Magda
and the Rat Catchers




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PROLOGUE

The bows of the boat were already under water and the stern, where the three of them were standing, had risen at a sharp angle. “We have to jump now“ the father said, “or we‘ll be sucked under with the boat when it goes.“ The girl hesitated because it was such a long way to fall. Then her father pushed her over the side of the rusting old trawler.

She fell fifty feet or more into the cold black water, which closed over her head. She held her breath and put out her hand. She was close to the side and her skirt was caught on something. She continued to hold her breath and opened her eyes. She could not see a thing but managed to undo the hook at the waistband. As the skirt slid away, she shot to the surface, buoyed up by the old-fashioned cork lifejacket her father had found in the cabin and made her put on, making sure it was fastened securely. “But where are your jackets?“ she‘d asked.

“I‘ve got them,“ her mother had replied, kissing her. “We‘ll put them on and follow you right away,“ and she wrenched the slanting cabin door open for her.

Now she saw her father, holding her mother up, swimming to the overcrowded lifeboat. They reached it and the two of them managed to hang onto the side, along with some twenty other passengers all floundering in the sea. The lifeboat began to tilt and a sailor came along with an oar and prised, or beat off, all the pairs of clutching hands. As the lifeboat moved on, her parents started to swim again. Neither of them had lifejackets. Then she lost sight of them as the rolling waves carried her farther away.

Kept afloat by the cork, she was not afraid of drowning but did think that in the icy water she might die of cold. She tried

to remember what she had been told about hypothermia. It had been when she was learning to ski and was mostly about what to do if stranded in the snow. However, there had been a bit about surviving in the sea after a shipwreck. She remembered being surprised because the instructor said it was best not swim if you had a lifejacket, because you lost more body heat that way. It was better to clamber onto an upturned boat or any wreckage but, if that was not possible, to scrunch up, with your arms crossed over your chest and your knees drawn up as high as they would go. As she could not see any wreckage large enough to sit on, this is what she did. Then, to keep awake, which the instructor said was important, she tried to remember good times at home, including exactly what happend on family birthdays.

They were a big thing at home. The day began with them wondering what was in the gaily wrapped parcels on the breakfast table. Later there was a party. When this was for her parents she used to read a poem she had written fort hem. Until she was twelve she loved birthdays.

PART I

1932 – 1933

CHAPTER I

Magda Senger did not like to sleep with the curtains drawn. On her eleventh birthday on the fourth of July 1932, the early morning light woke her up at five o'clock. The sun shone onto her face as she lay in the large bed with its tangled sheets and square pillows, one of which had fallen on the floor. The cupboards, dressing table and wardrobe in the room were ornate, massive and dark. They had come originally from the home of Magda's grandparents, who bought them when Biedermeier furniture was all the rage. However the room was not gloomy because the lemon and white, striped wall paper reflected the light from the large windows. It looked pleasant when Magda was made to tidy it up. Usually though it was full of clutter because she hardly ever put anything away. Only the dolls, which she did not play with any more were lined up on the shelf liked well-behaved school children.

Her bedroom was at the back of the house which was on the edge of a park in Nuremberg. Magda had lived in it since she was born. Her father Anton had it built for Magda's mother, his eloved Lisel when he married her thirteen years earlier. It was a modern house with a balcony that went all the way round it. Nuremberg though was an old town with a long history. Soon Adolph Hitler would add another chapter to its history, but on that July day Magda had never heard of him.

She got out of bed, wriggling her toes into the bear skin rug, before crossing the parquet floor, strewn with games, books and clothes. She went to the windows to see if it was going to be fine for her party. She looked down on the walled garden, shrouded in a mist that was thinning even as she watched. It was all right,

she thought, just a heat haze like the one every day that week. She opened the tall, middle window and stepped out onto the balcony. The air was mild and the garden silent. She saw she had broken off a bit of honeysuckle that had scrambled over the ledge. It smelt delicious. Not wanting to throw it away she put it in a tooth glass she filled with water.

Going out onto the balcony again, she glimpsed a dazzling golden oriole that flashed out of the poplars and flew high over the wall into the park. At this hour the garden was magical. There were many trees. Her cousin Fritz told her some people believed all trees were inhabited by spirits. Now, standing there at dawn, she thought it might be true.

There was a large spreading beech which she liked to climb. When it was in full leaf no one could see her from the ground, which was useful when she wanted to hide. Hans, who looked after the garden, grumbled about the beech tree though. He said it cast such a wide shade no flowers would grow underneath it. However everyone would be glad of the shade later on, if the afternoon was as hot as it promised to be. There was no one about yet but later the place would be full of her friends. Everyone was going to come, except Traudel.

Magda heard Hans closing the gate that led into the road behind him. He had come to water the rose beds under her window, before the sun got up. He filled a watering can at a tap near the ivy-covered potting shed and set off with it down the path edged with lavender. Hans had planted this, not only for its scent but because he said it kept the greenfly off. She watched him. Tall and thin, his face brown all the year round because he was outdoors so much, was as wrinkled as one of those russet apples that the cook Florrie stored throughout the winter. He was walking slowly because of his rheumatism. Magda decided to go down and talk to him.

She glanced at her new taffeta party frock, the colour of poppies, hanging in the wardrobe which she had left open. But for now she put on her old navy shorts and the crumpled,

cotton blouse that she had thrown on a chair the night before. Then, after finding her sandals, which she had kicked under the bed, she slipped onto the landing, tiptoed past her parents bedroom, where she could hear her father snoring, and went down the stairs into the kitchen. It was too early for even Florrie to be there making breakfast. She slid back the bolt on the door into the garden and the next minute was running over the long lawn that stilled smelled of the sweet, cut grass because Hans had mown it the day before.

As she went up to him to say good morning, he called out, "Happy birthday! Tell me again, I've forgotten. How old you?"

"Eleven". She looked up at his shock of white hair and wondered how old he was, but before she could ask, he told her anyway.

"I'm exactly seven times that age." Magda decided that made him very old indeed. She did not know that he had once been a handsome soldier, who had run away from home when he was fifteen to fight in the Franco-Prussian war. He had not forgotten though. Looking at the wiry little girl, who was not exactly pretty but had a smile that lit up her face, he became his young, gallant self again. He straightened up and, going into the hothouse cut a flawless carnation to give to her.

"Oh, thank you," she said, much surprised when she saw the unusual, crimson-flecked, white flower. "This is the one of those you won a prize with, isn't it? I'll wear it at the party. All my friends are coming, except Traudel. Trude, she's my best friend, is bringing Manfried. He's her older brother. I don't suppose I'll see much of him though. He's rather stuck up. I expect they'll bring beastly, little Wolfgang with them as well. He has tantrums. He had one at my last party because he didn't win anything. It was awful. None of us could get him to stop screaming. Then he was sick. Do you think he'll have grown out of that now he's nine?"

"Well, I should hope so," said Hans doubtfully.

Magda had a sudden thought. "Let me help you. I'll get an-

other watering can. Where would like me to start?“

“You can do the daisies. They’re always thirsty. Then, if there’s time, the geraniums. But they don’t need as much.“

The mass of white daisies looked up expectantly as she stood showering water over them. She was going to fill the can again and do the four tubs of geraniums on the terrace when Florrie came out of the kitchen door and called, “You’d better come in now. Your father and mother are getting up.“ Then, looking her up and down, she added, “I don‘t suppose you’ve washed yet and it’s quite clear you haven’t done your hair.“

Magda took the watering can back to the shed and, went to Hans to say she had only done the daisies. She picked up his special carnation, which she had placed on a garden table, saying with a smile, “Thank you again for my birthday present.“ Then she ran back to the house.

Hans looked after her thinking, *She’s a jolly little girl. A pity she’s Jewish.* Magda took a short cut by leaping over a clump of scarlet lilies – the kind that only bloom for one day.

Once inside she went up to her room to wash. After cleaning her teeth, she put Hans’s flower in the glass with the honeysuckle. She was about to go downstairs when she caught sight of herself in the mirror over the wash basin. So she grabbed a comb and dragged it her through her hair. *It isn’t much better,* she thought after a minute or so, *but it’ll have to do.*

When she went into the dining room, her parents were already standing by the breakfast table. Mutti was young and pretty, though a bit too thin and pale. She was laughing as she tied a bow on one of the small pile of packets at the place where Magda always sat. *She’s wearing that white silk wrapper that makes her look like a ghost,* Magda thought. At the same time, she was pleased to see that this was one of Mutti’s cheerful days. Lisel had moods. Sometimes she was full of life and seemingly tireless. Then, as if a lamp had gone out, she became listless and sad. On those days she hardly spoke, but shut herself in the music room, playing the piano for hours on end.

She also suffered from migraines. Her husband, knowing Lisel was not strong, did his best to protect her. He was fifteen years older than his wife. Big and square, he towered over her. He had the same unruly, curly hair as Magda, though not so much of it because he was going bald.

"Happy birthday, darling," Mutti said, giving her daughter a kiss. Papa also said Happy Birthday but when he went to kiss her, he noticed the shorts and grubby blouse.

"You dressed in a hurry, I see. Did you oversleep, today of all days?"

Magda started, "Oh no! I was out in the garden before six." She looked at him anxiously. Her father was liable to blow up. Though he never got angry with her gentle, fragile mother, only with her. Mutti told her it was because they were so alike, both impulsive, impatient and very obstinate. However, Magda saw Papa was smiling now and was not going to tell her off.

Before she could she sit down and start opening any of the gaily wrapped parcels, her father said, "Come and look at this first." Taking her by the arm, he propelled her into the conservatory. Under the Sirius, that was supposed to flower at midnight, but had not done so yet, there was a shining, black bicycle with red tyres.

Magda went up to it and gazed without saying a word. It was a three-speed model and had everything, including a lamp, a bell on the gleaming chrome handlebars and a leather saddlebag.

"Well, will it do?"

Magda found her voice. "It's wonderful! I never dreamed of such a thing. I thought Mutti did not want me to have one."

"Well I changed my mind, or rather your father changed it for me," said her mother with a wry smile. "If you learn to ride it this summer, you can go to your new school on it in the autumn. But you must also learn all the traffic signs and be able to ride really well."

"I already know how, I learned on Trude's bike. Now we'll be able to go to school together. Much better than going on the tram and quicker. This is the best birthday present ever," and,

dancing across the conservatory Magda hugged and kissed them. She was ready to take the bicycle outside, there and then, to show how expert she was, but Papa said, “Hold on, we’ll have breakfast first.“

Magda was too excited to eat but, while her father ate his cheese and ham and her mother sipped coffee, she opened her other presents, which included games and books, a pencil-case from an aunt and a pretty bracelet from Granny Vogel. By the time she finished looking at everything, the meal was over and she could take the bike out into the park to prove she could indeed ride it. She went up and down the central path in the park several times, slowly at first, then quicker. “Bravo,“ said her father who had come out to watch.

“Can I go and show it to Trude?“

He nodded. “Yes, all right!“

Trude lived just down the road and Magda was about to set off when Fritz appeared. He ran over to the bike and looked it over. “It’s Express-Werke’s latest, much lighter than mine. It shouldn’t be such hard work riding uphill. The three-speed will help of course.“

“Would you like a go?“ offered Magda.

“No, that’s all right thanks. It is a girl’s bike and I’m bit tall for it anyway.“

Fritz, who was two years older than Magda, was thin and lanky. The first thing you noticed about him was his blazing red hair. Today it needed cutting because his father, who was Mrs. Senger’s brother, had not noticed. Nor had his grand-mother who had come keep house for them after Fritz’s mother died.

He had recently had his barmitzvah, for which he had learned a passage in Hebrew, for the first time and, as he hoped, last time. At the celebration afterwards, everyone had bought presents. Then a piano arrived, a gift from Anton and Lisel. This had been his aunt’s idea because she had seen how often Fritz monopolised his father’s.

All the Vogels were musical. Magda was used to hearing her mother playing on the Steinway in the music room. She was particularly fond of Schubert. Once, when Magda asked why he was such a favourite, she replied, “Because although he can be so happy, he knows sadness.“ Heinz, her brother, earned his living teaching the piano to High School boys. He also composed chamber pieces, several of which had been performed in public. One of them, a trio for oboe, viola and piano, was praised by famous Hindemith. However, Fritz’s father was not well known, partly because he was impractical and had no idea how to promote himself as a composer.

When Joanna Vogel was young, she and her husband used to give parties, to which people flocked to hear her play the harpsichord. She played so well she could have become a professional, if her parents had not insisted that marriage was the only proper career for a woman. She played for friends. Then, later, when it became clear that Heinz was gifted, Joanna and her husband invited musicians and music publishers to the house, in the hope they would help their son. By the time Magda knew her, she no longer had the money to give big parties. She was one of the many victims of inflation after the government stock her husband bought before he died became worthless overnight. She still dreamed though of Heinz making a name for himself.

When Magda went to the Vogels she was used to finding her, gaunt and upright at the harpsichord, her hair red like her grandson’s, but now faded and thin, escaping in wisps, which, every now and then, she brushed impatiently from her face. Magda spent a lot of time at the Vogels who lived in the old town in a chaotic house, where meals were eaten at odd times, but which was full of interesting books as well as the sound of music.

She especially enjoyed being with Fritz. Not only could he play all the latest tunes by ear, he always had ideas for what to do. She thought he was quite clever, though he got dreadful school reports because he did not work unless he felt like it.

Mutti said he was an individualist. He had recently decided to learn English. He said it was easy. To prove it, he practised what he knew on Magda, so she learned a bit as well. He also had a passion for going to the cinema and, as many of the films he saw were American, he spoke English with an American accent.

Magda agreed when he said, "Aunt Lisel has asked me to help with the treasure hunt for the party. What about giving me a hand? You can show off to Trude this afternoon." Before they went round to the garden, they caught sight of Traudel coming out of her house on the other side of the park.

"Oh look! I thought she had gone away," said Magda. "Why did she say she wouldn't come to my party? Doesn't she like me?"

"It's not that. She likes you well enough. She's secretive. You know that. Whatever reason she has for not coming this afternoon, it's typical of her not to say."

"I expect she thinks parties are silly," Magda decided, "she's so serious."

"Don't worry about it. Come on! Lets get the things for the treasure hunt."

The two of them spent the next half hour putting bags of jelly babies, pink sugar pigs and chocolate elves wrapped in coloured foil, together with lucky charms, under bushes, in empty tree pots and in the creeper smothering the potting shed. The best prize of all, was a glider that could be made to fly when catapulted in the air with a rubber band. "I know just where to put that," said Magda, "Give it here." Then she swarmed up the beech tree to put it in a hollow halfway up.

Meanwhile Fritz chewed his pencil and tried to think up a clue. Eventually he came up with, "This flies. Look high!"

"They'll soon guess that," said Magda.

"I didn't want to make it too difficult," he replied. "Where you've hidden the thing is hard enough."

By the time they had done, Florrie and two maids, who came in daily, had set up a trestle table in the shade under the beech. Mrs. Senger brought out a large white tablecloth she had

embroidered all over with wild flowers when she was a schoolgirl. Florrie looked at all the carefully done lazy daisy, stem and cross-back stitches in brilliant colours and exclaimed, “It’s beautiful ma’am! Are you sure you want to use it today?“

“Why not? There’s no point in leaving it locked up in the linen chest for strangers to find some day.“ She smiled at Magda, and asked, “What better time than now is there?“ Then she added, “Perhaps if you and Fritz have finished hiding everything for the treasure hunt, you would like to help the girls take the party food from the kitchen into the conservatory. You can each choose one of the cakes to eat.“

Soon a round table in the middle of the conservatory was covered with plates piled with ham, pate and salame rolls, dishes of gherkins, slices of apple strudel, strawberry tartlets, vanilla star biscuits, almond macaroons and hazelnut kipfel. Florrie and Mrs Senger had been baking for days. On a separate small table with an ornate silver cake slice there was the chocolate-iced birthday cake. It had eleven candles round the edge, plus one more in the middle.

“Why do birthday cakes have an extra candle?“ asked Magda.

“It’s called the Life Light,“ answered her father who, it being lunchtime, had just come home from his office. “It’s an old German custom, wishing you may live happily to a great age.“

The maids brought domed wire covers to put over the plates. The cousins, who had been unable to decide on their treat, could hover no longer. Magda chose a strawberry tartlet and Fritz a slice of strudel. Mr Senger’s eyes lit up when he saw some marzipan apples and he took a couple of them.

As soon as a scrappy lunch was over, Magda went to put her party frock on. She did not mind dressing up, as long as she did not have to do it too often. She went over to the cheval glass to see how the dress looked on her. It had puff sleeves and the skirt had a stiff underpetticoat which made it stick out. She liked that. With her white socks and black patent leather

shoes, she was transformed – except for her hair. She thought about forcing it into plaits to tame it. But when she tried, they stuck out too, like the skirt.

"How are you getting on?" asked her mother, who had just come into the bedroom. "Oh no, I don't think so", she said, looking at the plaits. "Let me!" She undid them and, seizing a brush, attacked the unruly mop. For once, Magda did not shriek when she tugged. When Mutti had got all the tangles out, she found a wide, red ribbon and tied the hair back. "There!" she said. "That's better".

Magda took the prize-winning carnation out of the tooth glass. "Can you put this in, Mutti? Hans gave it me. It was my first present of the day."

"Goodness! You were honoured. He guards those hothouse blooms like a dragon with his treasure hoard," and she fixed the flower firmly in the ribbon.

The first guests to arrive were the Bremmer children. Trude ran up to Magda to give her a hug and say, "Happy Birthday."

Close behind her came the handsome, lofty Manfried, carrying a large box and behind him young Wolfgang crying, "Let me!" Helmut Bremmer, their father, ran the local sports centre and as a present they brought a shuttlecock set.

"Oh, wonderful!" exclaimed Magda. "Manfried, if you and Wolfgang, or someone, put the net up, we'll have a game later." Then, seizing Trude's hand, she said, "Come and see my bike. It's just like yours, except that the tyres are red."

The two friends were very different to look at. Magda's bushy hair was dark, her eyes brown and she was small for her age. Trude, like her brothers, was tall, had short, smooth blond hair and blue eyes. The two girls got on well together because they loved sport and were good at athletics. They were the same age and had started at Primary School together. There, everyone had wanted to be Trude's friend, who was not only very good looking but had a way of making each of them feel special. Magda was delighted when she chose her.

When the time came to take the entrance exam for the High School, Magda was sure her friend would pass but was afraid she would not because she was not good at arithmetic. She had scraped through, however. So they would not be parted. “Isn’t it a good thing we live so near each other,“ said Magda as she showed Trude her bike. “We’ll be able to cycle to school together.“

“Rather!“ replied her friend. “We’ll have a trial run soon, to see how long it takes.“ Then, looking the new bike over, she said, “I love the red tyres. They’re the same as the racing champions have.“

Meanwhile, the other friends Magda had invited to her party were arriving. Mrs. Senger was particularly happy to see Ludwig, the thirteen-year-old son of Leopold Kahn, a client of her husband’s law firm. She looked to him to take care of Wolfgang because, unlike some of the older children, he could get on with him. In fact he got on with most people. Granny Vogel said he was born to be a diplomat.

Ludwig promptly took the boy down to the far end of the garden, where there was a trampoline that Magda’s uncle had sent it from America. Wolfgang had never seen one before but was soon bouncing up and down furiously. The trampoline was a novelty for the other children as well. Soon there was a queue of them waiting to have a go. “I got here first“, shouted Wolfgang, who wanted to carry on bouncing even higher now he had a big audience.

Ludwig stopped a quarrel developing by saying, “I think there’s a treasure hunt starting soon. I’ll help you with the clues if you let the others have a turn now.“

“O.K. But I want to come back later“.

“Of course!“

Olga, Ludwig’s older sister had stayed on the terrace, where she looked Magda up and down and said, “What a fancy frock!“

Magda bit her lip and, looking at Olga’s plain, white pleated

skirt, thought, *Oh dear! She thinks I'm overdressed.*

Seeing her look downcast, the other girl added. "Well, it is your birthday and really you look quite pretty in it."

Fortunately Magda caught sight of Fritz beckoning to her. So she said, "Thanks a lot" and ran off to see what he wanted.

"You looked as if you needed rescuing. Now Olga is fourteen, she's become a bore," he said. "Here's your present. Happy birthday." Magda guessed the flat, square package he handed her was a book and, when she tore he tissue paper off, saw she was right. It was *The Golden Book of Myths and Legends.* Fritz had a tattered copy at home and often told her stories from it.

"Thank you, thank you very much," she said opening the book and turning the pages. "I've so wanted one of my own to read whenever I felt like it. This is lovely. It's got pictures too."

As well as sport, Magda loved stories. One of her favourite subjects at school was history because it was full of them. One of the first games Fritz had thought up meant acting out some of the legends. In most of them he was the hero and she was a distressed damsel. There was the day when she was Andromeda, chained to a rock in the ocean. The rock had been a tree stump in the wood and the ocean the dead leaves swirling round her feet. Fritz had enjoyed himself fighting the dreadful but invisible monster threatening her. However, she had had nothing to do and much preferred the time when she was Hyppolyte, Queen of the Amazons much more. After chatting to Fritz for a bit, Magda talked to all the others. "I wear your shorts every day in the holidays," she told Leonie, a plump, nervous girl who had brought them back from London where she had been visiting her English cousins.

"I'm glad you like them. I wasn't sure you would. No one seems to wear them much here – not girls anyway, though they do in in England."

By mid-afternoon, they had had the treasure hunt. The chocolate elves had melted but were eaten all the same. Ludwig continued to keep an eye on Wolfgang helping him with

the clues, as he had promised. There was no danger of a tantrum because, steered in the right direction by the older boy, it was Wolfgang who found the glider. This kept him happy for half an hour or more, until the rubber band snapped. However, he did not scream. He went back and commandeered the trampoline.

When the net was in place, Manfried and his friend Karl from the Sports Centre suggested they play Trude and Magda. The boys won all three games. "Well, Karl and I often play together," explained Manfried.
"Yes," said his sister, "but now Magda I can practise and next time we have a game with you both, we may beat you."

Manfried laughed at this. "Not a chance," he said as they all flopped down on the grass.

It was really too hot to run about any more. There was not the slightest breeze and the sun had been blazing down for hours. Everyone was thirsty and drank glass after glass of raspberry juice mixed with lemonade. Only Olga had a hat, a straw one with a wide brim. So Mrs. Senger, afraid some of the others would get sun stroke, shepherded everyone into the deep shade of the beech tree where, on the table spread with her embroidered cloth, the food was laid out. None of the children were too hot to eat and, all too soon, looking at the emptying dishes. Magda's mother was beginning to wonder if she and Florrie should have cooked more. No one paid any attention to the black cloud that crept over the sun. Suddenly, there was a flash that bathed the table in an eerie light. Two seconds later, a tremendous clap of thunder rumbled threateningly over the garden and the rain came down in torrents. Everyone dashed for the house.

"I didn't expect that!" exclaimed Magda's father who had just walked home from his office again. He was drenched and went upstairs to change into dry clothes, while Florrie provided towels for the others to rub themselves down. Then they gathered round the piano to sing all the songs they knew the

words of, with Mrs. Senger playing the accompaniment.

Magda noticed Ludwig was not there and asked Olga, “Do you know where your brother is?“

“I’ve no idea,“ came the reply. “I saw him going out of the gate before the storm.“

Just then, Ludwig slipped into the music room, wiping his glasses and Magda went up to him. “Did you get wet? Where did you disappear to?“

“No, I’m not wet. I waited until the rain almost stopped. Otherwise I’d have been back sooner. I went to pay my respects to the Feldheims.“

Magda was puzzled. “Why now? Was Traudel there? She wouldn’t come to my party.“

“She couldn’t.“ He paused before he went on. “Your birthday falls on the day Traudel’s grandmother died. The Feldheims celebrate her life on the anniversary. She was a heroine.“

“A heroine? In what way?“

“Well, as you know, she was Russian. She was killed in a witchhunt against Jews – what they call a pogrom – but not before she saved the life of Traudel’s mother who was a baby at the time. She hid her under the washing in a laundry basket. Then she went out to face the mob who were beating and stabbing every Jew they could find. She ran to draw them away from the house and died when one of the neighbours, she’d known all her life, split her head open with an axe.“

“How horrible! Whyever did he do that? Why were the mob killing Jews?“

“On that occasion people had been told the Jews were to blame for the assassination of Czar Alexander. There were more pogroms later, some for no reason at all.“

“Pogroms? Who’s talking about pogroms on my little girl’s birthday?“ Mr. Senger had come up.

“Ludwig was telling me about Traudel’s grandmother. I asked him to. Do many people hate the Jews Papa?“

“They do in Russia. They’re barbarians there. Here we’re

all Germans. It doesn't bother either you or Trude that you're Jewish and she isn't, does it?"

"We never think about it. We're going to be friends for ever."

"Good! Now come over to the piano. Fritz wants you to hear something."

Magda was whisked way from Ludwig. When Fritz saw her, he said, "I want to play you a song I heard when I went to that new movie they're showing in town. It's just the thing for today. It's in English but very easy to understand, as long as you know what the words 'happy birthday' mean, and he told her. Then he played and sang in his croaky voice:

Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday dear Magda.
Happy birthday to you.

Magda did understand. She would have kissed Fritz if she had not known he would be embarrassed. It was the first time most of those in the room had heard the song which became so famous. The grown-ups wanted an encore and Magda's friends shouted, "Sing it in German!" So Fritz sang it again, in English and then in German and everyone joined in. That was the highlight of Magda's birthday party.

CHAPTER 2

On the first day of term Magda was outside the house with her newly cleaned bike before half past six in the morning, a whole hour before school started, even though it only took twenty minutes to get there. Trude had promised come at a quarter to seven but Magda thought, hoped, she might be a bit early. As the minutes went by she became more and more nervous about how it would be in the new school. She and her friend had ridden past it several times in the summer. It looked enormous, with its three rows of tall windows in a murky green wall that stretched along half the length of the street. As it was the holidays, there had been no one about. The huge wooden door was closed fast and the windows stared blankly down at them.

At breakfast, Papa, seeing how scared she looked, had given her a hug, saying, "There's nothing to worry about. Just work hard and behave yourself and you'll be fine." Magda was not so sure. She doubted if she would ever get the hang of Maths. Fractions and decimals had been bad enough. Now, at the High School there would be algebra and geometry.

She was comforted a little when Mutti reminded her, "You won't be alone. You already know several girls who are going there and you'll be with your best friend."

Trude appeared, cycling down the road. As soon as she saw Magda, she called, "We'll probably be far too early. School doesn't start for ages. But never mind. Let's be off! We have to find our way around. Are you excited?"

Magda gulped, "Well sort of." She did not want to admit she was nervous. So she added, "I'm looking forward to seeing the gymnasium. They say it's got everything."

She was reassured to see Trude was wearing a woollen skirt like her own, only dark red, whereas hers was blue. They did not have to wear a uniform. This had made it more difficult deciding what were the right sort of clothes to have. Mutti had said, "It is best not to look dressed up, so you must wear things that are plain and comfortable." Looking at Trude, Magda knew Mutti had been right. Both girls had jumpers on which matched their skirts, for although the sky was blue the autumn day was breezy. The leaves on the beech tree in the garden, already a deep bronze colour, were beginning to fall, and the girls rode through flurries of star-like, yellow sycamore leaves as they set off through the park.

They had worked out beforehand the best route to the High School. It took them down several quiet side streets and over Fleischbrücke, the stone bridge that went into the old town. Magda loved the old town with its oddly shaped medieval buildings, castle and the tower, just like the one where Rapunzel was imprisoned. They rode into the Market Square, past the cascading waters of the Schöener Brunnen and then by the archway that led into the courtyard where Fritz lived in one of oldest and oddest houses of all. It was the first day of a new term for him as well, though Magda doubted if he let that bother him. After all, he was beginning his third year now and, in any case, never worried about school.

They went out of the Old Town to the High School which was a short ride away on the other side of it. They arrived at the fortress-like building with time to spare but were not the first. The heavy wooden door was open. Some girls and a thin, faded man carrying an attaché case, probably a teacher, were already going in.

"I wonder where the bicycle shed is? Let's follow her," said Trude, pointing to a short, plump woman with sandy hair who had spoken to the man in the doorway. When they got round the corner of the building they watched the woman jump off her bicycle and open a green gate before wheeling it inside.

They hung back and did not think she has seen them, but she had. “This way girls! You’re new aren’t you. What are your names?“ They mumbled them. “Speak up,“ she barked. They told her again, this time a bit too loudly. She studied their faces, now red with embarrassment. Suddenly she smiled, making them think that maybe she was not as fierce as she sounded. “Don’t forget whatever you’ve brought with you,“ she added, eyeing their saddle bags. Magda took her new pencil case out of hers.

“I’m Frau Kettner. Now come with me.“ She set off again, surprisingly quickly for such a small woman, to the main entrance.

Once they had passed through the stone porchway, they were in a large entrance hall and Frau Kettner called out, “Any first year girls please follow me,“ and, again moving very quickly, she began to climb a splendid marble staircase that rose to the top of the building. The other girls, including the twins, from their old school, went with them to the third floor and then down a wide corridor which smelt of beeswax. “This is your classroom,“ Frau Kettner said, opening the door and going to a table on a platform, where she stood looking at the expectant faces of the girls who had followed her in. “It is good that you have arrived early. It means you have first choice of where you want to sit. Then, taking a sheaf of papers from the table, she left them to themselves. The girls gazed at the dark, oak desks which were old but, like the banisters on the staircase and doors in the corridor, newly polished.

“Let’s sit near the window,“ said Magda, pointing to a desk which like all the others in the room was a double one.

“Right!“ answered Trude, “but not at the front.“ So they sat down at a desk in the third row. Looking out of the window, Magda could see tiled rooftops and a church spire, and above them clouds scudding across the sky. More and more girls came into the room. Soon everyone was talking. Some of them were shy in these new and strange surroundings and

only whispered, but Magda could not help noticing one girl, who did not mind sitting at the front.

She introduced herself as Lotte in a clear voice that carried right across the room. A bit later she told the girl sitting next to her, "I'm going to be a singer, like my mother. She's Lili Levy." On hearing this, Magda looked again at the boyish girl with fair, curly hair, cut very short, wondering if Fritz and his family knew her mother.

Looking round, Magda recognized the half dozen other Jewish girls dotted about. Two of them from their Primary School were sitting just behind her and Trude. One of them was Leonie. Trude turned round and asked her, "Did you go to England again?"

"Oh, yes," came the answer, "our cousins took us all to Devon and John – he's sixteen – started teaching me to sail."

"Weren't you lucky," said Magda, "How did you get on?"

"All right, until I fell in the water. What they call the boom swung round and knocked me into the bay. Oh look, here's Traudel."

Traudel and another girl Magda did not know were the last to come into the classroom. Traudel looked intent. She nodded at Magda, who saw she had shot up during the summer and was wearing glasses. There was only one desk left empty, at the opposite end of the row Magda and Trude were in. So she and the other girl, who had arrived with her, sat in that. This girl said her name was Helga and that her family had just come from Berlin to live in Nuremberg. Then she looked wonderingly at Traudel's black hair which she wore in a thick plait and asked, "Can you sit on it?"

"Yes, when it's loose," was Traudel's short answer as she foraged in her satchel for something.

The big clock in the courtyard struck the half hour. Whereupon Frau Kettner came back into the classroom. She tapped a ruler on the table and everyone fell silent. Then she said, "Guten Tag."

Everyone knew what to do from their previous schools and stood up to say *"Guten Tag"* in reply.

Their response was a bit straggly and Frau Kettner said, "I think you can do much better than that. Now say *Guten Tag* again." The second time the class met with her approval.

"Now, because it is your first day here, I am going to read the register and you must answer "Present" when your name is called. Not wishing to draw attention to themselves, everyone took care to speak up when it was their turn.

Just as the roll call was over, the door opened and a tall, middle-aged man, who was completely bald, came in. Without smiling, he said, "*Guten Morgen,* Frau Kettner. May I borrow a couple of minutes of your time with the girls?"

"Of course Herr Direktor," she responded.

Whereupon, in deep, ceremonious voice, he gave a short speech, beginning with, "Welcome all of you" and ending with him telling the newcomers, "This is a school with a great tradition, one of the first to be established in the country, to give girls a proper education. Make the most of your time." Then he went to the door and, with a curt nod to Frau Kettner, left.

After he had gone, the school day began, as it had done in the Primary School, with everyone singing a song. "It will clear your lungs," said Frau Kettner. "I expect you all know *Fine is the World*. Sing that." By the time the class had sung the song, which had a jolly tune, even the most nervous girls looked cheerful. "Very good!" said Frau Kettner. "Come to think of it, all of you here in this school for the first time are like the brothers in that song, setting out on an adventure in the world. No doubt they met with difficulties as well as the good things they were looking forward to. So, I expect, will you. Like them, you must be determined and brave. Now to work. I shall be teaching you literature. I hope you will learn to love our great writers."

For the rest of the lesson, she told the class about one of them, Schiller, who she said 'hated tyrants and loved freedom'.

Then she told them to open their books and turn to the page with Schiller's *Ode to Joy* and asked who would like to read it aloud. Lottte volunteered and gave a dramatic recitation Afterwards, Frau Kettner said, "You read that with feeling. It has been set to music. Do you know by whom?"

"Beethoven," came Lotte's prompt answer. "It comes at the end of his Ninth Symphony." Magda was impressed. Before she left, Frau Kettner gave them the *Ode to Joy* to learn by heart for homework.

Everyone who taught them that morning set them homework. By the time they had been given the third lot, Magda and Trude looked at each other in dismay. Magda did not think any of the other lessons they had that morning were as interesting as Frau Kettner's. History was a big disappointment. It looked as if Frau Berger, who had piercing blue eyes and sharp features, only wanted them to learn long lists of dates.

A skeletal man. with straggly, grey hair, whom Magda and Trude had seen in the entrance earlier, gave the girls their Maths lesson that morning. "I am Herr Schwarz," he announced, in voice that sounded like dead leaves rustling. Today I want to find out how much you already know. So I shall ask each of you in turn to come out and do a simple sum." Whereupon he began scribbling on the blackboard. He did not look stern; nevertheless, Magda was panic stricken, especially when he beckoned to her just after Traudel had written her answer on the board faster than anyone else had done so far. She froze when she saw her question had fractions in it. She just stood there. Herr Schwarz fidgeted and was about to say something when she realised she knew the answer. It was correct and she was able to go back to her desk.

"That was lucky," she whispered to her friend as she sank down beside her.

After Maths there was a recess. She and all the other girls went down the marble staircase and out into a courtyard at the back of the school. In the middle there was a flagpole with the

Bavarian State flag fluttering in the breeze. Several girls came up and joined Trude and Magda. As usual Magda's good looking, smiling friend was a magnet. Lotte was one of those who came up, clutching a bag of sweets which she handed round. "The Direktor is a bit pompous, isn't he?" she stated, adding, "I don't think he likes Frau Kettner much."

Finally after another two lessons, it was midday. Time to go home. "Thank heaven we have the afternoons off," said Trude as the two girls went to the bicycle shed, "I suppose that's one good thing about beginning so early."

"Oh, yes," agreed Magda. "Leonie says that school lasts all day in England. Wouldn't that be awful? But today wasn't as dreadful as I thought it might be. None of the teachers we've had so far are dragons. By the way, what did you think of Lotte?"

"Oh, she's a bit of a show off. Still, she was alright, sharing her sweets like that. Which remind me, I'm ravenous."

"So am I. When we get back, ask your mother if you can come over after lunch. We could do some of all that homework we have and afterwards, as it is still fine, we could have a game of shuttlecock.

Trude did come back and the two girls spent the afternoon together, one of many, sometimes at the Sengers and sometimes at the Bremmers. When the weather was bad, they went to the sports club, where Trude's father let them play table tennis.

Both girls settled in at school. The teachers were as strict as they expected. It took longer to get used to all the homework they had now. Magda struggled with Maths. At the end of term, she only passed the Geometry exam because she had learned all the theorems off by heart and half the paper consisted of copying these out. She had one real triumph, however, when she wrote an essay about meeting and talking to a tree spirit in the garden. Frau Kettner liked it so much she read it out to the class. Best of all, Magda and Trude were top

in P.E. On the last day of term they competed against each other when they played a game called Shipwrecks in the gymnasium. For this they used all the equipment there. This included vaulting over the leather horse several times, swinging Indian clubs, swarming up the ropes and leaping across to the parallel bars and climbing down them. Whoever completed the course fastest was the winner. At the last moment Trude hesitated when she lost one of her gym pumps. So Magda won by just four seconds.

CHAPTER 3

After that came Christmas. Like most of their friends, the Sengers celebrated this. Almost the only family Magda knew who did not did not were Traudel's, who were Orthodox. They kept all the Jewish holidays, whereas Magda's father observed only Yom Kippur, going on that Day of Atonement to the synagogue.

The week before Christmas, the Sengers and Vogels made the usual trip to the Christkindlmarkt. They went in the evening because then all the stalls would be lit up with coloured lights. They did not bother about supper because they knew they could get sausages and cold cuts of all kinds, bread, pretzels and gingerbread any time, whenever they liked in the market They set off in the Opel 'Olympia' car that Magda's father had got earlier in the year. He parked it near the railway station and they all walked from there down Königstrasse. They were well wrapped up with woollen hats, scarves and gloves, which was as well because it had begun to snow. Even before they got into the market, one of the many children walking with their parents along the pavement cried, "Oh look!" Where the snowflakes were caught in the coloured lights, they made a rainbow. They could also hear a brass band playing Christmas music.

When they reached the square, there were stalls, not only along a main avenue but stretching in every direction down the side streets. Every few yards there was a stand selling hot punch. They stopped by one of these when Lisel announced, "I must have some new decorations for the tree. The paint is peeling off some of the ones we have."

Then Joanna Vogel said, “I need to get stollen“ This was kind of fruit loaf that the Vogels always had at breakfast on Christmas Day. Often women made stollen at home but Fritz’s grandmother only cooked when she had to.

“I expect we all have different things we want to do,“ said Magda’s father, “so I suggest we split up and then all meet back here at eight o’clock. That’ll give Lisel and Joanna time to shop, Magda and Fritz can explore. You and I, Heinz can begin our evening with a glass of *gluehwein*.“

“Do you think you could get some of those spun glass balls for tree, please?“ Magda asked her mother. Then she and Fritz caught sight of Manfried and Wolfgang making their way through the crowd towards them.

“Happy Christmas!“ called Manfried. “I’m just taking Wolfgang to the carousel. Do you want to come along?“

The big roundabout was at the far end of the square. As the cousins were walking behind the brothers, Magda said, “Isn’t Christmas a jolly time? It makes even Manfried less standoffish than usual.“

“Well either that,“ Fritz replied, “or he wants help keeping the little brat happy.“ When they were passing a stall where a man in a chef’s hat was selling *lebkuchen*, the spicy smell of these biscuits, as big as saucers, made them hungry and they stopped to buy one each. Fritz and Manfried each bought tins of them to take home. Magda looked at the beautiful tins which were the same as always, with pictures of the town printed on them. She also stopped at a stall where they let you make candles. She would have liked to have a go, but that would have taken too long so she used some of her Christmas money to buy a ready made one instead.

“That’s gorgeous,“ said Fritz, looking at the elaborate wax swirls in purple and gold, “won’t it make you sad to see it melt down?“

“Oh I shan’t use it,“ replied Magda.

They reached the carousel and Wolfgang had a couple of

turns riding on a reindeer. Then Manfried said he would take him to the miniature railway which was something new at the market that year.

"Is Trude here?" asked Magda.

"Of course," replied her brother. She has gone down there to get a few animals for our crib, and he pointed to one of the side streets. The Bremmers were Catholics, but even non-Catholics liked to look at the many scenes from Bethlehem on display at Christmas.

So Magda said, "Do you know I've never been down that street when we've come here before, but I'd love to."

"Well, go ahead", said Fritz. I'll join you with Manfried and Wolfgang when we done the train ride."

Magda found Trude standing in front of the most extensive display in the street. It not only had the stable with Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus in his manger, but the whole of Bethlehem. So there was a miller grinding flour, a blacksmith hammering a horseshoe in his forge, men carrying wood home and more drinking in a tavern, as well at women taking water back from a well and others baking in kitchens. Magda walked up behind her friend, and putting her hands over Trude's eyes said, "Guess who?" The attempt to disguise her voice was a failure.

"Happy Christmas, Magda. Don't you think this is interesting?" Trude added, pointing to the scene in Bethelem.

"Yes, and how beautifully made all the figures are. The faces have different expressions. You can see the butcher probably has a bad temper."

"You're right and his wife looks as if she scared to death of him. Mother says the craftsmen who make these things for a crib have trained for several years in a special school."

Magda only had a vague idea of the Nativity story. "Who's that?" she asked, pointing to a figure by the manger.

"Joseph," Trude told her.

Magda was going to ask about the Three Kings when she

saw that a man and a woman, standing nearby, were staring at her. They did not look friendly. She heard the woman say, *"A little Jew!"* Suddenly Magda felt uncomfortable. Then, to her relief, the boys arrived.

Fritz said, "It's time we were getting back." So he and Magda walked back to the *glühwein* stall where the Sengers and Vogels had agreed to meet.

They all ate bread and sausages, before going home. It had stopped snowing by the time they were walking the car. The pavement was clear but all the rooftops and window ledges Königstrasse were white. "The houses look like iced gingerbread," said Magda. Near the car park they met Mr. Levy and Lotte. "See what Daddy's bought and Lotte held up a couple of Hansel and Gretel dolls. We're going to give them to Mutti. She's singing in the Humperdinck opera again, in Munich this year. You must come and hear her – and me. This year I'm in the Chorus."

For the most part Christmas was as it always had been for as long as Magda could remember. So there was the usual Christmas Eve meal of baked carp at the Vogels. Actually, neither Magda nor Fritz liked fish very much, but the grown ups enjoyed it and anyway it was a German tradition. Afterwards, there was sponge cake with cherries, which everyone enjoyed.

Hans found a fine, tall, bushy Christmas tree for the Sengers, and Mutti and Florrie shut themselves up in the drawing room to decorate it. When the doors were unlocked and Magda was allowed in, she was delighted to see, as well as painted wooden characters from Grimm and chocolate *kringel*, there were the spun glass balls she had asked for, gleaming in the light of fifty candles. It was her father's job every year to light these. Florrie held the steps as he lit the ones at the top of the tree. "Well, there she is, as pretty as ever," he said, as he stood on the carpet again. "Long may she reign over us," and he pointed to the fairy queen in a white crinoline, with a diadem in her blonde curls.

The only new thing Magda's family did in the holidays was to go to the Bavarian State Opera to hear Lili Levy, Lotte's mother. Fritz and his family, who knew the singer quite well, went with them. As they took their seats under the huge chandeliers, Magda looked up at the boxes on either side of the theatre and recognized the Direktor of her school in one of them. Beside him was a large lady in violet satin, a pair of opera glasses in her hand. Magda showed Fritz where the Direktor was, adding, "If that's his wife, maybe he has children as well. Somehow I never imagined him having a home like other people. He has only been to our class once. I just see him sometimes stalking down a corridor."

To which Fritz said, "Consider yourself lucky if he's like his God and 'moves in a mysterious way'. I see a bit too much of mine. Never a term goes by without him summoning me to his office for a ticking off."

The theatre went dark and the curtain went up on the two ragged children searching for food in the cupboard in a cottage. Soon Lili Levy came on as their harassed mother. Magda thought she was very good, though Lisel and her brother Heinz said she was a better singer than an actress. It was Fritz who first spotted Lotte in the chorus, among the children dancing and singing a song of thanksgiving at the happy end the opera. Afterwards, he and Magda agreed she looked as if she had been on the stage all her life.

"A Happy New Year to you all! How goes it?" The speaker was Karl Werfel who was opening wide the door of his farm in Dorf Walchensee as the Sengers got out of their car outside the stable and walked through the farmyard towards him. Karl was an old friend of Anton Senger's. They had served together in the Royal Bavarian Artillery in World War One. Both had fought at Verdun where their battalion had taken part in a big offensive against the French. Karl claimed that his friend had saved his life during that ordeal, though Anton always denied doing anything that any other comrade would not have done,

when he was stranded with his wounded friend in No Man's Land. Be that as it may, it was after Verdun that Magda's father was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class.

The Sengers often stayed for a few days at the farm and Magda always looked forward to being there. She was almost sorry when they got the car because she missed the way the adventure used to begin, by going to the Nuremberg railway station. They used to take travelling rugs to keep warm and a picnic to stave off the pangs of hunger. It was interesting seeing what other passengers got into the carriage and studying the various busy stations they came to, deciding which was the best kept and which had the most splendid station master The train took them to Kochel in Upper Bavaria, where they caught the Post Bus to Walchensee, where Karl would meet them with a truck to take them and their baggage the last half kilometre up to the farm.

Now they drove there direct, sweeping into the farmyard in style. Karl, hearing them arrive, came to the door and ushered them all into a big kitchen. Magda made her way to the fire burning in the range which, with its ovens, took up most of one wall. "I expect you're all frozen and hungry," said Karl. "For that matter, so am I. I've been out most of the day, first looking for Bismark. You haven't met him yet. He's my new pedigree bull. I found him eventually stuck in a gorse bush. The more the hefty fellow struggled, the deeper in he got.

"Is he hurt?" asked Magda's mother.

"No. Just a few scratches. He's in a foul temper though. Wilhelm's in the byre now, calming him down. Let's all have some soup. You've made some haven't you Hertha?" Hertha was an old woman who cooked for Karl. She nodded, smiled and put a tureen and bowls out on the scrubbed table.

While Magda was devouring the potato soup and munching the bread Hertha had baked, she looked round the kitchen. It was the same as ever, with the two black, witches' kettles humming on the range, hams and sausages hanging in the

roof, and the tall dresser with its willow pattern plates that were kept for best. She looked for, and saw, the hook on the bottom shelf where Karl hung his gold watch and chain each night. The wall clock with the wooden eagle on top chimed six and Magda remembered how Karl's wife had taught her to tell the time on it. She had died later when Magda was too young to understand that this meant she had gone away and would never come back. Now she wondered if Karl Werfel was lonely without her. She knew her father would be lost if his beloved wife died. And what would she do without her Mutti? She shook herself to get rid of such a dreadful thought.

"Is anything the matter Magda? Surely you're not still shivering", said her father.

"Oh No. I'm all right."

At that moment Wilhelm came into the kitchen and all eyes turned to him. He was Karl's son, a boy of twenty. He looked like his father. Both were tall and well built and wore the same kind of clothes in thick, grey cloth."Happy New Year", he said to the Sengers as he took off his jacket which had a large fur collar."I like your car Anton. How was the drive here?"

"Very good thanks. The sun was shining and melted the snow on the roads'.

"Well, they're icing over now. It's got much colder."

Magda looked dismayed. "We've brought my bike. Do you think I'll be able to use it?"

"If the sun comes out you'll be all right. In any case the woodland path will be clear."

