



milkweed

*an ANIMATED FEATURE ADAPTATION
BASED ON THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED YOUNG ADULT NOVEL
BY JERRY SPINELLI*

Contact Producer Gail Rosenblum: milkweedthemovie@gmail.com 612-298-6219

A tiny bread thief with no name survives in the shadows of Nazi-occupied Warsaw.

*A serendipitous encounter connects him to the family he longs to have
then leaves him with the weight of carrying their memories.*

A story of love and heartbreak, chaos and survival, and a lifelong search for identity





*There are experiences
that change everything.*




Experiences that must never be forgotten ...



... even when there is great pain in remembering them.



milkweed.



*A story of a boy
without a name...*

*surviving in the shadows
of a city about to change forever.*

*He's a street kid
surviving on instinct
and stolen bread
on both sides of the
Warsaw Ghetto wall.*

*Fast and fearless,
he answers to any name
just to feel like he belongs.*





At first, he thinks his name is

“STOP THIEF!”

as that is the only thing he’s ever been called...

*...until a band of Jewish teenagers
recruit him for his speed.*

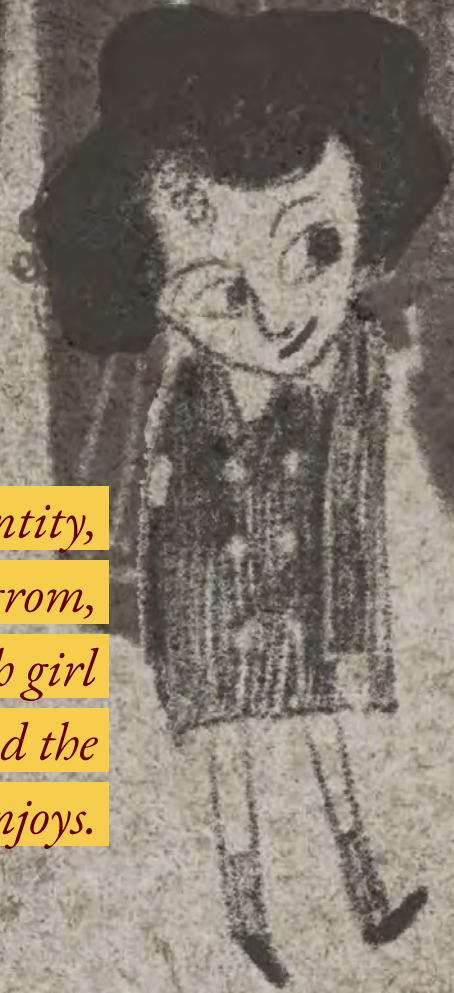


*They adopt him and
give him a new name:*



Misha Pilsudski.

*With this new identity,
he meets Janina Milgrom,
a sheltered and pretty Jewish girl
dazzled by his spirit and the
freedoms he enjoys.*



*As the city descends into chaos
under Nazi occupation,
identities shift:
the rich become the poor,
the damned become the fortunate,
the thieves become the givers ...*





*... and Misha finds his identity intertwined
with those who have befriended him.*

When his instincts lead him to be embraced by the Milgrom family, Misha discovers love, belonging, belief, and the unbearable pain of loss.



Because one day the trains come ...



*... to take away everyone he loves
and everything he has gained.*



With his identity again erased, he makes his way to America.

A painting of a man with his eyes closed, holding a large green leaf. In the foreground, there is a vase with flowers. The background is dark with some light spots.

Years later, broken and alone, he is approached by a stranger

*who calls him by the one name
that makes him whole again.*

*There are countless first-person memoirs of the Holocaust,
each more horrific than the next.*

