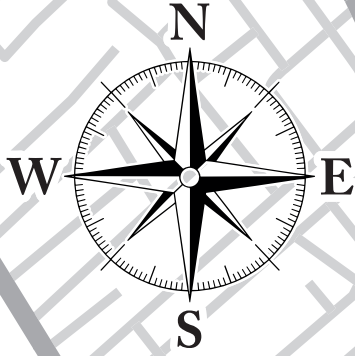
needed any reminding

- that there was very

little time

to spare.





I. Zielińskiej

L. Waryńskiego

Church of Our Lady of Consolation



Dittricha Park



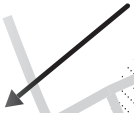
Różalski Ghetto Apartment

Synagogue



S. Okrzei

To Ruda and Bolimów Wood

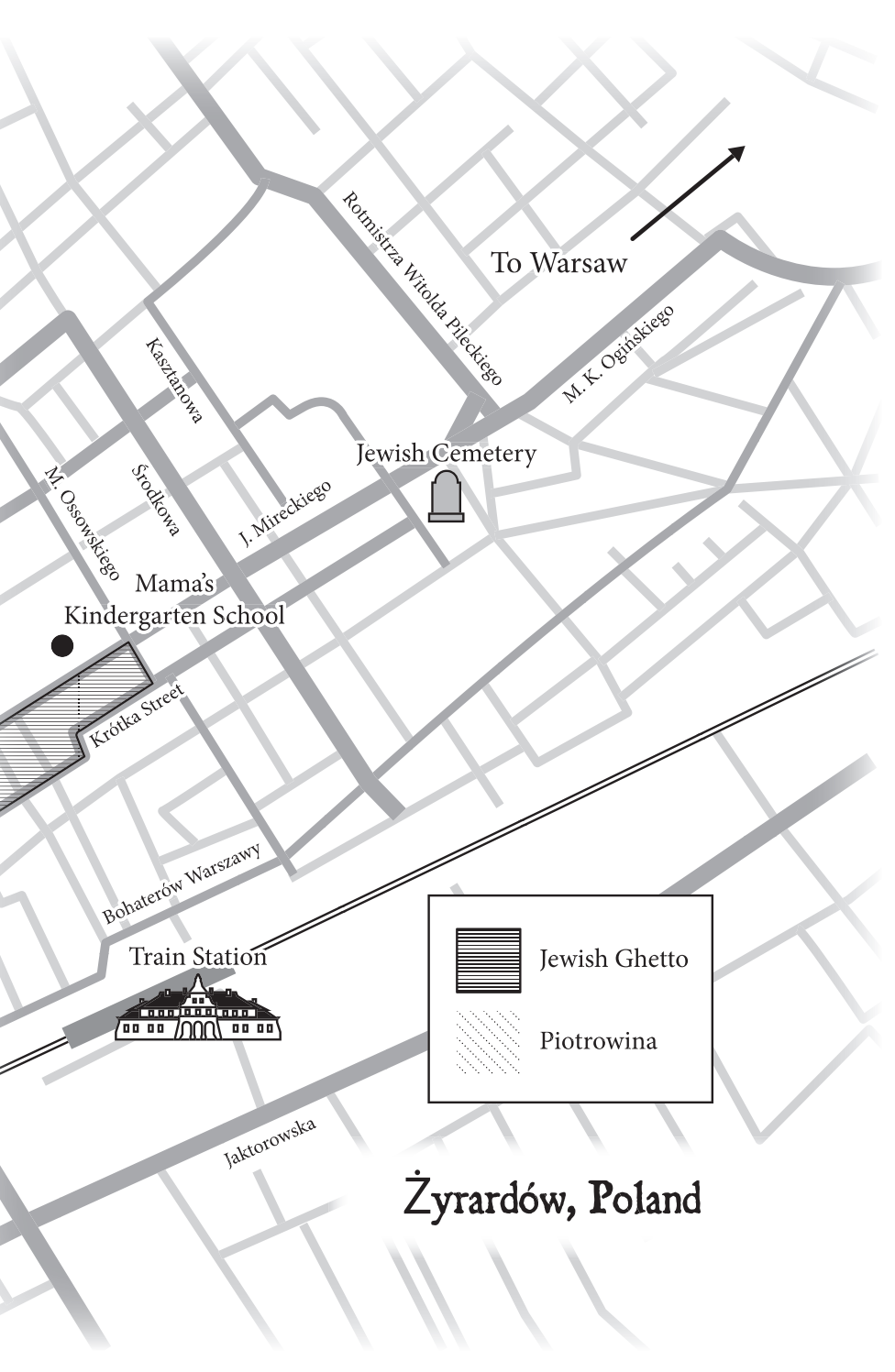


Różalski Family Home



Pisza Gągolina Canal

I. Maja Street



To Warsaw

Rotmistrza Witolda Pileckiego

M. K. Ogińskiego

Kasztanowa

Srodkowa

J. Mireckiego

M. Osowskiego

Jewish Cemetery



Mama's Kindergarten School

Krótka Street

Bohaterów Warszawy

Train Station



Jaktorowska

	Jewish Ghetto
	Piotrowina

Żyrardów, Poland

**ANTHONY  
KESSEL**

THE  
**BOOK OF  
NAMES**



Crown House Publishing Limited

[www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk)

First published by  
Crown House Publishing Limited  
Crown Buildings, Bancyfelin, Carmarthen, Wales, SA33 5ND, UK  
www.crownhouse.co.uk

and

Crown House Publishing Company LLC  
PO Box 2223, Williston, VT 05495, USA  
www.crownhousepublishing.com

© Anthony S. Kessel, 2026.

The right of Anthony S. Kessel to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Cover illustration © Nina Tara, 2026.

The right of Nina Tara to be identified as the illustrator of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2026.

Envelope text break image © designrgb – stock.adobe.com.

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owners. Enquiries should be addressed to Crown House Publishing.

Crown House Publishing has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

**EU GPSR Authorised Representative**

Appointed EU Representative: **Easy Access System Europe Oü**, 16879218  
Address: Mustamäe tee 50, 10621, Tallinn, Estonia  
Contact Details: [gpsr.requests@easproject.com](mailto:gpsr.requests@easproject.com), +358 40 500 3575