The next morning Magda cycled to the woods. The last time she had been there was during a weekend in October when there were autumn crocuses under the trees and she had picked a bucket full of mushrooms. Now the ground was frozen hard and the trees bare. *Yet, they're still beautiful,* she thought as she looked at the patterns of black branches, etched against the white sky.

On her way back she met her father who had been out with

Karl Werfel and Wilheim on their farm round. Karl and his son managed the small farm between them with the help of a cowman. In May there were also a few boys and women who came up from the village to harvest the asparagus crop. The Werfels' white asparagus sold well in the market. Local hoteliers bought much of it up because guests came from far and wide to feast on it.

The days at Walchensee passed all too quickly. As well as cycling Magda helped around the farm when she was allowed to. Her main job was to collect the eggs each morning. The hens did not always lay them in the boxes as they should have done, so hunting for where they had hidden them often took some time.

There was a lake nearby and when it had frozen, with the ice more than two feet thick, Mutti said, "Who wants to go skating?" Anton was not keen and Karl and Wilhelm were too busy, so she went with Magda who was surprised to see her frail mother with colour in her cheeks and full of energy.

"How good you are!" she exclaimed, watching Mutti whirling round, performing elegant figures of eight.

"I had lots of practice when I was your age. Come on! Practice is all you need."

Magda also went walks with Mutti who liked to go down to the village where she chatted to to other women she met in the shop, many of whom she knew from previous visits. Everyone there spoke in the Franconian dialect which Magda found difficult to understand, though her mother could follow it. "Who were they talking about?"she asked after one visit.

"Some young woman who's moved here from the town. She seems to have got on the wrong side of them. They're not bad people but suspicious of strangers. It helps that we're Karl's friends. Even so, I am careful what I say when I talk to them. They love to gossip. The shop is a social centre for women, just as the beer house is for men."

Magda's father sometimes went with Karl and his son to the beer house in the evening, where he learned that times

were hard for many of the folk in the area. The massive inflation in the 1920s meant any money saved was worth nothing. Karl kept going fairly well because his asparagus had always been profitable and now he was able to hire out Bismark as a stud to several large land owners.

On the last evening of the holiday, everyone gathered in the great kitchen for a final meal. When they were talking afterwards, Karl asked, "Anton, do you remember that Austrian corporal we used to call 'The White Crow', who was in our barracks for a while in the war?"

"Yes. He called himself Hitler, though they said his name had been Schicklgruber. He was a killjoy. He didn't smoke, I remember and was a vegetarian. I never spoke to him. He sat by himself most of the time, without saying a word. What about him?"

"I came upon him in Munich later where he had plenty to say for himself. He was standing on a street corner, haranguing a crowd about the communists. I didn't recognize him at first in an old raincoat, with that lank black hair of his much longer than it had been when he was in the army.

"He's probably gone mad. It wouldn't surprise me. There was always something odd about those staring eyes of his."

"Exactly what I thought when I saw him again. But, do you know they say he is making quite a name for himself as an orator. He's even invited to smart parties."

"I wouldn't have thought he's know how to behave at those."

"Oh, he doesn't even try. Our old Major, who was at party given by Dr Hanfstaengl, a rich man, they call Putzi. He told me Hitler made an entrance, very late, and after kissing his hostess's hand, stood at the buffet, stuffing himself with cream cakes, until there was a lull in the conversation. Then, at the invitation of his host, he gave one of his speeches. The Major said he began quietly, gradually building up to a crescendo when he was almost screaming. It was an extraordinary performance. He was a success, it seems. At the end, people cheered.

CHAPTER 4

The Sengers had left the Werfel farm and were back home again when Magda had a sudden thought one afternoon, and went out to get some of her father's favourite marzipan. It was his forty-sixth birthday. The date, 30 January 1933, was to change the life of all the Sengers and everyone in the country.

As Magda rode through the park, the air was still as if Nature was holding its breath. The grass was stiff with frost, the fallen sycamore leaves, no longer yellow, were trodden into the iron-hard ground. A finch, high up on one of the black branches that criss-crossed a white sky, broke the silence with a thin song then, after a few faltering notes, gave up. Magda crossed this bleak landscape as quickly as she could. Once in the Old Town, she made for Krumbachers which was the place you went to for utterly delicious cakes, all hand made by Otto Krumbacher and his family.

It was a café as well as a confectioners and, as soon as Magda opened the door, she saw it was crowded. People were sitting on the elegant gilt chairs at all the round marble-topped tables. Thawing out in the warm and breathing in the rich smell of chocolate, cinnamon and almonds, she said hello to Leonie's mother, sitting with her sister and English brother-in-law who were visiting Nuremberg. She also waved at Trude's parents, who were with the young swimming instructor from the Sports Club. Then she went to the counter and gazed at the array of sweets and cakes behind the glass panel.

The wireless was on but she did not listen to it, until Otto Krumbacher turned the sound up for an announcement by President von Hindenberg. Everyone in the café stopped talking. The Presi-

dent announced, “The new Chancellor of the Reich is Adolf Hitler.“ There was a gasp, followed by a tidal wave of chatter.

“How is it possible?“ exclaimed one statuesque old woman. “He’s got the gift of the gab but he doesn’t know anything. He’s the son of a minor Customs clerk who thinks he’s a painter.“

“Oh, he’s a bit more than that,“ said Mr. Bremmer. He’s worked out a plan to put Germany on the map again.“

“Well, all I know of him is that my sister in Vienna bought one of his pictures a few years ago and we all laughed at her.“

“He’s moved on since then,“ said a fat man, the local bank manager, trying to stare the old woman down. “You should read his *Mein Kampf*. It’s full of good stuff.“

“Yes, don’t be such a snob,“said the swimming instructor. “What does it matter who his father is? We could do with a fresh face. Perhaps he’ll shake up that decrepit bunch round Hindenberg.“

After Magda paid for a big bar of marizipan, wrapped in gold paper, she saw Leonie’s mother explaining what all the excitement was about to her brother-in-law, who did not speak German. She left the shop as Mr. Bremmer was saying, “We must give him a chance and see what he can do.“

On her way home Magda saw her father coming out of his law office with Rudolf Lill his junior partner. *They must have decided to finish early*, she thought. She did not know Herr Lill very well. Whenever she met him he never had much to say for himself, but Papa said he was a competent and conscientious lawyer.

Hiding the marzipan bar in her pocket, she went to catch Papa up. She jumped off her bike as Herr Lill was saying, “Enjoy your evening, Anton. See you tomorrow.“ He waved when he saw Magda, before turning down a side street.

“Guess what Papa! That man you and Mr. Werfel were talking about has been made Chancellor.“

‘“What man?“

“The white crow – Hitler.“

Her father stood stock still and then burst into laughter. “I

don't believe it. Wherever did you get that idea?"

"It's true. It was on the wireless just now."

Anton fell silent. Then he shrugged his shoulders."Well that's a birthday present I could have done without. The country's gone mad!"

"Is he really so bad? Some of the people listening to the announcement, said they thought he would be all right."

"He's a trouble maker. He won't last though. Now let me tell you about this evening. When we get home, you can put your party frock on. I'm taking you and Mutti out to eat. The Kahns are coming too, if Leopold gets back from Munich in time.

The three Sengers went to Anton's favourite restaurant where the owner knew him well and came forward with a oily smile to usher them to a table near the window. "There are Ludwig and Olga," exclaimed Magda as they went past with their parents. The Kahns entered and the Sengers waved. Olga, knowing she looked her best in a new, blue, shift dress, smiled happily as she came to sit by Magda.

"Happy birthday, Anton. You don't look *much* older than you did yesterday," said Leopold Kahn.

"Well, sit down and let's get started," responded Anton, "I'm not getting any younger."

His wife Alice came over and kissed Lisel. The two women were close friends. Amongst other things, they swapped notes on how best to manage their benignly despotic husbands. A waiter drew up a nearby table and everyone studied the menus they were given. There was an unspoken agreement not to mention their new Chancellor. "You get the best *sauerbraten* in the world here," declared Anton. "I'm having that."

"I'll join you," said Leopold.

"And the ladies? Alice? Lisel? Olga? And what about you Ludwig? Magda?"

As it was a cold night, all of them felt like something filling, so they chose this braised beef dish in a sharp sauce and the men had potato dumplings with it.

They were all drinking Anton's health – Magda, along with Ludwig and Olga, was allowed a glass of wine for this – when their attention was caught by a man with a closely shaven head who was one of a noisy party sitting opposite. He rose to his feet, saying in a resounding voice, "Let us all drink to our Führer." Many other people also stood up for the toast, though the Kahns and Sengers were among those who stayed seated.

"Who's that?" asked Magda.

"He's our Gauleiter Julius Streicher," Mr. Kahn told her, "He also edits that rag *Der Stürmer*, writing most of it himself. He believes everything wrong with Germany is the fault of the Jews. He never misses a chance to go on about it."

"Rumour has it that he asked to come to our school on speech day," said Ludwig, but the Direktor turned him down."

"You've got a better Direktor than we had in my day then," said his father. "Ours took Streicher on as a teacher. He taught me for a year and, realising I was Jewish, taunted me almost daily with the fact. Then one day when I was late, he thrashed me. He really laid into me. I think he had been looking for the chance to do so ever since he set eyes on me."

"Didn't you tell them at home?" asked Magda.

"No, if I had done my father would have gone to the school to complain and that would only have made matters worse. Streicher and the Direktor were as thick as thieves. Now my ex-teacher has a more important pal. There's a lot of Streicher in *Mein Kampf*."

"I wouldn't know. I won't have that madman's book in the house," said Anton.

"Talking about madmen, reminds me," Leopold went on, "I heard a joke when I was in Munich: Hitler and his henchmen were visiting a lunatic asylum. In one ward all the inmates stood up, saluted him and cried 'Heil Hitler!' All is except one man who just sat there. Hitler went up to him and asked him why he hadn't saluted him and the man replied, 'I'm not mad. I'm the nurse'."

They were all laughing when the waiter came up again to

ask if they wanted a dessert. “Anyone for chocolate pudding?“ asked Anton as they concentrated on the menu again.

The new school term started well for Magda. She was no longer nervous. She looked forward to Frau Kettner’s literature lessons and took great care with her essays, hoping to have one of them read out again. She got on well with the other girls and Trude was still her best friend. The first change came when she opened her new history textbook. At the beginning of the term Frau Berger’s had given them a test on the Thirty Years War. “Number the lines on your paper from one to fifty. Now first question: Put down the date of the Defenestration of Prague.“ And so she went on in her monotonous voice, finally reaching question fifty, which was, “Give the name and date of the treaty which brought the war to and end.“

The next day Frau Berger brought the marked papers back and read out the girls’ names with their scores, in order of merit. Magda and Trude heaved sighs of relief that they were not among those who had failed, because those girls had to take the paper again. “Thank goodness that’s over,“ said Trude.

“It might have been interesting learning about the Thirty Years War if Frau Berger had not made it so dull,“ Magda replied. ‘I think she was bored herself. I wonder what we’ll be doing next. They were soon to find out.

Only a few days after Hitler was made Chancellor, Frau Berger came into the classroom and got one of the girls to hand some new books that were piled up on her table. Magda opened hers and saw the frontispiece was a picture of an SS officer. He wore a skull and crossbones badge in his cap and was waving a Nazi flag.

“As you can see from your books,“ announced Frau Berger, “we’re leaving the seventeenth century behind. Instead, I’m taking you into modern times so that you can learn about the history of the Nazi Party. You will find it an inspiring story of how, after many trials and tribulations, our Führer triumphed over his enemies, so that he can make our country great again.“

During the rest of the lesson Frau Berger told them about the time Hitler had hoped to become Germany's leader ten years earlier. "Reactionaries, supported by communists – as I realised later – met in a beer hall in Munich because they had decided to have a king in Bavaria. I was present. Herr Hitler and his friend Captain Goering came into the hall and took control of the meeting." Magda watched as the usually dry-as-dust teacher glowed when she told them: "Herr Hitler, whom I had never seen before, spoke to all those gathered there. I went to the hall, thinking maybe a king was the answer to our problems. I no longer thought that after listening to Herr Hitler. He has a beautiful voice and he spoke so well. He inspired me and many other young Bavarians there. I was one of many who, cheering, followed him out of the hall. We were prepared to die for him. And some of us did die that day." Here, Frau Berger paused dramatically and raked the class with her sharp blue eyes.

"The police came," she went on, "and fired on the crowd of joyful supporters, unarmed as we were. Captain Goering was wounded. Our leader managed to get away – in a yellow car I remember – only to be arrested soon afterwards. They put him in prison. But he made good use of his time in gaol. He wrote *Mein Kampf*. No doubt you all have that wonderful book at home. Read it!"

When Magda went down into the courtyard with the rest of her class that morning, they were all talking about Frau Berger's lesson. "So the zombie has come to life, " said Lotte.

This remark was met with a chorus of voices, "You're trying to be clever again Lotte. "

"I thought that lesson was jolly interesting, " said another.

"The best ever," added a third. Trude did not say anything, just smiled. Magda turned and noticed Traudel was standing to one side. She was gazing at the swastika on the black and white flag that had replaced the Bavarian, black, red and gold one that used to fly in the courtyard. Seeing Magda looking at

her, she pulled a face and walked back into the building.

There were several changes about the same time. Teachers no longer said "Guten Tag" when they came into the classroom. Instead, they said, "Heil Hitler" and gave the Nazi salute. The girls were supposed to do the same, shooting their arms out smartly in front of them as they returned the greeting. Traudel and one other girl Marta did not go along with the new rule. They stood stock still. Marta was a Jehovah's Witness. Frau Berger, who pretended Traudel did not exist, singled Marta out.

"So," she said sarcastically, "You are not one of us. Perhaps you would be happier in another country."

This frightened Marta, a shy, lonely girl. Half whispering, "If I said 'Heil Hitler' I would be reverencing him as our Saviour. For Witnesses, only Christ is the Saviour." Then, scared as she was, she still refused to give the salute.

"Leave the room!" Frau Berger ordered, "and wait for me until the lesson is over!" Marta went and stood in the corridor. After that she did not come to school again.

This left Traudel to stare straight ahead of her, her arms down by her sides, her mouth tightly closed, whenever called upon to shout,'Heil Hitler!'.

Nor did the girls sing *Fine is the World*, or anything like it any more. Instead they sang Nazi hymns, including one celebrating the six Stormtroopers who had been shot at the beer hall meeting, that Frau Berger had told them about. There were also regular assemblies in the courtyard when all the classes were lined up in ranks to sing the national anthem and more Nazi songs. Studying the teachers opposite, all wearing swastika badges, Magda noticed there were fewer women than there had been. Those who were left looked impassive, except for Frau Berger who quivered with excitement. As for the men, Herr Schwartz slumped in his place, looking as morose as ever, while those on either side of him struck a military pose, their jaws jutting out.

Every so often the Director gave a pep talk. “Here we are educating you,“ he told the girls, “to become fit wives for German heroes. You must learn to have courage, determination and fortitude.“ Magda wondered if this was all they had to learn and what Frau Kettner thought about it.
Frau Kettner was one teacher who still said good morning in the old way, greeting the class with “Guten Tag.“ Then came the day when Magda, arriving at school with Trude, saw her favourite teacher’s bicycle was not in its usual place. “She’s always here before us,“ said Magda. “She must be ill.“

“Maybe,“ answered her friend. As soon as they got to the classroom they learned the truth.

“Guess what? Frau Kettner’s been sacked,“ said Leonie, running up to them. Magda’s heart sank.

“But why?“ she wailed.

Traudel, who was standing nearby, told her. “I can think of several reasons, one of them being that she’s a Sosi.“

“What’s a Sosi?“

“Magda, don’t you know anything? A Sosi is a Social Democrat. That means Frau Kettner is opposed to the Nazi Party, and Hitler can’t stand opposition. Anyone who disagrees with him has to be crushed.“ Traudel looked at Magda pityingly, before adding, “Surely even you could see our literature teacher’s face did not fit. “

Magda was stung by Traudel’s sarcasm. *Maybe I am a ninny*, she thought. *I ought to find out more, but where?* Then she remembered all those books in the Vogels’ house and decided to ask Fritz’s father, who was not only clever but, unlike her father, did not get impatient.

CHAPTER 5

That afternoon Trude said she had to go shopping with her mother, so Magda went to see if Uncle Heinz was at home. She found him in his room, stretched out in an armchair with his eyes closed, listening to something on the gramophone. When she came in he opened his eyes, smiled and put his finger to his lips. So pushing some scores and other papers aside on the squashy sofa, she sat down and waited, listening to the woman on the record singing a slow, measured melody. She found the music disturbing but when she gazed at her uncle, sitting opposite her, she was struck by how peaceful he looked. When the last notes had died away, he got up heavily and went over to close the lid of the gramophone. He had got thinner, she noticed and the mop of hair that flopped over his forehead was already going grey, yet he was only three years older than her mother. "I've never heard that before," she said. "What was it? The singer sounded grief-stricken."

"Yes, but she was also resigned. That was the end of Mahler's *Song of the Earth*. Thank God I have my records. I won't be hearing Mahler in the concert hall any more."

Magda looked puzzled. "Why not?"

"Haven't you heard? Hitler has put a stop to music composed by Jews being played in our concert halls. Nor does he want Jewish musicians playing anything in public. We are not in tune with the national spirit it seems."

"I don't understand. We're Germans aren't we?"

"Indeed we are but now the Führer wants to get rid of us. He's already got rid of me. I've been told I can no longer teach 'German' school children."

Magda stared at him. “That’s awful! How are you going to live?“

“Oh, I expect I’ll get by giving private lessons to other Jews,“ he said wearily. “There are many of us Germans who are Jews because we’ve been here ages. There are graves in the Jewish cemetery in town that date from the sixteenth century. Now can I play you anything else?“ he asked with a smile. “What would you like to hear?“

“Well really I came because I thought you might answer some questions. Frau Kettner been sacked from school. She isn’t Jewish. She’s a Sosi? Traudel says Hitler hates them. Why does Hitler hate so many people and what has he got against the Jews?“ She spoke in a rush and stopped for breath.

“Hold on! That’s enough to be going on with. Oh where to start? I suppose you never talk about any of this at home?“

“No, Papa never mentions Hitler. Mutti says he thinks the Führer is a fly-by-night, not worth discussing.“ Uncle Heinz raised his eyebrows.

“Nevertheless, you ought to know about our side of things, if only to counter all the propaganda you get at school these days.“

“Yes, you should hear Frau Berger. She says Hitler is a “liberator”. Is he? She says we must all read *Mein Kampf*. There isn’t a copy at home. Have you got one I could borrow please? “

“Of course I’ll lend you *Mein Kampf*. Frau Berger is right about that. You should read it because it will tell you what Hitler believes in. He certainly thinks he is a liberator, he has certainly persuaded your teacher and thousands of other folk like her that he is. Unlike your father, I think Hitler is very dangerous. He has given people a dream – though I’m sure it will turn out to be a nightmare. He also knows how to prey on people’s fears and prejudices. He tells them that because their government has been weak since the end of the war, Germany could be taken over by the Communists like Russia with a Stalin ruling over us. Most Germans shiver at the thought, though in choosing Hitler as their Führer they have picked a

man who is just as bad. Hitler and Stalin are opposite sides of the same coin. They're both tyrants. Meanwhile, most of our countrymen are backing Hitler to crush the Communists in our midst."

"What about the Sosis – Socialists?

"Hitler has persuaded people that Communists and Sosis are pretty much the same." They are not, though they both loathe Hitler, as I expect Frau Kettner made all too plain." Heinz hesitated and then went on, "I was a Sosi myself, you know, for a time. I composed a rallying song for them."

"You did? When?"

"I was eighteen. I met a girl who persuaded me Socialism was the answer to Germany's problems. She wrote the words for the song I mentioned."

Magda, started at the picture of her uncle this revelation conjured up, went on, "But you're not a Sosi now are you? Why not?"

"I stopped going to meetings when…." Here Heinz broke off. Magda, seeing a look of pain cross his face as he turned away, changed the subject.

"And where do the Jews fit in?"

"We don't. We are not part of Hitler's dream. He speaks of a new Germany, though really he wants to put the clock back. The Germany he has in mind is very old, going back centuries ago, when tribes of blond, blue eyed barbarians, without a drop of Jewish blood in their veins, were giving the Romans a hard time.

Ever since the war ended, life for many Germans has been bad. For a time there was inflation when a suitcase full of Deutschmarks would only buy a loaf of bread and, because no one had the money to buy anything, there was massive unemployment. In those circumstances people look round for someone to blame – a scapegoat. Hitler has provided them with one – the Jews."

Magda was bewildered. "But how? What are we supposed

to have done?“

“You’ll see from *Mein Kampf* he thinks we’re an evil influence in business, the universities, all the arts, the press – everywhere really.“ Magda’s eyes widened.

“He says we are planning to take over the world.“

“What!“

“Oh the notion is not Hitler’s own. It has been around for years. He got it from a pamphlet, *The Protocols of Zion*, supposedly written by some Jewish leaders at the beginning of the century. It turned out to be a forgery but the idea that Jews are hatching a global Jewish conspiracy has refused to die and Hitler finds it useful.“

The effort of trying to take in everything Uncle Heinz told her had left Magda dazed and pretty miserable. Seeing her face, he said, “Time for tea, I think. Let‘s go and find your grandmother.“ Joanna had taken to the idea of afternoon tea ever since she had eaten cucumber sandwiches and seed cake, while visiting England as a schoolgirl.

They found her in her sitting room, reading a paper which she threw in a waste paper basket when she saw them. Magda saw it was Streicher’s *Der Stürmer*. “How are you?“ asked Magda, kissing her granny. “Are you better?“Joanna Vogel had had the flu. Her face cleared as she pushed wisps of hair out of her eyes.

“Quite better, darling, though I must stop reading that dreadful man,“ pointing to the paper in the bin. “He’s enough to give me a relapse.“

“Can you make some more tea please Romi?“ she said to the Vogels’ maid who had just come into the room with a tray. Romi, who was small, nervous and wore her hair in plaits, went off to do so.

“She doesn’t look much older than me,“ said Magda.

“You’re right, she doesn’t, though she’s fifteen. I don’t think she got much to eat in the orphanage she came from. We’re trying to feed her up. So maybe she’ll grow a bit.“

While waiting for Romi to come back, Magda looked round

the room. It had a large wood stove burning in one corner and her granny's harpsichord in another. It was no tidier than Heinz's. It too had books and papers falling off chairs onto the floor but she never minded that. It was interesting, with banks of photographs among assorted china ornaments and the big and little boxes on several tables. When she was little she used to love rifling through the oddments in the boxes. These included buttons which came from the army uniform of Heniz's older brother. Granny told her he was killed a month before the war ended. He was a doctor, looking after wounded soldiers from both sides, when the field hospital he was in got a direct hit from a shell. Among the photographs, was one of him in an army greatcoat, clutching a pair of gloves. "How handsome he looks," Magda said once.

"Oh he was," replied her grandmother, "and he wrote wonderful letters. One day, when you're older, you can read them."

Now Magda, taking a buttered scone, went over to the arched window which looked onto the courtyard below. An old man was leaning against a lamppost, coughing. At last the rasping noise stopped and he moved on. Magda saw he was Hans. *He's walking more slowly than ever,* she thought. *I hope he's all right*. She heard the door open behind her and left the window.

Fritz came in. "Hello Magda. You're just the person I want to see. Ludwig and I want to go hiking in the woods above Deutzendteich on Sunday. Do want to come along?"

"I'd love to. Can I ask Trude as well?"

"Of course." Then to her surprise, he added, "You still see her then?"

As she rode home with *Mein Kampf* in her saddle bag, determined to read it in bed, she thought again about Fritz's question and realised she hadn't been seeing so much of her best friend lately. They still cycled to and from school together but Trude had not asked her over to the Sports Club, and she made excuses about not coming over in the afternoons.

Trude did not come hiking in the woods that weekend.

When Magda went to the Bremmer house to ask her, Mrs. Bremmer answered the door and said quickly, “No, No. It’s not possibl.“ Then, seeing Magda’s crestfallen face, she reddened and added, ‘Her father and I are taking her to Bamberg for the day.“

Magda set off with Ludwig and Fritz as arranged. At first it was quiet under the bare trees. No birds were singing but, while she was watching two squirrels chasing one another across the branches, they all heard a man shouting commands. The woods above Deutzendteich had been taken over by the Hitler Youth. “Damn!“ said Fritz as soon as he caught sight of the boys, engaged in a drill exercise, presenting arms with pretend wooden rifles. “What are they doing here? They usually play at soldiers in open country.“

“How smart they look!“ exclaimed Magda as the three of them stood a little way away, watching the troop. Fritz and Ludwig stared at the boys in their dark shorts, light brown shirts, black kerchiefs fastened with leather toggle at the neck – all of them sporting swastika armbands.

Ludwig smiled ruefully and said, “Half those kids have only joined because of the uniform. Where will they be in ten years time. I wonder?“

“I know where they’ll be in ten minutes time,“ responded Fritz, “playing war games. I vote we get out of here.“ During their retreat, the three of them saw another troop marching briskly towards them. Magda stopped dead, looking at the blond boy who was leading the marchers. The Fritz grabbed her arm and propelled her into a sidepath.

“Why did you do that?“ she cried. “Didn’t you see? That was Manfried!“

“I saw him all right and I’d just as soon never set eyes on him again.“

“He probably feels the same way about us,“ said Ludwig. “Tell us, what’s he done now?“

“He’s a thug – a barbarian. When I was out the other night

distributing…“ Here Fritz broke off. “When I was out last week I saw him at that damned book burning.“

“What book burning?“ asked Magda.

“Yet another thing you don’t know about?“ Fritz asked wearily. “The Nazi top brass organized public burnings everywhere of all the books they call ‘disruptive‘ or ‘decadent‘. Marx, Freud – anything written by Communists or Jews, naturally, plus a whole lot of novels, plays and poetry by all and sundry. Well, as I said, who should I see helping to chuck half the University Library on the flames but our Manfried.“

“I can hardly believe it!“ exclaimed Magda, as she thought of her friend’s brother.

“I can,“ said Ludwig. “He’s exactly what the Nazi Party are looking for. But, as it happens, Fritz, you won’t see him around much longer. He’s been selected to go to a special boarding school, where they’ll give him a Spartan training to become one of Germany’s elite.“

“Crikey!“ groaned Fritz

On Monday, Trude did not call for Magda. So she cycled to school alone. When she went into the classroom, she found the seating had been changed. The six Jewish girls had been put together in three double desks at the back of the room. Magda was sitting by Lotte. “Why have they done this?“ she whispered during another history lesson, while Frau Berger was reading out one of Streicher’s speeches.

“The Direktor ordered it. I imagine he thinks we will contaminate Aryans if we get too close to them. I don’t mind actually.“

“I mind,“ said Magda, looking at the desk she used to share with Trude, “and so do you,“ seeing tears roll down Lotte’s face.

“I’m not crying about that. I like sitting next to you. It’s Mutti. They’ve told her she can’t sing in the Opera any more.“

“Silence! How dare you sit chattering!“ Frau Berger was standing over them. “I don’t expect you to learn from my lessons but as long as you are here, you’ll keep the rules and show respect. There’ll be no recess for you today.“

With Frau Berger's gimlet eyes upon them, Magda and Lotte were kept in, copying the speech by Streicher which she had been reading aloud. They read and wrote the following explanation of why Jews had become the enemy within Germany: "You must realize," he told his followers, "the Jew wants our people to perish. That is why you must join us and leave those who have brought you nothing but war, inflation and discord. For thousands of years the Jew has been destroying nations. Let us make a new beginning today so that we can annihilate the Jews."

When the two girls handed the exercise in, Frau Berger said, "Now perhaps you understand why no true German girl wants to sit next to you."

After she had swept out of the room, Magda turned to Lotte and said, "I don't understand at all, do you?"

"No! I don't but I'm scared."

Because of the detention, Magda had not had a chance to speak to Trude all morning and, when she got down to the bicycle shed, her friend had already gone. She managed to catch her up in a narrow side street which was blocked because an overturned farm cart had spilled its load of cattle fodder on the road. "Trude!" she called. Trude went red and did not answer at first. Then her words came out in a rush.

"Please don't follow me around. I can't talk to you."

"Why ever not?"

"Because you're Jewish."

"What difference does that make? Surely you don't think I'm one of those enemies Streicher rants on about?"

"Not you personally. But Papa and Mutti say we mustn't have Jewish friends any more, or we will get into trouble." And the road being clear again, she rode off.

PART 2

I934 – I935

CHAPTER 6

Han died the following winter. It was Florrie who told the Sengers. “What? When? How?“ demanded Anton, “He was all right a few days ago.“

“He didn’t come last week,“ said Lisel.

“Before that his cough was so much worse, added Magda, “I asked him about it and he said it was nothing that warmer weather wouldn’t cure.“

“Yes, I noticed that hacking cough,“ said her mother, “I went to his house the day he didn’t come because I had a feeling something was wrong. No one answered the door when I knocked, though I’d seen his wife go in as I was walking down the street.“

“When did he die?“

“What happened?“

Florrie told them that Hans had died of pneumonia and that it had been very sudden. “One evening he was playing chequers with a friend in the beer cellar and the next morning he was ill. By the evening his mind was wandering. There was nothing the doctor could do.“

“I wish we’d known,“ said Anton. “I’d have got him a specialist.“

“From what I’ve heard,“ said Florrie, “no one could have saved Hans.“

“When is the funeral?“ asked Lisel.

“They’ve already had the funeral – two days ago.“

All three Sengers looked dismayed and Magda looked puzzled. “Why didn’t they tell us?“

There was a pause. No one spoke until Anton said, “Well, there’s nothing we can do now. I don’t suppose his family want

anything from us."

"There is one thing, sir. I'm sure Hans' wife can't afford a stone for the grave."

Anton, eager to do something, said promptly. "I'll pay for it."

"That's very good of you, sir." Florrie paused, searching for the words, before she added, "But it might be best if Hans's wife didn't know where the money came from. She never liked him working here."

"Didn't she? Nevertheless, Hans got on well enough with us and we were lucky to have him. He was a fine gardener. The least I can do is see he has a proper memorial." So Anton went to a stone mason to arrange this, telling him to say a few old Army friends of Hans, who wanted to remain anonymous, were paying.

When a letter came to say the work had been done, Magda and her mother went to the Johannis Friedhof to see the grave and say goodbye to Hans. The old graveyard, sheltered by firs and yew trees, looked tranquil in the pale, winter sunshine. It was well kept. "Hans would be pleased to think they have buried him here," said Magda, seeing the shrubs and sleeping flower beds. "It's a garden."

"Yes, a beautiful one," said her mother. No one else was about as they walked down the gravel paths between the box-like tombs, some which were very old.

"That's Albrecht Durer's," said Lisel pointing to a crumbling slab with a new metal plaque on top of it. "The print we have at the top of the stairs, *Praying Hands* is from a drawing of his. It's one of my favourite pictures."

"Why? It's not very interesting."

"I like it because those hands are beautifully drawn for one thing. But also because I know Durer had a vision of our world being destroyed by a deluge and thought the only thing we could do was to pray. Though I do not pray, I find his drawing speaks to me."

"We," Magda hesitated and went red, "I mean I, pass Durer's

house on the way to school.“ Then she went on, “How sad you are sometimes. Hans was like that too. I always felt I wanted to cheer him up. He never said much when he first came. Then we became friends. I asked him once why he’d become a gardener, he said he used to be a soldier but decided one day he no longer wanted to kill men. Instead he wanted to make things live. I thought he probably didn’t like Hitler much, because he always called him Adolf instead of ‘our Fuehrer’ as the teachers at school do. So I asked him one day about the Nazis. He said, ‘They are maniacs. Hitler will take us into war again. Then God help us0!“

Magda and her mother found the grave they were looking for at the far side of the cemetary. The handsome black marble slab that covered it had been inscribed, with Hans’s name, the dates he was born and died, and a single sentence, *He was a true German*.

When Lisel saw this, she said, “What’s more important, he was a good man.“ There was a marble urn on top of the tomb. “I shall fill that with flowers when Spring comes and with his special carnations in the Summer,“ promised Magda.

That term Magd and Traudel were the only two Jewish girls in their class. The Director was one of the first headmasters in Nuremberg to enforce a new Nazi rule that only Jewish children whose fathers had served at the Front in WW1 were to attend German schools. Traudel could stay because her father fought in the Battle of the Somme and, like Magda’s, was awarded the Iron Cross.

Magda had learned about the new rule when Leonie came round to her house to say that she and the others would not be coming to school any more. She found her friend on the balcony of her room gazing at the bare winter garden.

“Where are you going then?“ asked Magda who had not imagined their little group would be split up.

“To a Jewish school in Fuerth. It takes ages to get there. Still, at least I’ll be spared Frau Berger,“ and Leonie tried to smile.

"Is the school very religious?"

"I don't know, nor do I know how good the teaching is and I need to get good marks in exams because I want to be a doctor like Papa – if they let me."

Seeing her chubby friend on the brink of tears, Magda went over the hugged her. "I'll miss you very much, but you must come over whenever you feel like it. We have to stay friends."

"We must," agreed Leonie. Then she added, "Perhaps Fuerth will be all right. Lotte and the others will be there, though I don't think Lotte will stay long."

"Why not?"

"Her parents want to go to Paris. You know they won't let Lili Levy sing in opera in Germany any more and Lotte's father, who's a set designer, can't get work either." It was cold on the balcony and shadows were darkening the garden. The two girls went inside.

Magda and Traudel now sat together in a double desk at the back of the class, with no desks on either side of them and a large space in front, so that they were isolated from the Aryan girls. Magda looked sadly in the direction of Trude who was sitting next to Helga the girl from Berlin. She smiled nervously at Traudel, of whom she always been rather frightened, sensing this very clever, serious girl disapproved of her. Traudel smiled grimly back, saying, "They've put us here so that we can't contaminate the others." From then on none of the teachers asked Magda and Traudel questions in class. At first Magda put her hand up as usual but soon stopped because she was always ignored.

Frau Kettner's German lessons were now taken by Herr Wessel. He was shorter than some of the girls in the class and limped because of a war injury. He had a postage-stamp moustache like his Fuhrer's and was as much of a Nazi as Frau Berger. But whereas the history teacher was an enthusiast, he was bitter. It was clear he did not like any of the girls, Aryan or Jewish. In his first lesson he said, "You needn't think you'll

be hearing about Schiller from me. I've no intention of turning you into romantic rebels, let alone what the English call 'blue stockings'. You'll find when you marry the new German man, arcane learning is the last thing he'll want from his wife." He paused, looking the class over. Then he went on, "Indeed, that has always been so. When our great poet Goethe wed, he chose Christiane Volpius who was modest and no intellectual, rather than the erudite Frau von Stein."

Thereafter, Herr Wessel's spoke of two female models the class should emulate. One was the legendary Griselda who bore submissively every hardship inflicted upon her by a husband, bent on testing her patience. No one in the class liked the sound of her. Herr Wessel's other heroine filled them with awe. She was Queen Louise of Prussia who urged her husband Frederick William III to resist Napoleon. "For God's sake no shameful peace!" was her cry. She also told her sons they must be strong and brave. When they set off to the wars, she commanded them, "If you cannot in spite of all your striving raise up again our humbled state then seek death. Come back with your shield, or upon it." Magda saw Trude looked rapt as she listened to Herr Wessel's account of the Queen's life.

"Griselda was cringe-making and Louise a monster," Magda said to Traudel afterwards. "If that's what it takes, I don't want to marry one of Herr Wessel's German heroes."

"You're not likely to get the chance!"

By now Magda was used to Traudel's acid remarks. She ignored this one and went on, "Are girls never to do anything of their own?"

"Not in Nazi Germany, that is clear," came the reply.

The Aryan girls no longer mixed with the Jewish ones left in the school. Almost all of them joined the League of German Girls, which was set up so that they had a patriotic group to belong to, like their brothers in the Hitler Youth. They had a uniform which was a modified version of theirs, consisting of a dark blue skirt and white blouse with the League's ini-

tials stamped on the buttons. A black kerchief, fastened at the neck in a leather knot, completed the outfit. Like the boys, the girls were proud of their uniform and often wore it to come to school. Magda, seeing Trude in her new guise, thought, *She could be Manfried's twin*.

The uniform set apart those who wore it. An elite enclave, they stood in the recreation ground, talking excitedly about what they had done at the meetings, where they learned to march and do drill. They also sang the Nazi songs and listened to pep talks. Magda knew that, even if she had been included in their conversation, she would not have known what to talk to them about any more. Traudel, who was used to her own company, did not care as much as she did. Magda had always been sociable. It made her very uncomfortable.

She no longer knew what face to put on when she went into the classroom at the start of each day. She hesitated to say hello and be friendly like she used to be. On the other hand, if she walked past everyone to her desk at the back without saying anything, they might think she was putting on airs. Her mother noticed she was much quieter these days and asked, "What's wrong?"

So Magda told her about this particular problem and asked, "Mutti, what do you think I should do?"

Lisel thought for a minute before replying. "When you arrive at school, just say hello if any of your old friends look in your direction. The important thing is not to draw attention to yourself. Never give anyone a chance to say you're pushy. You must also make a special effort to look clean and tidy, so that no one can criticise your appearance. No more grubby blouses!"

Magda looked worried by this last bit of advice. "Would it help if I had my hair cut?"

"It might. It would certainly be easier to manage. But you've always said no when I've suggested it before."

"That was because I wanted to look like the girls in the story book pictures. I've changed my mind now."

It was 20 April, Hitler's birthday, when Magda went to have her hair cut. On the way, she went to the Johannis Friedhof with a bunch of tulips to put in the urn on Hans's grave. She came out of the quiet graveyard into streets thronged with people. All the buildings were draped in red and black flags with the crooked cross in the middle, and the buses that had brought hundreds of people into the town were decorated with bunting. She had difficulty threading her way through the crowds. A special service to pray for Hitler was being held in Saint Lorenz church, while outside there was a group of little girls, carrying posies which they hoped to give the Fuhrer. He was due to drive through the town in an open car on his way to the Eagles's Nest in Berchtesgaden, where he usually spent his birthday. The little girls' mothers knew that, on the journey, Hitler liked to talk to small children. "The Fuhrer has a wonderful way with children," said one of the many mothers who hoped he would single out her own small daughter.

Madga turned down a side street, where her father's Jewish barber was open, despite it being a holiday. While she was in the shop she heard a great cheer go up. "He must have arrived then," said the old man and shrugged.

Magda left the barber's and ran her hand over her bare neck. She no longer felt anything like a story book heroine, but at least she felt light and free. When she reached Koenigstrasse the Hitler Youth were marching down it, singing the *Horst Wessel* song. "Germany awake! Judah perish!" they sang. Threading her way among the flag waving crowds on the pavement, Magda watched as they reached a Jewish furniture store, where, with raised voices, they roared the line, 'When Jewish blood spurts from the knife'. Magda turned away while the bystanders cheered.

CHAPTER 7

Another school term had already started. Magda was wheeling her bike to the bicycle shed when she saw a girl, about her own age, getting out of a shiny black Mercedes. She said something to her chauffeur, who was in army uniform. Conscious of being stared at, the girl turned and looked Magda up and down. Her gaze also took in the bike, with its red tyres. Then she went up the steps into the school.

Magda stared because she wondered who the girl was. If she was a pupil, she had arrived in more style than anyone else in the school. Few of the girls or teachers came by car and those who did were not driven by a chauffeur. Her clothes were unusual too. She wore national costume, a red pinafore dress, which had a dirndl skirt, over a white blouse with puff sleeves. The frock was decorated with braid. This, and her thick plait of corn gold hair, reminded Magda of the children in the chorus of the *Hansel and Gretel* opera. She's she decided the girl was pretty as she admired her rosy cheeks and blue eyes. At the same time, she was put off by the way the newcomer looked her over.

Magda soon found out who the girl was. Just before lessons began, the Director brought her into the classroom. "This is Eva Schultz," he said. "She has come to join you. Make her welcome." Then, turning to Trude, he added, "I want you, Gertrud, to take care of Eva. During Break you will show her round the school." Then he went out.

As soon as the Director had gone, Eva looked round the classroom. Seeing Magda and Traudel sitting isolated at the back, she turned to Trude. "I see you still have Jews here. They

soon sent them packing in my last school."

Trude did not respond to this. Instead she asked Eva, "How is it you did not come at the beginning of term."

"We only learned last week that Papa had been promoted and posted here. He's a Lieutenant Colonel in the SS." To make sure all the girls understood the significance of this, she added, "That's Hitler's elite force."

Trude dutifully showed Eva round the school and answered her questions about the rules, but the two of them did not get on very well. Eva quickly realised that Trude was the class leader and had no intention of being part of a gang. She was given a seat next to Inge. Magda had decided this heavy, clumsy girl, with eyebrows that met in the middle, was peculiar after she told what she thought was a funny story about her brother tying a fire cracker to the cat's tail. Magda was not alone in avoiding her. No one in the class liked Inge much. Eva took up with her, sensing she could boss this slower-witted girl around. Inge admired the domineering new girl and followed her lead slavishly. She was also afraid of her because, if crossed, Eva had a sharp tongue. The sight of the pair, who were inseparable, led Traudel to dub them Siamese twins.

Eva made a point of treating Magda and Traudel as enemies. "Mother says, the Jews killed our Christ," she declared once. Another time, having learned somehow that Traudel was very good at Maths, she said, "I expect she good with money too. Everyone knows Jews are clever with money – too clever'. Traudel pretended she did not hear gibes of this kind and remained impassive. Magda went red and looked miserable when the gibes were directed at her. Seeing that, Eva targeted her all the more.

At first this took the form of remarks about Magda's looks: 'dwarfish' was one word she used. Another time she said in her loud voice, "with that sallow skin and frizzy hair, you can tell what she is a mile off." Then Inge chipped in with, "the nose alone would tell you that about both of them," and she snig-

gered as she stared at the Jewish girls. Magda, who had always hated her appearance, alternated between wanting to cry and wishing she dare hit her tormenters.

Traudel, seeing how the insults upset her, said, “Don’t take any notice. Eva and her sidekick Inge are natural bullies. Jews just happen to make convenient victims. If it wasn’t us they would get going on someone else.“

However the persecution campaign waged by Eva and Inge did not stop at insults. One day Traudel found the books in her satchel had ink spilled on them, although she never carried ink around with her. Next, Frau Berger came storming down the classroom to where Magda was sitting at the back.

“Where is your homework?“

“I gave it in, Frau Berger.“ Normally she would have turned to Traudel to back her up but she was away, and the other girls were too far off to have seen her do so.

“It is not with the others. You have not handed it in.“

“But I did. I gave it to Eva when she collected everybody’s.“

Frau Berger called Eva to her side, “Is that true Eva?“

Eva looked up at her with a winning smile. “No, Frau Berger, I’m sure she didn’t. Then, seeming to wrack her brains, she added, “I remember now. She said something about handing it in late.“

“So you are liar Magda,“ said Frau Berger. “I suppose I shouldn’t be surprised at that, though I am surprised you were stupid enough to think you would get away with it. You will, of course, stay in after school and do that homework you were too lazy to do on time.“

At 12.30 Magda sat down to do her homework all over again. Having done it before, it did not take so long the second time round. “You needn’t think you can go yet,“ said Frau Berger when Magda handed her the essay. “You will remain here until you’ve copied out this,“ pointing to a page in *Mein Kampf*. It was after 1.30 when she got down to the bicycle shed, where she was surprised to see Inge coming out of the gate.

What's she doing here? she wondered. Magda soon found out. The tyres of her bike had been let down and the pump was missing. It was 3 o'clock before she got home after trudging all the way, pushing the bike which she dared not leave behind in case anything else happened to it.

Mutti was standing in the doorway looking for her, when she arrived. "Whatever happened?" After Magda had told the whole story, Lisel said, "Do you want me to tell your father?"

"No please don't. He'd probably go down to the school. It wouldn't do any good. I can't prove I gave in my homework, if Eva says I didn't. And although I'm sure it was Inge who let the tyres down, I can't prove that either." As she spoke she remembered her father's birthday dinner in the restaurant, when Mr. Kahn told them how he had not wanted his father to go to his school to complain about Herr Streicher. She knew her father would get nowhere if he confronted Frau Berger. Everyone joked about her being the Director's favourite teacher, while she was forever singing his praises. When Lotte was still at school she had suggested the history teacher was in love with him. "No," Traudel said, "She's in love with Hitler."

"Well," said Lisel, "If you don't think your father can help, you can at least hide your feelings like Traudel does, and not let Eva and Inge see you mind anything they say. Also, take care not to give them opportunities to harm you."

"I'll try," said Magda. "To begin with, I won't take my bike to school any more, in case Eva and Inge decide to wreck it."

"Maybe that would be best – but what a pity!" said Lisel. "You so much wanted to cycle there."

"That was then." The best part was riding through the park and I haven't been able to do that since they started building the stadium. For months the Sengers had watched trucks loaded with huge blocks of glistening stone arriving daily in the park for Hitler's new stadium – the largest the world had ever seen. At the same time, the Great Road two kilometres

long and forty meters wide was gouged out of the grass in the middle of the site.

After her talk with Mutti, Magda took the crowded tram to school. She was also careful to keep her books with her wherever she went and hand her homework in personally to all the teachers. Eva kept up her barrage of insults but Magda pretended she had not heard when her enemy looked over in her direction one day declaring, "She looks like more like a monkey than a human being, doesn't she? But then Papa says Jews belong to a lower species."

Magda was right in thinking that if Anton Senger went down to the school, his complaints would be ignored – at best. On the other hand, Eva's father was welcomed there. Lieutenant Colonel Schultz went regularly to see the Director. One day he took Julius Streicher with him. As a result the Gauleiter of Franconia was invited to address the girls on Speech Day. At the appointed time he stood on the platform in the Assembly Hall while the Director introduced him in fulsome terms. Actually, he needed no introduction. Everyone in Nuremberg recognised this bullet-headed, stocky man with the narrow eyes and pencil moustache. He was often to be seen striding through the town's streets, brandishing a riding whip. Jews kept out of his way for, if he had his bully boys with him, he was known to beat up any he came upon.

The entire school was present on Speech Day, including Magda and the other Jewish girls, who had been placed at the back of the Hall, as far as possible out of sight. Streicher held forth on his favourite subject. Reminding his audience of the war which ended in 1918, before the youngest of them was born, he went on: "Only one people remained victorious in the dreadful war, a people whom Christ said its father is the Devil. That people had ruined the German nation in body and soul. Then Adolph Hitler, unknown to anybody, rose up and became the voice which called to a holy war and battle. He cried to the people to take courage again and to rise and give a help-

ing hand to take the Devil from the Germany."

Up to this point Magda was not quite sure who the Gauleiter was talking about. She was not left in doubt long. Steicher paused and asked his audience, "Do you know who the Devil is?"

Everyone in the League of German Girls knew. Many of them, listening breathlessly to him, shouted, "The Jew, the Jew!"

In the clamour Traudel hissed in Magda's ear, "Christ was a Jew."

