

protection of vital British interests in South Africa. From Muller he hears that Carson died in prison. While Castle talks about this to Sarah it becomes clear that Castle is the spy, because he is grateful to communists for the escape of his wife. When he is found out, he succeeds in getting to Moscow, leaving Sarah and Sam behind with his mother. But in Moscow he is unable to contact his wife, and she cannot travel abroad, because Sam has no passport. When at last Maurice is able to call her it is to tell her that they have been pawns in a game and that they will have to be patient, because they will not be able to be together in the foreseeable future. As the novel develops the self-interest of people in the secret services becomes one of its main themes. For this reason the novel may also be called a social novel.

The Tenth Man (1985)

This psychological novel deals with the problem of a man vainly trying to escape his fate. Chavel, a Parish lawyer, almost goes out of his mind when he draws a marked slip, which means that he will be one of the three prisoners the Germans will shoot. He offers all his possessions to anyone who is prepared to take his place, an offer accepted by Janvier, who writes a will leaving his new wealth to his mother and sister. Just after the war, Chavel, who now calls himself Charlot, travels to his old house in Brinac, now occupied by Janvier's mother and his sister Thérèse, who wants to spit in Chavel's face. He is hired by Thérèse to try to find Chavel. One day a man who calls himself Chavel comes to the house, but in reality he is Carosse, an actor, wanted by the police for collaboration, who had heard about the deal between Chavel and Janvier. Carosse talks Thérèse round to his version of what happened in prison, which implies that he, Carosse, is the owner of the property, because all changes of property during the German occupations have been declared illegal. But he is willing to marry Thérèse. When the real Chavel finds Carosse in Thérèse's arms, he tells her the truth about himself, and that Carosse is wanted by the police, but before he is able to prove his story, Carosse shoots him.

12 Thomas Keneally

I ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas Keneally was born in Sydney in 1935 and still lives there. Apart from filmstrips, stageplays, children's books and a fascinating account of his travels in Australia called *Outback* (1983) he has written some 16 novels.

In 1982 he won the most prestigious literary prize in Britain, the Booker McConnell prize. But the choice of the jury caused argument. *Schindler's Ark*, the prize winning novel, seemed more like a factual report than a work of fiction. But this is what Keneally is known for: faction, fictional treatment of real events. Most of his books are set in comparatively recent periods of history, mostly at important moments in the history of nations or peoples. He shows that it is often not grand political ideas, but personal reasons on a much smaller scale that are the true causes of important events. He is not simply a historical novelist; the issues he discusses are relevant to our present-day situation.

Other novels by Keneally are *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (1971), *Gossip from the Forest* (1973), *Confederates* (1979) and *The Playmaker* (1987). One of his first books *Three Cheers for the Paraclete* (1968) is semi-autobiographical, about a Roman Catholic who loses his faith.

II HIGHLIGHT

Schindler's Ark

Introduction

Schindler's Ark is a documentary novel, which, like so many other reports about the period tries to establish what really happened in the German concentration camps in World War Two. Talking about these camps means trying to interpret them and also the commanders like Adolf Eichman, Rudolf Hoess and in this case Amon Goeth. These men seem on the one hand to be ordinary people, but at the same time they are incredible men: what makes them the monsters they have become? The theme of this novel is not the evil of these war criminals, but the mysterious goodness of human nature, in this case the goodness that moved Oskar Schindler, a 'Sudeten' German, owner of the enamel works in Cracow. Keneally does not pretend to explain this mystery, he just reports what he has heard, eyewitness accounts of Jewish survivors of the Plaszow concentration camp and of Schindler's Emalia work camps, the so-called 'Schindler Juden', and the writer tells their stories in the most objective way possible. Remarkable in this report is that Schindler, the man who rescues Jews and fouls up the system is a German, a 'good' German (cf. the 'good' soldier Svejek). Keneally does not answer the obvious question why Schindler decides to turn



traitor to his own country. Neither does he show any outrage. He shows an almost extreme detachment; he seems to be simply reporting objectively and Schindler has too many weaknesses to be called a hero in the usual sense. This distancing technique makes the novel (or 'report' if it cannot properly be called a novel) all the more convincing.

