

The Year of 1945

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It is the year of 1945 in Poland. It's a year filled with misery, fear, and angst. It's a year where freedom and hope are stripped away just because you hold the Star of David with you.

I walk back home on the old cracked sidewalk. Tall, wooden buildings tower above me. They all bear Nazi flags, a constant reminder that our lives are only what they want them to be. A cloud passes over the sky. Something about this day doesn't feel right. I hear footsteps behind me, and I turn and see a woman walk up to me. She lives a few rooms away from me; a good friend to my parents. Fear is stricken all across her face. She recognizes me and says in a shaking voice, "Don't go home, not if you want to live".

I immediately rush back home, needing to know what happened. When I open our apartment gate, I hear a scream pierce through the air. With a sinking gut, I realize it's coming from the direction of my family. Slowly, I tiptoe to our family's apartment and look through the crack in the front door. As I look through, I found myself staring at my worst nightmare: two fully armed soldiers looming over my family. I blink my eyes furiously, not believing what I see is real, but it's as real as my heart hammering in my chest, as real as the fear pooling in my belly. I can't see my mother very well, but I can sense her fear radiating the air. *"They're going to take them away as they did to my sister", I think.* Someone grunts inside. Through the corner of my eyes, I see both my mother and father pleading for them to let go of my brother and spare our family's lives. The soldier slowly raises his rifle, I hold my breath and shut my eyes, **BANG!** My eyes fly open as the gunshot rings in my ear. Through my apartment door, I see my parents trembling. My chest constricts, knowing what happened.

"Please..." my parents beg.

I'm shaking, as I look at my helpless parents on their knees crying for their dead son, my brother. I force the door open. "NO!" I screech.

"Run, Jamie run!" My dad hollers behind me as I burst through the front door with tears streaming down my face. **BANG!** A gunshot rings again. My mother falls to the floor. **BANG!** My father as well. Now next thing I know I'm running for my life. I don't know what direction I'm running in, but every footstep I take leads to another chance of surviving. I hear the soldiers bellowing for me to stop, but I don't. I run and run until I see an old abandoned house and burst inside. I hold my breath and wait. I can hear footsteps outside crunching down on the fallen leaves.

"Where did she go?" A gruff voice asks. "I don't know," A man with a deep, scratchy voice replies. Everything goes silent. I find one of the many holes in the decaying walls and peek through it. My heart is thumping so loud I could barely hear what's going on outside. *Few! they're gone*, I think to myself. Slowly, I step out into the fresh cool breeze, and I turn around the corner of the abandoned house...

BANG! The same sound pierces through the air. "You cannot run anymore," grins the soldier. And once again, I find myself running for my life. I don't stop. I don't look back, all I am doing is running. Something cold and hard rips through the flesh of my leg. I stumble, and my eyes tear up from the pain. I try to get up, but it is too late. One soldier catches me, pulls me by my hair, and forces me to walk. He pulls me close so I can see every pimple on his gnarly face. He hisses at me, "You have nowhere to go now." His breath smells like garlic and faintly of blood. As I look into his stone-cold eyes, the images of my family flash in front of my eyes, and I can feel the fight draining out of me. The last thing I see before my vision goes black is the view of the bright, blue sky and shining sun.