Streicher then told his Aryan audience that it was up to them to keep German blood pure. Looking at the Seniors he warned them to avoid Jewish boys who use every trick to seduce German girls. He ended his peroration with a story about a beautiful girl he had been at school with. "She married a Jew and was ruined for life!"

After Speech Day Eva and Inge stepped up their campaign against the Jewish girls in the school. They took to shoving or bumping into to them accidentally on purpose, if they met in corridors. Whenever Eva did this she said sarcastically, "So very sorry! I didn't know you were still here."

Then, one morning, as Magda was making her way to her desk at the back of the class as usual, Eva stuck her foot out and sent her sprawling. Magda picked herself up and looking at her persecutor, asked, "Why?"

Eva had no time to say anything back because at that moment Herr Schwarz came in to begin his Maths lesson. He looked sharply at the two girls, hesitating. But all he said was "Take your places!"

Before the class went downstairs for Break that day, Eva came over to Magda's desk and slammed two books down on it. "If you still don't know, these will tell you exactly why you and your lot are not wanted here. I suggest you start with the picture book. It's the one I had in kindergarten." Magda stayed behind with Traudel in the classroom and picked up the book Eva had mentioned. It was called *Don't trust the Fox in the*

Meadow nor the Jew on his Oath.

"Rather a long title for infants, isn't it," commented Traudel who was looking over her shoulder. All the pictures in the book were caricatures of Jews. One showed an evil-looking man, with ringlets and a hooked nose, dragging a little girl away somewhere. "I can't be bothered with this rubbish," said Traudel and she made for the door. "Are you coming?" But Magda stayed. Each picture had a story to go with it. So a sketch of an ugly butcher in a filthy shop, where a cat was clawing at meat that had fallen on the floor, told its little readers, *One mustn't forget he won't have to eat the meat himself*. The other book was called *The Poisonous Mushroom*. It compared Jews to a fungi that must be got rid of before it destroyed mankind.

Magda had arranged to go to the Vogels for lunch after school that day. When she got there, she showed the books to Fritz who said, "More of Streicher's handiwork, I see."He's obsessed. I wonder what brought it on? Perhaps he was in love with that girl you said he spoke about at your Speech Day."

"Which girl? Do you mean the one that married a Jew?"

"Yes. I know they say 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned', but men can be just as bad."

Eva and Inge continued to torment Magda and Traudel. Their campaign came to a head on the day the school went on the annual ramble into the country. By midday the girls had reached a farm where they were to eat. After lunch, Magda and Traudel slipped out to explore, while the others were singing Nazi songs again. They had just reached a pigsty and were looking at the litter of piglets the sow had, when they realised Eva and Inge were following them. The four girls were alone and it was silent, except for the grunting and squealing of the pigs. Suddenly Eva and Magda rushed forwards and with a violent shove, pushed Magda and Traudel through the rickety wicker gate to the sty, bursting into howls of laughter as they saw them slither and then fall on their backs in the stinking filth there.

Magda and Traudel were trying to get up when they heard

a man say, “You are a disgrace to German womanhood!“ To their astonishment they saw the speaker was their Maths teacher. Beside himself with rage, he was glaring at Eva and Inge who fled. Muttering, “I will deal with those two later,“ he helped Traudel and Magda out of the sty. After making sure they were not seriously hurt, only bruised and very dirty, he took them into the farmhouse kitchen, where the farmer’s wife had been bottling several large tubs of raspberries. There he took Frau Tuchel on one side and asked her to help the girls clean themselves up.

He cannot have told her how they came to be in such a state because, as soon as he had gone, she stared at them in amazement, saying, “You must have been in the pigsty! Whatever were you doing in there?“

Quickly, Traudel said, “We wanted to pick up one piglets.“ The woman shook her head but didn’t ask any more questions. She just poured hot water from the kettles on the hob into one of the tubs that had held the raspberries.

After adding cold from the pump she said, “Take your clothes off and have a good wash.“ While they did so, she went off to find them something to else to wear.

“I still stink,“ said Magda, as she scrubbed herself and tried to get the pig shit out of her hair, “but it’s almost worth it, to have Herr Schwarz turn into a hero.“

The farmer’s wife came back with a couple of dresses “Here, you can put these on, she said cheerfully.“I think they’ll fit. They belonged to my girls.“

“Have you got any money?“ Traudel whispered to Magda who rescued her purse from where it was lying near her discarded skirt.

“I don’t want your money,“ said the farmer’s wife when she saw what she was doing. “Just you leave those dirty clothes of yours here. I’ll take them in exchange. They’ll be as good as new again when I’ve washed them.“

“Are you sure?“ Magda asked.

"I'm sure," the woman said. "You don't want to carry those smelly things round with you for the rest of the day."

"Thank you very much," both girls said, speaking at once. "We'd better get back to the others now," added Traudel.

"No, you're not to go yet," said Frau Tuchel. "That teacher of yours said he'd come and fetch you when he was ready. While you're waiting, you can write out labels for these raspberries. So Magda and Traudel sat down at the kitchen table with and a bottle of black ink and the labels to write *Raspberries,* 1933 on each one before sticking them on the rows of bottles. When they were halfway through Frau Tuchel came over with mugs and a jug of milk. "Help yourself to this," she said.

"You're very kind," murmured Magda after she and Traudel had thanked her again. "I'm afraid we've given you a lot of trouble."

"I'm used to it," she replied. "I've had six children of my own."I know what tricks kids get up to."

Magda and Traudel did not find out how their Maths teacher dealt with their tormenters. Eva, who always like to appear as if butter would not melt in her mouth, had previously been careful to wage her persecution campaign when the staff were not around. So, after Herr Schwarz caught her out at the pigsty, she decided she and Inge had better leave the Jewish girls alone as long as he stayed as a teacher.

"We've got a defender. I can hardly believe it!"

"We must enjoy it while it lasts," said Traudel. "Our Director will get rid of him." She was right. The school was told that Herr Schwarz would be retiring at the end of that term.

CHAPTER 8

Although it was now easier for Magda and Traudel to avoid Eva and Inge, life at school did not get much better. As the weeks went by more restrictions were placed on the Jewish girls left there. For some unexplained reason they were not allowed to do Latin any more. Magda did not care about that, but minded terribly when she was excluded from athletics.

"What's up now?" asked the more phlegmatic Traudel. "Is it the athletics business?"

"Yes. It's awful because I can't go to the sports club in town either. Mr Bremmer has put up one of those 'No Jews' notices – like the one outside Papa's favourite restaurant. Yet the manager made such a fuss of him when we were there for his birthday."

"Oh, those notices are everywhere now. But if you want to do athletics, why don't you come to the Zionist Youth Club? We have them there. Next time I go, I'll take you if you like."

"Thank you. I'm not sure I'll fit in, but I'll give it a try."

On her next birthday Magda got up early to go to the Johannes Friedhof before school. She wanted to place one of Hans's special carnations on his grave. She kept a prize-winning cream flower, flecked with red, to pin on her frock that afternoon. She did not think it would stay in her hair now it was so short.

She was not going to have a big party. It was no use inviting the Aryans, while a lot of her Jewish friends had emigrated with their parents, going to whichever country would grant them a visa, usually in Europe or America. Several boys and girls Magda met at the Zionist Youth Club had gone with their families to Palestine, and all the others talked about doing so.

The week before Leonie had come to say goodbye. Her father had an invitation from his English brother-in-law to bring his family to London. “My uncle is a doctor too, like Papa, and is sure he can find him a job.“

Magda was envious. “I wish we were coming too.“

“Why aren‘t you?“

“Papa won‘t. Mutti says he still thinks Hitler and the Nazis can‘t last, and that life will get back to normal again.“

“We used to think that at home too. Then Streicher started spreading dreadful stories about Jewish doctors molesting women in their surgeries and Papa lost half his patients. Uncle's invitation is a godsend.“

The two girls promised to write to each other. Magda watched Leonie walking down the road until she was out of sight. As she went back into the house, she wondered when, or if, they would meet again.

As Mutti pointed out, Magda was like her father in seizing every chance to be happy and, although she could not have a party, she was determined to enjoy her birthday. Ludwig and Olga came with Fritz to tea, bringing a box of cakes from Krumbachers. They shared these, sitting with Magda‘s parents, under the beech tree again. As her main present, Magda got a camera. She took pictures of them all and said, “I think I’ll become a photographer when I grow up.“

“In that case you‘ll need to learn“, said Anton, “photography is an art and you have to know how to develop your own pictures. I expect there are places where you can train. We must find out about them in a few years time – if this is not just a fad.“ Magda smiled. No one else said anything.

After they had eaten the cakes and drunk some of Florrie‘s raspberry juice and lemonade, they went inside and sang songs, including *Happy Birthday* with Fritz at the piano again. When Lisel and Anton had left Magda and her friends to themselves, Fritz had an idea. “Let's go and see *King Kong*. It's on at the new cinema.“

“That‘s the one in Bucher Street, isn‘t it?“ said Olga. “We can't go there. It‘s got a ‘No Jews‘ sign over the entrance.“

“So what?“ said Fritz. “They won‘t notice us, especially if you buy the tickets Olga. You‘re blonde.“ They all looked at her expectantly. Reluctantly she agreed.

Magda felt she and Fritz were on one of their adventures as they made their way to Bucher Street. They evaded the enemy – in this case the doorkeeper – easily. The woman in the ticket office hardly looked at Olga and they took their seats in die darkened auditorium, just as the credits were rolling. Unseen, they settled down to enjoy themselves.

“That was the most exciting film I‘ve ever seen,“ said Magda when they were all walking down the street an hour and a half later. That last scene on the skyscraper was terrific.“

“Yes, I thought lt was a bit tough on the ape though,“ said Fritz. “I felt sorry for him by the end. Did you know it‘s Hitler‘s favourite film?“

“I certainly didn't,“ said Olga.“Why?“

“I expect he sees himself as the hero – Jack or whatever his name was – rescuing the beautiful blonde heroine from a monster. From there it‘s only a short step to him seeing beautiful Ann as the Germany he wants to rescue.“

“Who's the monster then?“ asked Olga.

Magda, who guessed what her cousin was getting at, answered, “Fritz is going to say it‘s us, aren't you?“

“Yes. Hitler thinks the Jews are like that baleful, giant ape which has to be destroyed before it kills the innocent heroine.“

They all walked on in silence. Magda's birthday brightness had gone.

“There‘s another way of looking at the film,“ said Ludwig.

“All right. Tell us. Let‘s hope it‘s a bit more cheerful than mine.“

“Well it‘s obvious King Kong fell in love with the girl. So he‘s Hitler in love with Germany. Neither Kong nor Hitler know it but they are both lethal. Without meaning to they‘ll kill the

thing they love if no one stops them. The planes that shoot the ape down when he‘s on top of the Empire State Building are the forces of civilisation that will put an end to the Führer.“

Fritz laughed. “Bravo, Ludwig! Does that mean I‘ve got to feel sorry for Hitler now?“

By this time they had reached Magda‘s house. As she turned to give Olga a special hug, thanking her for being a trump about the tickets, she saw Fritz taking leaflets out of the knapsack he was carrying. Then she heard him mutter,“Time to do our bit for the forces of civilisation, Ludwig. Coming?“

“Just as soon as I‘ve seen Olga home,“ came the reply.

“What's all that about?“ Magda asked herself as Florrie opened the front door.

When Magda went to see the Vogels again she stepped on *The Poisonous Mushroom* that was lying on the hall floor. Flicking through the caricatures of Jews, she turned to Fritz, saying, “We don‘t look like this. We‘re all different. Lotte and Olga for instance could easily be Aryan. Do people really believe Streicher?“

“I‘m afraid a lot of people do believe him and, even if they don‘t, they are not going to stick their necks out and argue. However, if it‘s any comfort to you, Ludwig and I have got our own propaganda campaign going. Do you remember what he said about King Kong? Take a look at these!“ From his knapsack Fritz took some sheets of paper. All of them showed a crude cartoon of Kong on top of the skyscraper, clutching a terrified girl. Kong had been given Hitler‘s moustache and wore a uniform with a Nazi armband, while the girl was wrapped in the old German flag.

“What are you going to do with these?“

Ludwig and I will go out after it‘s dark next Sunday and stick them on doors and lampposts in the market place.“

Magda was thrilled. “What an adventure! You‘ve done this kind of thing before, haven‘t you? After we saw that film, you and Ludwig were going off somewhere together.“

“Yes, but that night we only had leaflets. This is the first time we‘ve had a cartoon. What do you think?“

Magda studied the picture. “It's clever. I‘m coming with you.“

Fritz, who knew his Aunt Lisel would never forgive him if he got Magda into trouble, said, “No! You can‘t. Not this time anyway. It would be trickier with three of us.“ Then, seeing Magda‘s mutinous face, added, “But I could do with your help this afternoon. Have you got a film in your camera?“

“Yes, why?“ She knew she had been fobbed off about the poster campaign but did not argue. She‘d made up her mind what she would do.

“We've got to write an essay in my dass about the new Nazi Stadium. I‘m going to the park this afternoon to look the place over and thought if you took a few photos I could use them to illustrate the essay. “As you see“, he added, looking at the Kong poster, “drawing's not my strong point.“

“I‘ll come along, but what a beastly assignment. Whatever are you supposed to write?“

“I know what I‘m supposed to write – a lot of guff praising the Führer and how the stadium will be a fitting monument to his past and future achievements. But I‘m not going to do that.“

“What then?“

“I shall write a purely factual description of everything with exact measurements.“

After lunch Fritz and Magda set off for the park. It was a fine day in early autumn. Fritz took a tape measure, notebook and pencil, and Magda collected her camera. A soldier was sweeping away yellow sycamore leaves from the Great Road of black and grey granite, as they walked down it. “I like the smell of bonfires,“ said Magda, as the smoke from a pile of leaves another soldier was burning drifted in their direction. They passed a few boys from Fritz‘s class who had also come because of the essay they had to write. They walked to the Zeppelin Field, a flat plain, lange enough to hold all the SS, Brownshirts and Nazi activists, who came in their thousands each year to greet their Führer.

She and Fritz crossed it to where there was a crowd of sightseers who were gazing up at a grandstand, behind which reared a stone monolith a hundred feet high, emblazoned with Nazi insignia. Behind that there was a colonnade with a swastika on each pillar. The crowd looked awestruck. “That's where our Führer stands when he speaks to us,“ one of the bystanders told his little boy.

Magda took a photo of it and whispered, “It's like an altar.“

“It‘s meant to be“, said Fritz, “Albert Speer was thinking of the Greek Pergamum Altar of Zeus when he dreamed it up. He knows his master. Hitler sees himself as the High Priest of the Nazi religion.

The cousins spent the next two hours on the rally site. Magda took more pictures while Fritz measured and counted, scribbling down calculations in his notebook, as they moved from the main stadium to a marginally smaller one, where the Hitler Youth, among others, gave displays. Finally, they came to the Congress Hall which was not yet finished. Avoiding the scaffolding at the back, Magda photographed the pristine, white front. Fritz, contemplating the two flat slabs, piled one on the other, said, “Whoever designed this pricey wedding cake is less imaginative than Albert Speer. No wonder Albert and Adolf get on – they're both fantasists.“ Then he grabbed Magda‘s arm. “Come on! That's it. We're done.“

“Good! I‘ve got no more film left. But what's this place for?“

“More speeches. Hitler‘s looking forward to holding audiences of 50,000 spellbound in it. Our Führer has a sense of theatre.“

“Yes“, agreed Magda, “but the play he‘s performing in is a rotten one.“

“You‘re right and it‘ll be a flop.“

CHAPTER 9

On Sunday evening Magda told her parents she was going to see Olga, and so she did, but only for a short visit. She made an excuse and left soon after she heard Ludwig say goodbye to his mother. She made sure he did not see her getting on the tram which went to the market place. There, as soon as she saw Fritz, she stepped forward. “No!“ he cried. “Go home!“

“I won‘t“, Magda replied. “Give me some of the posters! I‘ll be just as good at putting them up as you are.“ With that she grabbed a handful of the cartoons Fritz was holding and ran off down the street where Hans used to live. She did not have any glue so she slipped one of the drawings under the door of the house for his wife to find. *I wish I knew where Eva lived*, she thought. *I‘d leave one for her*. She put the other cartoons through the letterboxes of various offices and shops, taking care to do so when there were no passers-by. It did not take long to get rid of the couple of dozen pieces of paper she had and, as soon as she finished, she took the tram home again.

When she got there all the downstairs lights were on and her mother was in the hall struggling into her coat. Magda saw she was so agitated she could not do up the buttons properly. Her father was telephoning. “What‘s going on, Mutti?“ Magda asked, afraid she already knew the answer but hoping she was wrong.

“Don‘t go, Lisel!“ shouted Anton, putting his hand over the receiver. “Joanna‘s already on her way.“ Then he asked whoever he was speaking to, “What's he supposed to have done?“ When he got the answer, he gasped. Trying to modulate his voice, he said, “Don't worry, Heinz. If Joanna does not get anywhere, we‘ll go down together in the morning.“ He put the receiver

down, muttering, “The bloody young fool!“ Then he saw Magda who was standing in the doorway with her mother. “Where have you been then?“ he demanded, glaring at his daughter.

“I went to Olga‘s. I told you.“ Magda was shaking from head to foot.

“Alice says you only stayed fifteen minutes“, said Lisel.

“Were you with Fritz?“ questioned Anton, as if Magda was a prisoner in court he was cross-examining. “Did you see what happened?“

“Yes, I was with him and Ludwig for a bit in the Old Town. What has happened? They were all right when I left them.“

“Fritz is in gaol and Ludwig has disappeared. That‘s what happened. Heinz says Fritz has been arrested for distributing ‘subversive literaturi‘.“

“It was a cartoon. There wasn‘t any writing on it,“ said Magda weakly.

“So, you know all about it. Were you handing these things out too?“

Magda reddened. “I wanted to do something,“ she said, her courage returning. “I hate the way we put up with the lies they teil about us.“

“You're a silly girl“, said Lisel mournfully. “I told you how important it is for Jews not to draw attention to themselves. I expect this was Fritz‘s idea. Now look where it‘s landed him and, for all we know, Ludwig too.“

“You‘ve had a lucky escape, young lady,“ said Anton, less angrily than before.

Magda burst into tears. “But what about Fritz and Ludwig?“

“Wherever Ludwig is, he hasn‘t been arrested,“ answered her father. “As you must have gathered when I was on the phone just now, Fritz‘s grandmother is going to the police station. If she can‘t get him released, Heinz and I will go there early tomorrow.“

None of the Sengers slept much that night. At 1 a.m., Leopold Kahn rang to say Ludwig had come home. He had taken

cover after Fritz was arrested and stayed hidden until the police left, after gathering up all the cartoons they could find. Heinz rang up two hours later to say Joanna had not gone beyond the front desk at the police station. So Anton went before breakfast to pick up Heinz who looked haggard and crumpled. Telling his brother-in-law to shave and put on a clean shirt, Anton rang up his partner to say he would not be coming to the office until later – probably much later. He explained why, whereupon Rudolph Lill said, "May I make a suggestion? Let me go down to the police station. It might be better if you and Fritz's father stayed out of it."

Anton did not ask why. He merely said, "Do you have any reason for thinking you can get the boy out?"

"I'm not sure I can," came the answer, "but it might help that I know Gerhard Richter there. He's married to my sister."

Herr Lill went to the police station where he explained at the desk that he was a lawyer acting for the Vogel family. The policeman on duty looked in surprise at the little man with mousy hair, wearing a pinstripe suit. He was pretty sure he was not Jewish and wondered what he was doing mixed up in the affair. "You'd better see this," he said, handing him a copy of the cartoon. Then, at the lawyer's request, he took him down a dank stairway to see Fritz. Unlocking a cell door, he ushered Lill inside and, locking the door again, went back upstairs. There was hardly any light but when the lawyer's eyes got adjusted to the darkness, he saw there was a bucket and a bed – minus a mattress – in the small cell. Fritz was seated on the bare planks of the bed with his head in his hands. He stood up, wincing as he did so, and looked questioningly at the lawyer, who saw that his arm was sticking out at an unnatural angle and that the right side of his face was heavily bruised.

"You don't know me", said Lill. "I am Anton Senger's partner. I've got no sympathy for you. You have committed a crime and caused your family a lot of trouble. But you are very young and for you this was just a joke – though I must say, a silly one."

Here the lawyer waved the cartoon at Fritz. “For that reason,“ he went on, “and because I have a great respect for Anton and your Aunt Lisel, I want to try and get you out of here. But before I see the officer-in-charge about it, you must promise you‘ll do what I say.“

“What do you want me to do?“

“This piece of paper,“ replied the lawyer. “You are to say you picked it up in the street without knowing what it was.“

“They‘ll not believe that. When that swine stopped me, I had a whole lot of copies in my hand.“

“Then you must say you found a pile of them and were curious. You picked them up to see what they were. And another thing – if by’swine‘ you mean a member of the police force, don‘t use that word again! Otherwise I‘ll wash my hands of you.“

“All right,“ Fritz said, “I know you are trying to help.“ He held out his good arm and went on, “Forgive me if I shake hands with my left. Something is wrong with the other one.“

“Yes,“ remarked Lill, “it needs seeing to,“ and called for the policeman to open the cell door. Then he went, without shaking hands.

Next, Herr Lill went to see his brother-in-law with whom he got on well enough when they met at family gatherings. On those occasions Gerhard Richter was always cheerful, cracking jokes and a big success with the children. In his office, seated behind a desk, wearing a uniform that was a bit too tight for him, he was a different man. He had the air of someone who was not to be trifled with. However, he softened slightly when he saw who his visitor was. He smiled as he said,“Good morning, Rudolph. What brings you here“

“I've come to see what is going to happen to that boy, Fritz Vogel. He‘s the nephew of Anton Senger, my partner in the practice.“

“Is he now? You‘ve never said you worked with a Jew.“

“I have been with Anton ever since I qualified. He‘s always been very good to me. I‘d like to help him if I can.“

“I see. What do you want me to do?“

"I'm here to ask you to release the boy."

The officer sat silent for a minute. Then he said,"That's not easy. The cartoon you have in your hand has caused quite a stir here. Added to which some good Nurembergers have been sending the Gestapo various leaflets that have been left about the town, perhaps by this boy." Lill noticed with relief that his brother-in-law did not know that Ludwig had been with Fritz and he himself did not know that Magda had been with them, because Anton had not told him.

"Anyway," Gerhard went on, "I decided we had to put a stop to the business. So I sent men to keep watch. I must admit I was surprised last night to find they had nabbed a culprit who was just a kid."

Lill seized on this comment. "That's just it. Fritz Vogel is just a kid – his arm is broken by the way. This cartoon, which is very amateurish, is a silly prank."

"A dangerous one. Who knows that the boy will go on to do next?"

"I've just seen him. He won't go on."

"I hope you're right but he has to be taught a lesson. I need to think the whole thing over. I'm sorry, Rudolph, the most I can promise is that I'll see my men don't beat him up again and I'll have that arm set properly. I'm not letting him go today – if I ever do."

With that the conversation ended and Lill went away. He had been refused but did not feel hopeless. As he told Anton afterwards, "It was too much to expect that I bring Fritz out with me. Although Gerhard did not say so, he was no doubt looking over his shoulder as he spoke. He can't afford to cross the Gestapo. We'll have to wait and see what he does when the fuss over this affair has died down."

So the Vogels and the Sengers were left to agonise. No one said so but they dreaded the worst, which was that Fritz would be sent to the concentration camp built for political prisoners at Dachau. Partly because of the strain, Joanna had a stroke.

Although the doctor said there was every chance she would make a good recovery, Heinz refused to be comforted. After he brought his mother home from the hospital, he hovered round Joanna who was paralysed down one side. He barely touched the meals Romi prepared for him. As a result, the doctor, fearing he would soon have a second patient on his hands, drew up a list of things for Heinz to do in caring for the sick woman. Not all of these were necessary. The main purpose of them was to occupy Heinz‘s mind and stop him brooding incessantly over a situation in which he was helpless. For neither he nor the Sengers could do any more for Fritz. They could not even visit him, all requests to do so being refused.

‘You have to be patient, Rudolph Lill told Anton and Lisel. He had been right in supposing his brother-in-law was waiting to see how the Gestapo reacted to the arrest of a Jew for distributing‘subversive literature‘. Meanwhile, Gerhard Richter decided it was best not to remind anyone about Fritz. He was aware the Bavarian Gestapo was overworked because it had to cover an area with one million inhabitants. The danger was that quite a few of these were eager to denounce their neighbours. However, when after a month he heard no more from the understaffed secret police, he guessed details of his young prisoner‘s case lay buried under an avalanche of other papers. Meanwhile, Fritz caught scarlet fever. This gave Richter an excuse. He could say he was getting rid of the boy to avoid his men becoming infected. So Fritz emerged into the daylight again, having spent four weeks in solitary confinement.

Magda, who was longing to see her cousin again, had to wait until he was out of quarantine. Soon after he was up and about, she went round to ask him to come for a walk. Under an overcast sky they went through the almost deserted park and found themselves near the Nazi Stadium again. Fritz gazed up at the massive columns, emblazoned with swastikas and said, “I was mistaken about that man.“

“You mean Hitler“ said Magda.“In what way?“

“In my heart of hearts I thought he was a joke. I supposed people would see through him. I know now that if they ever do, it will take more than a cartoon to change their minds. That megalomaniac has hypnotised them. The policeman who interrogated me said that dozens of those leaflets we posted up in the town were torn down by our fellow citizens and handed in to the Gestapo headquarters. I have only succeeded in doing harm. My father has aged twenty years. And our grandmother, who always loved to talk, cannot speak clearly any more. She mumbles and gets all her words mixed up. She would never have had that stroke if I hadn‘t been such a fool.“

Fritz looked desperate. Magda was silent. Finally she said, “What are you going to do now?“

“Father wants to send me to England. Ludwig is going there to stay with a headmaster in Dover who has offered him a home and a place in his school. Apparently, this man is willing to take me too.“ Magda was dismayed. It was bad enough that so many of her friends had left. If Fritz went away as well, it would be like losing a brother.

“Don't worry,“ he said, seeing her stricken face. “I'm not going anywhere without Father and it is out of the question for us to leave Granny who is too sick to travel.“

Magda could not help feeling relieved. Fritz went on, “You mustn‘t think crushed by what happened. Somehow I‘ll find a way to fight the tyrant but it will be with something better than cartoons for folk who don‘t want to look at them.

“What‘s going to happen about school?“ asked Magda.

“I‘ve already gone back. The Director doesn‘t know where I‘ve been for the last month. At least I don‘t think he does. The official story is that I was away because I had scarlet fever. I wasn‘t the only boy in the school who got it. As you know, there‘s been an epidemic.“

By this time they had reached the Congress Hall. It was beginning to rain, so they took shelter under the scaffolding that was still in place on that symbol of Hitler‘s grandiose am-

bitions. “Talking about the Director reminds me,“ Fritz said. “You remember the essay? Well I wrote it without saying a word about how wonderful Hitler was. I just tried to reproduce an accurate surveyor‘s report. The best bit was your photographs. Then I handed it in and forgot about it.“

“No wonder!“

“Yes, but you‘ll never guess what happened. While I was away, our form teacher marked our essays and read aloud in class the one he‘d given top marks to. Ludwig said it was the usual Nazi rant and that our teacher praised it because it showed‘the best appreciation of the site and Hitler‘s vision in creating it‘. That was no surprise. But, lo and behold! The day I returned to school, the Director came into our form room. He‘d asked to read the essays and changed the marks of some of them. Well, to cut a long story short, he put mine top!“

“Good for him! I wish he was our Director“, said Magda. “You know, I think you‘ve been wrong about him, all along.“

“I've been wrong about everything.“

“I bet he doesn‘t like Hitler any more than we do.“

“Maybe,“ responded Fritz. “He‘s an old man though. He‘s retiring at the end of this year.“ Sheets of rain were coming down now. Soaked and cold, the cousins ran for the Sengers‘ house down the Great Road.

CHAPTER 10

Whenever Magda and Traudel got their homework back nowadays, the best they could hope for was to see 'Adequate' scribbled on the last page. Even Traudel's faultless Maths answers earned no more, and while Herr Shwarz used to smile as he handed her completed exercises, the young man who replaced him did not even do that. At the end of the present term there would be the yearly examinations and Magda knew that even if she did well, none of her teachers would praise her, though if she did badly, they would be quick to inform the class of the fact. She could imagine the humiliating scene. Added to which, Eva and her lieutenant Inge would be sure to smirk. "I'm so worried about the Maths exam," she told Traudel.

"Why? You manage all right most of the time."

"Not in Algebra. I just can't get the hang of it."

Traudel looked at her mournful friend. Then she said, "How would you like to come over to my house one afternoon? I could go over a few of the things that bother you."

"That would be wonderful. When?"

"Tomorrow. I'll tell Mutti and you can stay for a meal afterwards."

Magda was not only relieved when Traudel offered to help but surprised because the girl who sat next to her in class never said much, except to make the occasional critical comment.

The following afternoon Magda crossed the park to the Feldheims' house. She had to make a detour to avoid the annual Nazi rally being held on the vast site she had photographed for Fritz's essay. Earlier in the day there had been a parade in which several thousand soldiers and the Hitler Youth had

marched past the Fuhrer and top officials in the Nazi Party.

Magda had never been to the Feldheim home before. Traudel opened the door and took her across the hall with piles of pamphlets on the floor. Sonia Feldheim, a short, stocky woman, who had a capable air, came out of a room on the left. She looked Magda up and down quickly and welcomed her. “I’ve been looking forward to tonight,“ she said. “We can chat at dinner. Excuse me for now though, I have something I must finish.“

She went back into the room she had come out of, where Magda glimpsed a pile of brightly coloured squares of material and a pot of glue on a work bench. Seeing Magda looked curious, Traudel explained, “Mutti makes and dresses dolls.“

“What does she do with them?“ asked Magda.

“Sells them,“ came to answer. “It helps. We’ve been short of money since they stopped Papa working at the University. Magda remembered that Bernard Feldheim had been a Professor of Eonomics there before the Nazis got rid of him. Now he was the organizer of the local Zionists.

Traudel took Magda up two flights of dark stairs to the attic where she slept and worked. It was as large as Magda’s room but tidy and looked bare because there was very little furniture, just an old fashioned iron bedstead, a trestle table and a couple of straight chairs with fraying cane seats. Looking round to see where Traudel kept her clothes, Magda saw a large, black cupboard set in the wall. “Well, lets get started,“ said Traudel and the two girls drew the chairs up to the table and sat down. For the next hour of so Magda asked questions about the bits of Algebra she found difficult and Traudel tried to answer them.

“You’re a very good teacher,“ said Magda when they had finished. “You explain things so clearly. I don’t feel anywhere near so confused as I did. Are you going to be a teacher later on?“

“Well maybe eventually,“ came the answer, “but not for a few years yet. I’ll have more urgent work to do before that.“ Traudel did not say what this work would be.

Just then they heard cheering in the park and went over to the window to see what it was about. “I think that must be for Goering. Look, you can see him on the grandstand. Take these!“ Traudel handed over a pair of binoculars that she had picked up from where they lay on the window ledge. Magda contemplated the fat man in a fancy uniform with rows of medals who was acknowledging the greeting of an enthusiastic crowd. “He’s as much of an anti-Semite as Hitler,“ said Traudel. There are rumours going around that Hitler is going to make a special announcement tonight. No doubt Goering will have his say too. If you like, we can come up here after dinner. They use loud speakers so we should be able to hear bits of what they say, particularly Hitler. He shouts and likes to get the crowd worked up.“

“O.K. but I wouldn’t fancy having to listen to that racket night after night. How can you sleep?“

“Well, the rally’s only once a year. In any case I like to know what the Nazis are up to.“

At that moment a bell sounded from somewhere below them in the house. “That means dinner’s ready,“ said Traudel and the two of them went downstairs and into the dining room, where Traudel’s parents and her younger brother were already seated. Professor Feldheim was thin and probably very tall, though it was difficult to be sure of that as he was sitting down.

“Welcome to our home Magda,“ he said. Magda thought how distinguished he looked as she met this man‘s smiling gaze, a full head of silver hair and a beard to match.

Sonia Feldheim, who was sitting at the other end of the table also smiled and, indicating a boy sitting opposite the girls, said, “Have you met our youngest son Ezra yet?“

“I don’t think so,“ replied Magda, “but I’m sure I’ve seen you somewhere.“ Ezra was about twelve and took after his mother, with a mass of black, curly hair except that whereas she crackled with energy, he stared at the table, looking as

if he wished he were under it. Magda looked at him expectantly and said hello.

"Hello," he mumbled back, adding in a squeaky voice that had not broken properly yet, "No doubt you have seen my face. Everyone in Nuremberg has."

Before Magda could ask why, his mother cut in with, "Not now, Ezra." Whereupon he looked down again and shut up.

Magda expected to eat kosher food at Traudel's because she knew the Feldheims were Orthodox. She had never had it before because no one in her family was religious. She knew very little about it, except that it was complicated to prepare because you not only were forbidden to eat dairy stuff with meats, but had to cook those foods in separate sets of saucepans. It sounded complicated. Traudel said her mother did her own cooking because the only help she had in the house these days was a woman who came in to clean. Magda wondered if she would able to eat the meal. It would be dreadful if she choked on it. However, she thought she could smell chicken, so she hoped for the best.

She had not expected the long prayer which the Feldheims said before they ate. She did not understand the words and felt awed. At the end she whispered to Traudel, "Was that Hebrew?"

"Yes. We all began to learn it after Hitler came in."

"We must have a common language if we are to make a success of our homeland," explained Professor Feldheim, who had heard what his daughter said. "We won't be able work together, let alone talk to each other, if we can only speak German, Polish, Russian or whatever."

During the prayer Magda had thought the meal would be a solemn affair. But far from it, as soon as the soup with matzo balls arrived, Traudel and her parents began talking non-stop. Magda was astonished to see the girl who was so silent at school have so much to say in her own home. Only Ezra was quiet. He ate whatever food was put in front of him, every now and then casting nervous looks at his parents. *He's in trouble*,

Magda decided. *What's happened, I wonder?*

The main topics of conversation were what was happening in Germany and the family's plans to leave Nuremberg and go to Palestine. By this time Magda was used to Jews in Nuremberg deciding to emigrate, but all the ones she knew well wanted to go to a country where life would be more like the one they were used to. Eventually she summoned up enough courage to ask, "Why Palestine?"

"Because it is our ancestral land and Jews must have a country of their own again," said Traudel's father. "We belong with our forefathers. Anywhere else we are strangers in Egypt." Bernard Feldheim's face was a strange mixture of joy and melancholy as he spoke these words. Magda marvelled at his conviction.

Seeing her look of surprise, he asked conversationally, "What does your father think?"

"He says we are Germans now and that our present trouble with the Nazis will blow over."

Mrs. Feldheim shook her head incredulously. "Many Jews here agree with him but we can't go along with that, can we dear?"

"They're hiding their heads in the sand," responded her husband. Anti-Semitism is endemic in Europe. It may lie dormant for a few decades but then it surfaces again, as it has done now with the Nazis. Far from our troubles blowing over, they will get worse."

"They're bad enough now!" said a loud voice. This was Ezra, who broke his silence as soon as the Professor stopped speaking.

"Tell Magda what's just happened," said Traudel. "I imagine she's been wondering what's the matter with you all through dinner."

Before Magda could deny this, Ezra launched into his story. "A few weeks ago we had the usual photograph taken of the whole school, as we do every year. This time however the man, as soon as he finished with the group picture, wanted to photograph a few of us separately. He asked particularly for Jewish boys. One of the masters chose me."

"Meanwhile your friends smelled a rat and ran off," said his father. "You were slow – as usual! Of course Magda recognized you when she came. You let them trap you and now your picture has been posted on every street corner." Ezra got up and rushed from the room. Magda felt very sorry for him. She remembered now. Coming home from school she had seen a poster of two boys. One, whom she did not know, had fair hair and Nordic features. The other was Ezra. Underneath was written, *Who is the true German?*

"You musn't be so hard on him Bernard," said Mrs. Feldheim and went to find her son. He threw up his hands in despair and followed her. Dinner was over.

When the two girls were left to themselves, Traudel turned Magda saying, "You don't like the idea of Palestine, do you? Why not?"

"Well from what I've heard of it, it's so hot and dusty."

"You say that because you're a spoilt princess".

Despite Traudel's sarcasm, Magda decided to argue her case. "But most of Palestine is a desert. What are you going to do there?"

"I shall join Max and Alex on the Daganya kibbutz, near the Sea of Galilee."

"And what are they doing?"

"Farming of course. That's what the kibbutz is for. My brothers have been at Daganya for two years now, reclaiming the land much of which, as you rightly say, is desert. However the Jewish settlers have got an irrigation scheme going. With Max and Alec I shall help to make the desert flower. Hang on! I've got a picture somewhere." She went to the heavy.old sideboard and rifled through a pile of letters lying next to a seven-branched candelabra. "Here it is." She handed Magda a snapshot of two muscular young men, standing outside a low hut in front of an orange grove. "That's the men's dormitory," Traudel explained. "There several others, including one for the children. Everyone eats together and every adult works. I

am longing for us to get our visas so that I can be there. It's a commune in which all the settlers are equal."

"But aren't there people living in Palestine already? What about the Arabs?"

"Some of them have already sold land to us. As for the rest, I don't see why we shouldn't live side by side. There's enough room." Traudel smiled radiantly as she said this.

"What will your parents do?" asked Magda, who found it hard to imagine Professor Feldheim as a farmer.

"They won't be coming to Daganya. They'll stay in Jerusalem. Papa will probably get a job in the university and Mutti will teach. She'll also try to start a puppet theatre. She used to have one here you know."

"Was that hers?" exclaimed Magda. I remember going to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* one Christmas when I was little. I talked about it for days afterwards. It was wonderful."

"Yes, Mutti is the creative one in our family. The rest of us only talk here. It'll all be different in Palestine. There we're going to create a country. But we better go upstairs now." Traudel looked at the clock on the mantelpiece. "That is, if you still want hear what the man who's busy wrecking a country has to say."

Traudel's attic was lit by the search lights, shooting up a hundred feet into the sky from the Nazi rally below. Traudel opened the window, just as a roar rose from the crowd in the stadium. Magda saw well over a thousand spectators on their feet, their right arms outstretched as they shouted "Heil Hitler", their faces ecstatic. Their Führer had stepped onto the grandstand. He stood there in silence for what seemed an age, drinking in the adulation of his massed followers. The attic door opened and Traudel's parents came in with Ezra. All five of them watched what was going on below. "It's quite a Wagnerian scene, don't you think?" was Professor Feldheim's dry comment as he took in the solitary, illuminated figure, standing on high, against a backdrop of darkness.

“Why does he always wear military uniform?“ Magda asked.

“He sees himself as a warrior, fighting to reclaim Germany’s honour. Mark my words, it won’t be long before he takes the country into war again. He’s already got a massive rearmament programme going. No doubt he thinks the money he’ll get from the Jews will pay for it.“

Hitler began to speak to his now silent and rapt audience. Gusts of a strong wind that had blown up meant that the Feldheims and Magda only caught phrases here and there of the impassioned oration. They heard enough however to understand the Fuhrer was talking about them again. He said something about Jews insulting the German flag on the passenger ship Bremen, as it entered New York harbour. “Wherever there was trouble, at home and abroad,“ he went on, “Jews were at the bottom of it.“ As he said this, the crowd cheered.

“He’s crude, but clever,“ said Professor Feldheim. “He knows the Germans are afraid in their changed world. By making us as a scapegoat, he’s given them the simple answer they long for. He has become their voice.“

Hitler was still speaking. The watchers in the attic caught another phrase as he proclaimed, “New legislation is needed,“ but failed to hear exactly what legislation the Fuehrer had in mind. Later that evening Hermann Goering read out the Nuremberg Laws as they came to be called.

By that time the Feldheims had gone downstairs again. No one spoke. They were all thinking. The clock on the mantelpiece chimed nine. “I must go home,“ said Magda. “Thank you so much for inviting me. This has been one of the most interesting evenings I’ve ever had. And thank you, Traudel, for the help with Maths. Perhaps I won’t disgrace myself in the exam now.“

“Don’t be silly. You can do Maths as long as you don’t panic.“ Traudel smiled as she said this and Sonia Feldheim came over and gave Magda a kiss.

"Now you know the way, you must come again," she said.

Ezra, determined to be grown up, said he would walk Magda home. They avoided the park because of the milling crowds at the rally. After a bit Magda said, "I felt I really got to know your sister tonight. She always keeps her distance at school. She's quite different at home."

"Traudel's got her quirks. She's always on the defensive when she's out anywhere. As for you, she started off, at any rate, thinking you were a spoilt, little rich girl."

Magda gasped in dismay. Oh dear! Perhaps I am. I know I've always been in awe of Traudel. She's so clever. All the Feldheims are."

"I'm not!" said Ezra.

Magda ignored this and went on, "I love the way your family talk about everything, I wish mine did. Half the time, I never know what's happening. You are very gloomy though. Do you agree with your father's when he says everything for Jews is going to get worse?"

"Well, as you saw, Papa and I are sometimes odds on, but I'm afraid he's right about that."

By this time they had reached Magda's house. The two of them said good night and went their ways. As she got ready for bed Magda could see the sky glowing red from the torchlight procession that accompanied Herman Goering to the Congress Hall. There he spelt out the Nuremberg Laws which forbade marriages between Aryans and anyone with Jewish blood. Furthermore, Jews were no longer German citizens and so had no more rights than any other foreigner. From then on, they were indeed 'strangers in the land of Egypt'.

CHAPTER 11

A few days after the big Nazi Rally in 1935 ended Magda was greeted by a triumphant Eva in school with, “So it’s curtains for your blood sucking father, No more new bikes for you!“ Then, tossing her golden plait, she pranced over to her desk and a sniggering Inge.

“What’s she on about?“ Magda asked Traudel.

“I expect she means that rule the Nazis introduced to ban Jews working as lawyers. It wasn’t enforced everywhere but now it will be. She’s always been jealous of you,“ Traudel added, but could not say any more because Frau Berger came into the classroom.

After school that day Magda got off the tram early because she had decided to call for her father at his office and walk home with him from there for lunch. When she got there she saw that someone had scrawled a large cross and ‘JEWS OUT’ in red paint on the white front door. A couple of windows were also broken and the Senger and Senger brass name plate, which dated from the days when her great grandfather started his law firm, had been hacked off the wall, leaving a hole in the stucco. When she knocked, Frau Brebner, a middle aged woman in a severe suit, who was the receptionist, answered and told her, “Herr Senger is not here.“

“Magda hesitated, then asked, “Could I see Herr Lill?“

“He’s not here either,“ said the receptionist and closed the door.

Magda went home feeling frightened. She was late for lunch and her parents were already in the dining room. While she was hanging her jacket up in the hall, she heard them talking.

Seizing her chance to find out what they really thought, she stood there eavesdropping. Mutti was crying. “Don’t you see? There’s no place for us here any more.“

“I’m not going to let them drive me out. Rudolf Lill and I have come to an agreement. From now on, he will be the Head of the firm. My name will no longer appear on the name plate – when we get a new one. It’s a step up for him. Of course he’s pleased but he didn’t gloat, though Frau Brebner smirked – the first time I’ve seen her even trying to smile in ages. Anyway it’s settled. Rudolf can have the Aryan clients, but as long as there’s a Jew left to defend in Nuremberg. I’ll be here to plead his case.“

“There are fewer of those every day,“ Lisel pointed out. “The queues at all the consulates are getting longer. I’m afraid that soon there’ll be no visas left for us. At the moment the Nazis are only too glad if we leave, but what will they do to us, if we can’t?“

She was no longer crying and spoke quietly, anxious not to let her husband accuse her of being hysterical, but burst into tears again as she looked at his face and he told her, “Sooner or later they’ll see how much we contribute to Germany in every way. Without us, the country will be diminished, in the Arts and Science, as well as in business. You’ve only got to look at the list of Jews awarded the Nobel Prize to know that.“ Seeing she was still crying, he put his arms round her. “Don’t trouble your head any more, dearest. Come on, let me see my smiling Lisel again.“

The door of the living room was ajar and Magda saw her father drying Mutti’s tears with his large, snowy handkerchief. *He’s treating her as if she was a little girl*, thought Magda. *I wish he wouldn’t*. She went into the room and, just as she expected, her parents stopped talking as soon as they saw her. Magda said nothing during lunch about her visit to the office but decided not to go along any more with the wish to keep her in the dark about what was happening. *Surely*, she thought, ‘*at fourteen, I’m old enough to be told things*.

Heinz came over that afternoon, as he sometimes did, to show Lisel the quartet he was writing. Afterward he sat down

at the piano and played a Beethoven Sonata. Magda went into the splendid music room her father had arranged for the house to have when he married her mother. The September sun shining through the window made the reds and blues in the Persian carpet at her feet glow. Opposite her was a black lacquered cabinet where her mother kept her scores. It was inlaid with silver gilt and had always fascinated her. Now she gazed at the elaborate scrolls of leaves and the violin and flute depicted on its door as she sat listening to her uncle play. "Thank you Heinz. You played that beautifully" said Lisel, when her brother finished and was closing the lid of the Steinway. "The *Pathetique* is one of my favourites. It is yet another of those pieces in which Beethoven speaks of struggle, yet finds serenity too."

Her mother's resigned tone irritated Magda. "Beethoven resisted," she said fiercely. "I bet if he was alive now, he would not have submitted quietly to everything Hitler was doing."

Her mother and uncle looked at her, surprised at her vehement tone. Then Lisel said, "Darling, you don't understand."

"I understand enough from school and what I see in the streets with all those 'No Jews Here' notices. And I'd understand more if only you and Papa talked to me about the Nazis. Incidentally, I called at his office today. You couldn't stop me seeing what they've done there. Surely I'm old enough to be told what things mean."

Lisel looked startled but Heinz said, "She's right. You and Anton can't keep on wrapping her up in cotton wool. You should treat her like the adult she's fast becoming. Answer her questions and let her have her say."

Magda looked at her uncle gratefully. Lisel paused. Then she said wearily, "Very well. Go ahead! Ask your questions."

"First of all, I heard enough of your conversation with Papa before lunch to know you want us to leave Germany. If you think that, why did you give in so easily? You always give in to Papa, even when you believe you are right."

"For one thing, I was brought up to think that when I mar-

ried I should let my husband make the big decisions. Then I have always hated quarrels."

"I don't want the two of you to quarrel but I wish you wouldn't let him shut you up all the time. I expect after losing the argument today, you won't say another word."

Lisel looked pained at this outburst and Heinz broke in with, "You musn't be too harsh. Your father loves you both very much and is doing what he believes is best. Ever since he married your mother he has tried to protect her."

"I'm sorry," said Magda, going over to hug her mother. "I don't want to make things worse. But couldn't you go on trying to persuade him about emigrating if that is what you want? After all, many of the people we know have already gone."