The characters that appear are interesting, queer, funny, tragic, and have been compared with the minor characters in a Dickens novel.

Summary

In the autumn of 1943 Oskar Schindler lives in Cracow with his mistress and is having an affair with his Polish secretary. His wife lives in his home town of Zwittau in Moravia. He is a heavy drinker and he is on his way to a party with commandant Amon Goeth who is in charge of the forced labour camp at Plaszow. In this camp there are 20,000 Jews, Poles and Gypsies.

There are seven Germans at the table. For some of them Schindler has brought gifts, because he may need their support later on. Schindler takes his leave when the others go upstairs with whores, and he talks to the Jewish kitchen maid who shows signs of ill-treatment. She gives him money so that he can do something for her sister, if she is put on transport.

Then the novel turns to Schindler's youth which he spent in Zwittau, Czechoslovakia with Jews as his neighbours. He does some racing on his motorbike. He marries a girl after a courtship of only six weeks which causes a quarrel with his father. His father's business goes bankrupt followed by his parents' divorce. Schindler's own marriage is not a success either. He begins to wear the Swastika, because wearing it brings in business orders. After the German occupation of Sudetenland he quickly becomes disillusioned with National Socialism. He is offered a job in Admiral Canaris' Abwehr Intelligence and is asked to gather information in Poland.

In October 1939 he tries to set up a business in Cracow, Poland. A bookkeeper, named Itzhak Stern, a Jew, informs him about Rekord, an enamel factory. He also

discusses the present situation with Stern, who quotes a Talmudic verse: "He who saves the life of one man saves the entire world."

When Schindler has rented an apartment in Cracow, he wants to have it redecorated. He calls at the Pfefferbergs, a Jewish decorating firm, and is almost shot by Leopold Pfefferberg, who has escaped during transportation to a German prisoner of war camp. This young man thinks Schindler is Gestapo.

In early December Schindler, who pretends to be half drunk, warns Stern against a raid on the Jewish ghetto. On December 4th a special Einsatz Gruppe deals with the synagogues, leaving the 'lighter' work to the S.S. On the eve of the Sabbath many of the worshippers are killed.

A little later Schindler visits a jazz club with a party of 'decent' Germans, although jazz is forbidden, being a music of a lower race. Schindler is seeking permits to expand his factory. He also has to pass on information about the S.S. to the Abwehr. The conversation touches upon the situation of the Jews. They are transported in livestock carriages; the Judenrats have to supply labour details; the Jews have to wear yellow stars. There is also talk of a plan still under discussion with the French government to send all Jews to Madagascar. Schindler has seen that one of the men present has helped a Jew get into Hungary.

Schindler's factory begins to thrive. By the end of 1940 he is employing 250 men, some 150 of them Jews. For Jews it is essential to have jobs that demand skilled labour in order to escape transportation to concentration camps. The S.S., however, often detail Jewish workers to shovel snow, which harms production, but Schindler can do nothing about it.

For some time the situation remains stable, although Schindler is accused of beating up Jews by a Jewish family. Leaders of the Judenrat are imprisoned after accusations of attempted bribery of the S.S. On March 3rd, 1940 an edict is issued that the Jews of Cracow are to move into the ghetto. They do not mind very much as this measure will reduce racial conflicts with the Poles. The removal is completed by March 20th.

In the spring of 1940 Schindler travels back to his wife in Zwittau to discuss her coming to Cracow, but they decide that she will remain where she is. On this occasion Schindler is reconciled with his father.

In the ghetto the Jewish Ordnungsdienst is becoming very unpopular, because it is seen as a group of informers. One of its members, also called Pfefferberg, succeeds in leaving this service by feigning a bad back. At the end of 1941 Schindler is arrested by the Gestapo. All his cashbooks and ledgers are taken away, because the Gestapos want to find out whether his business contracts have been legitimate. Schindler's secretary informs some of his highly-placed contacts and the next day he is released.

