

Katrina's Journey

The Nazis invaded Poland three years ago. They were everywhere.

Samuel and I used to watch the Nazis patrolling the streets in front of our apartment. We didn't let Lucia see them lest she get scared.

One night, I heard pounding on the door! I sat up in bed. No one was allowed out after 7:00!

I walked to the door in front of my room and saw Papa turn on the electric light. The door opened. Nazis! And they were looking for the Jews that were in our house! I quickly looked at the hutch in the corner concealing the Jews. Oh no! It was crooked!

I looked at the Nazis, but they didn't seem to notice.

I need to do something.

They started tearing up all the rooms. When they found Lucia, she started crying, and they slapped her!

Samuel was smart enough to be quiet, but that didn't stop them from shoving him. Mama grabbed Samuel and Lucia. Two Nazis blocked her in a corner. The other Nazis were demolishing the house while arguing with Papa. I realized that they weren't paying attention to me! I could escape!

But where should I go? Of course! I decided to stay at Mr. Diller's for the night. I didn't want to run into anyone, so I took the stairs. When I knocked on his door, all the tears I'd been holding in since I saw the Nazis burst out as I explained the situation. He let me sleep in his spare bedroom and promised money for a train ticket.



In the morning, Mr. Diller woke me up and explained to me what to do. I left at 5:30 to catch the train.

I was nervous when I gave the Nazi my train ticket and fake ration card. But I boarded safely.

After I arrived in Amsterdam, I followed Mr. Diller's directions to a watch shop, and saw the triangle sign that meant it was safe to enter.

I saw a woman with pretty caramel-colored hair and told her, "I have a child's watch in need of repair." It was a secret code that meant I needed shelter.

I clutched the watch Mr. Diller gave me even tighter.

The woman, Betsie, took me to a room where an old man was sitting. "Here's a child in need of care," she said.

The old man smiled at me and took me to a bedroom. I fell asleep immediately. After I woke up, I went downstairs and saw the man sitting in a chair reading a newspaper. He saw me and his face fell. He motioned me over, and there was a feeling in the pit of my stomach that it wasn't for a good reason.

The newspaper headline read **"Jews Discovered Hidden in the Nopel Apartment!"**

My heart sank.

I skimmed the article. It described last night's events. My parents were being taken to a Concentration camp. My siblings are... dead? No. It just... no. I couldn't help it. I burst into tears and sobbed into the old

man's chest. I thought about my sister Lucia, and how the Nazi's slapped her. And Samuel, my brother, my role model.

Dead.

I pulled away from the man and ran up the stairs with teary eyes. That night I cried myself to sleep.



I stayed with the old man and Betsie for ten months until they found a home for me with the Crocketts in America. The children were girls, Sophie and Emma.

When I arrived, there were three people standing outside. One girl was at the window, sulking.

The mother introduced them in Polish. She insisted on me calling her "Mama."

The papa said, "Welcome to our home," in broken Polish.

The girl standing by her parents stepped up. "Sorry, Papa doesn't know Polish well," She explained. "I'm Emma, that's Mama and Papa, and my sister Sophie is inside. She isn't exactly thrilled about having a new member of the family."

"Uh-huh," I say, but I'm not paying much attention.

The house is *gorgeous*.

"So, do you want a tour, or do you want to sleep?" She inquired. "You're probably tired."

"Tired," I mumbled, and stumbled up the stairs behind Emma. I tumbled onto the bed she showed me and watched her leave. This felt so different. A safe home at last.

No more fear. No more hiding things. No more secrets. No Nazis.

I still miss my family, and cry for them every night, but I have a warm, cozy house to stay in.

I don't care if Sophie doesn't like me. I like this place, and I like the people here. Maybe my parents will make it out alive, and I will feel their love and care once again. But for now, I am at home with the Crocketts.