"True! Unfortunately however some of his closest friends feel that same way as he does and are determined to stay – Leopold Kahn for instance. He sent Ludwig to England after that trouble with Fritz's cartoon, but he and Alice won't go there. He's built up that business of his making stoves and doesn't see why he should leave it for the Nazis to reap the growing profits."

"That doesn't apply to Papa though. Eva Shultz said today that they're going to stop him being a lawyer."

"She was exaggerating," said Heinz. "Anton cannot keep his Aryan clients but he still has his Jewish ones."

"What is more," Lisel went on, "Leopold and your father are not so different as you imagine. Both of them are afraid of having to start from scratch again in a foreign country. In fact, your father would be even more at a loss than his friend. Leopold can take his business expertise with him but what would a middle aged German lawyer do with his legal knowledge? Because I know that, I can't push your father."

"I see," said Magda. And she did. Whereas as before she had seen strength of purpose and firmness in her father, she now discovered weakness. Somehow she felt closer to him and her resentment faded. She said no more except, "Thank you for talk-

ing to me Mutti," and, giving Lisel a kiss, she went to her room.

Anton now worked from home because an embarrassed Rudolf Lill had asked him not to use his office any more. Apparently one of Lill's clients, after meeting Anton on the stairs, threatened to change lawyers if he saw 'Senger there again'. After that the two men, who had been partners for years, rarely met. One day, however Anton heard in the Courthouse that Lill was getting married. "Who's the girl?" asked Lisel when her husband announced the fact during dinner.

"She's a Catholic and her name is Rosa Berger."

"She has a sister who teaches at the High School, doesn't she?" exclaimed Magda in dismay.

"Yes, I believe she does."

"Well, if she's anything like our Frau Berger, she'll soon make a Nazi fanatic of Mr. Lill!"

Anton was sceptical, "Rudolf is over cautious, but a good man at heart," he said.

Not long afterwards Anton came home from the Courthouse and sat down to lunch with his wife and daughter without speaking, and they saw he was not eating. Suddenly he said, "He cut me today."

"Who?" asked Lisel.

"Rudolf! I left the Court just as he was coming up the steps. He looked straight through me."

"Perhaps he didn't see you," suggested his wife doubtfully.

"Oh he did. We were face to face. He was no further away than you are from me now." With that, before either Lisel or Magda could say anything more, Anton got up and walked out the dining room, and neither of them saw him for the rest of the day.

"I expect Herr Lill has been listening to his fiancée," said Magda. "What a miserable wretch he is. You'd have thought that all Papa has done for him would have counted for something."

"Perhaps the girl has pushed Rudolph over the edge. But he's a natural conformist. He's just going with the tide."

As Lisel had predicted, the number of Jewish clients her husband had, dwindled with each months that went by. So while Rudolf Lill grew richer, Anton Senger grew poorer. One morning, when Magda went out onto her balcony, she noticed that while the roses were more luxuriant than ever, this was because no one had pruned them and the grass on the lawn was nearly a foot high. Hans had not been replaced and would not be. Nor did the two maids come any longer because one of Nuremberg Laws forbade Jews employing anyone under the age of forty five as a servant. Magda now made spasmodic efforts to clean up her room because Florrie, who being fifty, stayed with them, had so much more work than before, even though Lisel was taking over much of the cooking.

After her conversation with Mutti, Magda made sure she knew what the Nazis were doing. This was easier than it had been because she could ask the Feldheims, whom she visited regularly. She got on quite well with Traudel these days. "Thanks to you, I got through that Maths exam," she told her, to which Traudel replied.

"You'd have passed anyway. Not that it will do you any good," she added. No university will take you, no matter how many exams you pass. Have you noticed how Nazism gets into everything now, even Maths?" Magda guessed she was thinking of the Arithmetic exam.

"Yes, I've noticed," she said, fishing in her bag until she found the paper again and pointed to the following question:

'To keep a mentally ill person costs approximately 4 marks a day.

There are 300,000 mentally ill people in care. How much do these people cost to keep in total? How many marriage loans of 1000 marks could be granted with this money?"

"Does this thing about mental homes mean they want to close them?" she asked.
'It's worse than that," her friend replied. "The Nazis have

already started getting rid of the inmates. They've got a euthanasia programme going, though they have not publicised it much as yet. Families just get a letter informing them their relative has died of pneumonia or some other natural cause." Magda shuddered.

She did not mention the euthanasia programme to her parents who, unlike the Feldheims, steered off unpleasant topics of conversation. She knew they were doing everything they could to see she was happy. So she looked cheerful when she was with them, and indeed she was on and off. For although she now knew far more about the Nazis, she tried, like Anton and Lisel, to shut them out of her mind, at least part of the time.

Photography was one way of doing this. She found it more and more absorbing. Her Leica II camera had a range finder, which meant she could focus distance easily. So she started off taking pictures of the garden, park and favourite buildings in the town. Then she found she enjoyed taking quick snapshots of people more and began photographing her parents and all her friends. She did not ask them to pose, preferring to catch them doing something characteristic – Mutti playing the piano for instance. Her father, seeing her use the camera so often, arranged for her to get to know one of his remaining clients Paul Gutman, a professional photographer. Herr Gutman, a short, plump man in his sixties, with frizzy, grey hair, had a wife who looked so like him, she could be mistaken for his sister. They did not have any children of their own and were happy to see her. Pleased to find a fellow enthusiast, Herr Gutman treated her like an apprentice. He let her use his dark room and taught her the techniques for getting a good picture. "A photographer catches Truth on the wing," he said. So he approved of her wish to avoid fixed poses. He was delighted with one particular snap she took of a couple of toddlers.

Magda took that picture in the park. She was walking there when she saw a little girl, about five years old, who with her fat, light brown ringlets looked like Shirley Temple. She was play-

ing with a brightly coloured ball. Suddenly it went into the garden of one of the Jewish families nearby. A little girl, the same age, who lived there, picked it up and brought it to the garden gate. Magda has often seen her in the park. She was called Miriam. When she opened the gate to give the ball back, both girls, the one Aryan, the other Jewish, stood staring at each other. They were wearing identical red frocks. They giggled, before Miriam said, "Here's your ball," handing it over.

The girl with light brown ringlets said, "Come out and play with me." It was this moment that Magda caught on camera, just before the mother of Shirley Temple's double, called her away.

Photography was something Magda did on her own. When she wanted company, which she often did, she could always go to a Jewish Youth Club which had started up in town. She liked it much better than the Zionist one where she had not made any new friends. Fritz had suggested she joined the new club. "What do you do there?" Magda asked.

"I'm learning ju-jitsu. I thought it might come in useful if some of our former friends try to rough me up. But there are lots of other things you can do besides that – athletics for instance." That persuaded Magda, who had beeing barred from competing in athletics at school; it was something she missed greatly. At the club she began working for proficiency badges in cycling as well as athletics. There was also to be a skiing holiday in Murren, Switzerland during the Christmas holidays but Magda, who knew her family was short of money nowadays, did not ask her parents if she could go.

One afternoon, however, Lisel went to a bridge party at Alice Kahn's house. After they finished playing, Lisel sat on a sofa by the window, drinking coffee and gazing over the gabled roofs to the great castle, built to defend the town from foreign enemies. The bells in half a dozen Gothic spires and towers were ringing, though she did not know why. Suddenly, she felt how alien Nuremberg was.

"You're looking bleak," said Alice who had brought her cof-

fee over and sat down beside her.

Lisel shook herself and miled, “How’s Ludwig getting on?“ she asked.

“He’s sent one or two letters,“ came the reply. “He says he likes the school apart from the dinners, which the English boys don’t like either. There’s something they call frogspawn – tapioca pudding I believe. The head master he lives with also wrote to say how quickly Ludwig is learning English. We don’t know how homesick he is but he’s asked if we will send Olga to England as well. His headmaster knows a Quaker family in Dover who have offered her a home.“

“Does Olga like the idea? What does Leopold say?“

“Olga wasn’t sure but, although nothing will make her father leave, he talked her into it. He pointed out it she would be company for her brother and that even if there were anti-Semites in England, as there are everywhere, they keep quiet, unlike the Nazis. She thought it over. As you know she’s not the kind of girl who dashes into things but then we got a very warm letter from the Quaker family, welcoming her. That and another letter from Ludwig decided the matter. She’ll be leaving next week. By the way, what are you doing about Magda? Have you and Anton got any relatives or friends you could send her to?“

“There’s an uncle in America but we haven’t heard from him lately. Anyway, she’s too young to go abroad by herself.“ Lisel fell silent. Then she went on, “I wish she could get away from Nuremberg for a bit though. She doesn’t talk about it but I expect she has a pretty miserable time at school.“

“Isn’t she going on that skiing holiday in Switzerland – the one the Jewish Youth Club is organizing?“ Lisel looked blank, so her friend told her about it.

“Magda hasn’t said a word. How much does it cost?“

“I don’t know. I’ll ask,“ and Alice went over to where some of the other bridge players were sitting. She came back to tell Lisel the price of the trip and they both guessed the reason for Magda’s silence.

Lisel knew if she mentioned the holiday to Anton, he would find the money somehow but she did not say anything to him. Instead she went out and sold some of her jewellery. It was a wrench because her husband, who was always generous, had given it to her. It reminded her of happier times when they went out regularly to restaurants and theatres. However she never wore it these days because she did not want to draw attention to herself. Two weeks before the trip to Murren was due to take place, she told Magda, "I'm going to give you your Christmas present early." Surprised Magda asked, Why? What is it?"

"It's that skiing holiday you haven't spoken about."

"But – "

"No 'buts'! It's paid for." Magda was delighted of course and dashed off to tell Fritz, who also wanted to go on the trip, if he could find the money for it. As the Vogels were as hard up as the Sengers, Fritz had thought he might make enough playing the piano in the evenings somewhere.

"Where?" Magda had asked dubiously, when he first mentioned the idea.

"One of the bars perhaps."

"No one will take a Jew on!"
"I shan't even admit I'm German. I shall say I'm American and know the latest jazz tunes. I do know quite a lot of them after seeing all those movies."

Magda could not help admiring her cousin. His English was now pretty fluent and from the start he had spoken it with an American accent. She thought his scheme was worth a try.

"Guess what? I can come skiing," she told Fritz, as soon as she got to the house in the Market Square. "How's the piano playing?"

"I've had to stop," answered Fritz. "But I got away with it at first. I decided to give this town a miss, in case I was seen by someone who knew me. So I cadged a lift with someone who

goes home to Neumarkt every evening. There I hunted round for a bit and eventually found a man who ran a small cabaret. I don't think he believed my yarn about being an American. He asked how it was I spoke German with a Franconian accent and stared at me hard. While he was talking though I'd gone over to the piano and was playing a bit. He stopped me and I thought I'd had it, but he said, 'Okay, you're hired'. So I worked there on Saturdays and some other evenings. His place turned out to be popular and my songs went down well."

"Why have you stopped?" asked Magda. "It sounds fun".

"It was, until one night Manfried and his Hitler Youth friends paid a visit to the cabaret. He recognized me and I saw him going up to complain. As the manager is a decent guy, I decided not to embarrass him and vamoosed."

"Manfried again!" said Magda exasperated.

"If it hadn't been him, it would have been someone else. It was too good to last but I've made enough money for Murren. By the way, I've started writing songs now. One of them is a satirical ditty about our Führer.

"No!" exclaimed Magda.

"Don't worry I.'m not going to sing it in public. But who knows? It may get a hearing some day. Meanwhile I enjoy composing; it takes me into another world. Home is pretty dull these days. Father rarely goes out except to teach his handful of private students. Nearly all the time when he's in, he sits in his room, listening to records. Granny sits with him. On and off, Papa and I are also trying to keep house because, as you know, we're not allowed to have Romi any more. As you can see we are not very domesticated." To prove this, he wrote his name in the dust on the sideboard. Magda had already noticed that the room they were in looked as if it had been ransacked by burglars.

"How is Granny? Can I go up and see her?"

"Yes, of course. She's still paralysed down one side and frets because she doesn't think she'll ever play her beloved harpsi-

chord again. She can talk again though. You'll find she's thinks about the past a lot, particularly the holidays she used spend as a child with her uncle, who was the doctor in Sulzberg. She made me curious about the place, so I went to take a look. It's a primeval village with a small Jewish community who have stuck with the old ways. Some of the women I saw still wore wigs. Most of the men work on the land with farm tools that Cain and Abel might have used. However Granny makes the place sound a lost paradise."

"Where is Sulzberg?"

"The other side of Neumarkt. Her family, the Bettelheims, all came from there originally. If you're going upstairs, perhaps you could take Granny her coffee. It's all she seems to live on these days."

When Magda was going upstairs with the tray, she caught sight of a girl letting herself out of the front door, who looked like Romi. When she entered the room, Joanna was playing patience. Putting the tray down, Magda went over and kissed her, asking how she was.

"Not bad. As you can see," she said, looking down at the cards spread out on the marquetry table, "I have found something I can do with one hand."

Joanna's voice was strong but to Magda she seemed very frail. The red and black dress she was wearing, which her grand daughter called 'the gypsy frock', hung on her bony frame.

"Was that Romi I just saw?" Magda asked.

"Yes, she came to see me – on her first free day too," Joanna sounded both pleased and surprised. Then she added, "Romi's a skivvy now, in the hospital and says it's like being back at the orphanage. No one speaks to her, except to give her orders. I expect this house was the nearest thing to a home she'd had. Do you know? I miss her – and not just because of the work she did."

As Fritz had predicted, Joanna talked about Sulzberg. When Magda asked why she had liked being there so much,

her grandmother replied simply, “Because I felt free. My cousin Esther was my age and there were twin boys who were a year older. We would take food and go out for the whole day, walking in the woods or boating and swimming. In the autumn we used to go black berrying and there was a tree we climbed to get hazelnuts. The boys knew the best places to go for everything.“

Magda, listening to her grandmother, thought of her own holidays on Karl Werfel’s farm.

Joanna went on, “Everyone knew my uncle. He was a good doctor, I think. No one cared that he was a Jew and no one bothered us.“

“Is Sulzberg beautiful?“ Magda asked.

“I thought it was,“ came the reply. “I remember there were always masses of wild flowers in summer. I used to pick large bunches of them and stick them in jam jars in the kitchen. Do you know, I’d like to be buried in Sulzberg.“

“Oh not for a long time yet,“ said the startled Magda. Her grandmother smiled but said nothing.

Shortly after visiting the Vogels, Magda went with her mother to Krumbacher’s. They were meeting Lili Levy and Lotte who had got their French visas and were leaving for Paris that week. Lili’s husband August was already there and had found somewhere for them to live. Lotte was apprehensive. “I won’t be able to talk to anyone, until I’ve learnt French,“ she said.

“You’ll soon pick it up,“ said her mother. Anyway it won’t be a bad thing if you have to keep quiet for a bit. You know you talk too much.“

Lili was brimming over with optimism. “August’s landed a job in a small theatre in Montmartre and is sure I’ll be able to sing again. Did I tell you I already have an important contact?“

“No. Who?“ asked Lisel.

“Gigli, no less!“ Lili had sent the famous tenor a tin of lebkuchen at Christmas and he had written back to thank her. “It

was a charming letter," she said and in a postscript he wrote that he was looking forward to hearing me one day."

Just then there was a lot of shouting in the street. The café door burst open and Ezra Feldheim fell in. He had a black eye and a cut lip. A gang of young boys stood outside yelling. Magda heard the phrase 'little Yid'! Looking out of the window, she recognized one of them. It was Trude's young brother Wolfgang. Meanwhile Otto Krumbacher had come from out the back.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

"Nothing really," said Ezra, dabbing his mouth with his handkerchief. "That lot were chasing me down Koenigstrasse. It all the fault of the cursed photograph. One of them, saw me from the other side of the street and called out 'There's the pin up boy! The next thing I knew they were all round me. One of them took a swipe at me but I managed to get away and ran."

"I'm going to give those little hooligans a piece of my mind!" said Herr Krumbacher, making for the door.

"No please don't!" said Ezra, catching hold of his arm, adding wearily, "It wouldn't do any good. I'm all right really!"

"Anyway, they moved on now," said Lotte.

Seeing the gang had gone, Herr Krumbacher took Ezra by the arm. "Come along with me young man!" he ordered, "I'll give you something to put on that eye."

"Then come and join us," said Lili. "Which is your favourite cake?"

PART 3

I936 – I937

CHAPTER 12

Magda sat in the little cog train which was taking the Jewish Youth Club up on the last stage of the journey from Lauterbrunnen to Murren. As well as a dozen boys and girls from that club, there were several groups from France, Italy, England and the U.S.A., as well as other Germans. Fritz had already made friends with the Americans and was playing canasta with them a few seats away from Magda.

It was late in the afternoon in January and the gas lamps in the carriage were lit. The new upholstery had stiff bristles that would have scratched her legs if she had not been wearing ski pants. Although she wore shorts in the Summer, this was the first time in her life she had worn trousers and they made her feel a different person.

This is a different world too, she thought, gazing out of the window, as the train was grinding its way up and up into the mountains. The higher it went, the freer Magda felt. There were bands of fir trees on the lower slopes and everywhere pristine snow that still gleamed in the dying light. Looking at a mountain that soared up above all the others, she wondered whether to ask the girl sitting opposite, if she knew which one it was. She decided not to because the girl was reading. Also she hardly knew Rachel, who went to the Jewish School in Fuerth and was a newcomer to the Club.

As they sat in the small, creaking train, Magda studied her, thinking, 'She's beautiful'. With her straight, black hair, parted in the middle, drawn back from her pale face, like a ballerina's, Rachel could have been Italian. At the club she had not shown any interest in Magda or the other girls, but all the boys were

interested in her – including Fritz.

Magda decided that Fritz and the other bys were attracted to Rachel not only because she was good looking, but because she was an enigma. You never knew what she was thinking. Unlike Magda, who could not hide her feelings, Rachel was the mistress of her face. She looked up from her book when Fritz came over. “So that’s the Jungfrau,“ he said, gazing at the axe-like blade of rock, rearing up above the man-made railway line. “You know,“ he went on, “I like the idea it’s been here for thousands of years, ignoring the strife and turmoil that goes on below.“

He addressed his remarks to Rachel but it was Magda who spoke first. “Yes,“ she agreed eagerly, “it’ll still be here when the Nazis are dead and gone.“

“Well Rachel?“ persisted Fritz.

“By that time we’ll be dead and gone too,“ she murmured. Silence followed her comment, broken when Fritz announced, “I’d better get back to the game. I have to recoup my losses.“ As he went off, Magda was surprised to see Rachel give him an intimate smile.

The feeling of being in a different world lasted when they all got out of the train in Murren, a village which had not changed much for centuries. Finding no one was allowed to drive a car in the steep winding streets, lined with old-fashioned wooden chalets, made Magda feel she could forget modern, Nazi Germany for a bit. As she walked with the rest of the group to the hostel where they were staying, she was happy when an old man they passed greeted them with “God be with you“ in Swiss-German.

The hostel was one of the larger chalets, the walls between the ornately timbered windows painted a cheerful red ochre. It had the usual pitched roof and wide eaves which acted as a shelter from the snow. On the side looking towards the Jungfrau, there was a carved wooden balcony that stretched along the whole second floor. Magda unpacked her rucksack in the

room she shared with Rachel and the twins Lisbet and Hannah whom she had known since Primary School “Can I have a top bunk?“ she asked. None of the other three wanted it, so that she clambered up a ladder and put her rucksack there. She chose the top one because it was opposite a window high up in the wall, and she hoped to see the mountains when she woke up in the mornings. Then they all went down to eat.

Some of the food Magda and the other Germans ate over the next two weeks was the same kind of thing they were used to at home, such as the Frankfurter sausages and sauerkraut they had the first evening. The French and Italians were not keen on sauerkraut. “What is it?“ aksed a girl named Nicole, looking at the shredded white cabbage. Magda told her and the French girl lifted a small forkful to her lips. ‘Ugh!’ she exclaimed and said something in her own language about ‘la benzine’. Throughout the meal the members of the Jewish Youth Club and the other young Germans sat at opposite ends of the long table. The two groups did not talk to each other but everyone was studiously polite.

“They been told to behave themselves,“ said Fritz afterwards, looking over at the Hitler Youth boys. “Anti-Semitic insults don’t always go down well outside Germany, and the Nazis dislike being criticised by foreigners.“ Then he went off to play canasta with the Americans again, while Magda looked for a quiet corner so that she could write a first enthusiastic letter home.

When she woke up in the morning, she found she had been right about her bunk having a view. The sun was just coming up and, from where she lay, she could see the jagged platform of the Schilthorn etched against a blue backdrop. There had been talk the night before about taking the cable car up the mountain because, from the top you could see Mont Blanc and even as far as the Black Forest. Magda found herself going into the dining room for breakfast at the same time as one of the Hitler Youth. He held the door open for her, clicked his

heels and said, "*Guten Tag*". This was a surprise, then remembering what Fritz told her, she thought. So, *they've also been told not to go round declaiming* "*Heil Hitler*" *while they here*.

At breakfast she had Dr. Bircher's muesli for the first time and decided she liked the mixture of oats, nuts and dried fruit, especially with lashings of cream on top. "Good! Eat up!" said the skiing instructor, "It will give you energy." Then he gave her a list which showed her which skiing group she would be in. As she expected, she had been put with the beginners.

Fritz, who could already ski, was on the list for those classed as Intermediate. But he already had other plans. "I must get on the Advanced list as soon as possible," he said, "because I want to take part in 'The Inferno.'" The Inferno, said to be the longest downhill race in the world, was held every January in Murren.

"We'll have to see," said his instructor, "If you do go in for the race, you'll be pitting yourself against competitors who can hold their own in the Alpine Ski World Championships."

Fritz, who had hopes of scoring over the Hitler Youth contingent, smiled and said, "I'll work at it."

Magda and the other beginners found their ski instructor was a young Finn, who had been working in Murren ever since he had done well in the Ski Championships a couple of years earlier. He was well over six feet, with a broad, flat, pleasant face and he was tanned. From the first, he was lot less stern than most of the teachers Magda was used to. Speaking slowly and clearly in German and then English, he told the group, "My name is Pekka Rautalainen. There's no need to bother with my last name. Just call me Pekka. First of all I want you to line up, so that I can measure you for the skiis you'll be using. It's important that they are neither too long or too short, if you are going to do well." When it was Magda's turn, he looked down on her from his great height and smiled as he said, "You're not very tall are you? Never mind, you won't have so far to fall, as you're sure to do at first." Magda tried to be consoled by this

thought while Pekka was sorting through the pile of skiis at his feet. Eventually he found the pair he was looking for and stood them upright in front of her. “Yes, these will do,“ he said. “You see, that they come midday between your shoulders and your eyes, just as they should.“

Next Pekka took the group to a nearby flat surface. “First of all try walking on the snow. Skiing is like walking, except that you slide your feet along instead of lifting them. Move around and be creative. Raise your skis in turn, side stepping, keeping them parallel. The idea in this session is to get your sense of balance.“ Magda did all these things and, feeling pleased with herself; decided to copy one of the boys nearby, and jump with her skis on. The first jump was all right but when she tried a second time, she slid and fell on her bottom. Pekka came over to help her to her feet again and seeing her downcast look, said, “Don’t worry. You’re doing fine. Everyone falls down at first.“ Then he called them all together to tell them the best way to fall. “When you feel yourself falling,“ he said, “don’t stiffen up. Relax. The less flexible your muscles are, the more likely you are to hurt yourself. Crouch to one side of your skis and fall with your hips on the surface.“

So the morning went on. Magda fell over several more times, but following Pekka’s instructions, she did not injure herself, though she was sure she was black and blue. She was determined to keep going, learning to take turns both left and right, using her sticks to stop slithering. She did not know whether she was doing well or not, but decided she could not be too bad when Pekka took her, and a few of the others, to a small hill nearby. There he showed this select group how to move up a slope, using the simple side-stepping method, which meant taking small side steps like a crab to move upwards. Magda’s most terrrfying but also exhilarating moment in that first lesson was when Pekka said, “Now you can all ski down the hill. As you do so, keep your knees bent, your arms slightly outwards and your body leaning forward a little.“

Magda swooshed down to the bottom without mishap. 'I'm going to like skiing,"she told herself.

"That's it for now," said the instructor as he went back with them to the other beginners. "Time for lunch," he announced. "Bravo! You've all done well." As Magda made her way to chalet with Rachel, Pekka passed them. Giving Rachel a speculative glance, he patted Magda on the shoulder, and said "Bravo" again.

After he had gone on, Rachel said, "You're going to be good at this. I saw how quickly you were picking it all up." Then she laughed and, with a slight edge to her voice, added, "You're already the teacher's pet." Magda blushed.

Lunch was the big meal of the day which was as well as everyone was ravenous. That first day Magda sat at the long table with Fritz and his American friend Jacob Robbins. The three of them ate a lot of the special Swiss dish called La Raclette. This was cheese which was toasted on an iron plate over the fire, then scraped off the plate onto a mound of small, boiled potatoes. Magda was so hungry, almost anything would have tasted good, but she was especially fond of cheese and delighted to find the Swiss were too. She particularly liked it when, another day, they had fondue, dunking chunks of crusty bread into a bowl of melted cheese mixed with white wine.

Magda did not find it hard learning to ski. She learned new things every day, the various kinds of turns, how to go fast downhill and, most importantly, how to slow down and stop. After a week, she was weaving her way through the fir trees down a slope, when she caught sight of Fritz and Jacob. She turned towards them. "That was a perfect stem Christie," said Fritz admiringly. "If you carry on doing as well as that, I might take you skiing off-piste with me."

"Don't think of it Magda," said Jacob. "He's a lunatic on skis. He'll have you buried up to your neck in snow within minutes!"

"And you're a slowcoach," retorted Fritz. "I'll have you both

know that instructor of ours has given me the O.K. to register for the Inferno."

Magda knew Jacob was not a good skier. Stories went the rounds about the fixes he got into, such as the time he lost a ski and watched it slide away from him down a hundred foot slope. He was nineteen but appeared older because he was plump. He had light brown hair that refused to lie flat. He was not a hit with the girls. The twins agreed he was 'nice but dull. However Fritz said Jacob was 'no fool'. But when he asked Magda what she thought of his American friend, she said, "Well he's a bit pudgy and looks owlish." Nevertheless, she often talked to him, because he spoke good German, having been studying for the past year in Berlin.

In Murren, Jacob decided Magda needed protecting from her hare-brained cousin. In the evening, when the meal was over, she usually stayed to chat with the others, listening to one of the Swiss boys who played the accordion. One night, however, she decided to get on with the book she was reading, so she made off. Jacob went looking for her. When he found her she was sitting in an inglenook by the log fire. She had the book in her hand but was not reading. She was looking into the flames, day dreaming, imagining how it would be to have a dizzying encounter with someone like the hero in the novel – bold, resolute, tall and slim with hair as black as the raven's wing. Then she looked up to see Jacob shuffling his feet in front of her.

"I wondered" he asked hesitatingly, "could you tell me about your life in Nuremberg. Fritz described how he came to be arrested and I was puzzled. When the police first took him, they beat him up. Then one of the senior officers protected him and eventually let him go. What I'm wondering is, who is the typical German these days, the men who rough-housed a boy of fifteen, or the man who stopped them?"

Magda was disconcerted. "I was hoping to forget about what goes in Nuremberg, as long as I'm here."

Jacob was persistent. “I saw something of what went on in Berlin,“ he told her. “And I did not like what I saw. Those Brownshirts marching about, waving flags, roaring out their ghastly songs. They were drunk as often as not. One night they smashed up a Jewish pawnbroker’s near where I was lodging. There were police nearby but they didn’t stop them. I don’t understand and probably never will, because in Berlin I’m just a spectator. I need to know what is really going on from you, because you know it from the inside.“

“Why do you need to know?“ asked Magda, “You can’t do anything about it.“

“Well, I’m Jewish too, you know. I want to tell the people back home what’s happening in Germany. My grandfather escaped from the pogroms in Russia in the last century, and, when he began a new life in the U.S.A., changed his name from Rubenstein to Robbins. The family have been living in New York ever since. I don’t think they have any idea about what Hitler is up to. They ought to know and so ought all America.“

He spoke so passionately that Magda let herself be persuaded. Thinking of what he had said about Fritz and the police, she remembered Herr Lill. She told Jacob how he had first of all helped to get her cousin out of gaol, yet later cut her father dead on the steps of the courthouse. “Rudolf Lill is typical,“ I think.“ To begin with he had nothing against Papa, with whom he had worked ever since he qualified. But week after week the Nazis insist that the Jews are a poison, responsible for every ill there is in the world and that there is no place for them in the New Germany. Herr Lill who never hears anything else but that about Jews has begun to believe the propaganda – perhaps not the sensational stuff about our going in for ritual murder – but the idea that having us around harms Germany. The lies have taken hold with him, all the more since the girl he decided to marry is a fanatical devotee of Hitler. Added to which, it is in his interest to go along with

the Nazis. Because of them he now owns the law firm that has been my family's for several generations."

"But that does not explain why he cut your father, whom you say he liked."

"He is also afraid. People who are friends with Jews are likely to find their names printed in our local newspaper. Other Germans write to the editor about them or report them to the Gestapo. Herr Lill is a cautious man who wants a quiet life."

"Don't we all? Sometimes though that comes at too high a price. Thank you for telling me all this Magda. I'm glad I asked you. You're a thoughtful girl. But I promise I won't spoil your holiday again. Let's change the subject. What's that book you've got there?"

It was *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which Jacob had also read. So they went on to talk about why they liked Dumas and particularly this novel of his with its brave hero, who falsely denounced as his country's enemy, escapes from a fortress and wreaks his revenge on those who wronged him.

Sitting there in a darkened room lit only by the flames of the log fire, Magda found it easy to talk to this serious young American. In fact she found it easier to talk to a comparative stranger about the Nazis than it was with the Feldheims, let alone her parents. *The twins are wrong. He's not dull,* she decided. Then she saw he was gazing at her intently. Flustered, she jumped up, and making an excuse, went with her book to read in the dormitory.

Although Jacob kept his promise, Magda was reminded again of the Nazis the next afternoon when she went to pick up *The Count of Monte Cristo*, lying on the dining table. She couldn't recall leaving it there. Then, she saw there was an embroidered book mark in it and realised it was not her copy. She looked at the fly leaf and saw the name 'Rachel Kettner'. At that moment Rachel came into the dining room. "I'm reading this as well," Magda said, handing the novel over. "I feel Edmond is me. What do you think?"

"This is the first book by Dumas I've read and I'm enjoying it. It describes life the way it ought to be with good triumphing over evil. As you say, it is easy to put yourself in Edmond's place. Though I can't see myself or anyone in real life making that extraordinary escape from prison."

"Well I suppose it doesn't happen like that. Yet, you never know – and wasn't that bit exciting! By the way, I didn't realise your last name was Kettner, until I saw it here. There was a Frau Kettner who used to teach us at the High School but she got sent away. I was so sorry. I loved her lessons."

"That was my Aunt Ella. She's my father's sister." Seeing Magda looked puzzled, Rachel added, "Only my mother is Jewish."

"What did she do after she left the school? I haven't seen her since."

"Didn't you know?" Rachel demanded fiercely. "They sent her to Dachau, together with my father and other Sosis. They let her out after a few months but Papa died there."

"Your father died? How awful! What happened?"

"The conditions in Dachau were bad and there wasn't much food. Also the guards went out of their way to make the prisoners lives a misery. I heard later that my father caught pneumonia after standing for hours in icy rain when there was a roll call. After that they just left him lying on a bunk in a draughty hut. There was a doctor in the camp and he came to inspect those who fell ill. Then, if he decided whoever it was needed treatment that cost a lot, he went away again. My father wasn't the only one who died." Rachel told this story in a low, measured voice, trying to keep a hold of herself. Nevertheless, the tears were rolling down her face as she spoke. "He was such a good man!" she whispered at last. Magda did not say anything but went and put her arms round Rachel and they sat there in silence by that same fire where Magda had talked with Jacob. Finally when Rachel was calm again, she said, "You were asking about Aunt Ella. When she came out of Dachau her hair

had gone white and she's lost a lot of weight. I don't suppose you would have recognized her, even if you had seen her in the street. She was not ill though. She's in Switzerland now."

"Good! She's safe there," said Magda. "What about you and your mother? Are you going to Switzerland too?"

"There or somewhere. We're trying to get visas and that's more difficult now."

Magda continued to see a lot of Jacob. He came with her to the lectures Pekka gave on how to survive in the snow if you got lost or had an accident. Magda listened carefully to everything the instructor said about the importance of keeping warm. How you should dig a narrow trench to shelter in until help came, and how this trench should be away from any piles of rock. Otherwise it might get buried in a snow drift. Having made notes Magda pictured herself in various dramatic situations, such as getting caught in an avalanche. "You look as if you are miles away," said Jacob, seeing her rapt expression.

"Only a few miles," she replied, shaking herself and coming to again. I was imagining digging a trench for someone who had sprained or broken an ankle – Fritz or you perhaps, then skiing off to get help."

"It's more likely to be me than Fritz who breaks an ankle and I would look up gratefully as I drank the brandy carried by the St. Bernard's dog you brought with you when you returned. However, I must say, I would prefer an alternative version of this tale, one in which I was the hero, rescuing a damsel in distress."

"Yes, that's what usually happens in the story books. As a girl I get a bit tired of reading about all those helpless females."

"How interesting! I've never looked at any of the stories from an adventurous girl's point of view. Come to think of it, I can imagine you'd prefer to be the one taking action. Who knows? You may have to one day."

Fritz spent every daylight hour practising for The Inferno, so it was Jacob who went with Magda and several other members

of the Jewish Youth Club up the Schilthorn one afternoon. As they rose higher and higher in the swaying, groaning cable car, Magda looked back down the precipitous ten-mile slope and realised that it was the scene for the forthcoming Inferno. She shivered. “Whoever thought of racing down there, of all places?“ she asked.

“The English, in 1928,“ said one of the boys. “It’s the sort of thing they do. Now it’s become popular. There’ll be hundreds taking part this year. It’s good fun, if you keep your nerve.“

They got out of the cable car onto a wide plateau. It was a wonderfully clear day. They could indeed see Mont Blanc on the French-Italian border and the Black Forest, as promised, as well the gleaming peaks of the Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau. Although the sun was shining, it was bitterly cold as they stood there, marvelling the scene. So they took out the flasks the chalet manager had given them and drank hot chocolate too Jacob also produced a packet of Graham Crackers and offered them round. “My mother sent them,“ he explained to Magda. “Every now and then she despatches food parcels. She’ll despair if ever I lose a few pounds and somehow she has the idea I wont get enough to eat abroad!“

“I don’t think I’ve never eaten so much in my life, as I have in Murren,“ exclaimed Magda.

“We all think that,“ responded Jacob. “There’s nothing like skiing five or more hours a day for working up an appetite.“

CHAPTER 13

Everyone staying at the chalet gathered on the Schilthorn again for The Inferno, which was held at the end of the holiday. The Jewish Youth Club was there to cheer on those members, including Fritz, who were taking part. Murrren was now overflowing with skiers from all over Europe and every bed was taken. There were more than eight hundred competitors in the race. Each of them was given a number. Fritz was six hundred and ten. As the skiers set off in batches of eight, at thirty second intervals, he would not be racing until later in the morning. Nevertheless in he went up in the cable car at 8.30 with Magda and the others because he wanted to judge how good his rivals were. The first batches of skiers were already in the starters' tent, tightening their boots, snapping on their skis. They were all the local mountain boys and it was widely expected that one of them would be the winner, completing the course in the fastest time, though Pekka and a few of the other instructors would probably run them close.

"What is the fastest time anyone has finished in?" asked Magda.

"Six minutes, fifty-six seconds, I believe," said Fritz, "but I'm not hoping to break the record. I shall be happy if I come in ahead of Helmut." Helmut was the best skier in the Hitler Youth contingent at the chalet.

One or two inn keepers from Murren had set up stalls at the top of the Schilthorn, selling spirits and hot drinks of all kinds, as well as sausages. Fritz joined his friends drinking coffee. He decided against the tots of brandy on sale, which were supposed to keep out the cold. "I shall be warm soon enough,"

he said, giving his well wishers a strained smile, his knuckles white as he clenched the coffee mug. There was a leather bottle of vodka hanging up in the starters tent and a few of the mountain boys took a swig from that. Although they had all been skiing since the time they could walk, they were still tense as they gazed at the void into which they must soon plunge. Then, to a loud accompanying cheer, they were off. There was a hiss of wax as they pointed their skis, putting on speed on the first flat path. Within a minute they were multi-coloured specks, as they disappeared down the bright mountain.

Magda had brought her camera to Murren and took a photo of those first skiers as they lined up at the starting post. Jacob, who was watching her, came up and said "I'm going to write something about the race and see if I can get it in print. Do you think you could take a few pictures to go with my article? Then I would send it to Life magazine. The people there are more likely to take it if it's illustrated."

"I'd love to try," said Magda. "But don't build your hopes up too much. I can't take anyone actually skiing. The photograph would come out blurred if I tried."

"Don't worry about that. There are plenty of interesting things here for still shots. Fritz says you're a very good photographer."

As Magda took snaps of the starters' tent and the scene around, she asked Jacob, 'Do you often write things?"

"Yes, but so far I've only had a few items printed as a freelance. When I go back to New York I'm going to try and get a job on a newspaper. Most of all I'd like to become a foreign correspondent. That's the main reason I decided to stay in Berlin and learn German."

After Magda had taken a few obvious pictures of the young skiers, Jacob asked her to take one of an older man with a deeply tanned face that was criss-crossed with tiny lines. He looked very fit as he stooped down to tie the laces on his boots. "He's Arnold Lunn, who had founded the Kandahar Ski Club

to promote alpine skiing in 1924," Jacob told her. When she went over to ask permission take Lunn's photograph, she saw how old he looked close to. He smiled as she made her request and replied in heavily accented German.

"By all means my dear. But why don't you wait till I am at the starting post?"

"You're racing then!" Magda said, trying not to look surprised.

"But of course." The organizers told her afterwards that Sir Arnold was eighty seven.

By mid morning it was Fritz's turn to set off. It had begun to snow, though not heavily. A wind blew flurries of snowflakes over the Schilthorn and the starting post. Fritz was wearing a red jacket and cap that clashed badly with his hair. This meant that Magda could keep him sight until he and the other seven skiers in his group all disappeared over the brow of a hill. Helmut was among them.

"Will Fritz be all right do you think?" Magda asked Jacob. "They were all going so fast."

"There is plenty of snow so there's no danger of anyone hitting barely concealed lumps of rock and the fact it's snowing again means no one can go at a really break neck speed. Don't worry. Fritz is a good skier and although he takes risks, they're calculated risks."

"What do mean? What kind of risks?"

"He does things I wouldn't care to do, even if I was up to entering for this race – which I'm not. For instance, if you make turns going downhill, it is easier to keep control but turns slow you down. So Fritz doesn't take them. He's daring. Whether he's foolhardy or not depends on how daring Helmut is. Today is Fritz's chance to show the Hitler Youth what a Jew is capable of."

"Do you think I could try the brandy?" asked Magda.

"Why not? It won't make you drunk in this temperature. Come, let us both drink to Fritz's success."

After the brandy that flamed through Magda's veins, she, Jacob and the rest of the folk from the chalet took the cable car again and then made their way to the finishing line.

It was a great scene in Lauterbrunnen, with all the skiers who had completed the race, laughing, drinking and waving tankards of beer as they toasted one another. The judges had already announced who had won the Inferno that year. As expected, he was one of the Swiss boys, whose friends were carrying him round on their shoulders, as Magda and the group from the chalet arrived. Pekka was the runner up and was toasted by his students. No record had been broken this year; the winner had finished the course in seven minutes, fifty two seconds. Everyone agreed that was pretty fast, considering how deep and soft the snow was.

Fritz was standing next to Rachel, drinking from a flask, while she lit two cigrettes and, taking one of them out of her mouth, handed it to him. He smiled his thanks. Then, catching sight of his friends, loped over towards them, still full of energy. "Congratulations!" said Jacob. "You didn't break any bones then."

"Certainly not! What's more, my time was announced as nine minutes, fifty seconds, which means I came in 137th out of 840. That's is not too bad I suppose."

"It's more than 'not too bad' – more than a mile a minute! That's marvellous!" said Magda.

"And Helmut? Dare we ask?" queried Jacob.

"That was the most exciting thing that's happened to me for ages. Towards the end, we were both in front and were racing each other. By luck, as much as anything, I just managed to edge in front in the last few metres. But, do you know? When the results were announced, Helmut came over the shook my hand. I was flabbergasted."

Magda looked over to where the shock haired Helmut was standing with his friends. "I don't know that I'm so surprised. He's the boy I told you about who held the door open for me

at breakfast one morning. Perhaps he only joined the Hitler Youth because they're all expected to nowadays. He might be quite decent really."

"Yes, but how long will be stay decent, if he conforms like that?" said Jacob. "They'll be expecting him to join the SS in a year or so, and then what?"

On the last day of the holiday, there was a festival in Murren. Magda and the others went out to watch the townsfolk in fancy dress parading in the street, accompanied by a chorus of cow bells. That night, they had a party in the chalet before they all went their different ways next day. It began with a special feast, in which Magda's favourite fondue was on the menu and a delicious chocolate cake filled with cream and cherries, soaked in kirsch. Afterwards, when the empty dishes had been cleared away, everyone gathered round the fire and listened to the boy who could play the accordion and one of the locals who been invited to the party because he had the reputation of being the best yodeller for miles around. When he had finished, Magda looked at the piano and, turning to Fritz, said, "Why don't you play some of the things you know?"

"That's given me an idea," he replied. "We could have a dance. I'll play for that."

So they pushed back the furniture and Fritz sat down to play a foxtrot, while a couple of the boys went out and came back with beer, bottles of brandy and some wine, to help the party along.

Magda sat on one of the chairs lined up against the wall. She had never been to a dance before though she knew how to do the slow waltz, quick step and foxtrot because, in the days when she used to go with Trude to the Bremmer Sports Club, they had joined a modern dancing class there. That class only lasted for half of one winter because someone complained that modern dances were decadent and unsuitable in the new Germany. After that Mr. Bremmer decided they must do folk dancing instead.

Now she watched as the couples whirled, or jerked round the floor. The twins Lisbet and Hannah took turns dancing with the winner of the Inferno. *What will happen if they both fall in love with the same boy?* she wondered. Rachel, in a light blue dress passed by with Pekka. Magda thought how she looked like the Madonna in the Raphael picture that used to hang in the hall at school, Magda thought. Shortly afterwards Rachel went by again. This time Magda was startled to see her partner was Helmut, who appeared very taken with her.

No one had asked Magda to dance, partly because she had chosen to sit in a poorly lit corner and was half hidden by a tall grandfather clock which an English skier had given to the chalet. After a while, she decided to go to bed. She wasn't sure she wanted to dance, but it was embarrassing being a wallflower. She was just slipping out of the door when she bumped into Fritz, who was taking a break while the accordion player took over playing for the dancers. "You mustn't go yet," he said grabbing her arm. Jacob has just got back from Wengen. He has gone upstairs and will be down in a minute. He's looking forward to a dance with you."

"There are plenty of other girls back there he can ask. Anyway, why aren't you dancing? Rachel's there."

"Helmut's beaten me to it. You know what they say, "Lucky in cards, unlucky in love.'" Perhaps that law works for ski races too. Never mind me though. You mustn't go without giving Jacob a dance." Magda looked puzzled.

"Haven't you realised?" Fritz went on wonderingly. "Jacob has fallen for you." Magda stood stock still. "What? O dear!" she wailed.

"Don't worry! He won't say anything. I've told him you're not even fifteen yet. All he hopes for is that you won't forget him and that he'll see you again. By the way, he says you are going to be beautiful in a few years time."

Hardly able to believe her ears, Magda stared at her reflection in the dark window pane opposite. Seeing her mouth was

still too large and hair too curly, she shook her head. “He’s mad,“ she declared.

“Well, I wouldn’t say you’ll ever be a beauty,“ agreed Fritz, “but then I’m not smitten. I’ve known you since you were a squalling infant.“

At that moment Jacob came running down the stairs, waving some photographs. He had been to Wengen to get Magda’s Schilthorn film developed. She was relieved to see he gave no sign of being lovesick. “All the pictures you took came out,“ he said. “They’re fine. I have chosen these six, including the one of Arnold Lunn. Do you mind? As he is a phenomenon he’ll make the people at Life sit up and take notice.“

“Go ahead! You can have any of them. I’m flattered.“ Fritz had been called back to the piano leaving the two of standing alone at the bottom of the stairs. Magda, anxious to avoid Jacob asking her to dance, wanted to go away and think about what Fritz had said. She could not help glowing at the idea a young man admired her, but she could never love Jacob. He was not a bit like the young Captain Dantes, or D’Artagan. If she ever she met anyone like them, it would be different.

Just as she was thinking, “Jacob probably can’t dance either,“ he asked her. “Fritz is playing a quickstep. Do you know it?“

“I have learned it but have never danced it at a party or anything.“

“Now’s the time to try then.“

With that Jacob took her arm and led her back onto the dance floor. To her surprise, Magda discovered he was light on his feet and did not tread on hers. She took courage and asked, “Can you do the egg whisk chasse?“

“Good heavens! No! What’s that?“

“It’s a step I was taught when learning the quickstep. It looks great but isn’t really difficult. I’ll show you,“ and she did.

Jacob watched carefully, tried it and, after a couple of attempts, had mastered it.

"You really are the most surprising girl," he said as the music came to a stop.

"And you're a much better dancer than skier," she replied, not very tactfully.

Magda had several more partners after Jacob, including Pekka who asked her for a slow waltz. After she congratulated him on The Inferno, he said, "If you keep on skiing, you'll be able to take part in the race yourself." She was enjoying herself until one sweaty youth belched and breathed beer fumes in her face during a foxtrot. Looking round, she realised half the boys in the room were drunk and that many of the dancers had gone, including the twins and Rachel, also Pekka. Passing Fritz, who was still playing the piano, she pulled a face and he mouthed something. So, as soon as her tipsy partner let go of her, she escaped to bed.

As she went out of the room, she passed Helmut standing alone at the makeshift bar, looking disconsolate. When she reached the dormitory, she found the twins there. "Where's Rachel?" she asked.

"I've no idea," Lisbet answered. "When we last saw her, she was with Pekka." It was just beginning to get light when Magda was woken up by Rachel opening the door and tiptoeing into the room. Before going into breakfast Magda and the rest of the Jewish Youth Club piled their haversacks by the front door. They were leaving in an hour. Magda was late because she had left her packing till the last moment. Jacob was waiting for her.

"May I have your address in Nuremberg?" he asked. "I can send you that Schilthorn article, if it gets printed. Here's my Berlin one. I hope you'll write to me sometimes and say how you're getting on."

"I'll do that. I like writing letters." Magda gave him her address. "Are you planning to write anything else soon?"