On April 28, 1942, Schindler celebrates his birthday and there are congratulations from his employees and also kisses from Jewish girls. Consequently he is arrested again and taken to Pomorska prison, a notorious place. This time it costs his contacts more trouble, but after five days he is released again.

During the summer of 1942 the situation in the ghetto deteriorates seriously. Workers without 'Blauschein' are rounded up and put on transport. Another Pfefferberg, a former professor, is refused a 'Blauschein' as there is no need for

Jewish professors. At the station a German soldier, who used to be one of his students, rescues him.

In June 1942 several of Schindler's Jewish employees do not turn up. Schindler finds out that they have been put on transport to Lublin, where he knows a crematorium is being built. When he discusses the matter with an S.S. N.C.O. the man is adamant that his list cannot be changed. Even the fact that his workers are essential to Germany's war effort, as Schindler maintains, does not change the man's mind. Only when Schindler tactfully uses the name of General Schindler, no relation of his, but the man in command of army supplies, does this officer change his attitude and Schindler gets his men off the train.

While watching the ghetto from the hills one day, Schindler and Ingrid, his mistress, see the S.S. rounding up Jews and shooting those who try to hide. The scene opens his eyes even further. He remarks that 'Beyond this day no thinking person could fail to see what would happen'. He resolves to do everything in his power to defeat the system.

An escaped Jew reveals the full truth about the gas chambers and the Jewish resistance becomes better organised and more successful. Schindler decides to build a barracks where his Jewish night shift can sleep and in this way escape S.S. razias. He is also visited by a Hungarian dentist, Dr Sedlacek, an agent of Zionist groups in Palestine, who are trying to establish what the situation of the Jews in Europe is. Schindler promises to visit Budapest - Hungary is not occupied by Germany yet - and to tell his story in person, because if he does not, the truth may not be believed. In the meantime some Jewish jewellers have to sort out gold and silver for the S.S. and come across thousands of gold teeth still covered in blood. Schindler visits Budapest and tells what he knows about extermination camps. Many of the Jews present do not believe him and he is asked to come to Istanbul and speak to Zionist groups there, who will then inform Churchill and Roosevelt. In Cracow S.S. Untersturmführer Amon Goeth is appointed to liquidate the ghetto and to take command of the forced labour camp of Plaszow outside the city. He tries to persuade German businessmen to set up their enterprises inside the camp.

On March 13th, 1943 an S.S. Sonderkommando led by Goeth enters the ghetto in order to clear out some more Jews. Doctors at the hospital who realize what is going to happen, because at the other hospital doctors and patients have been shot, hand out cyanide to patients who cannot leave the hospital in order to escape the Germans. Professor Pfefferberg, considering an escape through the sewers, finds that his wife has disappeared. When he starts looking for her he finds a pile of dead bodies, some with familiar faces. He is told that his wife has been taken to Plaszow. He fools the S.S. and joins the column of prisoners on their way to the camp. At night the S.S. searches the houses in the ghetto and kills all the Jews who have been hiding, 4000 in all.

When Schindler's Jewish workers begin to arrive late for work, due to long roll calls and punishments at the forced labour camp, he proposes to Goeth to set up his own labour camp in the factory compound. Goeth and the S.S. agree and soon the first Jews start living here. They receive better treatment and better food than at Plaszow, because large quantities of the food meant for the prisoners of Plaszow are sold on the black market by Goeth.

Many prisoners now send requests to Schindler for jobs at his factory and he does what he can, rescuing many Jews from Goeth's outbursts of cruelty.

Schindler sees to it that his prisoners get enough food. He replenishes the bread that Goeth steals from the regular quotas. He often bribes S.S. soldiers with liquor in order to rescue the lives of certain prisoners and he does not allow any S.S. guards inside the camp. He sometimes has a drink with Goeth, although he despises the man and thinks him insane. A good relationship, however, is absolutely necessary for the safety of his Jews.

