**CHAPTER 34, PAGES 215-216**

The synagogue in town became a center of activity for the Jewish population. We walked there regularly to take part in conversation, hear the latest news, and look for work. A Jewish committee, headed by a man named Jakob Egit, had formed in the hope of creating a Jewish settlement in Reichenbach. The synagogue became their headquarters.

The first time I saw the two-story building with the large Star of David etched on the window pane above the entrance, I stared in awe. I walked slowly up the path that led to the main door, gazing at the arched windows of the first floor, then up at the towering windows of the second. Two pillars rose to the sky on each side of the square building, topped with ornate metal Jewish stars. The building was imposing, much larger than the small synagogue in Olkusz that my father had attended almost daily, taller than the trees that grew in the yard and the garden that surrounded it. I was amazed that, after all the devastation that had destroyed so many places of worship, this building should still stand.

When I passed through the doors, a sort of peace settled over me, like I had come home. I walked down the main aisle of the two-story sanctuary, staring up at the impossibly high ceiling overhead, sunlight streaming through the engraved star in the round glass window above the altar. The wooden banisters of the second-story balcony were intact, as were the pillars that supported it. The room had been stripped of furniture, so the space was wide open and waiting.