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue entry for this book is available from the British Library.

Print ISBN 978-178583777-7  
Mobi ISBN 978-178583806-4  
ePub ISBN 978-178583807-1  
ePDF ISBN 978-178583808-8

LCCN 2026933886

Printed in the UK by  
Clays, Bungay, Suffolk

# CONTENTS

Prologue: Death Comes to Town .....	1
Chapter 1: Downing Street .....	7
Chapter 2: Friendship .....	25
Chapter 3: Family Tree .....	37
Chapter 4: Death Makes its Mark .....	53
Chapter 5: Threads .....	71
Chapter 6: The Ghetto .....	85
Chapter 7: Amsterdam .....	107
Chapter 8: Wild Love .....	131
Chapter 9: The Book of Names .....	155
Chapter 10: Time Tunnel .....	177
Chapter 11: Portobello Road Market .....	191
Chapter 12: Security Breach .....	213
Chapter 13: The Sting .....	239
Chapter 14: All Guns Blazing .....	261
Chapter 15: Home .....	275
<i>Gratitudes</i> .....	303

**'Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet  
sheds on the heel that has crushed it'**

Mark Twain, author of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*  
and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

PROLOGUE

# DEATH COMES TO TOWN

ŻYRARDÓW, POLAND, NOVEMBER 1940

The knock on the front door was very loud, as if metal hitting wood. Maybe the butt of a revolver, Ida wondered, or a rifle.

After only a few seconds the impatient sound came again. Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

‘*Öffne die Tür!* Open the door!’ shouted a foreign voice from outside. ‘*Jetzt!* Now! Or we’ll knock the door down.’ Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

Ida ran to the living room and pulled the net curtains back so she could see who was out front. Men in grey army uniform. ‘It’s the German soldiers, Mummy,’ she whispered anxiously to her mum, Chana, who’d arrived at her side. ‘Four of them. With guns.’