"Well, since you ask, I intend to write about what the Nazis are doing in Germany. And because, after what you told me about

Nuremberg, I'm worried about what's happening to Jews there, I want to give you the address of my mother. She's been living in New York alone since my father died. I wrote to her about your family. I'd like you to see the letter she's written back. You must promise me that you'll ask her for help if either of you or any member of your family need it. You can be sure we'll both do whatever we can."

They had both finished eating and were now alone in the dining room. Jacob gave her a small white card and his mother's letter. When she finished reading it, she jumped up and, her face shining and grasped both his hands. "How kind you are!" she cried. Jacob freed his hands. Then he put his arms round her and kissed her.

CHAPTER 14

A month or so after Magda's fifteenth birthday she came down to breakfast to find her father reading a letter. Lisel was looking anxiously at the empty envelope lying by her husband's plate which Magda saw had the Nazi emblem and a line of Gothic print across the top. Anton was frowning as he read. Then he screwed the letter up and threw it across the dining room, narrowly missing Florrie as she came in with a pot of coffee. Magda and her mother waited for him to speak.

"Well that's it, then," he said when he saw their expectant faces. "They've decided to "cleanse German schools of Jews" as they put it."

"Does that mean Traudel and I can no longer go to the High School?" put in Magda.

"Precisely!" said her father.

Magda was not sure how she felt about this. It had been an ordeal going to school for a long time now and very hard to stay interested in class when, no matter what she did, she was never praised, only reprimanded if her work did not merit the comment 'adequate'. On the other hand, not to be allowed to go to the school at all made her feel more of a pariah than ever.

"You can go to the Jewish school in Fürth," said Lisel. "That won't be so bad will it? I should think you'll have more friends there. There'll be a lot of new girls too."

"I suppose so," replied Magda, trying to smile. After breakfast she went to the Feldheims to see if they had the same letter. They had.

"I won't be going to Fürth," said Traudel, when asked what

she thought about the school there.

"What are you going to do then?" Magda could help being disappointed.

"Well for ages I've wanted to go to one of those farms run by Zionists to train young people for life in Palestine. Now I can. I'll learn things like soil culture and chicken farming that'll be useful when I join Max and Alex on the Kibbutz."

"Where is the farm?" asked Magda, hoping it was near enough for Traudel to be in Nuremberg sometimes.

"It's on the river Spree, near Fürstenwalde. It's called the Neuendorf Farm and is said to be very good."

"But that's in North Germany – miles and miles away. Won't you be homesick?"

"No, I don't think so. Anyway, I probably won't be there long. Papa has been promised our visas for Palestine."

After leaving the Feldheims, Magda cycled over to Fritz's house. He had already left school and had not found anything else to do yet. Before Hitler came to power he would have gone on to college, but there was no chance that any university would accept him now. As Magda got off her bike and went up the steps of the Vogels' house, she hoped Fritz would not say he was going off to the other side of Germany. She did not think he would because she knew he felt he ought to stay with his father and Granny.

"Come on in," he said, as soon as he saw her. I've news for you. I've got a job."

"Where?" Magda asked apprehensively.

"Here. Leopold Kahn has offered to take me on at the stove factory."

"That's good," Magda said, much relieved.

"Well, it's better than doing nothing. But I can't say stoves inspire me. I'm to be a junior clerk. I bet the work's dead boring. Still it's good of Leopold to offer me anything. I was beginning to think I'd end up a street sweeper."

"Now you may end up a business tycoon, a magnate." They

laughed, neither of them believing this.

"Have you heard from your beau lately?" Fritz asked suddenly.

"I don't have a beau."

"Yes, you have. Jacob."

"Jacob is just a friend – a very good one. The last time he wrote, he told me he has a job as what he calls a cub reporter on a newspaper in Newark. That means he gets sent out to cover weddings most the time. Still he says it's a start."

"And you never know, something dramatic might happen at one of the weddings, like in that novel you're so fond of, Jane Eyre, where a man stands up and won't let the marriage go ahead. Then Jacob could make a name for himself writing it all up. Did he get anyone to take that article on the Nazis he was doing?"

"He says he's still trying. He has also got to know a group of writers who have been driven out of here by Hitler. They go around, addressing meetings to tell Americans how dangerous 'our Führer' is. He's thought of speaking himself and as he can't be here watching the Nazis, he's asked me to tell him as much as possible about what's going on. So I send him a sort of diary letter every week, with photos if I've taken any interesting ones. I quite enjoy doing that. It's a lot better than writing essays for Herr Wessel. Which reminds me, I came to tell you I won't be seeing Herr Wessel any more. Papa got a letter this morning."

"Yes, I know about that. Your mother was here earlier and told Granny. I gather you're going to the school in Fuerth. Do you mind very much?"

"I won't know until I'm there. I do mind though about the way the Nazis are shutting us out of everything."

When Magda got home she looked for Mutti but she was lying down with a migraine. Lisel had these more often nowadays, as well as fits of depression, when she shut herself away in the music room, until she had played herself out of them.

By the weekend she was up and about again and came to chat with Magda who was in the greenhouse. There were not many flowers there any more. The orchids Hans had cultivated were dead, as were other plants from the tropics, because the greenhouse was not heated any longer. The special carnations still thrived however and Magda was watering them when she heard the door open. She looked up and was relieved to see Mutti was well. They talked about the flowers for a bit and then Magda asked the question she had been longing to ask. “Is Papa still determined to stay here?“

“Yes,“ came the answer. “You see he thinks he can do good, helping the Jews who are left, many of whom have not got the money to pay for tickets to travel abroad, even if they could get visas.“

“Well, we won’t have any money left soon. Nor will we find any country to let us have a visa.“

“I know that. Sometimes I’m very frightened of what’ll happen next. The Nazis know the Jews are powerless and this makes them think they can do anything.“

“Doesn’t Papa see that?“

“No. He shuts everything but his work out of his mind. I think it might help you understand him if you saw for yourself what that work is. If you like, I’ll ask Heinz to take you to the Courthouse next time your father is defending one of his clients.“

A few days later Magda went with her uncle to the Courthouse. They went to hear a case in which a Jewish grocer claimed the suppliers had cheated him over the goods he had ordered and paid for. The suppliers, who were Aryan, thought they would get away with robbing a Jew but Anton Senger had investigated the case thoroughly and found evidence that his client’s accusation was well founded. Magda took her place in the court room with Heinz on one of the long benches for visitors that were like church pews. Waiting for the case to begin, she looked round. Even though it was daytime the room was

lit by several huge, crystal chandeliers. It was still dark however because of the panelled walls, blackened with age, and the heavy wooden benches and tables. She noticed also that none of the other lawyers spoke to her father, although she was sure some of them had known him for years.

Finally the grocer's case came on and her father rose to his feet. Being well over six foot, he was taller than anyone else around him. As he opened the case for the defence, a single shaft of sunlight from one of the tall, narrow windows opposite fell directly on him, acting as a spotlight. "With that fringe of curls round his bald head, he looks like Cicero," Heinz whispered. Magda was not sure who Cicero was, but she got the idea. She had never heard her father speak in public before. She was frankly surprised to find he was so eloquent. He spoke in a calm, confident voice that resonated in the vast chamber. He was much cooler than he was at home, where Magda often felt she had to be careful not to irritate him. He made no attempt to appeal of the emotions of his listeners, but stuck to the facts, which he outlined clearly and coherently.

He won his case. Magda saw the grocer come up to him afterwards and embraced him. "As I think you have seen," said Heinz, your father is a first rate advocate. He has a comprehensive grasp of the legal system and uses that knowledge to win in our changed circumstances."

"I felt really proud of him," said Magda, "and the grocer is so grateful."

"Yes, you can see why Anton believes he's still doing some good here. He does, – and will continue to do so, as long as the judges, like the one today, still believe in the rule of law." The two of them left the courthouse, with Magda understanding her father better than she had done, while at the same time she was nagged by fear. She knew her uncle thought judges would, sooner or later, give up following the rule of law.

Magda was sitting in Herr Rosenthal's history lesson in her new school. "This Jewish physicist has changed the way we

look at the universe," he said, holding up a picture of Albert Einstein. Herr Rosenthal had been called back out of retirement to teach History and had decided to make this a history of the Jews. He had tousled, white hair and wore a baggy suit which he must have had for years. *He looks a bit like the man in that photograph – without the moustache,* Magda thought.

In his first lesson Herr Rosenthal told the class, "We belong to an ancient race. Our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who lived thousands of years ago, lie buried still in the cave of Machpelah, near Hebron in what was our homeland.

After that the history teacher spent the next few weeks telling the girls about old battles the Jews had with their enemies and how the Romans had driven them out of Jerusalem. He then went on to speak of the trials and tribulations of Jews in the various countries they lived in after that time. "What the Nazis are doing to us now is the latest instalment in a serial story," he told them. Once, he brought in a novel called *The Trial* by Kafka. "Listen to this," he said and read the opening sentence: 'Someone must have slandered Joseph K because one morning, without his having done anything wrong, he was arrested.' That was written in 1925, eight years before the Nazis came to power here. Kafka was a prophet." The sentence stuck in Magda's mind. She read the book in which the helpless Joseph K is defeated by a malign state. Then she decided, that Mutti felt about life like Kafka, but she want to be like Papa, even if they were wrong.

Herr Rosenthal's lessons stopped being defeatist when he described the celebrated Jewish composers and artists who had delighted and consoled men Magda particularly enjoyed the day when he brought his Mendelssohn records to school. Uncle Heinz had already played her the *Overture to a Midsummer Night's Dream* but this was the first time she heard the *Violin Concerto*. Their teacher also showed the class pictures by his favourite Jewish artists, including Max Liebermann, who was born in Berlin, but who according to Herr Rosenthal

was called the ‘father of French Impressionism’. Magda was particularly struck by Liebermann’s charcoal sketch of a man engrossed in a book, because it reminded of the portrait of her grandfather in the hall at home. Next Herr Rosenthal brought in reproductions of paintings by Pissarro, Modigliani and Chagall and explained what they were trying to do. Magda liked Pissarro’s landscapes, which although they were French, reminded her of the countryside and people she knew from being at Franz Werfel’s farm.

“Great artists like these challenge us,“ he said. “They rub the dull film of familiarity off things and make us look at them afresh.“

Although Magda did not always fully understand everything Herr Rosenthal said, she thought his lessons were the best thing about her new school in Fuerth, which was overcrowded with all the new girls who had arrived there when she did. There were not enough rooms or desks. Her classroom used to be the gymnasium and three girls sat in the double desks there. She shared hers with the twins Lisbet and Hannah, whom she had got to know quite well after the holiday in Murren. She was fascinated by the way they seemed to know what was happening to each other, even when they were apart. “When Lisbet fell off her bike once,“ Hannah had said, “I knew immediately she’d hurt herself. I had a dreadful pain in my ankle. Then I discovered she’d sprained hers.“

The twins had been in Fuerth since being made to leave the High School with other Jewish girls whose fathers had not fought in WW1. Before starting there, Magda had asked, “Do you think I shall get on all right?“

“I should think so,“ answered Lisbet, “after being at the High School.“

Lisbet was right. In fact Magda found most of the work easy. She had done much of the Maths already, so that subject was no longer a worry. The girls at the school came from every kind of Jewish family, rich and poor. As some of the newcom-

ers had been less well taught than others, the Fürth teachers tended to go at the pace of the slowest girls. Magda found many of the lessons dragged. At the same time, she realised that she was not as dim witted as she used to suppose.

When Fritz asked her how she was getting on, she said, “I feel at home in this school. At the other place, even when I wasn’t worrying about Eva and Irma, I hated the way the League of German girls, all wearing their uniforms, stuck together, pretending Traudel and I weren’t there. At Fuerth we’re not forever afraid of doing or saying the wrong thing. We can be ourselves. We’re in the same boat.“

Fritz looked at her carefully while she was speaking. Then, raising his eyebrows, said, “Yes, it’s a ghetto. The Nazis want to put us all in one.“

As well as teaching the usual academic subjects, Magda’s new teachers told the girls they should get some practical skills, so that they could earn their own living if and when they emigrated. It was taken for granted that many Jews would be leaving Germany before long, provided they could find the money. Although, Magda could not see her family emigrating, she decided it was not a bad idea to learn something useful, just in case. Her teachers suggested cooking or sewing. Sewing did not appeal to her. Cooking seemed a better idea because, although her mother usually did this nowadays, there were those days when she was ill and could not. So Magda searched for and found a recipe book in the kitchen.

First she made marzipan for her father. It turned out to be surprisingly easy and, encouraged by this success, she became more ambitious. Next, she made schnitzel for supper, when her mother had a migraine. It was a bit soggy, and although her gourmet father ate it, he said at the end of the meal. “If you’re planning to be a modern, independent young lady, I think you’ll do better as a photographer than as a cook – that’s only a suggestion mind,“ and lying manfully, he added, when he saw her crestfallen face, “The schnitzel was fine. Keep up the

cooking too.“

Magda took the hint. For years Paul Gutman had made most of his income by taking portrait pictures of the townsfolk and their families. So the next time Magda went to see him, she asked if it was something she could learn to do. “Why not?“ he said. “As long as you realise it is bread and butter work and are prepared to make a few compromises.“

“In what way?“

“Well most people like to have a flattering picture of themselves. So you adjust the lighting and maybe remove any blemishes the subjects have when you develop the photographs. If I take a portrait of you that’ll show you what I’m getting at.“ Magda was surprised when, few days later, he showed her the result. All she saw of her hair was a few curls that framed a pale face, where Paul, by an artful use of light and shadow, had put all the emphasis on her best feature, her eyes. “There you see,“ he said, “that’s a picture of an interesting face.“

“You’ve certainly made me appear better than usual,“ she said, studying the photo carefully, to see how he got his effects. “It’s clever but not even you can make me pretty.“

At this he laughed. “I wasn’t even trying,“ he replied. “Surely you don’t want to look like a girl on a chocolate box!“

One day in Spring Magda arrived home, her face whiter than ever and tense. “Where’s Papa?“ she demanded, grabbing her mother who had just come downstairs. “Is he at home? Is he alone? I must speak to him.“

“Yes, I heard his client leave a few minutes ago,“ said Lisel. “You’re upset. What’s happened?“

“I’ll tell you soon,“ shouted Magda as she ran down the hall. Without knocking as she was supposed to do, she burst into the room Papa used as his office, followed by a frightened Mutti. Anton was sitting at his desk, going through some papers. Before he could speak, Magda said, “The Gestapo have arrested Herr Rosenthal.“ By now she had started to cry. Can you help? Please say you can.“

Her father took off the horn-rimmed glasses he wore for reading and laying them carefully on the desk, asked, “What’s the charge?“

“They call it ‘racial defilement‘. The girls at school say he’s been in love for years with a German woman and now someone has denounced him.“

“They’re not married, I take it.“

“No, they wanted to be but she already has a husband who refuses to divorce her.“

“Oh dear! That doesn’t look good.“

She and Herr Rosenthal fell in love and lived together. Then, when the Nuremberg Laws were passed, she pretended to leave him. He couldn’t bear to give her up though. He’s been arrested because someone saw him leaving her flat late at night.“

Magda’s father listened carefully to Magda’s story. When she had finished, he sat thinking in silence. Then he said, “You want me to defend Herr Rosenthal don’t you? But I have to warn you, his case sounds hopeless. I can hear now the prosecution arguing that this German woman has been enticed away from her lawful husband by a wicked, old Jew. The lawyer will probably quote Streicher on the subject. Not that he’ll need any help from our Gauleiter. As the law stands now, all love affairs between Jews and non-Jews are forbidden.

“But,“ Magda protested, “won’t it help that the couple fell in love before the Nuremberg Laws were passed. Also Herr Rosenthal did not entice the woman away from her husband. The girls at school say that everyone in Fürth knows her marriage had broken up before she met our teacher.“ On hearing this, her father smiled sadly.

Magda pressed on. “You won a case like this before, when you got that Jewish banker acquitted who was accused to trying to rape one of his maids?“

“I was lucky there. It turned out that the girl was an habitual liar who had earlier accused a member of the SS of raping her.

If the court had believed her story about the financier, people might have believed she was telling the truth about a German officer as well, and that would never have done."

"Does that mean you won't try again?" Magda pleaded.

Mutti, who had stood without speaking ever since she came into the room, now said, "Please Magda! You can't tell your father how to do his job!" Whereupon her husband looked at them both, each worrying about different things, before he had the final word,

"Ask your history teacher to come and I see me. I want to talk to him before I decide."

After talking to Herr Rosenberg, Anton said he would defend him, not because he had much hope of winning but, because he liked the history teacher and, even more, because he believed the unhappiness caused to ordinary, harmless people by the Nuremberg Laws needed an airing. When the case came on in court, his forebodings proved justified. The German woman, Juliet Ritter, was standing trial with her lover for the same offence. Yet, from the start the prosecution lawyer laid most of the blame on Herr Rosenthal who, he said, was more than twice the age of Frau Ritter. "He exploited and corrupted a vulnerable slip of a girl," he told the court.

Magda, who was sitting on a bench at the back of the room, studied Frau Ritter who looked utterly wretched. She was blonde and had a girlish figure but nevertheless looked a good bit older than Mutti. *How could anyone who knew our history teacher believe he was corrupt?* However, most of the other spectators at the trial, looking at the crumpled, elderly prisoner had no difficulty believing it. A woman, who was sitting in front of Magda, muttered to her neighbour, "She may be Juliet, but he's no Romeo."

"No, he's a dirty old man," the other woman declared.

Worse was to come when the woman's husband took the witness stand. He swore that Rosenthal seduced his wife while she was still living with him.

At last the moment came that Magda had been waiting for. Her father rose to his feet. She heard him speak as coherently and clearly as ever for his client. Her hopes rose when he produced evidence to show that the history teacher was living in Berlin until after his lover left her husband. However, this evidence was discounted, as was the fact the pair had lived together before the Nuremberg Laws made such liaisons criminal. Herr Rosenthal and Frau Ritter were found guilty of racial defilement. Their punishment was to parade through the streets of Fürth wearing placards. Hers read 'I am a Jew's whore' and his 'I am a filthy Jew who seduces German Women'. In addition, Herr Rosenthal was sentenced to twelve months in prison. As Magda left the courthouse, she remembered Joseph K who 'must have been slandered, because one morning, without his having done anything wrong, he was arrested'.

CHAPTER 15

Fritz was cycling furiously through the town on a grey morning. It looked as if it was about to rain. He was several streets away from Kahn & Sohn when he heard the works siren. This meant it was 7 a.m. and he was late again. To arrive at work on time he ought to get out of bed at six but usually overslept because he stayed up until after midnight playing canasta or jazz records with friends or, if he was alone and had an idea for a new song, he forgot about the time altogether. This morning however he had managed to get up at six, but when he went downstairs he found he was alone in a kitchen where there were dead cinders in the stove and no breakfast.

These days his grandmother, who seemed to be getting better, insisted on him eating a good breakfast and, to make sure he did, got up to prepare it. Although Joanna had never liked cooking, she did not have to do more than make coffee for this first meal of the day. She merely put bread, ham and cheese on the table and stood over her grandson while he ate. "You're outgrowing your strength," she said, looking at Fritz who at seventeen was six feet tall. "Eat up, you're much too thin."

To which he replied, "If I may say so Granny, you're are no one to talk. If you get much thinner you'll become invisible."

Today Fritz had been late setting off because he had gone upstairs to see what had happened to Joanna and found her still asleep. He said, "Good morning" softly but was unable to rouse her. He went to tell his father who, as he did not have any pupils before ten o'clock, did not get up with the others. Heinz woke up when he heard his bedroom door open and, as soon as Fritz spoke, went back with him to his mother's.

Joanna had woken up and, seeing their surprised faces, said, “I slept badly last night.“

“Are you all right?“ asked Heinz.

“Yes. Just a little tired that’s all. I won’t get up yet. Have you had any breakfast Fritz? If not, go and have it right away. You find the bread and ham in the larder.“ Fritz gave his Granny a kiss and said he would eat something.

But he did not because the kitchen clock told him it was already after 6.30. When he heard Kahn & Sohn’s siren wailing above the roof tops, he was still thinking about his grandmother who, although she could now use her right hand again, was very weak. He wondered what would happen were she to the flu, or even a bad cold.

I was raining heavily when Fritz rode through the big gateway of the stove factory into the courtyard. The rain brought down with it the acrid smoke from the two chimney stacks and he could taste it. Everyone had already begun work and the yard was deserted. He threw his bike down where some more were lined up neatly in the cycle stand and slipped into the outer office. Because it was so dark outside, all the lights were on. Feeling conspicuous, he took his place at a long table near the receptionist’s desk. The office, unlike the rest of the works was new. Leopold Kahn had decided to have it built as soon as his business expanded after the depression of the 1920s ended. “I want everyone here to work with the latest equipment,“ he said, ordering new telephones, typewriters and calculating machines to be installed. “What is more,“ he added, “it’s important that our customers feel we’re a go-ahead and prosperous concern when they come to us.“

As usual Fritz’s spirits sank as he entered the office. The lights might be shining brightly but the atmosphere was oppressive. A few of the clerks looked up when he came in but did not speak, except for the receptionist who mouthed “Good morning“ and smiled briefly. The receptionist was Rachel who, being a year older than Magda, had already left the school in

Fürth by the time Fritz's cousin started there. Rachel and her mother were still waiting for their visas to Switzerland and she was happy enough working at Kahn's in the meantime. Fritz was relieved that Frau Meissen the bookkeeper was not in the room as she would certainly have said something about him being late.

One of Fritz's jobs was to open the post each day. He looked at the pile of envelopes all sizes in front of him and began. He had to put the date each letter arrived at the top of it, together with the time day to the nearest fifteen minutes. There were two stamps for this. One was for the date. The other had a clock face on it, together with moveable rubber hands. Anxious to make up for lost time, he cursed the fiddly task of having to move the minute hand along. "I see you have set the hour hand at eleven. It's not yet eight." The speaker was the bookkeeper who had just picked up one of the opened letters.

Her harsh voice grated on Fritz who muttered "Sorry!" as he put the hour hand back to seven. She watched him do so and handed him the already opened letters to correct. Then adding sarcastically, "You seem to have little sense of time, young man," she went back to her desk.

Fritz knew the bookkeeper enjoyed catching him out. As he made quite a few mistakes, she often got the chance to do so. Because the work he had to do was so routine, he was careless, if not with the post, then with the filing. The previous week the whole office had been in an uproar because no one could find an important order from a Herr Moser, who came in to complain about it not being dealt with. Fritz had put it away under the letter 'L'. The bookkeeper never said anything about Fritz being a Jew but he knew this was why she had it in for him. She was a committed Nazi and an ardent admirer of Hitler. In her free time she went to meetings held for children after school, telling them about the Führer's achievements, as well as what he planned to do next.

Nearly all the employees at Kahns were Aryan. Fritz and

Rachel were the only Jews in the office. The junior clerks, unlike the bookkeeper, did not go out of their way to be unpleasant to Fritz, neither were they friendly. They did not speak to him unless they had to and, if he came upon them chatting and joking during the lunch break, they fell silent. Fritz decided it was like being back at school.

That was one of the reasons he was glad when he was sent out of the office on errands to the Post Office, or to walk round the town delivering the monthly envelopes to the firm's pensioners. He asked one of them once whether it had been good working in a Jewish firm. "I never thought anything about the Kahns being Jewish," the old man replied. "Old Herr Kahn, and his son after him, always treated everyone fairly. When times were bad, we had a cut in wages but no one was sacked. Some of us still meet on the first Tuesday of every month to have a drink and talk about old times."

Fritz also enjoyed it when he had go down into the factory. The workers he met there were skilled craftsmen who had been with the firm for years, sometimes decades. As far as he could tell, they took no interest in politics and took very little notice of anything the Nazis said or did. The one exception was the middle aged storekeeper Norbert Hesse. Fritz first guessed that Norbert disliked the Nazis after coming upon him one day when the Hitler Youth were marching down the road past the factory. This was a familiar sight as there were marches of one kind or another every two weeks or so. The storekeeper was about to go in through the works gate when Frau Meissen, cheerful for once, caught him by the arm saying, "Aren't you going to stay and see your son go by Norbert?"

"No. Why should I?" he replied, pulling himself free. "I see enough of him every day."

The bookkeeper frowned as she called after his retreating figure, "I hope you realise your boy is just what this country needs."

Fritz discovered that Norbert Hesse had been a soldier,

conscripted to fight the French and English in 1914 who, by the time he was demobbed in 1918, had come to loathe war. He also loathed Hitler. “The man’s a maniac. He’s hell bent on sacrificing Germans in another bloodbath.“

It was midday and the two of them were alone in the store-room. Norbert went on, “I can’t understand why people don’t see it. They’re sleep walking into disaster if, like that bookkeeper of ours, they not besotted. Whenever we have those marches past the gates, she and the other women crowding the pavements cheer themselves hoarse. They look crazed. Fritz who remembered Norbert’s boy was among the marchers, could not resist asking, “And your son? What does he think?“

Norbert looked bitter. “The Nazis have got at him. He’s mad about war. He can hardly wait. I’ve given up on him. I used to try but got nowhere. At first he sulked. Then he started saying I was talking treason. It’s like having a spy in the house.“ The storekeeper was the only friend Fritz made at the stove factory.

Rachel had stopped going to the Jewish Youth Club, so when Fritz was pleased when he found her at Kahns and hoped to get to know her again. However she avoided him although she chatted happily to the other clerks. One of them, a tow-headed youth named Rudy, was always finding excuses to talk to her, much to the irritation of Frau Meissen. Whenever she saw him hovering near Rachel’s desk, she chased him away, saying, “Let our hard-working receptionist get on in peace. Whereupon she would scowl at him, while giving her a saccharine smile.

Fritz knew that during the week Rachel stayed with her Kettner grandparents because they lived near the office. So one evening he waited for her after work. He had noticed the bookkeeper called her Regina, not Rachel and asked her about this. “Regina is my middle name,“ she replied. “It’s less old fashioned than Rachel, don’t you think?“

"It suits you," commented Fritz. "It means 'queen' doesn't it. Come and have a coffee with me Regina."

"I'm so sorry, I can't," replied Rachel quickly. "I promised my grandmother I would be early tonight."

"Okay, another time then," Fritz said with a rueful smile and went back to the yard to get his bike. As he was riding home he passed the café, where he had thought of taking Rachel, and saw her sitting there with Rudy.

When he mentioned to Magda that Norbert Hesse was the only person he could really talk to at work, she said "What about Rachel? I'd have thought you would have stuck together. I even wondered what you'd do if she fell in love with you."

"There's no chance of that," said Fritz laughing. "I'm puzzled though. She's friendly with everyone else in the office except me. Even that grim old harridan Frau Meissen, who loathes my guts, is as sweet as honey with her. In fact our bookkeeper has set herself up as Rachel's guardian and warns off all male predators. The odd thing is, Frau Meissen and the rest are all anti-Semites, yet they don't mind Rachel, as they do me. Of course she doesn't irritate them making mistakes like I do. Perhaps that's it."

"It's more likely to be because she's prettier than you," said Magda.

Shortly after the cousins had this conversation, Fritz was with the storekeeper who, catching sight of Rachel passing by, told him, "I used to know her father. He didn't like Hitler any more than I do. It was dreadful what the Nazis did to him and his sister because they didn't go along with his hare brained schemes."

"I don't suppose it helped that his wife is Jewish," Fritz added.

"Is she? I had no idea."

Suddenly Fritz realised that no one else at Kahns knew about Rachel's mother either. He could not help despising her for behaving as if being Jewish was a shameful secret. Still, if

that is how she wanted it, he would not give her away. Turning to Norbert, he said, Regina, as she likes to be called, must be keeping it dark. You won't let on to anyone else, will you?"

Norbert shook his head as he promised. "Not me! Good luck to her."

Fritz got used to working at Kahn & Sohn over the next few months. He still found the job boring but he did not mind so much because he spent more and more of his free time at an informal Jazz Club in the town. The members met in each other's houses and the club was a private one, because the Nazis disapproved of the kind of music they played, especially if had been written by Jewish or black Americans.

One day he was crossing the factory yard on his way to the workshop, thinking about a new Harlem sensation, Ella Fitzgerald. His jazz friends were all talking about this singer and asked him if he could get her records because he knew where to find such 'under the counter' items. "I'll try," he told them. "If she's made any. You say she's only sixteen." He was pondering where to begin his search, when a black Mercedes nosed its way through the tall, arched gateway. He watched as two middle aged men in smart suits got out of the car and went into the office.

When, after twenty minutes or so, he got back to his desk, the men had disappeared. They had gone up to the Reception desk, demanding to see Herr Kahn and were still with him. No one had seen them before and they had not told Rachel anything about themselves. "Maybe they're auditors – new ones," said one of the clerks. "Or tax inspectors," said another. "Perhaps Leopold has been fiddling the books." "That's enough tittle tattle," interrupted the sour bookkeeper. "Get on with your work, all of you!"

The two strangers were at Kahns again the next day, making a thorough inspection of the workshop. On the third day they came up to Fritz and asked to see all the files for orders

made over the last six months. When he had abstracted these from the cabinets the men took them away with them. They brought them back the next morning and shut themselves up with Herr Kahn again.

Finally the mystery was solved when, as soon as everyone had arrived one morning, Leopold Kahn called the entire work force to a meeting. From every door a hundred and three employees made their way into the yard, some of them were wearing their coats or macs which they not had time to take off. A few of the women carried umbrellas because it had been raining. The rain had stopped now and the sunlight shone on the puddles which reflected the faces of those standing near them. Some these faces showed fear, others excitement. Such a meeting had never been called before. When everyone was assembled, Leopold Kahn came out and stood at the top of the steps. He was impeccably dressed as usual, in a navy blue suit. His thick, dark hair was carefully brushed, but his face was white and strained. Adjusting a triangle of white handkerchief in the breast pocket of his jacket, Leopold stepped forward.

"From tomorrow," he announced, "I will no longer be your employer. The firm has been taken over by a large iron and steel consortium." On hearing this, the men and women listening, shuffled and murmured.

One man was heard to say, "Why?" They all knew that Kahns was a family business which was doing well. If they thought about the future of it at all, they supposed young Ludwig would take over eventually.

Leopold was tense but his voice was steady as he continued, "This not my doing. As you no doubt know, it is not thought proper for Jews to own or run businesses any more. Therefore Kahn & Sohn has been what the Nazis call Aryanised. I need hardly say that I am deeply disappointed. However, you have nothing to worry about. I have been assured that the jobs of those who are considered 'true Germans' are secure. Almost everyone here, I believe, falls into that category." As he spoke

these words, his glance swept over the company, coming to rest briefly on one or two of the employees in front of him, including Fritz.

"This is it then!" Fritz murmered to himself.

Leopold continued, "I cannot speak for those few who are no longer considered Germans – I mean those of you who are Jewish." Here he stopped speaking. In the silence that followed his listeners watched as his face twisted and he fumbled for the handkerchief in his pocket. "Don't break down! You musn't break down," muttered Fritz under his breath, willing Leopold to go on.

Herr Kahn wiping the sweat off his forehead, recovered his composure, and continued, "It only remains for me to thank you for working for me so well over the years, helping to make the stove factory the success it is. Your new employers are lucky people. Goodbye and Good Luck!" With that he turned and went back into the office.

Fritz remained in the courtyard surrounded by a noisy crowd of workers, voicing their opinions about the changeover. Most hoped, like one of the older men from the workshop, "It would not make much difference who their new bosses were." Frau Meissen was heard to say "It is for the best." Fritz did not speak until the storekeeper came up to him and taking him by the arm said quietly, "It's a damned shame," adding "I shall miss you, my boy in this madhouse." Fritz smiled and responded with, "Thank you Norbert. This is where I say goodbye. Be careful. Germany is going to need you when it becomes sane again." They shook hands and the storekeeper turned on his heel leaving Fritz wondering whether to go back into the office or make his way home.

The yard was now empty but at that moment Rudy came outside and called, "Herr Kahn wants to see you."

Fritz went up the stone staircase to the top of the building to his boss's office. He had only been in it once before, on that first day when he joined the firm. Leopold was standing at a

large window looking over the jumbled roofs of the town.

"May I say how sorry I am Sir," Fritz began.

"It wasn't entirely unexpected," Leopold broke in. "This isn't the first firm to be 'Aryanised' and it won't be the last. Nuremberg has always been one of the most anti-Semitic cities in Germany. I don't suppose you're old enough to have seen that rhyme that used to be inscribed on a stone in Judenstrasse.

"No, what was that?"

"I saw it soon after I'd learned to read. I was so proud of my new skill I insisted on reading aloud everything I saw in the streets. One day when out with my father I deciphered that verse. I've never forgotten it. It went like this.

The stones of Jews remain
But the deceivers were driven forth
From this house. That's the truth
In fourteen hundred and ninety nine.

The good burghers took the stone away eventually, but I expect they'll put it back up now. Nuremberg has reverted to type. However I haven't asked you up here to discuss history but because I wanted to know what you are thinking of doing.

"Well, I was thinking of going home when you called for me."

"You might as well. But after that? Obviously, there's no future for you here, even if your new employers kept you on. In any case," and he gave Fritz a wry smile, I have a feeling the stove factory was never the right place for you, So have you any ideas on what you'd really like to do and can I help in any way?"

"There is one thing I thought of trying. The Nazis don't like jazz – what they call 'nigger music'. They've banned it on the wireless and records are hard to get in Nuremberg. However I've got a few contacts and usually find them. I was wondering if I could build that up into a business. The music is popular

and there's plenty of demand."

Leopold smiled and said, "It might work as long as your suppliers and customers keep quiet about what you're doing. For Heaven's sake, don't get yourself arrested again."

"Don't worry! I'll be careful and no one's going to play the records in public, not after what happened, the other week, when those kids took a gramophone down to the park."

"I haven't heard about that. What did happen?"

"The Brownshirts came along and smashed their records to smithereens. But who's to know what we do in our own homes?"

Leopold was still doubtful, but he did not try to put Fritz off. Instead he said, I wish you success and I'll be one of your customers. If Alice and I go to America we ought to know something about jazz."

"America!" said Fritz surprised. "You've made up your mind to leave Germany then."

"There's nothing to keep us here any longer. We'd prefer to go to England where Ludwig and Olga are but we may not get a visa. So we'll try for one to the United States as well – or any country that will take us." Leopold looked both determined and desperate as he spoke. Then seeing Fritz staring at him anxiously, he shrugged and went on more cheerfully. "Changing the subject, Alice and I are having a party on Saturday for all our friends. We're inviting the young people as well and would like you to come. What do you say?"

"Thank you. I'd love to."

"Good! Bring a few dance music records with you. They'll help the evening to go with a swing." Fritz promised he would.

CHAPTER 16

Joanna Vogel's health continued to fail. She stayed in her room when she was not listening to music with Heinz. Before his arrest, Herr Rosenthal used to join them. The Vogels got to know him after Magda told them about the history lessons. Joanna approved of the way he taught his pupils to celebrate Jewish thinkers and artists of all kinds, but reproached him for spending any time describing the exploits of 'some of those monsters in the Bible'.

"Such as?" he asked

"Well Joshua for one. We always hear how he blew his trumpet and the walls of Jericho fell down, but not how, when he entered the town, he ordered his men to put every living creature there to the sword, even sheep and oxen, as well as all the men, women and children. He's not one of my heroes."

"I agree," Rosenthal had replied, "but I don't hold him up as model. I am giving history lessons and Joshua has his part in that."

Yet although Joanna was alert and, if anything, more lively than she had been for ages, everyone worried about her because she ate less and less. Magda found a recipe for the seed cake her grandmother had enjoyed on her visit to England. She made one thinking it would tempt her. Joanna thanked her. "Come here, let me give you a kiss," she said. Then she broke up the slice of the cake Magda handed her, eating about a teaspoonful of crumbs before saying, "It's just like I remember but I'm afraid I have no appetite." Then seeing how disappointed Magda was, she said, "Please don't be hurt. It's a very good cake. Leave it here. I'll try again later."

Heinz called the doctor who was mystified because, as he told Joanna, "You've made an excellent recovery from your stroke.

What all this I hear about you not eating? That'll never do'!

"Don't bully me'! she replied. Fritz or Heinz took meals up to her room and she told them to leave the plate there. "I can't eat with you standing over me." So they went away and that seemed to work. When one of them went back after an hour or so the plate would be empty. Then Fritz discovered that she was throwing the food away.

"I've got some problem with my digestion," she admitted, when he challenged her. "If I don't eat for a bit, I'll get better soon."

"She's starving herself to death," said the distraught Heinz and the next day stood by while Joanna forced down a few spoonfuls of vegetable soup which Romi brought because she remembered Mrs. Vogel liked it. The soup made Joanna vomit. Heinz called the doctor in again who sent her to the hospital for a thorough examination. This showed she could not keep anything down because she had cancer of the pancreas.

They kept her in the hospital where she became confused, drifting in and out of sleep, because she was heavily sedated most of the time. Whenever Romi, who was still working at the hospital, came to wash the floor, she hoped to speak to her but Joanna was always asleep. Opening her eyes one morning, before anyone had come to give her an injection, she heard church bells ringing and, realising it was Sunday, determined to stay awake. As soon as she saw the nurse bending over her with a syringe, she waved her away, saying, "All my family will come this afternoon and I want to have a clear mind." The nurse told her the injection was to deaden the pain, to which she said, "I'll be dead soon enough, and all the pain too. So please go away." Joanna was in a long ward with twenty other seriously ill patients, who were all heavily sedated so it was still and silent for much of the time. It was also antiseptically clean with white walls and cupboards as well as snowy sheets on every functional, iron bedstead. Her cot was next to the window and while waiting for her visitors, she turned way from the sterile scene around her and gazed at the masses of cloud dissolving and reforming in the skyscape.

"I like looking at clouds," she told Lisel who was the first to arrive, "They appear, change by the minute, fade away yet remain – like the human race." Soon Heinz and Fritz arrived, followed by Anton and Magda. They stood without speaking for a moment, looking at the wasted face, framed by whisps of hair that was still red.

"Cheer up," she said. "Just promise you'll do everything you can to survive the Nazis. If you promise that I don't mind going." She closed her eyes for a minute because of the pain. Then she opened them again, smiled and, fishing under her pillow, gave her son a piece of paper. "I would like this to be read at my funeral please." Heinz was the last to leave her. Her last words as he went were, "Make sure you get all that music you've been writing played and don't forget, I want to be buried in Sulzberg."

Joanna got her wish. She was buried in the little Jewish cemetery which was on a hilltop above the village of Sulzberg. It was windy day. The wind sent narrow streamers of white and grey clouds scudding across a pearl sky. Magda, ankle deep in the unmown grass of the old cemetery, watched the gaunt figure of a man with a neat grey beard who standing upright by the open grave, where her grandmother's plain wooden coffin had been placed. His long coat was flapping in the breeze. *So that's the uncle Granny used to stay with,* she thought, as she studied him.

Dr. Bettelheim was in his late eighties and frail. He was supposed to be retired, though he still had patients who came to him for advice because, as one of them said, "He knows me better than I know myself."

Today, he had agreed to conduct the funeral service for his niece. As he pointed out, when Heinz came to see him, "It is not necessary for a rabbi to do this. A rabbi is a teacher, not a priest. In any case, the rabbi in Sulzberg was dead and had not been replaced."

There were only a few Jews left in the village and they were all old, the younger ones having long since migrated to the towns in the hope of making a better living, including the man who used to cut the grass and weed round the graves. The graveyard had

become a beautiful wilderness with tall daisies, tiny blue speedwell and even spotted orchids growing freely there.

Magda, standing with her family saw some villagers climbing the hill to the burial ground. As one man, bent almost double with arthritis, took his place behind her, she heard him say, "She didn't make old bones you know – not like the good doctor." Magda, who had never thought about it before, wondered how old her grandmother was when she died. She wanted to ask Fritz but he was standing a little way off, studying a sheet of paper he had in his hand. Her father and mother were next to her. Lisel was crying and Anton had put his arm round her shoulders. Heinz, nearest the open grave, was staring steadily at his mother's coffin.

As soon as the doctor thought everyone was assembled, he began to speak in a deep voice that carried surprisingly well over the sunken. crumbling gravestones with their inscriptions in Hebrew and German, many of which could no longer be read. "We have come here to bury Joanna and celebrate her life," he began. "She faced death without hope or fear. We have long been told, 'We are mortal and our days as grass. We flourish like a flower in this graveyard. The wind passes over it and it is gone.' Joanna accepted that fact."

"Nevertheless, the death of those we love grieves us who are left behind. Joanna's death has laid waste to the lives of her children Heinz and Lisel and her grand children Fritz and Magda – lives that were once filled with the warmth of her presence. Yet Joanna lives on in their hearts and in the hearts of all those who loved her.

She was with us here on earth for sixty one years, over forty of which she spent as a devoted and beloved wife, mother and grandmother. During that time we used to meet at family gatherings, and at the parties for which she was famous when her husband was alive. On those occasions we all looked forward to the moment when she could be persuaded to take a break from her duties as a hostess and delight us playing on the harpsichord – Bach or Scarlatti perhaps.

“Most clearly of all I remember how she was as a lively, high-spirited child. She was a tomboy. When I think back, I can see her now halfway up a tree, pelting her cousins with hazelnuts and running races with them, which she often won.“ Here Dr. Bettelheim paused and seemed to be struggling for breath. There was silence, broken only by the sound of the wind in the trees, as the mourners looked at him anxiously.

Then he recovered and went on. “From the beginning, there was always that other side to Joanna, the side that loved music. When she was no more than three years old, my wife found her trying to pick out a tune on our piano and decided to teach her. Quite soon the child outstripped her teacher.

Joanna lived the last part of her life in troubled times, as do all of us who are Jews. With that in mind she has left us a message to say that, that if we do not lose hope and are determined, our race will overcome misfortune. Her grandson is going to read it to us.

Fritz came forward and took his place by the doctor’s side. Wearing a black suit he seemed thinner than ever. Seeing his white face, framed by fiery hair that had grown too long again, Magda thought how like their grandmother he was. He still held the piece of paper she had noticed he was reading earlier, but he did not look at it. He had learnt by heart ist words.

“Joanna Vogel’s message is a story from long ago,“ he began. “*It is called A Parable of the Dubner Maggid:*

> A king once owned a large, beautiful diamond of which he was justly proud for it had no equal anywhere. One day the diamond accidentally sustained a deep scratch. The king called in the most skilled diamond cutters and offered them a great reward if they could remove the imperfection from his treasured jewel. But none could repair the blemish and the king was sorely distressed. After some time a new stone cutter came to the king and promised to make the diamond even more beautiful than it had been

> before. The king was impressed by his confidence and entrusted the stone to his care. And the man kept his word. With superb artistry he engraved a lovely rosebud around the imperfection and used the scratch to make the stem. We can emulate that diamond cutter. When life bruises us and wounds us, we can use even the scratches to create something of beauty and worth."

Silence followed as Fritz spoke these last words. Finally, turning to the open grave, Doctor Bettelheim concluded the service by saying, 'In this place, where Joanna wished to lie with her forbears, may she come to her rest and peace'. After that it only remained for her son to cover the coffin with earth. He took a spade propped up against a pile of dark, heavy soil nearby and began. Seeing his father falter halfway through this task, Fritz went to help him and they took it in turns until the grave was filled and the ground level again.

As everyone left the lonely cemetery, reactions to this idiosyncratic funeral service were mixed. One of the more pious Jews from the village was heard to say in a puzzled voice that the doctor 'had not once mentioned God'. Hearing this, Heinz whispered, "Mother never talked about God either."

Anton was encouraged by the parable. So was Magda. She also thought how Joanna had given up the possibility of sharing her music with the world after she became a wife and mother. *Does it always have to be like that?* she wondered.

Lisel reflected on the likelihood of creating 'something of beauty and worth' when 'life bruises us and wounds us'. Sighing, she decided that to do you have to be strong.

Romi could not get away from the hospital and did not arrive until the funeral service was nearly over. She stood behind the other mourners, out of sight. Then after everyone had gone, she went forward and, as a mark of respect, placed a single white pebble on Joanna's grave.

PART 4

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CHAPTER 17

In the Kahn‘s dining room a row of candles in silver candlesticks shone down on the Rosenthal plates and crystal glasses. While Leopold and Alice were applying for visas, they held dinner parties every week. Their house, hidden from the road by trees, had become a social centre for their friends in the now isolated Jewish community in Nuremberg. The parties were lavish. “There no point in saving our money,“ declared Leopold, “they’re not going to let us take it out when we go.

“Did you get anything for the factory?“ asked Anton.

“Oh yes, the usual ten per cent of its actual value.“

“And I suppose that’s taxed.“

“Indeed it is. The tax is ninety per cent!“ came the answer. “The Nazis are anxious to get rid of us, but not our money. Also, they’re beggaring us because the last thing they want is for us to be welcomed as an asset by whatever country we end up in. But enough of all that,“ Leopold went on before anyone could pursue the subject further. “Let me fill your glass, Anton. I don’t usually care for Moselle but this is rather a good one, don’t you think.“

The wine was very good. Leopold was a wine buff who, blindfolded could tell you not only what he was drinking, but the year. Every summer he went with friends on wine tasting trips to the Rhineland, coming home with cases of Hock, Riesling and Liebfraumilch. Now he had decided they might as well drink up his cellar at dinners such as the one he was holding that evening.

The Kahns had been without servants since the Nuremberg Laws were passed. The food was provided by caterers,

who left after they had brought the herring rollmops, schnitzel and various desserts. Thereafter the guests served themselves from a buffet at the end of the room. No one minded the absence of waiters or waitresses. In fact they felt freer with no alien, possibly hostile, strangers listening to them talk.

"Are you still determined to stay here Anton?" asked Heinz as he toyed with his orange Bavarian cream.

"Certainly, as long as I can do some good."
Heinz, who had not spoken before during the dinner and seemed absent minded much of the time, now said, "I'm not going either, though I wish I could persuade Fritz to leave. He has a future, which is more than I have."

"I think you're both wrong not to go. Still I admire your courage," broke in Leopold. "Which reminds me of a joke I heard yesterday in Munich, when I was waiting in the queue at the British consulate. Levi and Hirsch meet in the African jungle each with a rifle. 'What are you doing here?' asks Hirsch.

'I've got an ivory carving business in Alexandria and shoot my own elephants,' says Levi, 'and you?'

'I manufacture crocodile skin goods in Port Said and shoot my own crocodiles.

'And what happened to Simon?'

'He's a real adventurer. He's stayed in Munich.'"

Heinz shrugged and Anton smiled deprecatingly, while the other men laughed.

Lisel bit her lip and Alice gave her a sympathetic look.

Magda and Fritz did not come to the dinner parties. The Kahns held those for friends of their own generation. They came instead to the larger parties every month, where the guests included young people. These were more informal affairs. The older men gathered in one room to play cards, where the women saw to it that they were provided with copious amounts of bread, sausages and beer, before going off to gossip and chat to any of their children who were at a loose end. Sometimes, Fritz's friends got him to play one of his songs making fun of

the Nazis. Most of the time, however, they danced to the records he always brought with him. Magda enjoyed the dancing and was popular as a partner. She had no idea how to flirt however, so did not enjoy it if any of the boys showed signs of becoming romantic. When a sleek, dark youth named Willy was persistent, she hid in the conservatory. There he found her and made a grab at her to kiss her.