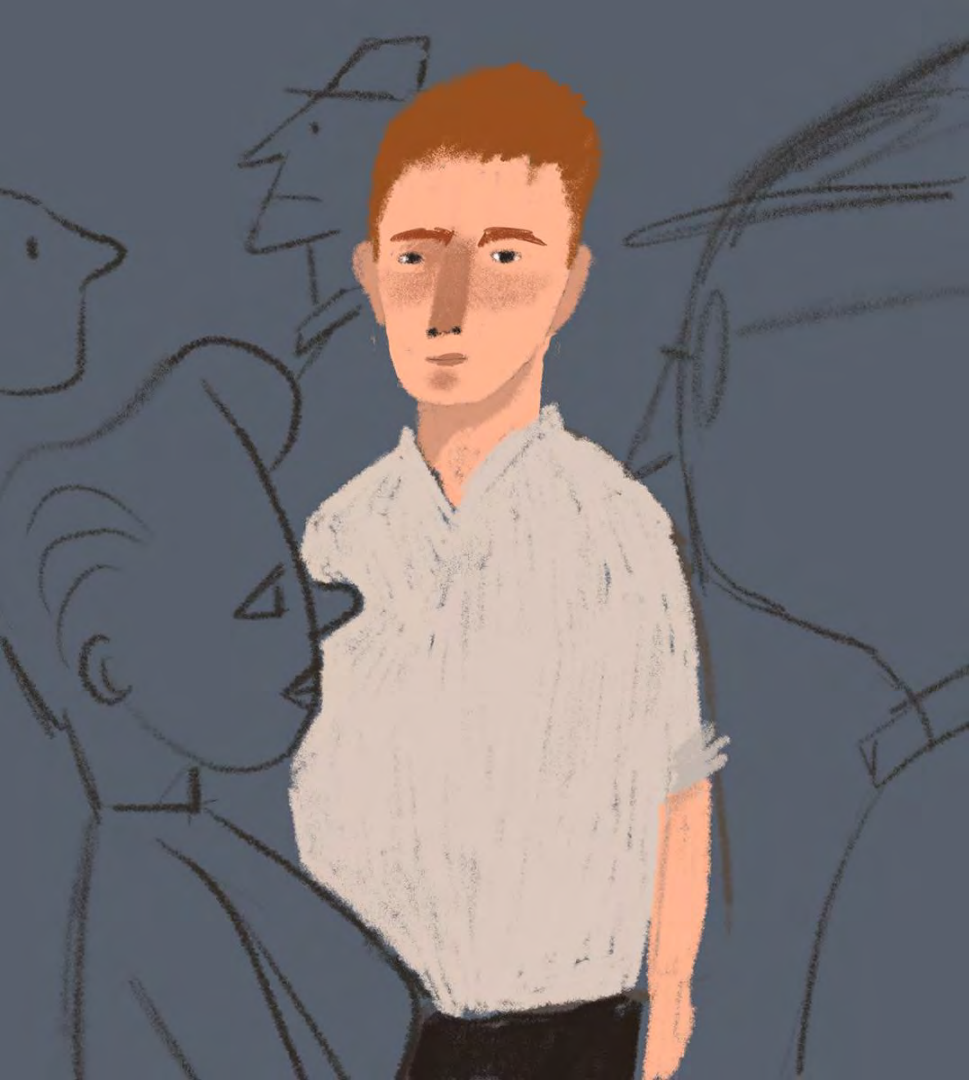
*Milkweed, as historical fiction, serves as a blank
universal canvas — a stark reminder of what can happen to
any of us when stripped of our identity and humanity.*

Characters

Stopthief / Misha

*The eyes through which
this story is told.*





Uri

*King of the streets, red-headed Uri feels a protective urge toward Stopthief, giving him food, and a bed, and teaching him the number one rule of survival: **stay invisible.***

The Boys

Kuba, Ferdi, Olek, Enos.

Hiding out in a stable, Uri's motley band of rough and tumble boys find Misha a peculiar and easy target for their bullying antics, but quickly realize they must work together to survive.





Janina

Beloved, pampered and fiercely independent, Janina Milgrom finds the scruffy boy fascinating, infuriating and eventually, invaluable as he helps her cope with her fears and growing cruelties in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Mr. Milgrom

*Kind, patient and open-hearted,
Mr. Milgrom embraces Misha
as though he were his own son.*

*Patently aware of the devastating finale
to his family's story, he acknowledges
Misha as the sole ticket to survival
for his cherished daughter.*