Although the Germany Army had occupied Żyrardów – a small town outside Warsaw – for the past year, this was the moment that the family had feared.

‘Get the other children,’ Chana immediately ordered Ida. ‘Go to your rooms and hide in the cupboard.’

‘But, why ...’

‘Now! No time to explain. Just do what I say!’

Scared by the concern in her mum’s eyes, Ida raced across the hallway, yanked Anya from a seat at the table and cried out in a hushed tone for her other siblings. Reuben,

Tamara and Sara arrived quickly, and Ida transmitted their mother's instructions firmly. 'The Germans are here! Hide in your rooms. In the cupboards. Now!'

Without question, the three siblings streamed up the central staircase of the large red-brick house in an affluent street on the outskirts of the town. They'd talked about this moment as a family, but its arrival was still a shock. Imagination turned to reality, the aggression behind the German voices palpable.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! 'Last chance or we force our way in!' bellowed the soldier who was evidently in command. 'On the orders of the *Führer*.'

Over her shoulder, Ida caught sight of her mother walking slowly across the grand hallway towards the front door. Despite the situation, Chana remained graceful, proud, wiping her beetroot-smudged hands on her cooking apron before reaching for the handle. She turned briefly around, and her eyes met Ida's, a shared moment of stark resignation.

Worried about the two other boys, Ida glanced backwards through the kitchen window into the back garden. Amos and Jakob were kicking a football across the grass, seemingly oblivious to the evil that was about to penetrate their lives. Wolfie, the family's beloved Polish Greyhound, chased around gamely. It was too late to get the boys up to their rooms, but she wished they'd stop whooping in delight, generating unnecessary attention.

Chana took a further step forward. At the very moment she opened the front door a fraction, a kick from a soldier's black boot walloped the door straight into Chana's face,

sending her sprawling to the floor with a gash to her forehead. Amazingly, she didn't cry out and just put her fingers gently to the broken area of skin, inspected the blood then gathered herself back up into a standing position.

By now Ida was at her mother's side, arms around her shoulders, and she could feel the shakiness in Chana's stance. Seething at the soldiers who'd forcibly entered their home, invaded their private space without any regard or care, Ida spat words at the leader: 'How dare you! Look what you've done! Get out of our ...'

'Be quiet,' the soldier in charge interrupted in the kind of soft, firm and fearsome voice that immediately commanded attention. 'Say nothing. Just listen.'

A noise behind made Ida turn around. Alerted to the furore, the boys had come in from the garden and were now positioned in the kitchen, unsure what to do. Seeing his trembling mother, Amos cried out and was about to run over, but Ida noticed the soldiers tense up, hands at the ready. Wolfie barked loudly at them.

'No!' Ida shouted at Amos, her arm raised. 'Stay there, Amos. Everything's fine. I'm just talking to the officer.'

'Good girl,' the German soldier said patronisingly. 'You learn quick. And control the dog. Or we will shoot it.'

Ida wanted to cuff him around the ear, but she held her resolve and stayed quiet, calming Wolfie with pats to his neck.

The soldier turned his attention back to Chana. 'My name is Captain Klaus Mann. I am an officer of the *Wehrmacht*, the German Army, which is in control of Poland.

I am in command of the *Heeresgruppe*, the squad of soldiers in charge of this town, Żyrardów. On the orders of our Commander in Chief we are taking ownership of all homes and possessions belonging to Jews.'

Captain Mann waited but Chana remained unmoving and silent.

'You have ...' the captain looked at his watch, 'approximately eighteen hours, until 07:00 tomorrow morning, when we will return and you will be moved, rehoused, to the ghetto in central Żyrardów. You may each take one suitcase with you. Failure to be ready and failure to comply with these instructions will result in severe punishment.'