"Whatever have you got on your hair?" she exclaimed, pushing him away. "It reeks!"

Willy, who saw himself as the new Rudolph Valentino, had used violet-scented hair oil in keeping with his image.

"What a rude little girl you are!" he said and walked off in a huff.

That's torn it, thought Magda. *He'll never ask me to dance again now.* Magda missed one or two of the monthly get-togethers after that. She decided however to go to the last party the Kahns held later in the summer, before they went to England.

After months of trying vainly to get a visa, their problem was solved when Olga wrote to say she had fallen in love with a boy she had met in Dover, and that they were getting married. Leopold and Alice therefore would be going to the wedding. Once in England, they hoped they would be allowed to stay there. "Even if the English don't want us," Leopold declared, "we wont return to Germany."

"Do you know anything about this boy Olga's marrying?" Lisel asked Alice.

"His name is Peter and he's a student at King's College in London. I've got a photo Olga sent us. Here it is." He she showed Lisel a picture she had in her handbag. "He wants to be a teacher."

"He's got a cheerful smile," said Lisel, studying the photo of an athletic young man with fair, curly hair. He and Olga will make a good looking couple. When's the wedding?"

"He's graduating this summer, so they are planning to get

married after that. Leopold and I have had a letter from Peter's parents. They don't mind the idea of a mixed marriage and we certainly don't."

Lisel eyes widened as her friend went on, "I believe Peter and his parents are good people – it'll be much the best if Olga begins a new life and brings up children who don't have to think about being Jewish."

"You may be right," said Lisel sadly, "though if many of us do that, what's to become of Jews?"

"You must have a new dress for the Kahns' last party," Lisel told Magda. "It's sure to be a gala occasion." Magda did not know exactly what she wanted but was clear about what she did not want. So the search for a frock took several outings and sessions in fitting rooms before she found one she thought suited her.

"It's dreadfully expensive though," she whispered, looking at the price tag. "Don't worry about that," said her mother who had just sold another bit of jewellery. "It's just right for you."

Finally the big night came. Anton and Lisel had left earlier for the dinner party which Leopold was giving for his friends, before their children came for the dance. When Fritz arrived to escort Magda, he found her in a sleeveless, yellow silk frock with a matching bandeau threaded through her curls. 'My word!' he said, stepping back in mock amazement.

"Is it all right?" she asked.

"It's great! I'm glad you've put your glad rags on because tonight you're going to have a surprise."

"What sort?"

"I'm not telling but you'll like it." Intrigued, Magda slipped on her coat and put her dancing pumps in one of the pockets. Then Fritz picked up the bag of records he was carrying and steered her through the front door. It was a warm evening and Magda did not need a coat but kept it on to avoid passers by staring at her new frock.

When they went through the Kahns iron gates and walked

up the drive, they saw every window in the house was lit and, once inside, they were struck by the heady smell of the massed Madonna lilies on the hall table. “Aren’t they gorgeous?“ said Magda.

“Well yes,“ agreed Fritz, “but they make me think of funerals.“ After they had left their coats and went to where they could hear voices, they saw there were elaborate flower arrangements along all the corridors and in every room.

Most of their friends were already there. The girls, all carefully made up collected in little cliques. Some of the ones smoking gestured nonchalantly with their cigarette holders. The carpet in the long drawing was rolled back and the boys, in dark suits and crisp white shirts were lining up the chairs and sofas against the walls.

Magda noticed a pale girl in a green dress going into the drawing room. Surprised, she realised it was Rachel.

Then, hearing a shout from the card room where the men were playing skat after their dinner, she paused to see what was going on. Leopold was triumphant. “Well, I pulled it off, didn’t I?“ he said laughing, while her father looked at him with raised eyebrows. Magda had not bothered to learn the complicated rules of skat which was a game played only by men. Someone once told her it was a cross between bridge and poker. While Mutti said the way her husband and his friend approached the game told you a lot about their characters.

“Leopold“, she said, “being an entrepreneur, takes risks with the bidding. Anton, plays in a more measured, calculated fashion, just you’d expect a lawyer to do.“ By the time Magda turned away from the card room, she had lost sight of Rachel and Fritz.

Her cousin put the records down by the gramophone and looked round for Rachel. He found her in a corner, camouflaged by the fronds of a giant potted palm. “Hello Rachel – I mean Regina,“ he greeted her. “You’ve returned to the fold I see. How come?“

Rachel blushed and, looking over her shoulder, fearing the others would hear him, she whispered urgently, “Please don’t be beastly Fritz.“ He stared and asked, “How are things at the stove factory?“

“I’ve no idea. I’ve left. One of the new bosses was a student with my father and spread the word around about him being a Sosi. He also knew my mother. As you can imagine the atmosphere in the office was Siberian once the news got out that I belonged to a family of dissidents and was half Jewish into the bargain. Frau Meissen not only turned against me, but waged a vendetta.“

Tears filled her eyes as she spoke. Fritz, who was always thrown when girls cried, lent her his handkerchief and, putting his arm round her shoulders, said, “As you realised, I didn’t approve of your little game of pretence. But never mind that now. Welcome back!“

Rachel sniffed and tried to smile, adding, “I just wanted to be anonymous.“

Meanwhile a boy, taking a record out of the pile Fritz had dumped on the table, wound up the gramophone and put it on. Startled, everyone stopped talking when they heard the jazzy tune. “It’s very fast,“ said Magda, “are we supposed to dance to it?“

“Oh, that’s a vintage James P. Johnson record. He wrote the tune,“ said Fritz. “I thought it was rather fun. It is also a dance – called the Charleston. It was all the rage in the twenties. I don’t know the steps though. Does anyone?“ No one did. Then Magda remembered something.

“Mutti used to do it – I’ll go and get her.“ She found Lisel with Alice coming out of the card room, where another noisy game of skat had begun. “Leave the men to get their own beer,“ she said. “We want you to teach us something. You know how the Charleston goes, don’t you Mutti?“

“We both do,“ said Alice laughing. “It was great fun, wasn’t it Lisel? Magda’s mother, hearing snatches of the Johnson

record, looked young again and said, “Those were the days. Come on, let’s show them.“

So, to applause and cheers, Lisel and Alice gave a demonstration. Soon everyone was trying to do the dance, some with more success than others. Magda got the hang of it quickly. At first she tried the steps out by herself because as Mutti explained, “You don’t have to dance the Charleston with anyone. When we used to do it, girls often danced it alone or with each other.“

Soon, however, Willy, on the look out for a competent partner, decided to overlook the scene in the conservatory and took Magda out onto the floor with him. “You’re quite good,“ he told her stiffly. Magda, ignoring his tone, smiled faintly. She noticed he was no longer using the violet scented hair cream. Encouraged, he went on, “After this, I’ll get Fritz to put on a tango, and we’ll see how you get on with that.“ That was enough for Magda so, as soon as the Charleston record stopped, she made an excuse about needing to say something to Mutti and escaped. She found her on a sofa and sat down next to her. “Were those parties you went to and danced the Charleston anything like this?“ she asked.

“Yes, and No,“ came the reply. “They were just as hectic because we too were trying to shut out the bleak everyday world. As you know, there was roaring inflation. If you didn’t buy a loaf of bread first thing in the morning, it cost ten times as much by the afternoon. That was frightening but not as frightening as now because so many people in Germany were in the same boat about money. It’s different these days.“

“You mean because folk hate us?“

“Yes,“ agreed Lisel. Then she got up, saying “I’d better go and see if Alice needs any help with the refreshments. She went off to an adjoining room where there was a buffet, leaving Magda sitting on the sofa. She was relieved to see Willy pass by with a fresh partner, a girl in floating scarlet chiffon, whose long black hair almost touched the floor as he bent her backwards, per-

forming his spectacular version of the tango. Fritz also went by, dancing with Rachel. *So, they made it up,* she thought. *He's keen on her really, though he doesn't admit it.*

Just then, someone standing behind the sofa bent down and whispered in her ear, "May I have the next quick step?

"Jacob!" she cried, jumping to her feet. "I can't believe it! What are you doing here."

"Fritz got me an invitation. I'm staying with him and Heinz."

"So you're Fritz's surprise. I never dreamt it would be anything as nice as seeing you here." Jacob looked at her reflectively. "You've grown a couple of inches," he said. "And you're thinner than ever – but it suits you."

"Thank you. You haven't changed, except that I don't remember seeing you in glasses before." Jacob now wore horn rimmed spectacles, but apart from those and his smart town suit, he was the same as he had been in Murren. He was just as chubby, his back hair still refused to lie flat and he had the serious, searching expression Magda remembered.

"Oh, the glasses," he said. "I discovered last year that I'm short sighted. You've no idea what a difference it made when I first put these spectacles on and walked down the street. 'How ugly people are!' I thought. Suddenly I could see their spots, warts and wrinkles – rather depressing. On the other hand," he added with a smile, "you look lovelier than ever."

Embarrassed by this compliment, Magda was saved from responding to it by hearing the new record someone had put on. "That's a quick step," she said. "Let's dance. Can you still do the egg whisk chasse?"

"Are you hungry? Magda asked when the dance ended. "There are refreshments in the next room." Jacob followed her to where the caterers had again brought a variety of savoury dishes for the buffet, while Otto Krumbacher had sent pastries.

"If you sit down, I'll get you whatever you want," said Jacob, pointing to a table. "What would you like?"

"Most of all, a long cool drink and a piece of cheesecake, if there is any. If not you choose something." There was a crowd round the drinks table, where one of the boys had volunteered to be the barman. That table was spread with the cloth Lisel had embroidered as a schoolgirl. Madga decided that Mutti must have lent it to Alicee because it was to long. The room was candlelit and, sitting at a small, round table in the shadows, she watched the crowd, in particular Willy and his tango partner. The girl with the long black hair was standing very close to him, taking sips of wine from the glass he held. His other hand was pressed into the small of her back as he gazed into her eyes with his most seductive smile. *She looks so confident. He can't patronise her, Magda thought, as the girl smiled back challengingly at Willy. I wish I had my camera here.*

The room was hot; several of the other boys and girls were flushed and most of them were excited. One boy, who always liked to clown around, said or did something that made his friends fall about laughing. She watched Jacob thread his way back to her with a tray.

"There's caviar," he said, putting the tray down. "So I've brought us some of that, as well as cheesecake."

"Are you here for a holiday, Jacob?" she asked, adding more seltzer to the glass of hock she was drinking.

"Yes, I'm just making a flying visit to Nuremberg but I'm in Germany for longer. My paper has sent me to Berlin."

"So you're a foreign correspondent. That's what you always wanted, isn't it? Congratulations!"

'"Thank you. You helped me to get the job with those diary letters of yours, especially the description of the Rosenthal trial. I submitted that, virtually unchanged, as an article and it caused quite a stir. Scores of readers wrote in. First there were the moral crusaders who condemned your history teacher for living with a woman he was not married to. Then the liberals

condemned the Nazis as barbarians."

"Good heavens! Who won?"

"I like to think our side did. But in any case the controversy sold papers and persuaded the editor to send me here. Incidentally, it is already obvious that the Nazis have gained in confidence and strength since I was last in Berlin."

"Yes, there's no stopping them, I'm afraid. If you want another Nuremberg story, you should get Fritz to tell you how they took over the Kahns' stove factory. He was there when it happened."

"You need a protest movement."

"There won't be one because most Germans think Hitler is a saviour. Not the Jews of course. Lots of the ones we know have emigrated. Those who stay, like Papa, still hope the Third Reich will disappear somehow. In the meantime, they forget about the Nazis whenever they can." Just then the boys standing near the bar burst into guffaws again. "As they doing tonight," she added. "What do you think of this party, Jacob?"

"Wonderful! This house is beautiful and the Kahns are magnificent hosts."

"But?"

Jacob hesitated and glanced round the room with its large wall mirrors that reflected the crowd of carefree young people. "I can't help remembering Vanity Fair. I imagine you've read the book?"

"Yes, said Magda, wondering what was coming next. "Why do you ask?"

"I was thinking of how Thackeray describes that ball the Duchess of Richmond gave on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo. It was a glittering occasion, the women in all their jewels, flirting with the men in their splendid dress uniforms. They ignored the sound of Napoleon's canons which they could hear whenever the music died away."

"Yet, by the next day many of those dashing men would lie dead on the battlefield, you mean?" As she spoke, Magda

studied the party guests again. Willy and the girl with long black hair had disappeared, but others had paired off, among them Fritz, seated on a sofa with his arm round Rachel's waist. "I know what you mean. This is not such a grand occasion as the Duchess's ball but we are behaving just like the folk there." She paused and wailed, "What else can we do?"

Jacob looked guilty. "Oh my God, now I've made you depressed. I shouldn't have held forth like that. I'm sorry. Shall we dance again?"

"Don't worry! You haven't told me anything I didn't already know, though you've expressed it better than I could have done. Come on. I'll get them to put on the Charleston record and teach you."

Jacob tried his best with the Charleston and told himself not to lecture. Finally Magda decided she ought to look for her father, who was taking her and Mutti home in car.

"I've got my car here," said Jacob. "May I take you?" Magda agreed and went off to tell her parents of the new plan.

When she and a silent Jacob were seated in his Volkswagen, she turned to him and said, "I know you're thinking you shouldn't have said anything about the party, but you mustn't feel you cant say what you believe. I like listening to you and whenever I'm with you, I talk freely too – more than with anyone else." Jacob gave a twisted smile on hearing this. It was way after midnight and he drove through the deserted town without saying anything until they reached the Vogels' house. There he stopped and, turning off the engine, said "Fritz tells me neither Heinz or your father want to leave Germany. Is that right?"

"Yes, Papa is determined to stay. In any case we probably couldn't get visas now."

He turned and looked at her intently, "There is a way you could leave, Magda."

"How?"

He took a deep breath. "You could marry me and come to

America as my wife.“

Magda had realised that Jacob was probably still in love with her but had not expected this. She gasped. “Are you serious Jacob? I can’t marry you for a passport!“

“I’m quite serious and I’m asking you to marry me because I love you – and have done ever since I first saw you in Murren. I realise you don’t love me, but I want to live with you anyway and take care of you. Please say you’ll let me do that.“

Magda sat in silence for a full two minutes. Then she said, “You are kind. I admire you and am very fond of you. I think it’s wonderful that you’ve asked me to be your wife but the answer is no. I cant marry you – I will never marry.“

“Why ever not?“

“I’ve felt this way for a long time. It seems to me that marriage is a prison.

“What do you mean? Do you think I’ll turn into Bluebeard?“

“No, of course not,“ she said patting his arm. I mean that as soon as women become wives they lose their souls. I’ve come to that conclusion seeing the life led by Granny, Fritz’s mother, once she got married, as well as the lives led by Mutti and her friends now. Take Papa, for example, he loves my mother very much but sees her as a child, while Alice is Leopold’s slave.“

“They all belong to a different generation. I couldn’t be like Anton or Leopold, if I wanted to be, which I don’t. My mother has proved to me that women are as talented and capable as men. I was still an infant when my father died and left her with no money. She had never worked for a living, yet she started a translation business and has made a success of it. I promise you I would always treat you like the equal you are.“

“No doubt you’d try but I’m afraid the social pressure would prove too much.“

Jacob said no more. He got out of the car and went round to open the door for Magda. When they were both standing on the pavement, seeing his baffled, angry face, she pleaded, “Don’t

let us quarrel!“ She reached up and, removing his glasses, put them in the top pocket of his jacket. He looked questioningly into her upraised face. Then he took her in his arms and kissed her. The kiss went on a long time. After which he said, “I’m not just a man you like to talk to then?“

“O no! – you’re much more than that.“

“Dearest Magda,“ he said and kissed her again, less urgently this time, more tenderly.

Suddenly the light went on in Anton and Lisel’s bedroom. Magda looked up startled and broke away, saying, “I must go in now Jacob. Goodnight.“

As she was about to go up the steps to her front door, he said quietly, “I’m not going to give up, you know. I’m like Willliam Dobbin in *Vanity Fair*. He wanted Amelia desperately and she turned him down, but he won her in the end.“

Jacob intended to visit Nuremberg as often as he could get away from Berlin but, soon after the Kahns’ party, his mother fell ill. He went back to New York because he was her only child there was no one else to see she was cared for properly. Magda continued to write but wondered when, or if, she would see him again.

CHAPTER 18

On the none of November Magda came down to breakfast to find her father had already finished eating his rye bread with ham and was leafing through a thick book bound in scuffed, red leather. She was surprised because he did not read at mealtimes. Then she saw the book was a stamp album. “This was my father’s,“ he said. He was an avid collector. I’m afraid I was a disappointment because I never shared his passion.“ The album looked vaguely familiar to Magda. Then she realised why. In the portrait of her grandfather that hung in the hall, he was holding a book which she had always thought was a learned tome of some kind, but now realised was the album. “My father told me that, even if I did not want to add to his collection when he died, I should guard it carefully because some of the stamps are rare. No doubt they are. I can remember now how excited he was when he managed to buy an English Penny Black.“

“Do you really want to sell such an heirloom?“ asked Lisel. “It seems a pity.“

“I don’t know yet whether I’ll sell it. But I am going to Munich to get it valued.“

“Why Munich?“

“Da Gama there is a reputable dealer. He’s a fellow Jew, so whatever he says the stamps are worth, I’ll be able to believe him. He came from Portugal originally but has lived here for years. With that, Anton picked up the album he had laid on the table, and went off to get ready for the journey. Just before he went out of the front door, he kissed Lisel and said, “I have got one or two other people to see in Munich besides Da

Gama, so I will stay the night there.“ Then he hugged Magda, saying, “Look after your mother!“

Magda had left school after her birthday in July and since then had established a more or less regular routine to fill the days. Three times a week she went over to Paul Gutman’s house and helped him. Sometimes he let her take the portrait pictures, especially the ones of children because they were not shy with her. Most of the time though she spent in the dark room developing the photographs, which she could now do on her own. “You know, your husband has taught me such a lot,“ she told Paul’s wife when she and Hedy were drinking coffee at the end of an afternoon.

“And you’ve worked hard,“ Hedy replied. “Paul says you’ve the makings of an excellent, possibly original, photographer.“

Magda also taught herself to type after Fritz let her have an old typewriter he found in the attic at home. She was now able to type the letters she still sent to Jacob. She had not said anything to her parents about his proposal because she was so confused. When he kissed her after the Kahns’ party, she thought she was in love with him. Yet the idea of marriage frightened her. Fritz was the only other person who knew about the proposal because his friend had confided in him.

“What did you say?“ Magda asked.

“I told him you were too young. You are you know – much younger than your actual age.“

Magda’s first letter to Jacob had been to New York where he had gone after his mother had a heart attack. In his reply he told her that the doctors said she had every chance of making a good recovery. She has been working too hard for too long, he went on, but I’m going to insist she takes it easy from now on. Jacob’s next letter was short and barely coherent. Adele Robbins had had a second heart attack and was dead. Magda, having got through to International Enquiries for Jacob’s telephone number, rang him up. She spoke to him for a long time, trying to find the right words. He was weeping throughout

the call.

For some time after that Magda did not hear from him. Then he wrote to say that his newspaper wanted him to return to Berlin. So she started writing her diary letters about life in Nuremberg again. On 9th November she began with the sentence, 'Everything here is much as usual, no better, no worse.'

That evening Lisel asked her brother over for dinner. Fritz was spending the night in Neumarkt, where he was taking part in a jam session with his fellow jazz enthusiasts. She did not like Heinz to spend too much time alone, because now he no longer had Joanna to watch over him, he forgot to eat. The three of them had a light meal with chicken broth, which Florrie had made earlier, followed by blinis, one of Lisel's specialities. These were filled with bilberries that she and Magda picked while walking in the country earlier.

Over the meal Lisel asked her brother how his own work was going. His face brightened as he said, "I've finished with chamber music for a bit and have begun a concerto – though God knows if anyone will ever play it. Nothing written by a Jew is likely to get a hearing in Germany."

"What about trying someone abroad?" suggested Lisel.

"I'll have to see. The concerto is not going too badly, but I've only finished the first movement."

After that, Heinz suggested Lisel play for them. "What would you like to hear?" she asked when they were in the music room.

"Schubert," said Heinz. "Yes please," added Magda, 'the *Impromptus*. I love those."

It was one of Lisel's energetic days and she played for over an hour, Schumann as well as Schubert, including the rippling third *Impromtu* Magda hoped for.

"If you're not tired," said Heinz, "please go on."

"All right!" Lisel agreed, smiling. "I'll play a couple of the *Debussy's Preludes* I've just learned." After *The Girl with the*

Flaxen Hair she played *The Submerged Cathedral.*

"Why is it submerged," Magda asked, as the last sonorous notes died away. Lisel's answer was vague. "The cathedral is under a French lake now – I've no idea how it came to be there though. They say that you can still hear the bells ringing sometimes. It is that sound Debussy has tried to recreate in his music."

"Debussy suits your style," said Heinz.

"You may be right," agreed his sister. "I'm going to practise some other piano music of his. I believe there's quite a lot of it."

"What a lovely evening this has been!" said Magda, as Heinz was putting on his coat to go home.

Of the two Debussy pieces she liked *The Girl with the Flaxen Hair* best. Yet as she lay in bed that night, she fell asleep wondering about the cathedral under the waves. What had happened? Was it a natural disaster or the work of men? Were there houses too? Was anyone drowned?

It was still pitch dark when she was woken by banging. Someone was knocking on the front door and there was shouting. She heard Florrie call out, "Who's there? What do you want?" Then there was another voice, "Open up! If you don't want us to kick the door down." Florrie must have opened the door. Magda heard her protesting,

"Go way, the lot of you! You're drunk." Then she gave a yell and there was a thud, as if she had fallen or been pushed over. By this time Magda had jumped out of bed and turned on the light. Looking at her watch she saw it was nearly midnight. She was about to go out into the corridor when she heard the pounding of feet on the stairs. She hesitated and the bedroom door was flung open. She backed away as half a dozen youths rushed in. Four of them were members of the Storm Division, the other two, who were younger were not wearing the Brownshirt uniform. All of them were carrying sledgeham-

mers and knives.

Laughing, they began smashing up the furniture and sweeping everything off the shelves. One of them smashed the cheval glass and sent crystal splinters flying all over the floor. Another two staggered over to the big, heavy wardrobe and tried to topple it, but they were too drunk and gave up. Meanwhile a boy, not in uniform, who looked younger than herself, slashed the feather mattress on the bed with his knife. Magda made for the door but one of the heftier Stormtroopers seized her by her nightdress, tearing it off. Stark naked, she stood petrified as the others stopped what they were doing and stared at her in silence. Then, one of them started to undo his belt and moved forward. She gave a strangled scream.

A much older man appeared in the doorway, taking in the situation. “Out!“ he commanded. The boys slid sheepishly into the corridor, leaving Magda face to face with their leader. His uniform was immaculate but she saw only the pistol in his belt, while he looked her up and down. Then he said contemptuously, “Put your clothes on! Where are they?“

“In that wardrobe,“ she said pointing to the heavy piece of Biedermeier furniture.

“Get them!“ he told her, before turning sharply on his heel and leaving her alone.

The boys who had wanted to push the wardrobe over, had broken one of its carved feet. When Magda went to pull the door, the whole thing fell on top of her. Fortunately it caught on the edge of the bed. Bruised, but otherwise uninjured, she wriggled from under it. The big window was smashed and a gust of wind sent feathers from the ripped mattress whirling round the room, making her cough. The coughing brought her to her senses. Gingerly dragging a coat from under the fallen wardrobe, she put it on and went out of the bedroom to find her mother.

The house was quiet again and she thought the invaders had left. Then she heard a scraping noise downstairs in the

hall. Looking over the banisters she saw a young boy slicing through the canvas of her grandfather's portrait with his knife. He turned and she recognized Wolfgang Bremmer. Seeing her staring at him, he stopped. Then he ran out of the open front door, shouting 'Bitch! Jewish whore!"

Magda heard her mother calling and rattling frantically the door of her bedroom. The Brownshirts had locked her in. Magda found the key lying a few feet away on the landing and let her out. They hugged each other, crying with relief at being united.

Florrie met them at the foot of the stairs. She too was in tears and wringing her hands. "Wait till our Führer finds out about this," she kept on repeating. "Those drunken louts will be punished."

"Where's the telephone?" asked Lisel. "I must ring my brother." They found it under the scattered contents of the linen chest, which lay upturned in the hall. While Lisel was trying to get through to Heinz, Magda picked up the table-cloth her mother had embroidered. Someone must have cut himself and used it as a swab because it was soaked in blood. She let the cloth fall again, just as Lisel put the receiver down, saying, "Heinz's phone is out of order. I've reported it and will try again in a bit." They went into the dining room, wading through broken glass and china and contemplated the pile of broken wood in front of the fireplace that had once been dining chairs. When they reached the music room Lisel cried out, "Where's the piano?" Nothing else had been touched but the piano was not there. Magda walked to the open French windows and went out onto the balcony. The rail was broken. She stepped forward cautiously and looking down, cried out. Lisel ran to join her.

"Careful Mutti!" called Magda, grabbing her mother's arm. "Stand here!" In the dawn light they gazed at the Steinway lying smashed on the terrace below. Seeing the two stricken faces, Florrie was speechless. Then

she turned to go, saying “I’ll make some coffee – if there is any.“

There was a mess in the kitchen where the Brownshirts had tipped out the contents of all the jars and bags they could find. They had however missed a shopping bag that Florrie had placed behind the door the previous afternoon. This had a packet of coffee in it. There was still chairs to sit on so, when she had made the coffee, she cleared the table of assorted debris, and putting the pot and a couple of cups, minus handles, down, went to fetch her mistress and Magda. Lisel was trying again, without success, to phone Heinz. As they went into the kitchen, Florrie seized a broom. “I’ll start sweeping up, ma’am,“ she said.

“What’s the point?“ said Lisel. “Find another cup! Sit down and have coffee!“

It was already after daybreak and as the three of them sat drinking and talking about what had happened, there was another thunderous knock on the front door. They looked at one another in consternation. “I’ll go,“ said Lisel jumping to her feet. A moment or so later, Magda heard her say, “He’s not here.“

Almost immediately after that, two SS officers came into the kitchen. “Where is Anton Senger?“ demanded one of them.

He looked at Florrie as he spoke and she replied, “He went to Munich yesterday morning Sir, and has not returned yet.“ Not content with that answer, the two officers went through the house, searching for Anton. Finally they left, slamming the front door behind them.

“I must go and find Heinz,“ declared Lisel, after attempting a third time, in vain, to phone him.

“I’ll come with you,“ said Magda. As soon as they went out they smelled burning. The synagogue in a nearby street was still smouldering. They saw the Rabbi gathering up the torn Torah scrolls which had been thrown out onto the pavement.

A piece of parchment wrapped itself round Magda's ankles. She picked it up and handed it to the old man. He thanked her but did not recognise her. The last time she had been to the synagogue was for Fritz's barmitzvah.

There were no Brownshirts or SS about as they walked through the town, but plenty of curious people, shuffling through glass on the pavements. The windows of all the shops owned by Jews had been broken. There were also looters, with no one to hinder them as they helped themselves to anything they could carry away. Magda saw one old woman with a wheelbarrow piled high with clothes coming away from the store where Mutti had bought her the yellow silk frock.

When Magda and her mother got off the tram in the Old Town, their way was blocked by a crowd of people, standing round a woman who was weeping and hugging a body that lay on the ground. "Wake up Sophie! Wake up!" she repeated over and over again. The body was that of her daughter who, terrified, had jumped out of the bedroom window.

As they approached Heinz's house they met Fritz coming out of it. "Father's not here," he said. "I've only just got back." The neighbours say the SS have taken him. I'm going to the police station."

Lisel caught her breath and, taking hold of him by the arm, said, "Magda and I will go with you."

"No, better not! You both look done in already."

"We're all right," said Lisel. "The Brownshirts wrecked the house but didn't touch us."

"They've been here too," said Fritz. "Let yourselves in and you'll see. I'd rather go to the station alone. I'll try and speak to Gerhard Richter, the polizeimeister who let me go. He's pretty decent." With that, he handed his aunt the door keys and was off, saying, "Wait for me if you can. If you go, you needn't lock the door, there's nothing worth stealing any more."

Lisel almost tripped over the telephone which lay on

the hall floor, the wires ripped out of the wall. The books were all gone from the shelves and Magda realised what the bonfire, smoking in the yard, was. She heard Mutti sobbing and found her surrounded by broken gramophone records. "They smashed the lot," she cried. "O poor Heinz.!" Magda found one record intact, from Mahler's *Song of the Earth*. She put it carefully on the table beside her uncle's chair.

Fritz had not returned when Lisel told Magda, "I must go home. I want to be there when Anton comes – if he does. God knows what's happened to him! You stay here and wait to see what Fritz finds out."

"Shouldn't I come with you?" asked Magda, looking at her mother who was shaking and paler than ever.

"No! Stay and find out what has happened to Heinz. I'll be all right." Then before Magda could say another word, she left.

After an hour and a half Fritz came home. "Father's in Dachau. I managed to see Richter as he was going into the police station, but he says he can't do anything." Fritz flung himself down on the broken sofa, hiding his face in his hands.

"Did the polizeimeister say why Uncle Heinz has been arrested? What's he supposed to have done?"

"I asked that. He's not been charged with anything. He's not alone. There was a crowd of women at the police station, including Alice Kahn and Traudel's mother. The SS have taken Leopold and Professor Feldheim as well.

"Come home with me," said Magda. "Perhaps Papa is home by now. Maybe he'll know what to do."

"And maybe not. He's probably been arrrested as well. Richter told me I would have been, if they had found me. You go home Magda. I'm going to Dachau to see what I can find out there." Fritz jumped up from the sofa, making for his bedroom to find a haversack. He found it and Magda helped him to

stuff it with an extra sweater, shoes and a few other things they found scattered about.

Seeing the look of desperation on her cousin's face she said, "We're in this together. Take care and come to us as soon as you can."

"I will – if not with Father, as soon as I find out what is happening."

CHAPTER 19

Anton returned two mornings later. He limped into the dining room, his navy business suit torn and mud stained. Scarcely noticing the smashed dinner service that lay around his feet, he issued an order: “Start packing! We’re leaving.“

“What happened?“ demanded his wife, looking at large gash on his forehead, with sticking plaster over it that was coming off. “What did they do to you?“

“I’ll tell you later. Just do as I say now!“ Magda saw her father was both angry and frightened.

“Yes,“ said Lisel “but you must let me put something on that cut first.“

Magda hovered nearby, hoping to pick up more information, while her father allowed his wound to be dressed. He would not say how he came to be in such a state, except that his forehead was cut when a piece of glass from his broken spectacles got embedded in it.

“We’re going then?“ queried Lisel. “You’re quite sure?“

“Oh yes, I’m sure. I don’t know where we’ll end up yet but there’s no place for us in Germany any more.“ Magda knew then that whatever had happened to her father in Munich, it had been cataclysmic.

“What about visas?“ she asked.

“Da Gama has given me a written invitation to visit him in Lisbon,“ he replied. “That should get us out of here.“ Lisel wondered how they would manage for money.

“What happened about the stamps?“ she asked.

“They’re going to be our lifeline,“ Anton announced. “Da Gama said they are worth quite a bit. He wouldn’t buy them

because he could not be sure of getting a fair price if he sold them on here. He told me to find a buyer abroad, and that's what I'm going to do."

"Are we going to live in Portugal?" asked Magda.

"No. We are going there because Da Gama wants to visit his mother. The Brownshirts wrecked his business in Munich. So now he wants to emigrate to Chile, where a stamp dealer has offered him a partnership in his firm. Da Gama says we stand more chance of getting visas for Chile if we apply for them in Lisbon.

"Chile!" exclaimed Magda. "We don't know anyone there, or the language. What language do they speak? Portuguese?"

"We wont be the only Germans there. The language incidentally is Spanish. We'll soon learn it."

"We'll have to,"' said Lisel, who was relieved to be going anywhere. So was Magda as she began to take in the idea of South America. The look of hatred on Wolfgang's face – a boy she had known since childhood – and her helplessness when that vicious lout in the bedroom wanted to rape her, convinced her almost anywhere was better than Nuremberg.

The next few days were busy. Fritz came and went often. His father was still in Dachau, though Leopold Kahn and Professor Feldheim had been released almost immediately because they were able to show they were leaving the country. Fritz was warned not to go near Dachau for news of his father, lest he be arrested himself. Lisel went there instead every day, without learning when, if ever, her brother would be let out. Meanwhile Fritz was trying to get visas for any country that would have him and his father. However, after nine of November all the consulates were besieged by people wanting the same thing.

He tried hard not to lose hope. One evening, looking marginally more cheerful, he dropped into his aunt's and uncle's shell of a house for a meal. As there was no dining room furniture intact, they had this as a picnic on the floor. While they

were eating eggs mayonnaise he announced, “I’ve had a bit of luck. I met a young Frenchman the other day who used to come to our jam sessions. I didn’t know, but he works at the Consulate. He was appalled at what’s been happening here. Anyway, to cut a long story short, he’s seen to it that Father and I are put on the waiting list for visas to France.“

“That’s a relief!“ said Anton.

“Yes, it’s a start. I also have the Levys to thank. Lili wrote a letter saying she and August would sponsor me and I was able to show that at the French Consulate.

“How are the Levys?“ asked Magda.

“Lili sounded cheerful. She’s not singing again yet, but has hopes of doing so, and August has his job in a theatre in Montmartre. She also wrote that Lotte is chattering as much as ever – in French now.“

“Will being on a waiting list get Heinz out of Dachau?“ asked Lisel.

“I don’t think so,“ replied Fritz despondently, “not until I can produce a fixed date and the clerk at the Consulate said we might have to wait up to two years.“

The Feldheims had got their visas for Palestine and would have left before what was now called ‘The Night of Broken Glass’ if they had not been waiting for Traudel, who was on her way back from the Zionist training farm in North Germany. Magda went over to say goodbye. When she went up to the house, she saw the front door was hanging on its hinges. As soon as she stepped into the hall, Sonia rushed forward and hugged her, asking, “Are you all right? We heard your father was hurt.“

“Yes, he was attacked, but he won’t talk about it, so Mutti and I can only guess what happened. However, he’s not seriously injured, thank goodness – just cut and bruised.“

Sonia shook her head.‘“He must be shaken though. To think such a respected figure as Anton Senger could be beaten up by those swine – everything’s happening much more quick-

ly than even Bernard and I supposed."

"Yes. What about you?"

"We're all fine. Anyway we're going tomorrow. Soon all this will be behind us."

"The Brownshirts set fire to Mutti's dolls," said Ezra who had just appeared. "It's a wonder they didn't burn the house down." Just then Professor Feldheim came down the stairs. In Dachau they had shaved off his beard and all his hair. Magda stared at his naked skull. Seeing the look of astonishment on her face, Ezra said, "They've made him look like the pictures of Death you see in one of those old books, haven't they? All he needs is a scythe."

"Don't exaggerate Ezra!" protested his father and, waving his hand round his head, he admitted, smiling, "It's certainly a bit chilly for November in Nuremberg, but no doubt the sun will be shining in Palestine."

Traudel who was with her father, ran down the stairs and grasped Magda's hands. "Thanks be to Jehovah that you are all right! You're not still staying here are you?"

"No. We leaving too. We may end up in Chile."

"I wish you were coming to Palestine," said Traudel. "It's no further away than South America and it is the right place for us."

"There's no need to go over all that again," said Ezra.

"No," added his father, "we've already made our case. I'm only too sorry that my gloomy prophecies are coming true."

"Did you expect the other night?" asked Magda.

"Well I didn't expect a pogrom, but I was afraid there would be trouble after that German diplomat died in Paris."

"Do you mean the one the Pole shot?" asked Magda. She remembered Uncle Heinz speaking about a Jewish boy who had fired a revolver at an official in the German Embassy.

"Yes, I wasn't surprised when the death caused public outrage. What I didn't know was that Dr. Goebbels would seize on it was an excuse for promoting what he called 'spontaneous

demonstrations.‘ They were not spontaneous of course. It was all organised.“ The Professor sighed wearily.

“The Storm Troopers all over the country had their instructions,“ Traudel added. At the farm we heard about them wrecking Jewish homes and businesses in Berlin. Then coming here on the train, people were talking about other places where they ransacked homes and burned down the synagogues. Listening to all this, Magda was struck by the Professor’s use of the word ‘pogrom‘. Walking home across the park afterwards, she remembered that birthday ages ago when her father had assured them all that they did not have pogroms in Germany.

The family packing was soon done. They could only take as much as they could put in the car. Apart from clothes, Anton rolled up the torn canvas of his father’s portrait and put it at the bottom of his suitcase. He also removed the most valuable stamps from the album and put them carefully into an envelope.

“It is a good thing they’re so easy to carry around,“ he said.

“It might be best to keep them hidden though,“ suggested Lisel, taking them out of the envelope and sewing them into the turnups of his trousers.

The rest of time before Anton left, he went round to any remaining clients, who were not leaving Nuremberg, to tell them he would not be able to act for them any more. He also withdrew money from the bank, just before they froze his account. Some of this he handed to Lisel to buy clothes and anything else that would not be confiscated at the border. The rest he gave to Florrie, who was going to live with her sister. She was still confused and wanted to believe the raid on the house was no more than a drunken spree by lads who had got out of hand. “No, Sir,“ she told Anton when he handed her a roll of banknotes. “When you come back, you’ll need this.“

“Have it!“ he replied. “I can only take ten marks out with me and we’re not coming back.“

Before Magda did any packing, she sat down and typed a

letter to Jacob, who was back in Berlin, telling him what was going on in the town and all that had happened when the Storm Troopers broke into the house – well nearly all. She could not bring herself to tell him everything that had happened in her bedroom.

The most difficult part of her letter was finding words to let Jacob know she was leaving, without knowing exactly where she and her parents were going. "Papa's plans are vague," she wrote. "We will have to make a life in an unknown country and speak daily in a language which is also, as yet, unknown to us. If that happens, I want you to know that I will never forget you."

If Magda had been surprised by her father's precipitous decision to leave Germany, she was just as surprised to discover that Paul Gutman and his wife had no intention of doing so. "But why not Paul?" she asked when she went to say her family were going. "As a photographer you can work anywhere in the world."

"I'm too old to begin again. I could never get used to living in a strange country, nor could Hedy. Both our families have been here for at least three hundred years. This is where we have our roots. If a full grown tree is uprooted it dies."

"My family has been here as long as yours. Now even Papa sees the Nazis don't care two pins about that." She looked round the sitting room which was unchanged. Because the Gutmans rented their house from a Gentile, the Brownshirts had given it a miss.

"Aren't you afraid of being arrested?" she asked Paul.

"They won't bother with me," he replied. "It's not as if I was a factory owner or any other kind of prominent citizen."

"What will you live on?" she continued. "Those Jews who stay on in the town after what happened on the ninth are unlikely to have money for your photographs of them."

"We'll manage," said Hedy. "We don't need much." Magda sat drinking coffee and eating Hedy's marble cake, hoping, but

unconvinced, the Gutmans were right in believing the Nazis would leave them alone. As she walked home she wondered if there was anything she could have said to shake her friends' determination to cling to the few tattered remnants of their existence in Nuremberg.

The Kahns too had not been visited by the Storm Troopers, but not for the same reason as the Gutmans. The first Leopold knew of the pogrom was when the SS came to arrest him early in the morning on the tenth. As soon as they let him go from Dachau he came to see the Sengers. Like all their Jewish friends he visited them rather than rang them up, because the Nazis now intercepted telephone calls. He too had had his head shaved in Dachau and, to the distress of Alice, defied convention by walking round town hatless. When his wife insisted he put his hat on, he hat retorted, "I'm not ashamed. They have tob e ashamed at what they've done. Let them see."

Finding Anton is what used to be his office, he contemplated the desk which was now only useful as firewood, and said, "At first Alice and I did not know why the Brownshirts neglected such a tempting target as our house. But all became clear when they made me sign it over before they let me out of Dachau. Guess who's having it?"

"I've no idea, who?"

"Lieutenant Commander Schultz. He came to see me yesterday – alone. He said he'd heard I was going to England and asked if I knew what was happening to the house. I told him some of the SA people had been to look at it, knowing that like most of the SS he probably loathed the Brownshirts. Actually, no one had been, but I wanted to see how he would react. Up to that point he was surprisingly polite for such a rabid anti-Semite. Now his tone changed. Very curtly, he said, 'You can tell anyone who asks that I'm requisitioning it.' He wants the furniture as well."

Magda, who was trying to tidy up in the office, gasped and her father snorted.

“What does it matter?“ Leopold said with a shrug. “If they’d let me sell it, I would only have got a derisory sum for it. We are all on the Wheel of Fortune. It turns, taking some of us to the top, sweeping others to the bottom. The Lieutenant Colonel is riding high now – but who knows for how long?“

Hearing Herr Kahn, Magda admired him because he was already leaving the past behind him. Yet she could not help feeling a pang when she thought of Eva Schultz prancing round that house, preening herself in front of the long mirrors in the salon.

Leopold had come by himself to see his friend but was soon followed by Alice and then Fritz. Lisel took Alice on one side. “I am glad we are leaving all this behind, even though we’re losing everything. What about you?“

“I feel the same. I try not to worry about where we’ll be and how we’ll make out. It was a blow when Leopold lost the factory, but I don’t care who has the house.
There’s only one thing I’m sorry about and that’s so unimportant I can’t think why I let it bother me.“

“What is it?“

“Well I’d set my heart on shipping a piece of furniture to Olga as a wedding present. Now I can’t because Shultz has comandeered everything.“ Lisel thought for a moment before saying, “As you can see our furniture is nearly all broken. But come with me,“ and she took Alice to the music room. “What about that?“ she asked, pointing at the black lacquered cabinet with its elaborate gilt inlay. Do you think Olga would like it?“

“She’d love it, so do I. It’s beautiful. How come they didn’t smash it?“

“God knows! Maybe they were worn out after pushing the piano over the balcony,“ Lisel suggested bitterly. Anyway the cabinet is still here and I don’t see why the Nazis should have it. I’ll get it shipped to Olga right away if you give me an address.“

While this conversation was going on, Fritz was questioning Leopold. “Did you see my father in Dachau?“

“We were in the same dormitory.“

“How was he?“

“Not too bad. He kept his self respect.“ Fritz suspected there was something behind this remark and asked, ‘What do you mean?“

“Not everyone did. Herded together, some of them behaved like brutes. I watched three of them fighting over the toothbrush of a man who had had a heart attack. I could hardly believe they were educated, professional men. Heinz, on the other hand, appeared resigned. Just before I left, he gave me a message for you. ‘Tell Fritz not to wait. Germany has lost its soul. He’s to get out as soon as possible.“‘

“I am certainly not leaving Father in that place. If they don’t release him sooner, I’ll stay the two years to get the French visas and see what happens then.“ Leopold shook his head but did not say any more.

Later, when the Sengers were alone and picnicking on the floor again, there was a knock at the door. Florrie stood in the hall and called, “Who is it?“ Only she heard the muttered reply but reassured, she opened up. Whereupon Rudolph Lill walked past her, into the dining room.

“What on earth are you doing here?“ shouted Anton, rising to his feet. Lill was taken aback but recovered himself.

“I came to say I don’t approve of what the Storm Troopers did the other night.“ Looking round the wrecked room and the pile of broken chairs still by the grate, he went on, “It was disgusting!“

“You let it happen though“

“How could I stop it? I didn’t even know about it until it had happened.“

“No more than you knew I was going to be kicked out of the firm until it happened. Don’t you see it is because of you and people like you that accept everything that ‘happens‘ that

the Nazis behave as they do. Why you hadn't the courage to even speak to me in the street lest your masters objected. Now you wait until after dark, when no one will see you, to come here. GET OUT!" Lill threw up his hands and backed away into the hall, where Florrie shut the front door after him.

"That was splendid!" exclaimed Magda, giving her father a hug.

"I feel better after that," said Anton, smiling for the first time since his return from Munich. Then turning to Lisel, he asked, "What do you think, darling?"

"I think you and Magda are so alike," she answered, kissing them both.

On the day the Sengers were leaving Nuremberg Magda got up in the half light of early morning and, pulling aside a blanket Florrie had tacked up in front of the broken window, went out onto the balcony. She could just see the bare branches of the beech tree in the autumn fog. She shivered in the cold damp air and went back in to dress. She wondered whether to roll up and pack the alpine sleeping bag she had brought back from Murren, but decided against it. It was better to have no more the two suitcases that she could carry easily. Then she wandered aimlessly round the house which had already died. Florrie had now gone to her sister's and her parents were not up. She hovered in front of the telephone, willing it to ring. When she sent her letter to Jacob she had half hoped he would risk a call being monitored and would telephone to say goodbye, but he had not done so. Perhaps he had not received her letter because these were being intercepted as well.

Jacob had got her letter, but not until the day before because he had been in hospital having his appendix taken out. He saw and heard nothing of the horrors of the ninth until he was allowed to go back to his lodgings again, where he found a number of urgent messages from his New York editor and Magda's letter. As soon as he read it, he got into his car and began driving to Nuremberg. He drove too fast and was stopped

for speeding. Horrorstruck, he was made to go to the police station in Halle to be charged.

Magda stood ankle deep in dark red beech leaves. On the wooden table beside her lay her camera which the Brownshirts had not found in the big drawer of the wardrobe. If the fog cleared, she hoped to take a few last pictures of what had been her home. Just now she could barely see the potting shed, smothered in ivy, or the cold, empty greenhouse. It was quite still and the fog muffled every sound.

The silence was broken when the back door opened and she heard Mutti say, "She's in the garden. Go to her!" Then Jacob, with his hospital pallor, appeared out of the fog like a ghost. He ran towards her, "Thank God! I was afraid I'd be too late." He put his arms round her. She burst into tears.

"I don't know why I'm crying," she managed to say at last. "I'm so happy to see you."

"You know why I've come don't you? I'm here to take you away to where you will be safe and I can look after you. Everything is changed now. You are in real danger. You must come."

When Magda did not speak, he went on, "I've told your mother I love you."

"What did she say?"

"She said I was to tell you that. Your father was there as well and bombarded me with questions, which I answered as well as I could. In the end they both agreed that if you are happy to marry me, they would be happy too. It's for you to decide.

O Magda, you are the only girl for me. Please say yes." He clasped her more tightly, trying to find her under the thick woollies that swaddled her.

Conflicting thoughts whirled round inside Magda's head. With Jacob's arms round her, she felt warm and sheltered from harm. But marriage! The idea of it scared her more than the unknown dangers that threatened her. She kissed Jacob but did not say yes. Instead she told him, "Everything has indeed changed and, because it has, I cannot abandon my father and

mother until I know they are safe.“ She spoke urgently, trying to make Jacob understand this and in a way he did, although what she said filled him with despair.