Mrs. Milgrom

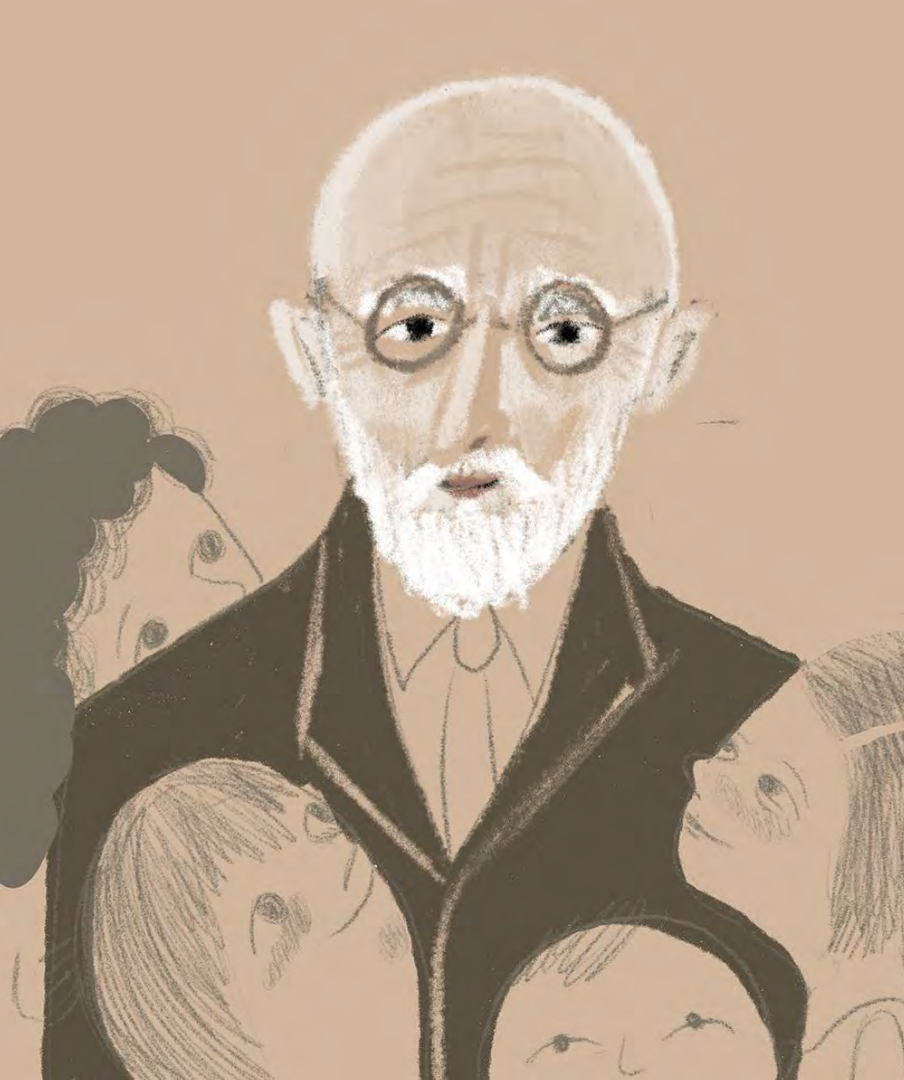
Unable to accept the terrible new reality for herself and her family, Mrs. Milgrom rapidly declines mentally and physically inside the Warsaw Ghetto, withdrawing from her family and ultimately perishing from grief.

Uncle Shepsel

*Self-absorbed and cold toward Stopthief,
(except when the boy is bringing him food)*

*Uncle Shepsel enters the ghetto studying
to be a Lutheran, naively believing that
decision will save him.*





Dr. Korczak & The Orphans

Based on the real Janusz Korczak, a pediatrician, author and humanitarian born in 1878 who ran an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. Milkweed's Dr. Korczak reserved a tender place in his heart for little Stopthief, who stole bread for the doctor's hungry children.

Jackboots

Misha is fascinated by the shiny Jackboots, which allow him to see his reflection. It doesn't take long for him to grasp his perilous miscalculation and understand the importance of remaining unseen.



Educational outreach

Children today do not know what the Holocaust is.