At the end of this statement, Ida observed the slightest of revolting grins on Captain Mann's face, the sign of somebody enjoying their power. She also noticed a grotesque semi-circular scar on his right cheek.

'Do you understand?' he concluded.

Ida stayed quiet, the question clearly rhetorical, but Amos took a step forward and started to complain. In an instant, Captain Mann had his revolver pointed directly at Ida's brother. 'Not another step, young man,' he stated, stopping Amos in his tracks.

'Good,' finished the officer. 'It's important you understand the gravity of the situation. We will return tomorrow morning. Ensure you are ready.'

With a flourish, the captain twisted around, and, in unison, the quartet of soldiers stamped their right heels on the ground, raised their right arms out front, palms down, and shouted '*Heil Hitler!*'

And then they were gone.  
But it wouldn't be for long.



## LONDON, PRESENT DAY

At her bedroom desk in north London, Edie took out her A4 notepad. She'd decided that the subject of her Year 9 history project would be art stolen by the Nazis during the Second World War. Her decision had been triggered by the email she'd received three months earlier from Esther Marks, director at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the organisation known for tracking down war criminals.

In that email, Esther had shared that Edie's mum had been investigating the possibility that the German army had stolen artwork from the family of Edie's grandmother (Mama, Edie's mum's mum), when they were living in wartime Poland. Edie's mum's investigations had, heartbreakingly, been cut short but, on receiving Esther's message, Edie had started secretly looking into the story herself.

In the course of her research, Edie had been learning about Mama's oldest sister, Ida. Not only had Ida been thirteen, as Edie was now, when Mama had last seen her in Poland and, most probably, that age when she died, but Ida's appearance and traits – such as her boldness – seemed remarkably similar to Edie's.

Eddie's detective research had, however, stalled as Esther's team had frustratingly been unable to open Mum's password-locked files, meaning Eddie hadn't been able to fully take on Mum's investigation yet. Out of the blue, however, Eddie had just received a WhatsApp message. As was Esther's style, it was short and to the point:

ESTHER: There's been a breakthrough. I'll send an email tomorrow, then let's talk on Zoom. It's important.

Eddie's head was brimming with anticipation as she sat staring at the notepad. Recollections from her research were spinning wildly. Maybe a mind-map would help. In black ink she wrote various words around the top half of the page: 'Żyrardów, Poland, WW2, 1940, Mama, Ida, Nazis, Art'. She was about to start linking the words then, without really thinking, she switched to a red biro and placed one word underneath: 'Mum'.

As Eddie put the biro back down, one particular question crystallised in her mind. It was a strange question, but it felt incredibly important.

Had Mum been deliberately trying to leave a trail, a connection between long-lost Ida of the past and her own present-day daughter?

Whatever the answer, Eddie thought, this was another vital case for her to solve.

# Two girls, two enemies, one shared courage



opportunities in life

always exist, but whether

we see them as

possibilities

depends on the

openness

of our minds.



but then an

even greater

insight arrived.

- WHOOSH -

A next-level realisation.

Her mind was whirring

crazily, thoughts

spilling and

spreading,

images

coming

and going.

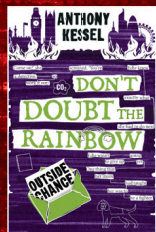
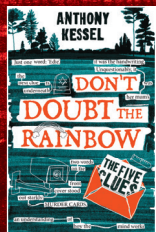
Renowned internationally for solving mysteries, Edie Marble is soon to be the youngest recipient of the highest honour for bravery, the George Cross. But receiving her award draws her into a web of corruption.

Meanwhile, Edie embarks on the quest her beloved mother was unable to complete, to find artworks stolen from her family during the Nazi occupation of Poland.

The stakes are high, the danger real. And the truths she uncovers will change her world, and the world, forever.



## THE AWARD-WINNING SERIES



 [www.crownhouse.co.uk](http://www.crownhouse.co.uk)

Suitable for ages 11+ £7.99

ISBN-13: 978-178583777-7



9 781785 837777

Cover design and illustration Nina Tara