He broke away and, gripping her by her outstretched hands, stared at her bleakly. “I’m so afraid I’ll never see you again. You will disappear and I wont even know what’s happened to you.“

“No! I’ll write to you Jacob. I will, whenever I can. I promise.“ Shaking his head, he still looked at her. He turned and ran towards the garden gate.

“Wait!“ she called. He paused. Then, seeing the camera in her hand, he shook his head again and went on running. Magda took a picture of a grey figure disappearing in the fog.

CHAPTER 20

Magda cycled round the town looking for Fritz. They were leaving Nuremberg that day and her father wanted to try. one more time, to persuade him to come with them. Outside the house in the Old Town, no one had cleared away the burnt remains of Heinz's books from the yard. It had rained, soaking the cloth covers which had not caught fire. She left her bike and walked to the Vogel's door, over a few scraps of handwritten music. They were Heinz's concerto.

Fritz was not at home. This was no surprise. She knew he often slept at friends' places to avoid one of those dawn calls by the SS. None of the friends, she visited next, had seen Fritz however. It was only when she got back to her parents that she discovered him arguing with her father.

"I know you mean well," Fritz was saying, "but I'm not going."

"If, they let Heinz out," protested Anton, "it's sure to be on condition he leaves Germany. He can join you, wherever you are".

"Wherever that is! You know my father is not the most practical of men. I cant see him coping with all the bureaucratic rigmarole he'd have go through here, before he got out, let alone managing what may be a complicated journey across Europe."

"It wont be the first time he's travelled abroad! What is more, you're underestimating the sense of urgency he will have. Knowing the danger he faces if he fails will concentrate his mind." Lisel, who was standing at her husband's side in this battle, was torn between the two of them. She knew how

vague her brother was. At the same time, the longer her nephew stayed in Germany, the more likely it was he too would be arrested.

Magda was sure Fritz would not come with them. Nor did he. Obviously under strain, he still smiled as they all wished each other luck. Then he got on his bike and rode away across the park, with the three Sengers watching till he was out of sight.

An hour or so later, the Sengers got into Opel. It was tightly packed but at the last minute Anton found a place for a case of wine. That's for Karl Werfel," he said. The plan was to make for the farm first of all.

When they got to Bayreuth they sighted the first of several road blocks. Anton, who knew the town, avoided these by taking to the side streets. "We'll pend the first night here," he declared. "If we leave early enough in the morning, the police manning those road blocks will still be in bed." Lisel and Magda hoped he was right. Anton drove to the back of the hotel he had often stayed at in the past. After walking round to the front, the three of them went into the Reception to ask for rooms. A young clerk, with his blonde hair slicked back with grease, looked at the Sengers in a pointed fashion. Then he said, "I suggest you read the notice." This said 'NO JEWS HERE'. A little girl, standing at the desk with her mother, sniggered, while the woman pretended not to hear.

Magda and her parents went to another hotel after that and a couple of guest houses, all of which had the same notice posted outside. Wondering what to do, they walked back to the car, which they had left outside the first place they had tried. An old man was standing by it. Anton recognised him. He was the doorman Ralph, who had worked at the hotel for years. "I am glad I've caught you Sir," he said, "if you haven't found anywhere to stay yet, and you probably haven't – more's the pity! – may be able to help." Magda and her parents waited as he went on, "My sister runs a boarding house. She'll put

you up. It's not de luxe of course, like this," he added, waving his hand at the imposing pile behind them.

"God in heaven! That doesn't matter," exclaimed Anton. How do we get there?"

"I'll take you. If you don't mind my suggesting it, it might be best if I drove. The police are active today and likely to stop any Jew driving a big car." Anton nodded, thanking him. They were not stopped because the doorman was in his uniform and the police, seeing the hotel logo on the jacket, ignored his passengers.

So the Sengers spent their first night away from home in Frau Lessing's boarding house on the outskirts of the town. The paint on the window frames and door of the ugly brick building was cracked and flaking, but the steps up to the door had been scrubbed. Ralph went inside to have a word with his sister, coming back soon to say she had a couple of rooms free. Frau Lessing, a stout woman, wearing a brown apron and black boots, was a bit younger than her brother. She looked capable. Greeting them with a tight smile, she looked them up and down, but did not ask them any questions. After showing them to a couple of monastically simple rooms with polished lino floors, she excused herself. "I am cooking dinner," she said. Perhaps you would like to join my brother downstairs for the meal in an hour's time." She hesitated, then added, "I think you will find that more comfortable than eating with my other guests, who are all regulars. As they hardly ever see strangers here, they are sure to be curious."

Lisel, who could see the woman was embarrassed in case those regular guests were angry at finding a Jewish family in their midst, accepted the invitation immediately. As soon as Frau Lessing had gone, she said to Anton and Magda, 'We musn't cause that woman any trouble. It is very brave of her to take us in."

"Yes," Anton agreed. "She and her brother are still decent people."

When Magda and her parents were eating frankfurters and sauerkraut with the landlady and her brother, conversation was rather strained at first. However, after a couple of glasses of strong Munich beer, Ralph admitted he was puzzled by the Nazi objections to Jews. “I was always glad to see you at the hotel“, he said, toasting Anton. “I can’t think why they don’t want you. You are a gentleman, which is more than can be said for some of our guests in their smart uniforms.“ That night Magda slept in a feather bed, for the first time since her own was ripped apart.

The family got up early the next morning, when only Frau Lessing was about. After a hasty breakfast in the kitchen, Anton asked how much they owed. The bill he was given was modest but he paid the landlady the sum he would have paid at the hotel which refused to have him. She looked surprised but he said, “I want you to have it, not only for the good food and comfortable beds, but because we know you and your brother took a risk taking us in. Thank you.“

There no road blocks as it was not yet five o’clock when the Sengers left Bayreuth in the Opel. “Where are we going after the Werfels?“ asked Magda as Anton took the main road north.

“We’ll try and cross the border into France eventually,“ replied her father. “But I want to say goodbye to my old friend first. I expect it will be the last time we ever see him.

“I wonder what he thinks about Hitler now?“

“He wont like him any better,“ Magda assured her.

“No,“ added Anton. “He saw through him within days of setting eyes on him in the war. Though, like me, he made the mistake of not seeing how dangerous a cracked corporal could become.“

Magda did not talk much as they drove along. Sometimes she looked out of the window at the solid farmhouses and fields covered in stubble where barley and rye had been harvested earlier. Anton avoided the towns and the autumn

countryside looked empty. Once the Opel halted to let a cowman and his herd of piebald cattle pass. Occasionally Magda saw children playing or a woman hanging up washing in her yard. With nothing much happening outside to distract her, she sat thinking.

Her father's wish to see his old army friend again, prompted her to list all the friends she had lost. The roll call was a long one. There was Trude, the first to reject her. Then there were those who themselves had been rejected by the Nazis. Leonie, Ludwig and Olga were now in England, Traudel in Palestine, and probably by this time Rachel was in Switzerland. She remembered Herr Rosenthal talking about the wandering Jews, driven out of Jerusalem. It had begun all over again. Though she missed the friends who had gone, she was less afraid for them, than for those left behind. What would become of Fritz who was as much her friend as he was her cousin? She tried to comfort herself by remembering how resourceful he was – but what would happen to the Gutmans?

Then there was Jacob. He had given up on her. Once again she saw him disappearing in the fog as he ran to the garden gate. When she went back into the house that morning, he mother, seeing her tear-stained face, said, "You sent him away then. Can you tell me why?"

"Yes, he's gone, but please don't make me talk about it," she had replied.

"Your father and I liked what we saw of Jacob," Lisel went on, "but of course we don't know him. You've kept him a secret for some reason."

"That was because I was mixed up. I still am."

Neither of them spoke for a bit, until Lisel said, "Well you don't have talk until you feel able to. You're only seventeen. That's young to be thinking of marriage. Even I was older than that when your father proposed. I won't say any more, except that we're so very glad we're not going to lose you – yet."

As they approached Walchensee, Anton drove through the

village. People in the street stared, surprised at the unusual sight of a car, until several of them recognised it. Magda saw one man, standing outside the beerhouse, peering through the windscreen. When he saw who the driver was, he muttered something and turned aside to spit. Next to the beerhouse there was an army recruitment poster.

Karl Werfel was in the farmyard when he saw the Opel and waved as he came towards the car. “You’re here, that’s good!“ Looking at them anxiously, as they got out, he asked, “How are you all? We’ve been getting bad news about Nuremberg. I was going there to find you, if you hadn’t come.“

“We’re leaving Germany,“ said Anton, embracing his friend. We’ve come to say goodbye.“

“So the white crow has driven you out. I’m very sorry. I’m hoping you’ll stay for a bit though, if this is to be our last meeting until God knows when. Come with me Anton while I give the cows their fodder and tell me what’s been going on.“ Then turning to Lisel and Magda, he said, “I expect you would like to have a wash and brush up. Go in. Herta will give you some hot water.

“What do you want me to do about the car? Is it all right to leave it here?“ asked Anton.

Karl paused, then said, “I tell you what, Wilhelm’s taken the truck into town. So put your car the barn,“ and he went to open the big double door. “That way if any of my Nazi neighbours call, they wont see it.“

“Your neighbours have become Nazis then?“ remarked Anton, as he took the case of wine for Karl out of the boot. “The folk round here used to let politics pass them by.“

“Some of them still do, but there are more zealots than there used to be, particularly those who sell supplies to the SS, who’ve set up camp near the village.“

While Anton went with Karl on his rounds, he told him about the house being wrecked. “Good God! Who would have believed it?“ exclaimed Karl, stopping dead in his tracks. “Lisel

and Magda must have been scared to death. And you?“ he asked, noticing that Anton was limping. “How did you come by that?“ he continued, looking at the ugly gash on his friend’s forehead.

Anton’s face darkened as he said, “I fell and broke my glasses.“ Then he changed the subject. “How Wilhelm? They say there’s going to be war? Will he have to go?“

“There’ll be a war all right. They’ve started putting posters up in the village now. The latest one says, “Through Military Will to Military Strength‘ – the Lord preserve us!“ Franz threw up his hands in despair. Then he went on, “When war comes, I’ve no doubt Wilhelm will have to go, and I’ll find it hard running this place without him.“

“What does he think about it?“ asked Anton.

“Although he doesn’t say much, I know he doesn’t mind if they call him up. He’s crazy about machines. He sees himself flying a plane and becoming another ‘Red Baron‘. For him war’s a big adventure. He thinks he’ll see life.“

“He’ll see death, that’s for sure,“ said Anton as they made their way back to the house.

Magda carried the two cans of hot water upstairs that Herta filled for her and her mother. After they had washed she put her face flannel outside on the window ledge to dry. Then she said, “I’d like to get some fresh air. Do you want to come for a walk Mutti?“

No, I think I’ll lie down for a bit. It’s sure to be a long evening.“ Then, looking her daughter, who was leaning out of the open window, gazing at the hens pecking about in the dust of the farmyard, she added anxiously, “If you do go out, I would avoid the village. I have a feeling that the less we’re seen here, the better it will be for Karl.“ Magda, remembering the man outside the beer house, said, “I expect you’re right. I’ll walk in the woods and maybe go down to the lake.“

Magda sat on a tree stump by the lake, the waters of which were still and black in the fading November light – thankful

she had not met anyone on her walk, though in earlier times she had been happy with a score of skating villagers. She thought of the day she had glimpsed a younger, happier Mutti than the one she thought she knew. Some of her happiest memories were of times spent, hiking, picnicking, and gathering mushrooms in these woods. It was these she would miss when or if she made her home in Chile, which she now knew was a land with fifty volcanoes and a desert. It was dusk when she got up to go back to the farm. She decided this place is for her what Sulzberg had been for my grandmother.

As she left the tall firs and ancient oaks, she said *"auf Wiedersehen"*, hoping, but not expecting to see them again one day.

Herta laid on a big supper that evening with a main dish of meat balls and a mountain of roast potatoes, as well as home cured ham and several kinds of sausage. After that there was cheese and raspberry compote with cream. "I'm ravenous," said Anton as he sat down. Magda and Lisa were hungry too, as they had none of them eaten since they had rye bread and coffee in Frau Lessing's kitchen at dawn. Wilhelm came back from the town, just in time to join them, taking a seat where he could talk to Magda. Magda looked round the large kitchen. The dresser was bare because Hertha was using the best willow pattern plates for this meal. Nothing else had changed though, the black kettles sat on top of the range where a wood fire burned, and the wall clock with its eagle chimed every half hour as usual.

Hertha, her work done, was going to bed when Anton took hold of her. "You given us a feast," he cried. The old woman looked at him, startled, "It is just plain, German food," she said.

"That's what is so good about it," he replied. He would have kissed her but she, thinking he must be drunk, pushed him away.

Asking, "Is there anything else you need Mr. Karl," and be-

ing assured there was not, she said good night and disappeared upstairs.

No one round the table felt like sleeping yet. Between them the men drank most of three bottles of Anton's wine. Several times, Magda noticed Wilhelm, who sat opposite, looking at her. *He's a handsome boy*, she thought. *I expect, with those blue eyes and ready smile, he's a success with the girls.*

Everyone at this supper started off by talking about the past, rather than the troubled present. However there were awkward silences, usually broken by Karl, proposing another toast. Nor was it possible to forget the outside world for the whole of the evening. Eventually Wilhelm, turned to Anton, saying, "So you're leaving Germany. Where do you want to go?"

"It's not so much where we want to go," came the reply, "but where we can." Then he told the Werfels about da Gamba's invitation and the possibility of Chile. Wilhelm looked across the table at Magda saying, "I can just see you as a South American senorita, in a long frilly dress, waving castanets in the air." This remark jarred on Magda who replied curtly, "I don't know about the frilly dress and Mutti's more likely to learn how to use castanets."

Realising he had got off on the wrong foot, Wilhelm stopped flirting. "You'll see a different world," he went on seriously, "I must say, I envy you." As Magda looked incredulous, he explained, "My best chance of seeing the world is if there's a war and I have to fight in it."

"Do you mean you're ready to die for Hitler?"

"I hope I wont die for any man, but if I refused to go when I'm called up, I'd find myself in gaol, if they didn't shoot me. Quite apart from that I believe that a man can prove himself in war. Father doesn't think that of course. He had a wretched time in the last one, stuck in the trenches. I wont join the army however. It'll be the Luftwaffe for me." His face lit up as he confided, "Most all I'd like to learn how to fly a Messerschmitt."

"A what?"

"Messerschmitt – the new fighter plane. In one of those you are on your own, pitting your wits against your enemy."

He would have gone on enthusing but, getting no response from Magda, he turned his attention to Lisel.

Magda had not known what to say to Wilhelm. She could not understand him looking forward to fighting for Hitler. He spoke without thinking. At the same time, when he talked about fighting duels in the air, he sounded so heroic – a modern D'Artagnan.

Meanwhile, Karl was looking worried and questioned Anton about the sort of travel documents he had and how he planned to get across Europe. After that they went back to talking about the past again, recalling the days when they were bachelors together. When they got on to their days in the army, Lisa and Magda, who had heard all the stories before, went to bed.

At four in the morning Hertha knocked at Magda's door. When there was no answer, she turned the handle and went in. She grasped the girl's shoulders, shaking her, gently at first, then more urgently when she did not stir. "Get up! You have to get up my dear."

"What is it?" asked Magda drowsily, still half asleep. Then the sound of a motor cycle back firing made her sit up with a start and turn to Hertha. "What's that?"

"My nephew," said the old woman. "He's just been to say the SS are coming here."

"No!" exclaimed Magda, jumping out of bed, and starting to dress. "Where are Papa and Mutti?"

"Mr. Karl is with them. Everyone's going downstairs." Magda scrambled into her clothes and went to the kitchen, leaving Hertha to make the bed, so that it looked as if no one had been sleeping there.

"We'll go immediately," Anton was saying to Karl, as Magda joined him and her mother.

"No, that wont do," said Karl, "you'll meet them on the road and they'll stop the car."

"Well, what do you suggest? If the SS find us here, it won't do you any good to be known as someone harbouring us."

"Worse than that, it won't do you any good. I don't know what the SS want. They might arrest you. At best they'll search you and strip you of any valuables you have. It's one of their ways of making a bit more money for themselves."

Lisel, looking nervous, leaned on the table for support. "The stamps!" she whispered. Magda went over to put her arms round her. Anton shrugged.

"I don't suppose they'll arrest any of us, when I tell them we're leaving Germany. The Nazis want us to go. As for valuables, they'll be looking for jewels and cash and we haven't got any."

"They musn't find you," replied Karl firmly. It's not worth the risk. You can hide in the barn, if you can put up with a bit of straw and muck." Whereupon, he took Magda and her parents to the barn, telling them to stay at the far end, where covered with sour-smelling hay, they waited for what would happen next.

About ten minutes later they heard a car roar into they farmyard, then doors opening and slamming shut. Karl, who together with Wilhelm, was in the yard, greeted one of the callers, "Good morning, Herr Oberleutnant. What brings you here so early?"

To this he got a clipped reply in a Berlin accent. "We have been informed by a patriot that you have Jews here."

Ah, thought Magda, *the man outside the beerhouse*. There was more talking which was not audible. Then they heard Karl insisting, "I tell you, they've gone. They only stayed an hour." After that there was silence as everyone went into the house.

"They don't believe Karl," whispered Lisel. "They are searching for us." Anton gripped her arm, hoping to comfort her. Magda remembered she had left her face cloth on the window

ledge.

The SS men came out of the house again. The Sengers heard Karl say, “Goodbye Herr Oberleutnant“ and the door of the car open.

They waited for it to drive off. But the Oberleutnant paused, saying, “We’d better have a look in that barn before we go.“ Magda and her parents held their breath as they listened to the sound of approaching feet on the cobblestones. As soon as Karl opened the big door, the SS men saw the Opel. “That’s their car!“ said the Oberleutnant triumphantly. “It’s no use your denying it, our informer told us about it.“ He walked round it, so that Magda, peering through the straw, could see his jackboots planted on the floor, no more than a yard from her. “So where are they?“ he demanded. Magda clutched her mother.

“The car’s mine. I bought it,“ said Wilhelm coolly. “I told Anton Senger, he would be stopped if he was seen driving it, and that in any case Jews would not be allowed to have driving licences much longer.“

“You’re well informed young man,“ said the officer patronisingly. “So, where are the Jews?“

“I should think out of Germany by now Sir. I took them in the truck to the railway station.“ The Oberleutnant was silent. Then he laughed and said, “I wish you luck with your new toy. I hope you got a bargain.“

“Oh I did. The Jew was in no position to haggle, came the reply. With that the Oberleutnant and his men left.

The fugitives emerged from under the hay, brushing the straw and dirt off their clothes. “You were splendid,“ Magda told Wilhelm, “so convincing!“

“Indeed you were! Thank you from all of us,“ said Anton. “You’ve got a son to be proud of Karl.“

“I know that,“ his friend answered. “Come on back in. You can clean yourselves up and we can decide what to do next over breakfast.“ A bit later, having finished his second cup of coffee, Karl turned to Anton and said, “You are a marked man if you

leave in the Opel. About this time of the year I usually visit a couple of suppliers on the border. I could take you with me in the truck to Strasbourg. Once there, you can take a train to Paris on the first leg of your journey to Lisbon.

So it was agreed. Wilhelm, already gratified to be praised by Magda, found next that Anton wanted to make him a present of the car, saying, “You’ve deserved it.“

“No, I can’t have that,“ said Wilhelm dashing upstairs. In a few moments he was back, with a bundle of notes in his hand. “Look, I don’t need this now. I was saving it for a motor bike. You must take it,“ he said when Anton tried to push his outstretched hand away. “The car’s worth a lot more than this – one of these days I’ll let you have the rest.“

CHAPTER 21

On a November night, two weeks after the Sengers had left, Fritz was standing back in a deep Gothic doorway opposite the police station. He was staring up at the window of Gerhard Richter's office. He had tried to see him earlier in the day but the *polizist* on the desk, finding out Fritz did not have an appointment, had told him his superior had seen enough Jews. "It's no use waiting," he added.

There was a light on in Richter's' window, so he was still there. Earlier Fritz had watched from a nearby café where he had sat eating bread and bratwurst slowly, making his beer last until the place closed. By then it was nearly midnight but the *polizeibeamter* had not left his office. It was very cold. Every so often Fritz walked up and down the street to keep his circulation going, never taking his eyes off the police station doorway. "The man has to go home to bed sometime," he told himself when he heard a church clock strike two.

The day had begun well. Making a quick visit home, he found a letter telling him to go to the French Consulate. There he had been given visas made out for Heinz and Fritz Vogel. With these precious documents he had gone immediately to Dachau, fully expecting that when the officials there saw his father would be leaving the country, they would release him.

It had not been like that. To begin with, the guard on the gate was reluctant to let him in to speak to anyone in authority. Then when he refused to leave, the man, eager to see the back of him. said, "All right, go to Leutenant Klempner."

Fritz entered the yard just as a score of shaven-headed prisoners were being herded across it. Filled with foreboding,

he watched them shuffling along in their cotton, striped uniforms, shivering in the cold wind that blew down from the Alps beyond the camp. As they drew nearer he studied each of the grey, silent faces to see if his father was among them. The guard barked at them to pick their feet up. But when they tried to quicken their pace, one of them fell and the prisoner behind him tried to haul him to his feet. The guard strode over, kicked the fallen man and pistol whipped the prisoner who had tried to help. Despite repeated kicking, the man on the ground did not stir, so the guard shouted *"Schutze!"* Whereupon two *einfacher Soldaten* appeared and dragged the body away.

Leutenant Klempner was cleaning his pistol when Fritz entered the shabby little room where he was sitting. Putting it on the desk, he looked up. "Who are you? What do you want?" he demanded.

"My name is Fritz Vogel. I have reason to believe you may be willing to release my father," he replied, looking at the bullet headed officer, who stared back at him silently before a faint smile that did not reach his eyes flickered over his face.

"Who may your father be?" he asked in his metallic voice.

"Heinz Frederik Vogel."

"Vogel? Vogel? There is no prisoner of that name here."

"He was arrested on ninth November and brought here. Where is he?" The Leutnant stared before he said, "You are being insolent."

"Please be so kind as to tell me," Fritz said, lowering his voice. There was still no answer. Finally he asked, "Is he dead?"

"You will know that if you receive his ashes," the implacable Leutenant replied. Fritz fled from the room and the camp.

Once he had got back to Nuremberg he tramped the streets hour after hour, picturing his vague, gentle father. If he was dead, as the Leutnant seemed to suggest, how had he died? Leopold Kahn had not said he was ill when he left him in the camp. Had the guards killed him in some careless act of brutality? Was he in fact dead? Or was he still in Dachau? Leo-

pold Kahn, who might have told him more about conditions in the camp, had already left, with Alice, for England. Fritz racked his brains trying to think of someone who could tell him anything. As a last resort he decided to ask Gerhard Richter. Perhaps, he could not, or would not help, but Fritz believed the polizeimeister was not devoid of human feeling and what else was there to do?

The sergeant came down the steps of the station at half past two in the morning and began walking home. Fritz followed him and when he saw him about to go into the apartment block where he lived, he ran up, calling out his name. Richter gave a start. Then recognising the red haired boy he had let out of prison, he said, "So, you're still in Nuremberg!" Fritz nodded and Richter asked the same question as the camp Leutnant, but in a softer voice, "What do you want?"

Fritz told him about the visas for France and what had happened when he tried to get his father released from Dachau, ending with a plea, "Could you possibly find out what has become of my father, please?"

The sergeant began walking up the steps of the apartment building. Then, as he took out his keys, said, "Come and see me in my office at twelve noon tomorrow."

When Fritz walked into Richter's office the next morning, he was sitting at his desk. Seeing him come in, he put something in the drawer. He looked tired as he said in a flat voice. "Your father has not died nor, as far as I know, is he ill."

"O thank you. Thank you for finding this out and for being willing to tell me."

A wave of relief swept over Fritz as he spoke but before he could say anything else, Richter put up his hand to stop him and went on, "They have sent him to Buchenwald."

"Why?" asked Fritz dully. "That's another camp, isn't it? Where is it exactly?" "Near Weimar," came the answer.

"I'll go there," said Fritz, recovering from the shock at this unexpected news. If I show the people there my father has a

visa, they'll let him go. Won't they?" he went on, seeing the sergeant remained sombre."

'He is on the list marked 'Never to be Released'", said Richter. "If you go there, all that will happen is that they will arrest you too. In fact I am surprised they have not done so already. The SS are rounding up thousands of people, gypsies, vagrants, even the unemployed and of course Jews."

At that moment there was a noise in the street below. Richter moved to the window. "Come here!" he ordered. Fritz joined him to watch a contingent of soldiers marching by. They wore field grey, were armed and carried heavy back packs. "They are ready for action you see," said the sergeant, "Germany is on the brink of war. Our Führer is not going to be content with taking over Czechslovakia. He wants much more than that. Look here," he continued, grasping Fritz's arm. I'm going to give you piece of advice, "You cannot do anything to help your father. He must take his chance. You must leave Germany now. Even if you manage somehow to keep out of the hands of the SS, if you wait till war begins, the frontiers will be closed and then you won't be able to get away."

Fritz shook Herr Richter's hand but did not answer. Dazed he left him. When he had gone out of the office, Richter went back to his desk and took the bottle of whiskey out of the drawer again. As Fritz was leaving the station he heard a woman arguing with the policeman who had refused him entry the day before. "Where is he?" she pleaded. "Please tell me where they've taken him." Fritz looked at her face, trying to think where he'd seen her before. Then he remembered – it was with Magda. She was the photographer's wife, Hedy Gutman.

Fritz was numb with misery as he walked slowly home, with the idea of collecting a few clothes, though he had still not taken in completely Richter's advice. He was about to go through the archway into the courtyard to his door when a neighbour, coming out, brushed against his shoulder and muttered under his breath, "Don't go home!" Fritz looked at the man, who

lived next door and used to complain when he played jazz late at night, unsure whether he had heard him correctly, but the speaker was already hurrying away. Then, looking into the courtyard, Fritz saw the SS. They saw him and one of them shouted, “Halt!“ He turned and ran, with three or four officers after him. He knew the area better than they did, and diving down a side street, dashed through a cobbler’s where the owner, who was crouched over his last, looked up astonished as he fled out of the back door into another alleyway. At the end of this there was a bedding factory with a heap of stuff, awaiting transport, in front of it. Fritz crept under the tarpaulin covering the pile, which consisted of mattresses. He burrowed and squeezed until he was wedged between two columns of these, at the back near the wall. There he waited. His SS pursuers did not come to the bedding factory but Fritz decided to stay where he was until it was dark.

He was thinking of coming out when he heard a couple of drivers talking in the yard in front of him. They were speaking Swiss German and Fritz gathered one of them was going to Zurich. They stripped the tarpaulin off the mattresses and started to load them onto their trucks. They soon removed half the pile and one lorry was fully loaded when Fritz, realising they were going to discover him anyway, took a chance and emerging from his hiding place, asked “Can either of you give me a lift to Zurich?“

He put on his best smile. They looked suspiciously at his lanky, scruffy self while he looked at them, trying to size them up. One of them was small and wiry and glared at him The other was older, in his fifties maybe. He was taller and built like an athlete, though his figure had thickened. Unlike his companion, who bristled with hostility, he appeared merely surprised and curious. He spoke first. “What on earth were you doing in there?“ pointing to the half-dismantled consignment of mattresses.

Fritz decided to make up a story. “I knew drivers went from

here to Zurich. I want to see the girl I'm in love with. She's German but lives in Switzerland now."

"I don't believe a word of it," said the other driver. "You were hiding from someone. The police I expect. You're a thief, if not worse. Leave him alone Franz. He'll only cause trouble." Getting no answer from Franz, he became exasperated. He darted towards his truck, saying, "Please yourself. I've got my load. I'm off," and, starting up the motor, he drove out of the yard.

"There are trains to Zurich, you know," said Franz.

"Yes, but I haven't any money," answered Fritz.

The driver laughed. "Have you got a passport? You'll need one to get into Switzerland." Fritz, who had taken to carrying his passport about with him, produced it. He did not want the driver to look at it but Franz took it out of his hand. Opening it, he saw the large "J' printed on the first page and the name "Israel" inserted after "Fritz". "This means you're Jewish, doesn't it?" he said.

"Yes, we all have passports like that now," Fritz admitted. "It's a Nazi regulation." He stood waiting for the driver's reaction.

At last Franz said, "I hardly ever meet Jews. Now's my chance to get to know one. Give me a hand with the rest of these mattresses and you can tell me about yourself on the way to Zurich."

Seated in the cab with Franz, Fritz told him about being chased by the SS. The driver, who had picked up High German in his job, spoke to him in that.

"What about your parents?" he asked and Fritz explained that his mother had died soon after he was born. He added that his father was in a concentration camp, without going into detail.

Franz did not press him for more information but offered Fritz one of the small black cigars he was smoking. He took it, hoping it would stave off the pangs of hunger, though previously he had only smoked cigarettes. It tasted acrid and dried

his mouth Neither of them spoke for a few miles, until the driver said, “Then you are on your own.“ Fritz nodded and Franz went on, “What about this girl you said you wanted to see? Did you make her up?“ Even as Franz spoke Fritz decided that, before crossing into France, he would find Rachel, who had left Germany with her mother at the same time as the Sengers. “No,“ he answered, “she’s real and I’m in love with her.“ *And maybe I am,* he thought. “She’s in Berne somewhere,“ he added.

“I married my boyhood sweetheart,“ said Franz.

“Are you happy together?“

“Yes, on the whole,“ answered Franz, after reflecting for a moment or two. Marie’s given me three sons. She has moods, but it helps having this job – it means I’m not under her feet all the time.“ Then he asked Fritz if he had ever been to Switzerland.

“I was in Murren three years ago and took part in the Inferno.“

“Did you now?“ Franz exclaimed looking sideways at his companion in surprise. So did I when I was about your age. How did you make out? Could you finish?“

“Yes, in getting on for ten minutes.“

“Not bad!“

“It was so-so,“ said Fritz modestly. “I expect you were much faster.“

“I finished in just under seven minutes, but I was brought up in the shadow of the Schilthorn.“ Fritz had a sudden picture in his mind of the burly driver, with a cigar clenched between his teeth, as he once was – a tough, vodka drinking mountain boy, like the ones he knew he would never beat in the race.

The journey to Zurich was well over two hundred miles. The driver kept up a good pace, without stopping. He did not get tired or hungry because, as he explained, he had slept most of the day and made sure of a good meal before he started. Fritz however, was exhausted. Before long, the hum of the en-

gine and steady pounding of the tyres on the tarmac sent him off to sleep.

Franz woke him up as the truck approached the Swiss border. “Don’t show your passport unless you have to,“ he told him, “I’ll try and get us through without it. That way there’ll be less time wasted answering questions.“ This plan worked. The border control officers were used to seeing the truck and merely glanced at the driver’s papers. One of them looked enquiringly at the young passenger, slumped in his seat, seemingly asleep. Hastily, Franz said, “He’s my son,“ and drove on.

Franz dropped his passenger near the railway station in Zurich, cutting short his attempts to thank him, he called, “Good luck with your girl!“ Whereupon he revved up again, without waiting to hear Fritz tell him he may have saved his life.

Fritz went into the railway station. He had not eaten for twenty four hours and, hovering in the doorway of the buffet, he savoured the smell of coffee and hot chocolate, looking hungrily at the men and women munching buttery croissants. He only had a few coins in his pocket. In any case, they were German money and no use in Switzerland. He thought of going into the town to see if he could get a job, dish washing in a place where they would give him something to eat. Then he saw an elderly, bewildered couple who had got off a train, standing on the rapidly-emptying platform, surrounded with bags and suitcases. On impulse he went up and offered help them with these. He saw from a label on one case that they came from Baltimore, so he spoke to them in English. They were relieved when they heard him.

“Someone was supposed to meet us,“ said the woman, “but we seem to have missed him.“

“Can you get us a cab,“ asked her husband. “Do you know the lingo here?“

“Well, I speak German and that’ll do,“ replied Fritz. Then he found the pair a taxi and told the driver to take them to

the hotel they said they were staying at. He also found out for them how much the fare ought to be.

"We're certainly glad we met you," said the wife. "Be generous now George!" George was, giving Fritz enough cash for breakfast and a bit over.

Over the next few days, he trawled through Zurich, taking whatever job he was offered, hoping to make enough to get him to Berne and not arrive on Rachel's doorstep dead broke, if and when he tracked her down. The first evening he worked as a waiter in a café where the proprietor took him on to help out with a birthday party. He was given his food, but not enough money to pay for lodging anywhere. He spent the nights hiding in the organ loft of the Fraumunster Church. There he was discovered by the organist who came to practise early one morning. He was a young man with whispy fair hair and a sensitive, rather weak face. As soon as he realised the drowsy vagrant wrapped up in an old rug was German, he asked questions. Fritz was reluctant to tell him much but did mention his father was a music teacher and had also composed a few pieces. "And you?" asked the organist finally, "Do you play?"

"Yes, the piano, popular stuff. I was hoping to get taken on somewhere – in a tavern maybe, but haven't had any luck with that so far.

"Try the Lion's Head," said the organist. One of my students told me Herr Gruber's looking for a pianist. He usually is. No one stays long because he's got a nasty temper."

Thinking whatever the man was like, he would not be as bad as the Nazis, Fritz said, "I can put up with that." So, furnished with the address, he went off to look for the tavern.

It took him some time and it was late morning when he found it in a courtyard, well away from the imposing banking area and fashionable Hoehenstrasse. Coming out of the daylight into a large, dark taproom that smelt of fried pork and tobacco, he could not see much at first, but heard someone bel-

lowing. As soon as his eyes got used to the dim light he made out a big, florid man. He was cursing a woman mopping up spilt wine on the floor near the table where he sat eating.

"Are you Herr Gruber?" Fritz asked.

"I am,"' came reply. Then realising Fritz was not speaking Swiss German, the landlord, stared at him and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"I heard you were looking for a pianist."

"Pull the blind up," Gruber growled at the charwoman. Then as the light shone on Fritz's face, he asked, "Are you a Yid?"

"I am Jewish, yes," answered Fritz and waited for what would come next. This was another question, "Are you a communist?"

"No," Fritz replied truthfully."

"Well that's something. I expect you're too clever by half though. Most Yids are. But I warn you, you'll have to be pretty smart to put one over on me." Then he pointed to an old upright in the corner. "Play something!" he ordered.

"What shall I play," asked Fritz, "a waltz? Jazz?"

"Anything goes here," answered his would-be boss, taking a flat box out of his pocket and downing several white pills. Fritz played one or two things, including the Skaters' Waltz, ending up with Swanee River which he ventured to sing. It was obviously a bonus that he knew English.

"You'll do," said the landlord, "I'll only want you in the evenings," he added, "from five until we close." Fritz managed to get the promise of an evening meal, in addition to the small salary.

Fritz went back to the Lion's Head at five o'clock and played until two in the morning. Gruber shouted a lot. Every few hours he was seized by griping pains. Then he would swallow some more pills and curse his indigestion, though Fritz wondered if there was something more seriously wrong with him than that. Whatever was the matter with him, it did not

improve his temper. His favourite victim was the under sized potboy who, whenever he saw Gruber was in one of his rages, tried to keep out of the way, lest he get a clip over the ear. Fritz, barricaded behind the piano was safer. Anyway Herr Gruber left him alone. This might have been because he was astute enough to see he had got a popular attraction in his new pianist. Word spread about him and the tavern filled up.

Most of the customers were male, beer-drinking students. They got Fritz to play Fats Waller favourites such as *Ain't Misbehavin* and *Honeysuckle Rose*, though towards the end of the night they hummed student songs for him to pick up, so that they could belt out the choruses. The landlord kept them in order and had no hesitation in throwing into the street anyone who got too drunk and made a nuisance of himself. Fritz got on well with the drinkers who were all about his own age, and enjoyed his job more than he thought he would when he started.

He needed to sleep during the day however and this was a problem. He was not going to get paid until he had worked a week and was still nearly broke. Therefore he curled up in various church pews, whenever there was no service. The churches were cold however, so he preferred a bench at the railway station, though there he was more likely to be woken up and moved on.

So far Fritz had not been noticed by the Swiss authorities but that was soon to change. One night he and everyone else in the Lion's Head heard a row going on in the kitchen, then a heavy thud. Next the white-faced cook came running into the bar. "Help! Quickly!" he shouted, "the boss is hurt." A young medical student jumped to his feet and went to see. Herr Gruber was lying on the floor. The student bent down and examined him. "He's dead," he told all those who were crowding into the kitchen. "We must call the police." The cook began whimpering, "I didn't kill him. He was try-

ing to choke me and he fell when I managed to push him off."

As soon as the police came, they questioned everyone including Fritz. The Sergeant demanded to see his Swiss visa. "I haven't got one," he admitted, "I'm just passing through," and produced the papers he had for France.

"Yet you've been working in Zurich, without permission to stay in Switzerland."

"Yes, I need to earn money to continue my journey." The Sergeant looked Fritz over carefully, before saying, "I have to send you to a detention centre, or back to Germany."

"Not Germany! I'm a Jew," cried Fritz. His interrogator, who took no interest in politics, was startled by this outburst. Sensing there was more behind it than he understood, he paused again. He had spent his career playing everything by the book but was nearing retirement. Taking a deep breath, he said, "Get out! Don't let me set eyes on you again!"

Fritz whispered, "Thank you," adding in English, "You're a regular guy," before he tagged on to a group of students who had been told they were free to go.

Despite this near miss, Fritz had no intention of leaving Switzerland before he had found Rachel. It was over sixty miles from Zurich to Berne and Herr Gruber had not paid him before his sudden death, so there was no question of him taking the train. He decided to walk. The journey took him four days. He did not risk hitching a lift on the road, in case he ended up in police hands again. In fact kept off the highway whenever possible and avoided going through villages. These detours made his journey longer than it should have been. He had managed to buy a bag of stale bread from a Zuruch baker and rationing this out carefully, made it do. Fortunately, he could always find a brook he could drink from. He was always hungry and looked longingly at some trout he saw once darting about in the water but had no means of catching one. At the next slow moving stream he came to, ice was already form-

ing near its banks. It did not rain, though once there was a light snow flurry that stung his face as he tramped steadily on. There were times when he was almost out of his wits. “I have to keep going,“ he told himself. “If I don’t give up, Father won’t.“ He willed Heinz to survive Buchenwald.

When it was dark, he looked for somewhere to sleep out of the bitter cold. The first two nights he took shelter in a barn and a stable, but on the third he roused the farm dogs, whose barking brought two men out to find out what was going on. Fritz escaped, by luck more than anything, because he stumbled, falling into a patch of garlic and scent foiled the dogs. Getting up, when it was quiet again, he resigned himself to sleeping in the open in a temperature that was now below freezing, when he caught sight of a burned out cottage on the other side of a field. It had no roof though some of the walls were still standing. Investigating it, he found some steps leading down to a basement. He decided it would do. In fact this last night of his journey he was warm for an hour or so, because he was able to gather up some litter and pieces of wood lying about to light a fire. Then he sucked at and munched the last of his bread which was now as hard as a stone, before falling asleep. It was broad daylight when he woke and the sun was shining, though it was still cold. The fire had been out a long time and he was stiff, but he hoped his stiffness would wear off once he got on the move again.

CHAPTER 22

It was still early in the morning when Fritz reached Berne and made his way to the railway station, hoping to earn a bit of money again and buy something to eat. He went up to one middle aged woman, surrounded with cases. When he offered to help her however, she said "No, No," hurriedly and seemed scared to death. He realised why when he went into the lavatories and caught sight of himself in the mirror over the wash basins. He was filthy and his hair was matted. He washed his hands and face, as best he could, in the cold water, using a gritty bar of soap that was on the ledge. Then he had a go at washing his hair though, as he had lost his comb, it still looked wild afterwards. There was little he could do about his clothes, except scrape some of the mud off. As he finished he felt he was being watched. He turned and saw a solid Swiss citizen, with a gold watch and chain in his waistcoat looking at him in some surprise.

Greeting him with a polite "Good Morning," Fritz left quickly.

Next he went into a telephone booth and looked for Kettners in the directory. He remembered Rachel saying that she and her mother would be staying with her aunt, so he used the last few coins he had in his pocket to ring the women listed. The third one he tried was Ella Kettner. Rachel's aunt listened to him explaining who he was and told him to come over right away.

"I'm not very presentable, I'm afraid," Fritz warned her. "In fact, I look like a tramp because I've been sleeping rough."

"All the more reason to come here. We can clean you up and

give you lunch. I hope you're hungry as well." Fritz assured he that he was and she gave him directions for finding the house. "Rachel will be so pleased to see someone she knows, Frau Kettner said finally. "She's sad these days as you can imagine."

As Fritz walked down the cobblestone lanes of Berne with their old sandstone buildings, he was reminded of Nuremberg as it used to be before it resounded with the sound of marching feet and men roaring out the Nazi hymns. *Things are slower here,* he thought, *but you can get on with your own life. I wonder how Rachel finds it.* Then he remembered Frau Kettner saying her niece was sad. *Perhaps she's lonely,* he thought.

He also tried to sort out his own feelings about the girl he was soon to see again. He knew he wanted Rachel. Yet he often disliked her. It irked him that she was ashamed of being Jewish. She puzzled him. One day she was the virtuous Susannah, the next day she was Dalilah. Yet even when he kissed her and she kissed back, he knew he did not have her. "Is that it?" he asked himself. Have I come here to answer a challenge – a hunter chasing his elusive prey? These thoughts took him to the street where Frau Kettner lived. As he approached the house, he came face to face with a man coming away from it. Middle aged, portly and wearing a gold watch and chain, he looked like the Swiss in the urinal.

A white-haired, frail woman answered the door when Fritz knocked. "Come in," she said, grasping both his hands. "I'm Rachel's aunt. She tells me you are Magda's cousin. I want to hear how she is. poor girl! She was a joy to teach – so lively and responsive." Then stepping back, she looked him over. "Before you see Rachel, you'd better put some clean clothes on. I'll sort out some of my nephew's. He's a student, away in Geneva until Christmas. Come with me! We'll see what we can find." Fritz followed her up a narrow staircase to a cluttered bedroom. A tennis racket had fallen out of a cupboard and he had to avoid some tennis balls that had spilled over the floor. While Frau Kettner looked for clothes, he examined the

photographs on the wall. Seeing him studying the picture of a strikingly handsome young man, receiving a trophy, she explained, “That’s Jules – my nephew. The photo was taken when he’d just won the One Hundred Metres.“ She stood looking over Fritz’s shoulder as she spoke, but drew back quickly. He stank. “I suggest you have a bath,“ she said.

After twenty minutes soaking and scrubbing in hot water, he was milky white all over, and his hair blazed like the rising sun. In a white shirt and black trousers, slightly too short for him, he made his way to the dining room, where he found Rachel and her aunt, who stood waiting for him by a wood stove. “It’s good to see you again,“ Rachel said in an even voice. “I did not think I would.“

Ah, today we are Susannah, Fritz told himself. “I had to find you,“ he said aloud. “How are you?“

“Very well, thank you,“ she answered primly.

“And your mother?“ he asked, seeing she was not in the room. There was silence for seconds that seemed endless, until Ella Kettner cried, “I thought you knew – they’ve put Hilde in a concentration camp.“

Rachel stood with her head bowed. Fritz moved forward to take her in his arms. “I’m so very, very sorry. I had no idea. I was told the two of you left together.“

Rachel stepped back from him, saying, “We did.“ The Gestapo came onto the train just as it was about to start and arrested Mama. Look! I don’t want to talk about it. You can ask Aunt Ella questions later.“ Lunch was a sombre affair. Fritz did not feel inclined to talk about himself. Instead he managed to keep the conversation going for a bit by describing what had been happening to Magda and her parents. The other two said little, except to offer him extra helpings of braised beef. “You’re a walking skeleton,“ commented Rachel.

Nor did Fritz say anything about his father until he was alone with Frau Kettner. Then he said, “When you feel the

time is right, tell Rachel that my father has been sent to Buchenwald. It won't help her but I want her to know she is not alone."

Frau Kettner looked at him sadly. Then she said, "That's where we think Hilde is. I imagine they've both been sent there for the same crazy reason."

"What do you mean?"

"I expect the Gestapo have been digging up the past and have found out they were Sosis." Fritz knew his father had gone to meetings of the Socialist Workers' Party as a boy, but Heinz had never said much about it.

"That was ages ago when my father was younger than I am now," he protested. "He has never been a political activist."

"You're wrong there. He was when he knew Hilde." This was news to Fritz and he looked bewildered.

"He helped her write pamphlets and marched with her in the streets," Frau Kettner went on. "He was arrested with her once after the police broke up one of the meetings." She paused, then added, "He was deeply in love with her." This too, was news to Fritz. Stunned, he asked, "What happened?"

"She jilted him and married my brother. When I was a child Dietrich was my hero. He was for the Party members as well. He had what they call charisma."

"And my father?"

"Heinz disappeared. I had no idea what had become of him until I saw him again in Nuremberg."

Frau Kettner left Fritz by himself after that. He stayed in the small, sparsely furnished sitting room, taking in what he had just heard about his father, trying to see the despondent, passive man he knew as the energetic, ardent youngster he must have been. Fritz was still sitting there when Rachel came in. "Are you worn out," she asked, "or would you like to come for a walk?"

"I feel fine," he replied, "You can show me the town. Do you think I could borrow a jacket?"

Rachel took him past the shops, through the arcades that straddled the pavements in the Old Town and showed him 49 Kramgasse. “Einstein worked on the Theory of Relativity there,“ she told him. Fritz nearly said, “Another Jewish genius,“ but restrained himself. Finally they walked under the bare lime trees, along the almost deserted river bank.

“You’ve obviously had a rough time,“ said Rachel. “How is it you’re in Switzerland. Fritz told her how he escaped from Nuremberg and some of the things that had happened to him since. “Actually, I’ve been extraordinarily lucky. Of course, I’ve met anti-Semites here, but they don’t make a mission of it as they do back home, and I’ve also found several people who’ve helped me.

“You found that because you have what my aunt calls winning ways.“

“Not with everyone,“ Fritz retorted emphatically.

They walked on in silence for a while, until Rachel said, “I know you despise me.“ Before Fritz could protest, she went on. “You do, because I don’t want to be Jewish.“

“Well I admit, that depresses me.“

“I’ve brought you out here to explain.“ Whereupon Rachel launched into a speech she had obviously rehearsed. “My father was Aryan. That means I’m half and half. As long as I lived with my mother I thought of myself as Jewish. But she’s gone now and will never come back.“

Chilled and thinking of Heinz, Fritz cried, “You can’t know!“

Rachel, seeing his anguished face, exclaimed, “I should not have said that! I’m sorry. Aunt Ella told me about your father. He may survive Buchenwald. Some people will. I was thinking of my own father who went into Dachau a strong, healthy man and died there.“ Suddenly she asked, “How old do you think Aunt Ella is?“

“I hadn’t thought. In her sixties?“

“She’s forty two.“ Rachel fished in her purse and found a

photograph. “Here!“ she said, handing it to Fritz. “This was taken just before she went to Dachau.“ Fritz looked at the snap of a small, plump woman with an unwrinkled, round face.