Dr Sedlacek visits Schindler again accompanied by a Swiss Jew. Schindler passes on everything he knows about the camp system. He even takes his visitors inside Plaszow, passing them off as fellow industrialists, and here Itzhak Stern makes sure they see all the horror that is part of the daily routine.

In January 1944 the status of Plaszow is changed. It now comes under the authority of the S.S. Main Economic and Administrative Office at Oranienburg, under the command of General Pohl. In order to get certain favours Schindler now not only has to send gifts to Goeth but also to the bureaucrats in the higher S.S. echelons. From there he receives a sort of guarantee that the situation will not be changed. An advantage of this new status is that Goeth now has to send in reports of every death in the camp and instant arbitrary executions have become impossible.

On his 36th birthday Schindler feels depressed, because the advance of the Russian armies has stopped. As camps in the east had to be vacated, the S.S. has now started burning bodies at Plaszow. Goeth has been ordered not to leave behind any trace for the Russians. Prisoners are forced to excavate bodies and to put them in piles. Goeth's Jewish secretary is in a position to read all his correspondence, so he finds out that Goeth has requested and received permission to exterminate several thousand Jews to make room for Hungarian Jews, who are stronger and healthier and of more value to German industry. Spirits in the camps rise a little when news is received that the Russians have reached Warsaw and that there has been an attempt on Hitler's life.

Goeth calls a meeting at which he expresses concern for partisan attacks on the camp. He even stages an escape attempt of a prominent Jewish family in order to prove to his superiors that his worries are to be taken seriously. Even in the presence of Goeth Schindler does not hesitate to give help to a group of Jews who are on a train bound for Mauthausen and who are suffering from high temperatures. He orders firehoses to be directed at the train and he passes round buckets of water. A little later Schindler is informed by the Army High Command that Plaszow concentration camp is to be vacated. Schindler will have to send his own prisoners back to Plaszow to await relocation. His factory is to be closed. Schindler proposes to set up a new factory in relatively safe Moravia and to take a number of prisoners with him. He gets permission and starts compiling a list. He plays blackjack with Goeth in order to be able to put the name of the commander's servant, Helen Hirsch, on the list.

Schindler tries to persuade another German businessman who has a good name among the Jews to accompany him to Moravia with his uniform factory and his 3000 Jews, but the man decides not to follow Schindler. Suddenly Amon Goeth is arrested by the S.S. under suspicion of embezzlement and black market dealings.

In Moravia Schindler finds a good site for his new factory and camp. It is in Brinnlitz, near his home town Zwittau. There is much protest among the German population of the area, but letters of complaint do not get past a friend of Schindler's at Headquarters in Berlin.

Schindler's final list contains over a thousand names of Jews, whom he considers essential for the highly skilled labour at his factory. This list begins to be famous among the prisoners at Plasow and many of them try to get their names added by bribing Goldberg, the personnel clerk.

On October 15th, 1944 800 men are loaded on a train, to be followed by 300 women a week later. When the train reaches the concentration camp of Gross Rosen many prisoners think that they have been betrayed. The S.S. here are not in the possession of Schindler's list and Goldberg is made to type it out from memory. After three days the journey is continued and the last 100 miles take two days.

Schindler has had to pay for the new camp himself and he does not expect to be able to start production again. His wife now comes to live with him and his other liaisons are discontinued without any unpleasantness. The transport of the 300 women goes via Auschwitz, where they undergo humiliating treatment and medical inspection and where they receive hardly any food at all. The world now knows about the gas chambers, because the Russians have excavated the Lublin camp where they discovered drums of Zyklon B. The Schindler women, in the meantime, grow weaker every day. Schindler is told that they will not be of much use to the war effort any more, but he insists on having these women, as many, he says, are irreplaceable.

The camp at Brinnlitz is not quite ready yet, but nobody seems to mind. The Jews feel safe here, the food is reasonable, and the S.S. guards are no fanatics, but middle-aged reservists. Then Schindler is arrested a third time by the Gestapo. He is imprisoned for eight days and his contacts have great difficulties in getting him out. When it becomes clear that Schindler is essential to the production of secret weapons, so the Gestapo are told, they set him free. During his absence his wife takes care of the camp.