Format

*An animated feature adaptation
created for streaming platforms as well
as the classrooms of social studies, history
and english teachers as a complement to
“Milkweed” the young adult novel.*

The glaring deficit in teaching Holocaust history

- *Two-thirds of American millennials surveyed could not identify Auschwitz.*
- *Twenty-two percent said they haven't heard of the Holocaust or are not sure whether they have.*
- *Holocaust education in the United States is rare; just NINE states mandate Holocaust education, which is left up largely to school districts or individual teachers.*
- *As the number of Holocaust survivors dims, the ranks of Holocaust deniers is growing.*

“The Holocaust provides one of the most effective subjects for examining basic moral issues. A structured inquiry into this history yields critical lessons for an investigation into human behavior. It also addresses one of the central mandates of education in the United States, which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen.”

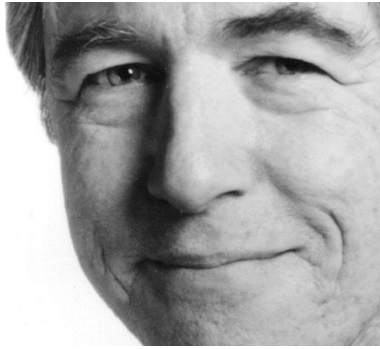
-- U.S. Holocaust Memorial

A three-pronged approach:

Our nonprofit mission allows us to offer a “Milkweed” teaching curriculum free of charge to middle school teachers nationwide, along with the film. This curriculum is comprised of three elements:

- 1. A grade-specific teaching curriculum meeting Common Core Learning Standards for English/Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.*
- 2. Multimedia enhancements and study guides to offer students a deeper understanding of the Holocaust’s historical relationships and connections to contemporary life.*
- 3. A “What If?” game engaging young people in a conversation about what they think they would have done had they been children inside the Warsaw Ghetto trying to survive.*

The Milkweed Team



Jerry Spinelli: Author

“Milkweed” author Jerry Spinelli is a Newbery Medal and Newbery Honor winner. Milkweed won the prestigious Golden Kite Award in 2003. Spinelli’s “Stargirl” debuted on Disney+ in March of 2020.



Gail Rosenblum: Producer

Gail is a newspaper editor, author, speaker and founder of nonprofit MPGL Entertainment to bring compelling young adult films with 21st century teaching curricula into middle schools nationwide.



Mike Owens: Co-Director

Mike is an Emmy- and Oscar-winning animation director, show creator and educator with more than 20 years of experience in the industry. He is co-owner of WOMO Studio developing and producing original content.



Wendie Owens: Co-Director

Wendie is a storyteller and artist working in animation and live action to bring cultural and scientific stories to a wide audience. She is co-owner of WOMO Studio developing and producing original content.

The Milkweed Team



***Annita Soble: Art
Director***

Annita Soble runs an animation and illustration studio in Brooklyn NY, where she skillfully translates abstract concepts into visual forms. The parent of five Jewish children, she is particularly invested in this project.



***Audrey Favorito:
Animation Producer***

Owner of Wild Carrot Productions, Audrey served for 12 years as executive producer for Reelworks Animation, a commercial animation studio known for high quality traditional hand-drawn animation.



***Tom Lieberman: Music +
Soundtrack Supervisor***

Tom is a composer, performer and producer for radio, television, stage and screen. He was music supervisor for "Sweet Land," winner of the 2006 Film Independent Spirit Award for Best First Feature.



***Chris Bartle:
Screenwriter***

Chris is an award-winning writer and commercials director in London. He found his way to Milkweed the novel more than a decade ago, quickly realizing the impact a movie would have.

The Milkweed Team



Bruce McFarlan:
Animator

Bruce's roots are in traditional, hand-drawn animation and cover all aspects of character animation — from storyboarding and character design, to layout and producing hand-drawn key-frame animation.



Matt Herbst:
Composer

Matt studied film scoring at the University of Southern California's world famous Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television. He has won the prestigious BMI Award for Achievement in Film Scoring and is a member of ASCAP.



KK Neimann:
Curriculum Specialist

KK has a Masters in Teaching from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has worked in education for 20 years, teaching essential skills students need to be responsible and engaged citizens locally and globally..



Ellen Kennedy:
Curriculum Specialist

Ellen is founder and executive director of World Without Genocide, which provides education about past and current conflicts and advocates locally and nationally for policies and legislation that promote peace and justice.

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Love endures in memory



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