Rachel took the picture back again and continued with the explanation she was determined give Fritz. “As I was saying, all the time I was growing up I thought of myself as Jewish. Now I’ve realised I don’t have to be. If my father had lived instead of my mother, I would have been brought up as an Aryan and that is what I am going to be from now on.“

Fritz gazed at her sceptically. “I know this isn’t relevant,“ he said at last, “but I came here to tell you I love you.“

They both stopped walking. Fritz turned to face her, waiting. For a moment he thought she was elated. But that fleeting look was replaced by a mocking smile when she spoke. “You say you love me. It’s not only irrelevant, it’s unrealistic. if the Nazis had not taken over Germany, we might have been happy together – when we weren’t quarrelling. It’s no use now. As the History teacher in Fürth was fond of repeating, ‘You can’t step into the same river twice‘. It was bad enough when we were both in Nuremberg. Now, from what you tell me, you are a fugitive. You are quite right in believing me to be a coward. I can’t live like that. I don’t want to be hounded and persecuted any more. Nor do I have to be. Someone here has asked me to marry him and I have said yes.“

Fritz gasped. “Who is the man?“ Let me guess. The nephew?“

“No! Jules has got a girl. The man I’m marrying is a Swiss businessman. He manufactures chocolates. You almost met him. He left the house just before you arrived.“

“A fat man, with a gold watch chain? I did meet him. He’s twice your age. More than that. Whatever made you choose him?“

“He’s generous and kind. I’m marrying him because as his wife I’ll be protected.

“Needless to say, you don’t love him’?

"Not yet. Look! I am only doing what your mother did when a marriage was arranged for her, except that I'm arranging this myself."

"Tell me Rachel, does your 'betrothed' know you have a Jewish mother?" Fritz asked scathingly.

"With Emil I am Regina. I don't imagine he is an anti-Semite but I haven't told him. I can see no reason why I should. Please don't be bitter Fritz! You can't stay in Switzerland. Did you suppose I'd go away with you? Just what did you expect when you came here?"

"I don't know what I expected," Fritz said. Suddenly he laughed. Rachel stared. "What's the joke?" she asked.

"I was thinking of a story I heard about two strangers who strike up a friendship in a bar. At the end of the evening, as they are walking down the street, one of them says, 'I have a confession to make, I used to be a Jew.' And the other says, 'I also have a confession to make, I used to be a hunchback"'.

By now they had reached the house again and it was already getting dark. "I shall leave early in the morning," Fritz announced as they went inside. Rachel nodded. Then throwing her arms round his neck, she kissed him on the mouth, before leaving him standing alone in the hallway.

Fritz needed to be by himself. He made his apologies to Frau Kettner, saying he was not hungry after his large lunch. "I'm not used to eating so much any more."

"I understand, she replied. "You must be exhausted as well. I've made up Jules's bed for you. Go upstairs now and get some sleep."

Fritz embraced her. "You're very good," he told her. "In case I don't have another chance, I want to thank you for everything."

He would have gone on but, embarrassed, she stopped him, saying briskly, "Get along with you now. Sleep well"

When Fritz went into the bedroom, he saw his own clothes, which Frau Kettner had had cleaned, lying neatly folded on a blanket chest. He did not like to forage for Jules's pyjamas. So,

as the wood stove was burning steadily, he stripped and flung himself naked on the bed. He did not sleep. He lay there, trying to make sense of all he had heard that day, beginning with everything Rachel had said. He tried to tell himself she was being rational, but he writhed with disgust and anger as he saw her, all too clearly, in bed with that fat slug he had met on the doorstep. He also thought about his father and Hilde. Unlike Hilde, however, Rachel had not rejected him because she had fallen for someone else.

Next his anger turned to pity, both for Rachel and for himself. Finally, trying to come to terms with that fact he had been dumped, he told himself ruefully, "I'm carrying on a family tradition."

When eventually he fell asleep, he was tormented by a dream in which he was running through a vast, red-brick building, trying to find a room he had left and could not remember the number of. Ever more anxious, he went up and down stairs and along corridors endlessly. Whenever he met someone and asked the way, he could not understand what they said.

He was wakened from this nightmare by a door opening. Rachel was standing there. He sat up, uncertain at first whether he was still dreaming. She came in, closing the door carefully behind her. A street lamp was shining through the window and, as she stepped into the light, he saw she was wearing some kind of silky thing – a kimono. She slipped this off her shoulders and it fell to the floor. Fritz gazed. Naked, Rachel was very beautiful. He made room for her on the bed, saying, "I didn't expect this."

"Sssh!" she whispered, putting her hand over his mouth, "Don't say anything more."

At half-past-five Fritz was alone again. He dressed quickly in his clean clothes and left the house. As he stepped out of the front door the street lamp went off.

CHAPTER 23

“We hope to spend the rest of our lives here.“ This was Lili Levy speaking. Magda was part of her audience. The Sengers had reached Paris and were sitting in the Levys’ apartment on the third floor of a tall, narrow building near Sacre Coeur. Magda reclined on a pile of bright cushions, surrounded by assorted furniture, mostly bargains carefully chosen from junk shops. On the walls there were theatre posters, one of them featuring the entertainer Mistinguett in a fantastic feathered headdress. Magda thought the room was charming.

“We’re applying for French citizenship,“ August was saying. He was shorter and quieter than his wife. He had just come home.

“How was it today?“ Lili asked him as he flopped down on the sofa.

“Now it’s the leading lady who says my set is too dark,“ August replied. “I think she’s afraid the audience won’t see her in all her glory. That’s the theatre for you, no matter what country you’re in. “Never mind I’ll get things sorted out tomorrow,“ he added with a resigned smile.

Magda listened to Lotte’s parents talking about their life in Paris, though it was Lotte she wanted to hear from most of all. Her old school friend sat on a white lacquered chair, her long legs stretched out in front of her. She was wearing male evening dress and a frilly shirt. “You look marvellous,“ whispered Magda, “those clothes suit you.“

Lotte, with her lath-like figure and short fair curls, was the perfect Parisian dandy. “Thank you,“ she replied. “Actually this outfit is more comfortable for going about in outside. For one

thing, I don't have to wear high heels. For another it means I can stand in the pit at theatres without any eyebrows being raised, or being mistaken for a tart."

"Do you always dress as a boy then?" asked Magda.

"Not always, but quite often. This suit is really my theatre costume. I decided to change here, for the show tonight."

"So you're an actress! I always knew you would be," exclaimed Magda. "Papa, Mutti, we must go and see Lotte. She's in a play."

"Well, we can't miss that," said Anton with a smile, though he was a bit bewildered.

"What's the play called and what is it about?" asked Lisel, who was equally puzzled by the way the girl was dressed.

Lotte corrected them, "I'm not in a play, nor am I an actress, yet. I am in a revue and do male impersonations."

"Believe me, she's most convincing," said her father "She waves that Malacca cane she has with just the right kind of flourish. 'I'm Burlington Bertie of Bow' is her big hit. Of course she inherited her voice from Lili," he added looking at his wife affectionately.

"And you Lili?" asked Lisel. "In the last letter we had you said you hoped to sing again."

Although Lili's face showed signs of strain, she was as determinedly optimistic as ever. "It's hard but I haven't given up. Recently I've been doing odd jobs in a theatrical agency. There I meet people. In fact, only today, I was talking to an opera impresario and he thinks there might be something for me in a production of The Merry Widow he's putting on." With that she flashed everyone a brilliant smile.

The faces of her husband and daughter lit up. Together they chorused. "That's wonderful news!"

"I'd better get some champagne in." her husband added.

"Hang on! I haven't got the part yet. Still, I think the man I spoke to meant it. He said he'd heard me sing Valencienne in Munich."

“What language do you sing your songs in?“ Magda asked Lotte. “I expect your French is pretty good by now.“

“It’ll do,“ came the reply. “But I also sing in English and even German sometimes. Paris is very cosmopolitan. That’s just one of the reasons why it’s better being here than in Nuremberg.“

“Don’t they mind Jews?“ queried Lisel.

“Not that I’ve noticed,“ said Lili.

“No, you don’t notice anti-Semitism here half the time, especially among artists of any kind,“ interrupted August. “Nevertheless it exists. It just hasn’t become a campaign as it has at home. For the most part, it’s dormant. Every so often it comes to the surface however, as it did in the Dreyfus case.“

“That was ages ago!“ protested Lili. None of the French we know would treat a man as shamefully as they did that poor Captain, just because he was Jewish.“

“I’m not sure Papa is all that wrong,“ broke in Lotte. “You’ve forgotten what happened to me at school, Mutti.“

“What did happen?“ asked Magda.

“Well, when we first came here, I was at a Lycée for girls. At the end of the year they decided to do Corneille’s Polyeucte as the school play and I was chosen to be the hero. Then, just before the first rehearsal, one of the Catholic parents objected to a Jewish girl playing the part of a Christian martyr. After that, several other mothers sided with this woman. There was quite a row until the Head Mistress called me into her room to ask me, in the nicest possible way, to give up the part.“

“As I have said before,“ commented Lili at the end of Lotte’s story, “I think the fuss only started because of that girl who thought she ought to be playing the lead. She nagged her mother into making a complaint.“ August did not say anything while the Sengers looked thoughtful.

Lotte shrugged and concluded, “Actually, I didn’t mind all that much. Polyeucte is a dreadful prig and I would have had to rant on endlessly about la gloire and le devoir, glory and duty. Now, there’s one thing I want you to do especially.“ she

said, turning to Magda, “After you’ve seen the revue tonight, we must go to Bricktops.“

“What’s that?“

“A jazz club. If your parents can’t bear that kind of music,“ and here Lotte looked at Lisel doubtfully, “we can go by ourselves. I’ll keep this suit on, so that people think I’m your lover.“

Here, August, seeing the look on the faces of Anton and Lisel, broke in quickly, “We’ll all go. I can assure you Lisel that even if you don’t like jazz, you won’t regret it.“

“Of course we’ll come,“ agreed Anton, “If nothing else, we’ll be seeing Parisian life.“

Anton was cheerful because, the journey to Paris had gone more smoothly than he expected. Earlier, helped by Lisel and Magda, he had told the Levys about it. The bit after they left the Werfel’s farm had been the most frightening. They lay hidden in the back of Franz’s truck, expecting any moment to be stopped by the Gestapo. Once they arrived in Strasbourg however, Anton had sold some of the stamps Lisel had sewn in his turn ups. Then, with his wife and daughter, he went straight to the railway station to buy tickets to the French capital. There was an anxious quarter of an hour when the police boarded the train at Nancy and asked to see the passengers’ papers. However, the Sergeant did not say anything when Anton showed them his family’s, probably because he took the precaution of slipping a hundred French francs in his passport before he handed it over. “Money still talks,“ he told August. “And at least Frenchmen expect you to give to them, whereas the Nazis just steal it. It was the same at the hotel we’re staying at. The receptionist asked no awkward questions after I made it worth his while not to.“

It was after midnight when Lotte took Magda and their parents into Bricktops. The jazz club was dimly lit and smoky. The floor in the centre was a shifting kaleidoscope of colour as couples danced energetically to the band at the far end of the

room. Magda noticed a striking blonde chatting and laughing with two tall Negroes, as they stood drinking cocktails at the bar. August got a waiter to push two tables together and they all sat down. “Let’s sit at this end,“ said Lotte, taking hold of Magda’s arm, “then you’ll be able to see the musicians, that’s important.“

“Who are they?“ asked Magda.

“One of them playing tonight is Sidney Bechet.“ Seeing Magda look blank, she added, “He’s the American saxophonist, who’s very popular here. He’s the reason this place is packed tonight. But I particularly want you to see the pianist who comes on later.“

Lotte, in her male attire, blended into the Bricktops scene where, as far as Magda could see there was no dress code. She noticed one girl, in tight black trousers and an apache beret who was kneeling on a chair, blowing smoke rings over the head of her boyfriend lounging on the seat beneath her. While at the table next to the one she was sitting at, there were a couple of middle aged gentlemen in formal evening dress, smoking cigars. As this pair commanded the full, obsequious attention of the waiters, it was easy for Anton to order drinks for everyone the next time one of them appeared.

At 3 a.m. Anton and Lisel were ready to leave, but Lotte, backed up by her parents, protested, “No, you can’t go before you’ve seen Fred Bird!“

“Why? Who is he?“ demanded Anton.

“Look! I can’t believe it,“ exclaimed Lisel. Fred Bird, in a white jacket and bow tie had just come on stage. Greeted by enthusiastic shouts, he took his seat at the piano.

“It’s Fritz!“ shrieked Magda, so loudly that he heard her. He swung round, and seeing her and the others, flashed them a smile, before he began playing ‘The Maple Leaf Rag‘. He played other old and new pieces and the crowd did not want him to go. Finally he said he would give them a song he had composed

himself. “I’ve called it ‘The Plague‘ and it’s a blues.“ The song he sang had the minor harmony and slow jazz rhythm of the blues, but was unlike anything that the people in Bricktops were used to hearing from American singers who came to the club. The melancholy words described a land devastated by pestilence. Gradually it became clear that ‘The Plague‘ was Nazism. Fred Bird’s audience was surprised and did not know quite what to make of it, though they applauded politely.

Magda was aware however that the pair sitting at the next table did not clap. One of them spoke in a low voice to his companion and Magda caught the phrase, ‘Il a raison’. “What are they talking about?“ she whispered to Lotte. “Hitler,“ came the answer, “they think he’s right.“

“Whyever didn’t you tell us Fritz was here?“ demanded Lisel.

“It was Lotte’s idea,“ said August. “She wanted you to see him translated into Fred Bird.“ Anyway when you arrived we knew Fritz would be in bed,“ Lili explained, “working the hours he does, he has to sleep in the day. You’ll see him to talk to tomorrow when you come to lunch. He nearly always eats with us. He rents the attic at the top of the house we’re in.“

“And Heinz? Is he with him?“ asked Lisel.

“No I’m afraid he isn’t,“ replied August. “That’s another reason we thought we ought to talk to you before you met Fritz.“ The blood drained from Lisel’s face when August went on to tell her that Heinz had been sent to Buchenwald. Anton put his arm round her and shepherded her through the dancing crowd and out of the club, followed by the others.

Magda caught hold of August’s arm. “Does anyone know anything about Buchenwald?“ she asked.

“It’s pretty bad from what I hear,“ he answered. “Your cousin is bitter about his father. You saw Fred Bird the entertainer tonight but when you see Fritz you’ll find that, as the psalmist says, ‘the iron has pierced his heart.”’

The next day, when Magda arrived at the Vogels for lunch,

she left her parents to go on telling them what had been happening Nuremberg, and climbed the extra flight of steep, narrow stairs to the garret where Fritz was. She knocked on his door calling out, 'It's me. Are you up yet? Are you decent'?"

"More or less Magda," came the answer. Come in, the door's open."

Magda went into a barn-like room, with hardly any furniture, where a solitary, scarlet geranium in a pot on the window ledge provided the only splash of colour. Fritz, who was in his shirt sleeves, came forward and, putting his hands on Magda' shoulders, studied her. "You look all right, he said with a smile, "and it's wonderful to see you. Who'd have thought when I cycled away from you all at home that we would meet here?"

'"We have been so worried about you. Never mind, you've made it. You're all skin and bone though," she said, hugging him, adding, as she examined his gaunt face, "and you look older."

"Yes, I believe it's calling 'growing up'. I'm healthy enough."

"And you're safe!"

"Yes, I'm safe."

"But not your father. Oh Fritz, you mustn't give up hope. The Nazis let people out of Dachau, so why not Buchenwald?"

"There are several reasons why not. It is no use hiding from the facts. First Hitler and his gang took away our money, jobs, the chance of a decent education, and then our German nationality – in the hope we'd leave. Not enough of us have done that. So now Himmler has decided to shut the rest of us up in concentration camps. Everyone we know and care for is already in them, including Rachel's mother, your photographer friend Paul Gutman and my father." On hearing this, Magda froze.

Fritz turned away to look out of the window. Fixing his gaze on the shining domes of Sacre Coeur, he hesitated. Then, without looking at Magda, he began to speak again in a low, care-

fully controlled voice, “A few weeks ago I met a German army deserter who knows Buchenwald. He says that when he first drove into it he saw prisoners in their striped clothes, dragging carts piled high with stone slabs. Some of them were barely able to move but the guards drove them on with whips.“

Magda shuddered. “What were they doing?“

“Building a road apparently. It’s known as Blood Street. Buchenwald has a particularly vicious Commandant, an SS man named Koch, who is starving and working the prisoners to death, literally. No doubt he is ‘following orders‘ but he enjoys it. His wife Ilse is even worse that he is. When the inmates die, as about forty of them a day do, she has them flayed so that she can make lampshades out of the skin.“

“Oh Fritz,“ gasped Magda. She sank down on the unmade bed, because the room began to tilt and darken. For the first time in her life she fainted.

When she came to, Fritz was bending over her with a bottle in his hand. “Here, drink this,“ he said. “I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have spoken. Are you O.K?“

Magda coughed, because the brandy burnt her throat. “Yes, I’m all right,“ she assured him, as the colour came back into her face. “You musn’t apologise. I wouldn’t want you to keep something as ghastly as that all to yourself. You must feel you can tell me the truth. Fritz was still looking at her anxiously without saying anything. When she thought she could stand, she got up. She staggered. Holding on to her cousin, she said, “I love Uncle Heinz too. So does Mutti – very much.“ She paused before adding. I don’t think you should tell her any of this. Papa and I are afraid she’s going to be ill. She did not come down to breakfast this morning.“

“No, she came here – woke me up in fact. We talked but I didn’t tell her what the German soldier had said. You’re the only person I’ve told. I couldn’t bring myself to talk about Buchenwald to the Levys.“

“I think I know why,“ said Magda. “They are so happy to be

in Paris. Now, before we go down to lunch, tell me how you got here.

Fritz gave her an edited version of his adventures. “Do you remember how I once joked about being a street sweeper? Well I was for a couple of days. My main problem was not having any money. I took any job going just so that I could pay for the next meal.“

‘No wonder you’re so thin. Our pilgrimage had some frightening moments but mostly it was tedious and de luxe compared with yours – thanks to Grandfather’s stamp collection.“

“Mine wasn’t so bad once I reached Berne. There Rachel’s aunt put me up. After that I had the good luck to fall in with Josef, a Jehovah’s Witness. He found me trying to sleep under a railway bridge. Once he learnt I had fled from the Nazis, he took me to his home where he and his family went out of their way to help me. Their people are also being sent to concentration camps because, from the beginning, they have refused to kowtow to Hitler.

“I know,“ said Magda. There was a Witness at school whose father was imprisoned, and she refused to give the Nazi salute.“

“Anyway, Fritz went on, “Joseph gave me maps for Switzerland and France, while his wife provided me with a bed and fed me. I gathered, talking to the family that they do not celebrate Christian holidays, such as Christmas. I didn’t say so, but thought that sounded a bit bleak. Yet I was struck by how contented they were, as well as generous. Josef’s son even found me an old bicycle – the best possible present, because as well as speeding the trip up, I found folk were less suspicious of a man on a bike than they were of a vagrant who might steal anything he could lay his hands on.“

“Did you see Rachel in Berne?“ Magda asked.

“Yes I did. Which reminds me. Can you come out this afternoon and help me choose a wedding present for her.“ Magda was both surprised and dismayed when Fritz told her about

Rachel's marriage plans.

"How could she? She's putting herself in a cage, like those linnets they sell in the markets here."

"Yes, but it will be a gold one. Rachel has never had any money and Emil is rich I imagine."

"How disappointed you must be," said Magda, giving him another hug. "You were in love with her, weren't you? I thought you'd end up marrying her."

"O come on! How could I?" said Fritz disentangling himself. "Anyway it would never have worked. We have such different ideas about life. For one thing, she wants to forget she has any Jewish blood, whereas I've never been more conscious of mine than I am these days. Hitler has told me what I am and made me proud of the fact. The other day I passed some of the Hasidim in the street. I always used to think they were a medieval throwback with their weird clothes and rigid rules. Now Magda, I know they're our brothers, who are helping us to keep our identity and survive." Magda looked at her cousin's sombre face, thinking, *August is right. He's changed*.

"Come on," she said smiling, "it must be time for lunch. Let's go downstairs."

At lunch everyone sat at a long, wooden table which, in contrast to the rococo dining chairs, looked as if it had come out of a monastery. "This is delicious Lili," said Anton as they all ate a country omelette, stuffed with potatoes, onions and ham. "A toast to the cook," he called, raising his glass of the good French wine which August had bought in his honour.

The conversation was about Paris. Everyone congratulated Lotte and Fritz on their performances the night before and this led them to talk about the music scene in general. "There's a lot going on here," said Fritz, "and none of that nonsense about banning American jazz because some of it is written by Jews and Negroes."

"Yes," said Lili, "a lot of black Americans stayed behind af-

ter the last war and more have come since. Not that they've reached the opera world yet, but you must have noticed how many there were at Bricktops."

"I envy you," whispered Magda to Lotte, so that her mother would not hear. "Doing what you do, you're so independent. You don't have to find a husband to keep you."

Lotte laughed. Oh, I'll probably get married sometime and then I may find I myself keeping my husband. When Mutti was in the Bavarian State Opera, she usually earned more than Papa. By the way, she went on, "if you like independent women, you ought to see Edith Piaf. She's a great artiste and does not marry – not often anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"She takes lovers instead." Calling across the table to her parents, Lotte asked,

"Will there be time to take Magda to hear Edith Piaf sing?"

"We must leave tomorrow," said Anton. "I want to get to Lisbon while my stamp dealer friend is still there."

"Then we'll all go tonight," said August. "Lotte's right. 'The 'Little Sparrow' is someone who shouldn't be missed. That's her over there," and he pointed to a poster of a diminutive woman with huge eyes and the look of a street urchin.

Lisel was tired and Anton said she ought to rest, so only Magda went with the Vogels to the noisy music hall to hear Edith Piaf. As she sat listening to her sing Heureuse, even though she could not understand all the words of that song about happiness, the feeling came through. "What do you think?" Lotte asked Magda afterwards.

"She's wonderful. I have never heard anyone before who knew just how sad life can be, yet refused to let sadness conquer her. Oh I do like Paris. I wish we could stay here!"

The next day Fritz did not sleep in the morning because he wanted to see his family off. He was just leaving the house when he saw the postman had brought him a letter. Glancing

at the envelope, he thrust it in his pocket. Anton and Lisel were going with the cases by taxi to the station, where they were taking the train to Madrid. Fritz, who arrived early at the hotel, found Magda and suggested they walk to the Gare d'Austerlitz, pointing out they had plenty of time.

They went out into Montmartre where Fritz who had not yet eaten that morning, bought chestnuts from the old man crouched over his brazier at the corner of the street. "Don't you love the smell of new bread?" said Magda as they passed the bakery, where women were buying their breakfast baguettes. As they walked by the bars and restaurants which were also open, she studied the men sitting drinking their café au lait and reading newspapers.

One elderly gentleman, wearing a coat with a fur collar, gave her a debonair smile as she went by his window. Fritz saw him too and with a grin asked Magda, "Do you fancy being an old man's darling?" Magda did not answer because her attention had been caught by a sprightly old woman in a feathered hat who was sashaying down the street towards them. She was accompanied by a little black bulldog with a red bow fastened to his collar. When this pair had gone by Fritz told Magda, "That was Madame Palmyre and Bouboule. In her heyday she ran the Brasserie de la Souris, a café for lesbians."

Magda, who had only just learned about lesbians from Lotte, looked at her cousin and remarked, "You don't have hide in Paris if you're like that then?"

"Not on the Left Bank," Fritz replied, "anything goes here." They walked on for a bit. Then Magda said, "You must love being in a place where folk live and let live. I was saying to Lotte last night that I wished we could stay in France."

"I don't think that's a good idea," he replied. "You'll be safer if you get to Chile. Hitler will grind the whole of Europe under his heel if he can."

"Do you really think the Nazis will come here?" Magda asked unbelievingly. Whatever would you do?"

“They might and, if they do, I’ll have my chance at last. If you remember, I realised after that cartoon fiasco, we could never defeat Hitler with bits of paper. I think sometimes of that fable our grandmother had me read at her funeral. As I understand it our broken diamond can never be mended until Hitler is destroyed. If he invades France, I’ll join any army that takes me.“ Magda was torn between admiration and dread on hearing this. Fritz, reading her thoughts, went on, “There wouldn’t be any alternative. If the Nazis ever infest Paris, you know what they’d do to me and any other Jews here. I’m no hero, but I’d rather get killed fighting them than that.“

They reached the station a few minutes before the train to Madrid, trailing clouds of steam, ground to a halt at the platform. There were a lot people who rushed to get on it. Anton however, had reserved a first class carriage for Lisel’s sake, who felt a migraine coming on. Amidst all the bustle and noise, Fritz kissed his aunt and shook Anton’s hand, wishing them God speed. Then Anton settled his wife comfortably in a corner seat, pulling down the blind, while Magda, the tears running down her face, leant out of the window of the already moving train to say goodbye to her cousin. As she stretched out her hand, Fritz took the letter he had put in his pocket earlier and closed her fingers round it. “This came for you,“ he said. “Be kind!“ Then he stood on the platform until the train disappeared.

CHAPTER 24

'How much'?

The clerk in the Chilean Embassy smiled blandly at Anton and replied, "For the three visas – fifteen hundred marks. Magda saw her mother grip her father's hand and heard him catch his breath. It was a huge sum, five times the amount it ought to have been.

Anton had gone to a dealer and sold the last of the stamps as soon as they arrived in Lisbon, but had not got as much for them as he should have done. The dealer was not da Gama who, unexpectedly, had already sailed for Chile. When the Sengers went to the address he had given Anton, they found an old house with wrought-iron balconies overlooking the sea. Magda noticed most of the shutters for the windows were closed. Da Gama's mother, a woman in her seventies, lived in the house alone, except for a couple of servants. The Señora, who had been expecting Anton, handed over a letter her son had left for him. In it he explained he was leaving right away because he had been asked to take up the partnership in a firm in Santiago by the beginning of December. He went on to write, *I have had a word with my cousin at the Embassy, who assures me that your visas will be granted readily.* They had been – at a price.

Señora da Gama, who spoke only Portuguese, nevertheless made it clear that she wanted her son's friend and his family to stay in her house while they arranged their passage to Chile. Magda was both touched and surprised when this old lady, dressed in voluminous black, swept towards her, embracing her, uttering the word "Bella!" She also embraced Lisel, this time with

tears in her eyes. Magda caught the word, dolorosa, repeated several times. She insisted on giving them lunch, ushering them into a dining room filled with massive, ornate furniture, which looked as if it had been there, unchanged, for the past hundred years. They took their places at a large round table, covered with a lace cloth, eating grilled sardines, followed by strong sheep's milk cheese and oranges, fresh off the tree in the garden. Because of the language problem few words were spoken but their hostess alternated between smiling graciously and shaking her head sadly. Every now and then she patted Lisel's hand. Obviously her son had told her what had been happening to Jews in Germany. After lunch she gestured to them to follow her upstairs, where she showed them their bedrooms, giving instructions to a maid to make up the beds.

"The Señora is very kind," Magda said when later she and her parents were walking down to the port, to look for a ship.

"Yes," said Lisel. She shows the sort of old world courtesy we haven't seen for a long time. She was shocked as well. I suppose Jews live in peace here. I wonder why her son did not want to stay."

"Da Gama is ambitious," Anton explained. "That's why he went to Germany. I expect Lisbon cramps his style."

They knew they were near the harbour when a strong smell of fish hit them. When they reached it, Magda looked at the boats of all sizes moored there, some of them fishing smacks from which the catches had been unloaded earlier. Seagulls screamed overhead. Two of them swooped down in front of Magda and squabbled over a herring left lying on the ground. A few fishermen were still on the quayside mending their nets. There were also two large passenger liners, their paint and brassware gleaming in the winter sunshine. These Anton ignored, as likely to be too expensive.

He was just about to go into one of dockside taverns to ask which boats were sailing to Chile when they saw the Cristina. It was a trawler, where a man with a bristly black beard and

gold earrings was giving orders to sailors rolling casks up the gangplank. There were also crates on the deck marked 'VALPARAISO'. So Anton hailed the man, asking if he was the Master? He got a reply in Portuguese, the only bit of which he understood was the speaker's name – Captain Pereira. Seeing the look of incomprehension on Anton's face, the Captain asked, "What do you want?" first in English, then in German.

Anton, relieved at being able to make himself understood, explained they wanted to go to Chile. "Do you take passengers?" he asked. During the dialogue, Lisel stood by anxiously, while Magda stared doubtfully at the Captain, who reminded her of the pirate in the picture book she had had as a child. Continuing in broken German, the Master of the *Cristina*, threw up his hands, saying he already had enough passengers and that there were no more cabins left. When Anton assured him, "We don't expect to travel in luxury," he looked them up and down before saying that, by shifting his First Mate out of his quarters, he could let them have a cabin just big enough for three.

Magda and her mother heard that the journey would take about fourteen days, possibly longer, depending on the weather. "Well, we're not in a hurry, are we?" murmured Lisel. "Let's hope he won't charge too much." Anton asked what they had to pay. Pereira did not reply immediately. Magda, aware he was looking them up and down again, much as the clerk at the Embassy had done, suddenly realised how smart they must appear in the new clothes they had bought before leaving Nuremberg. At last he spoke, naming a sum in escudos.

Magda's father did a rapid calculation in his head and, turning to his family, exclaimed, "He wants three thousand marks!" It was impossible. After paying for the visas, Anton had barely two thousand marks left.

While Magda was wondering what on earth they were going to do now, she heard her mother whisper in her father's ear, "I still have my engagement ring."

She remembered when Mutti had worn it every day, but had suddenly stopped doing so, saying, “It is too beautiful for these envious times.“ She saw her father turn away from the trawler captain and put a consoling arm round her mother’s shoulders, saying, “Well, it’s only a bauble.“

“It’s very precious to me,“ protested Lisel. “It’s the first piece of jewellery you gave me and has a special meaning. However, perhaps now it will save us.“

“Where have you hidden it Mutti?“ asked Magda. With an embarrassed smile, Lisel explained that she had sewn it into her corsets.

Telling Captain Pereira that he would be back in an hour or so, Anton took his wife and daughter into the town centre again. They walked down the Avenida da Liberdade, looking for jewellers. They passed two but first needed to find somewhere quiet where Lisel could extract the ring from its hiding place. Eventually they came to the Eduardo VII Park. There is a deserted glasshouse in the Estufa Fria, Lisel took a pair of nail scissors from her purse and, unstitching the ring, put it on. The three of them gazed at the glittering, solitaire diamond that pierced the green shade cast by the palm fronds around them. “It’s lovely,“ said Magda. “Yes, when I got so thin, I took the ring to be re-sized,“ murmured her mother. “They said the stone was flawless.“

“One of these days darling, I’ll buy you an even finer ring,“ promised Anton. “Now let us go back to those jewellers.“ The ring was sold for much less than it was worth, but for more than the extortionate sum demanded by Captain Pereira, whom Anton paid.

Learning that the *Cristina* was sailing the following afternoon, Magda and her parents went back to Señora da Gama who, during the afternoon, had recruited her sister to join them that evening. Doña Anna, an energetic spinster who dressed in a more modern style than her older sister, spoke German be-

cause she had once kept house for her nephew in Munich. On the way to the Señora's Anton had noticed the Avenida Palace Hotel and invited the two women to be his family's guests there. "You must help us make an occasion of our last night in Europe," he said when they accepted the invitation.

The hotel had once been a palace. The dining room was the former marble Grand Salon, with tables arranged in two circles round a dance floor. As Anton and his party entered, a pianist was playing light music. With Dona Anna translating, Anton's party studied the lengthy menu for a seven-course meal, in which many of the dishes were fish. Except for Magda, they decided on lobster for their main course. She thought she would be adventurous and chose Alcatra, roast beef marinated in red wine and garlic. "How is it?" Lisel asked.

"Good, but there's a lot of garlic," she replied.

Magda did not talk much during the meal. She looked round the restaurant. For a while she watched, somewhat wistfully, a Jewish family who were celebrating their son's birthday. They laughed a lot and the waiters looking after them were doing their best to keep up the festive atmosphere. She also listened as, with Doña Anna acting as an interpreter, her sister asked Anton to tell her more about what had happened to drive her son out of Germany. Anton described how the stamp dealer's shop was gutted. He also said, "I shall be indebted to your son forever. Without his help, God know what would have become of me. He found me lying unconscious in the street." It was the first time Magda and her mother had heard this detail. They winced, waiting for Anton to say more, but he did not do so. Instead he avoided being questioned any further by getting the Señora to tell them about her son's life before he decided to go to Munich.

Later on, the hotel manager approached one of the diners, a man in his forties, to persuade him to sing. With a slow smile he got up and went down onto the dance floor, to the applause and cheers of the other Portuguese diners.

“Who is he?“ asked Magda, looking at his dark, lined face.

“Lisbon’s most celebrated singer of fado,“ replied Doña Anna. “We are indeed fortunate tonight.“ Unaccompanied, his tenor voice resonated throughout the salon in a song that was wildly poignant, yet perfectly controlled.

“What was he singing about?“ asked Lisel when it was over. “That was very beautiful and sad.“

“Fado is the music of the town’s poor,“ explained Dona Anna. “The song was about loneliness.“

The restaurant remained quiet until, to dispel the sombre mood created by the fado singer, the pianist began to play modern dance music. Whereupon Anton took Lisel and the two sisters in turn out onto the dance floor for a waltz each. Magda, who thought her father was a terrible dancer, was spared because there no more waltzes. The meal ended with pasties de nata, small, extremely rich, custard tarts. These Magda and her father declared delicious, though Lisel could not finish hers.

It had not been easy to ignore the shadows hovering over the table where Anton presided over the last supper in Europe. The Señora’s sympathy and obvious concern were a reminder of the dangers past and to come. While for Lisel the fado singer’s song told her that life was sad more often than not. Magda contrasted their own small, sombre party with the one the Jewish family were enjoying nearby, where a flushed boy, surrounded by his laughing relatives and friends, took a deep breath to blow out the twelve candles on his birthday cake. Anton knew the feast was only a partial success. Nevertheless, he was glad they had come to the Avenida Palace, aware this was the last de luxe occasion his family was likely to enjoy for a long time.

Later that night, before Magda lay down in the big four poster which had two mattresses and half a dozen pillows, before taking a much-folded letter out oft he pocket of her skirt. It was the one Fritz had given her at the Gare d’Austerlitz and was

from Jacob. She had sent him several postcards since leaving Nuremberg, but this letter was the only reply she had received – not that she expected to hear from him after his flight from the garden. She had read the single sheet of paper many times before. Now she took it over to the lamp on the table and read it again:

Dearest Magda,

What has become of you? Am I throwing these words into the void? I have no idea where you are. Your postcards give no addresses. I asked Fritz, who wrote to me after he arrived in Paris but he didn't know either. I will send this letter to him in the hope that you will meet up somehow. If you read this, please write back and say how you are.
When we talked in the garden that last morning, I faced the fact I had no chance with you. Even while you were saying that you could not leave your parents, I knew and thought you did as well, that if we married, Anton and Lisel would be safer than they could be struggling to cross Europe. As my wife, you would surely have been able to get American visas for them. You spoke as you did because you are unable to love me. I was encouraged to imagine you did for a while when you wanted me to kiss you. Then I realised that was because you found my kisses warm and comforting – which is very far from what I felt. However enough of that. I promise not to pester you any more.
If you are wondering about the enclosed trinket, it is an identity bracelet. I got it on a recent visit to England. They are making them there for people to wear when war comes. Will you wear it? It is not valuable, so will not tempt thieves. As you will see, along with your name, it has mine on the reverse of the disk. That is

because, if you ever need help, I hope I will be told. You do not love me, but I would give my life for you.

Jacob

As always when she read Jacob's words, Magda felt sorry and guilty. She sat looking out of the window at an empty sea stretching away into the distance. When Fritz had handed her the letter – no doubt recognising the handwriting on the envelope – he had said "Be kind." How could she be? The only thing Jacob believed would make him happy was if she became his wife. The cheerfully independent Lotte had laughed at her when she said that marriage was a prison house, but her friend's rational arguments had not dispelled Magda's aversion and fear, feelings she hardly understood any more but which were stronger than ever.

She took off the bracelet that had come, wrapped up in tissue paper, with Jacob's letter. It consisted of a chromium chain, about half a centimetre wide, linked to an oblong disk. On the front of this three words were etched, Magda Senger Nuremberg. Turning the disk over, she read Jacob's name and New York address inscribed there in minute copperplate handwriting. She put the bracelet back on, pushing it above her elbow, where it could not be seen. Then she went to bed.

That night she had the same nightmare she had had twice before since Kristallnacht. She was standing naked in her bedroom in Nuremberg, watching the Brownshirt boy undo his belt. She tried to scream. Then she woke up, choking and bathed in sweat. Afraid of having that nightmare again, she got up and sat in the deep armchair by the window, listening to the waves breaking on the rocks. There, just before dawn, she fell asleep. Lisel coming in the bedroom just before breakfast, did not wake her. Seeing she was comfortable, she covered Magda with an eiderdown and left her there she was until it was time to get ready to leave and board the *Cristina*.

CHAPTER 25

It made no sense to clutter up the cramped cabin by unpacking so, taking only the camera out of her suitcase, Magda went up on deck. She had not taken any photographs since leaving Nuremberg but now she thought she would enclose pictures in the letter she wanted to write to Jacob. It would be a journal letter, like the ones she used to write him and she would post it after they landed, when she knew where they would be living. Once again, she had only managed to send him a postcard from Lisbon, with no address on it. 'I wish he'd stop worrying,' she thought as she slipped it into a letterbox on the way to the *Cristina*.

The sun was setting as she stood at the boat rail watching the crew taking on the last barrels of olive oil. Their overseer was a lithe youth with dark curly hair, who had introduced himself to her parents, when they came aboard, as Manuel Pereira. He was the Captain's son. He was as dark skinned as his father and, like him, spoke a smattering of several languages. Now when he saw her, he waved and shouted "Guten Abend." Magda said good evening back to him, before asking if she could photograph the crew working. Assuming he would be in the picture, he struck an energetic pose, arms akimbo and one foot planted on a barrel.

After she had taken a couple of pictures, Magda walked away down the deck, noticing how old and shabby the trawler was. The paintwork was grimy, the unpolished brassware was going green and the tarpaulin, covering the two lifeboats, was torn.The boat sailed and the weather was so mild that Magda and her parents were able to spend most of the day in the fresh

air, which was a relief because, the only place to sit down below was the room where the passengers ate which, like their cabin had no portholes. They fell into a routine, learning Spanish from the grammar Anton had bought in Lisbon, eating meals of dried, salted cod and talking endlessly. Every morning Magda found a quiet corner and wrote an instalment of her letter to Jacob. She could not respond to his plea for her to love him but, nevertheless wrote how unhappy she would be if he decided they could not be friends. The rest of the pages she filled with an account of the journey so far.

None of the other passengers spoke German. They were either emigrants, returning after a visit to the homeland, or Portuguese who were going to see their relatives in Chile. The Captain said most of them were farmers, though one of them was a priest whom Pereira asked to hold mass for them and his crew at regular intervals. The women were intimidated by Lisel's fashionable clothes, while their husbands looked curiously at Anton's pinstripe suit and the Homburg hat he always wore. If Magda was alone, Manuel would come over and talk to her, and when he saw she was learning Spanish, helped her with the pronunciation. However, if his father caught sight of him with Magda, he always found some job for him to do. Lisel, noticing this one day, said, "I imagine the Captain, being a Catholic, does not want his boy to get too interested in you. Magda shrugged off the pain of being spurned by the man she thought of as 'the pirate', but in future avoided his son.

Left to herself, Magda spent a lot of time listening to her parents reminiscing, and so learned what had happened to her father in Munich to strip him of all his illusions about the place of Jews in Germany.

He described how, on the night of 9 November, he was with da Gama who had invited him to dinner. Hearing shouting in the street, they went to see what was going on and watched incredulously as the young Brownshirts fanned out in all di-

directions, breaking the windows of every shop owned by Jews. When they went to see what was happening to da Gama's business, they discovered the Storm Troopers had wrecked it. Finding little to loot, they had tipped the stamps from dozens of flat trays out onto the pavement, where they lay among shards of jagged glass to be trampled underfoot by uncaring passers-by, or blown away.

The next morning Anton went to the police station to lodge a complaint, despite the stamp dealer urging him not to. "I'm sure you will want to bring the undisciplined members of the SA responsible for this outrage to book," he told the sergeant. Then he handed him the name and address of da Gama, adding, "This highly respected stamp dealer is not German. Tell me, was what happened to his business last night the way to treat guests in our country?" The sergeant picked the piece of paper up by the corner and, with an expression of distaste, dropped it in the waste paper basket. The sergeant's senior officer was standing nearby.

While Anton was speaking, he looked at him briefly and turning away, said carelessly, "Get that vermin out of here!" Whereupon a couple of laughing underlings did just that. They frogmarched him to the door where they threw him down the steps into the gutter. He was knocked unconscious when he hit his head on the kerbstone, and would have lain there if the anxious da Gama had not followed him. Anton came to, with the stamp dealer standing over him. Thereafter he had taken Anton home and looked after him until he was fit enough to travel back to Nuremberg.

"I learned something in that police station – at last," Anton declared. "The men I thought were my brothers don't see me as human at all. What started off as envy and resentment of Jews who were successful has turned into a phobia. Now nearly everyone goes along with the idea that we are a virus, or an infestation that must be got rid of as the rat catcher gets rid of rodents."

Lisel looked appalled. “Where will it all end?“ she asked. “If they believe that, they need have no conscience about what they do to Jews, any more than the rat catcher has, going about his work.“

“O they have no conscience,“ Anton concluded bitterly, “or rather Hitler is their conscience.“

After that Anton was told what had happened at home while he was away. Lisel described how she had been locked in her room on Kristallnacht and what she had discovered when she went to her brother’s house. Magda gave an short account of what had happened in her bedroom and explained how she had seen Wolfgang carving a swastika into Grandfather’s portrait.

They also talked about what they might do in Chile. Anton, recognising he had left his life as a lawyer behind, announced cheerfully, “If nothing else turns up, I can be a taxi driver,“ though he looked doubtfully at Lisel when she said, “and I can teach the piano.“ Magda hoped she could help by becoming a photographer. “Surely,“ she said, “the Chileans want to have their portraits taken? At the back of her mind, she also kept the idea of finding more interesting work – perhaps on a magazine.

On the sixth evening of the voyage Magda was sitting out of sight behind one of the lifeboats, listening to Manuel playing his guitar, which he sometimes did after dinner. She hardly ever recognised whatever he was playing. She supposed it was folk music. She would have liked to have asked him about it, but did not because he was rather conceited and might think she was chasing him, and anyway it was not worth being humiliated by the Captain. Some of the pieces sounded as if you were meant to dance to them. Others were plaintive. Once Manuel played the fado tune she had heard at the Avenida Palace Hotel.

They were sailing down the coast of North America, somewhere near Cape Cod and the weather was changing. All day

the sky had been overcast and the air oppressive. As she sat there in the dusk, it started to rain and she had to go down below. It was stuffy in the cabin and the dining room smelled of cod so, putting a waterproof cape on, she came up again with her father. They found a wind was blowing hard. Soon what they thought was a squall turned into a force nine gale. The trawler creaked and groaned as huge waves crashed over the bows. At first it was exhilarating as the two of them gripped the rail on the trawler's sheltered side, watching the churning foam. Then it became frightening. The crew were shouting but Anton and Magda could not understand what was being said. Captain Pereira saw them and ordered them down below. They were going anyway. When they reached the cabin, they sat with Lisel uneasily, listening to the howling wind, shouts and feet thundering on the deck over their heads. They also heard one of the other passengers trying to calm his wife who was screaming hysterically Suddenly, to their relief, the gale died down, as quickly as it had arisen. Below decks, silence descended like that of the tomb. The Sengers decided to get some sleep, but did not undress. As Magda climbed into her bunk she could stop herself slipping to the side nearest the partition because the cabin was listing.

The next thing she knew was that her father was tugging at her arm saying "Get up! The boat is sinking!" She had climbed out of the bunk with difficulty onto the floor of the lopsided cabin and put on the lifejacket as her father ordered, not realising it was the only one. After she left the cabin, she began an arduous struggle up a gangway that was nearly vertical. Once on deck, she saw the bows of the boat were under water and the sea was pouring in. She clambered to the stern where they were lowering a lifeboat. It was when she did not get a place in it that her father had told her she must jump into the water.

EPILOGUE

Kept afloat by the cork lifebelt, she drifted in the dark waters of the Atlantic. She was very tired and imagined she heard a booming noise and a whistle. At one point a dazzling beam of light swept over her. But she could no longer tell the difference between what was happending now and what had happended in the past. She closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, her head was resting on a coil of rope and looking down, she saw she was wearing onliy a torn blouse and her knickers. Nearby she voices, speaking English with an American accent. Seeing her trying to situ p, a man in a blue jersey ran over. “Jesus!“ he cried. “We reckoned you was dead!“ Then he dashed off and was back in seconds with a blanket. Bundling her into it, he carried her down below. There he laid her on a stretcher alongside other survivors.

Magda called out, “Mutti? Papa?“ but there was no answer. She had not expected there would be. She saw again Manuel prising her mothers’s fingers off the edge oft he lifeboat. A young doctor came over. She tried to stop sobbing, not wanting tob e asked questions. “I couldn’t keep awake“, she shispered at last.

“A good thing too,“ he said. „“The fact you became unconscious saved your life. It meant your body closed down. I guess you’re going tob e okay. Whats’s your name?“

“Magda.“

“Well“, he went on, “we’ll be docking in New York soon. Then I’ll send you to a hospital for check up.“ Before he moved on tot he next stretcher, he gave her an awkward pat on

the hand. Magda turned over onto her side and felt something digging into her arm. It was the identity bracelet Jacob had sent her. Before the doctor left the makeshift ward he turned and called out, “Good luck, Maggie!“

Maggie. She would keep that name in the New World.

Magda and her cousin Fritz are growing up in Nuremberg under the Nazis. They know they are German but they are also Jewish. This the story of what happens to them, their families and friends when Hitler and the Nazi party decide that Jews are vermin that must be got rid of. It is also the story of how other Germans come to accept the Nazi propaganda, some with enthusiasm, some out of fear and self interest, while some are sceptical and a few resist.
Apart from the Nazi leaders all the characters in this novel are fictitious, but the story is true.

The photographs of Aryan and Jewish children on the front cover were printed by Julius Streicher in his anti-Semitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* in 1937. They are reproduced here courtesy of the Wiener Library.

The author lives in Kent. Educated in England and America, she has worked in both countries and on the Continent.
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