When Schindler returns Itzhak Stern urges him to do something about the 300 women. He sends Rudolf Höss, the commander of Auschwitz, a case of liquor and other gifts in order to get his cooperation. The women, mere skeletons now, arrive after a few more days. Thanks to the good food and the medical care at Brinnlitz most of them survive. In order to prevent an outbreak of typhus Schindler builds a delousing unit. Dysentery fades thanks to the food. In order to get extra rations Schindler asks some prisoners to forge all kinds of stamps and documents. If S.S. guards accuse prisoners of some 'crime' Schindler always manages to find solutions, usually by lavishly pouring alcohol.

Not one shell is produced in the new factory. Schindler's flamboyant behaviour always convinces inspectors that machine failures and teething pains are the causes of not fulfilling the expected quotas. In secret Schindler starts building his own arsenal inside the camp and he forms three commando units of 5 prisoners each. During the winter of 1944-45 Schindler and another 'good' German get a further 3000 prisoners out of Auschwitz into small camps in Moravia where there is shortage of labour. Schindler applies for another 30 metal workers and this request

is granted. For some of these Jews this means a last minute rescue. Jews who escape from trains during transport are also taken to Schindler's camp. He has made a deal with the Moravian Gestapo about this. He also rescues Jews who are left in a train in Zwittau in a cold of minus 30 degrees Centigrade, none of them weighing more than 35 kilos. In the meantime Schindler's wife travels round the country in order to get medicine.

About this time Amon Goeth is released because of his progressive diabetes, and he visits Schindler; nobody understands exactly why. On Schindler's 37th birthday, April 28, 1945, white bread is handed out among the prisoners. Schindler receives orders, that if the Russians come close, the aged and sick are to be shot and the others are to be walked to Mauthausen. Schindler uses his influence to have the S.S. commander removed, because he is the only S.S. man likely to carry out such orders. Feeling that the end of the war is near, prisoners begin to draw up a report of Schindler's record. They want him to flee west and surrender to the Americans. When the German surrender is a fact Schindler makes a farewell speech to the prisoners urging everyone of them not to carry out personal vengeance on Germans. After this Schindler and his wife prepare for departure. The former prisoners present him with a ring for which the gold has come from the teeth of a fellow prisoner, who has given it up freely.

Now that the defeat is certain the S.S. begin to desert and other guards give up their weapons to the prisoners. Schindler then opens an enormous storeroom full of supplies for the German navy. He had acquired the storage contract with the help of some bribes. The stores are handed out to the prisoners to help them through the first days of liberty. Schindler and his wife are dressed in prisoner's stripes when they leave the camp, accompanied by eight prisoners. The vehicles they travel in they find plundered the next morning and they travel on by train. When they meet American soldiers they ask them to bring them into contact with Jewish soldiers or a rabbi, a meeting which is very emotional. After this they travel on into Austria. In the meantime Brinnlitz is liberated by a single Russian officer and from that moment onwards the prisoners begin to leave. Schindler and his party travel to Neuremberg, and from there towards the Swiss border. Trying to cross this border, however, they are captured by the French and long interrogations follow. But their story is believed and they are released.

The war has left Schindler penniless, but he is helped by the Jews. Amon Goeth is executed by the new Polish government.

In 1949 Schindler emigrates to Argentina, paying for his passage and that of a number of Jewish families with the money he has received from a Jewish relief organisation. In 1957 the farm he has started goes bankrupt and he returns to Germany, leaving his wife behind. In Germany he tries to start a cement works, but this fails, too. In 1961 he is invited to Israel by some of the 'Schindlerjuden' and here he is finally honoured. Reports about his wartime record in German newspapers do not make his life in Germany easy. The remaining years of his life he spends alternately in Israel and Frankfurt, never at ease, always short of money, until in 1968 the German government grants him a pension. In 1974 he has a seizure and dies in hospital.