

8th August 1940

This is my new diary. I guess I should take care writing in it, well mostly because mama bought it for Christmas and I can't give it back. It's got a lovely front cover with white doves flying in and out of it. But just be warned because I'm not writing my secrets in it. Anyways, I think I should get started on what happened today.

Mama's birthday. Papa, Jan, Hanna and I are going to the nearest gift shop to buy a present for her. Personally, I think we should create homemade ones. Hanna could create a dress because she's an excellent seamstress and Papa could whittle a little bird or something like that. The only problem with my idea is that I'm rubbish at a lot of stuff and the only thing I could say I'm talented at is writing.

Mama always said I had a steady hand, so that is usually why I write the family letters. But what could I use my writing skills to create? A story? I don't think so!

Me and Jan ran ahead while Hanna nattered on about how exquisite her next dress is going to be to Papa. I don't really think he was listening. Just saying 'uh huh'. Anyways me and Jan are the best of pals and since I don't really have any real friends I just play with him. He's our dog by the way. And the most cuddliest, loveable and faithful dog ever.

The bell rang as we entered the shop. I was amazed at how many things were on the shelves. I ran over to the stationery section all ready to beg papa to buy me those special ink pens. Right now I have to use a pencil! --

He said another day though, which is what he always says.

Eventually, we found the perfect present for mama. A cooking set with all the right tools. Mama is going to love it since she loves to cook! We set off home and sure enough mama was waiting for us.

“And where have you three been?” Mama asked as we took off our boots.

“Oh just took Jan out for a walk, no kerfuffle made thankfully!” papa said, quite truthfully.

“Hmmm I see, which meant taking all three of you. I thought Flora usually takes Jan out?” mama asked suspiciously.

“Yes well we decided to all go together!” Hanna said, plastering a fake smile onto her face. Mama shrugged and carried on peeling potatoes.

I ran upstairs to hide the presents. Later that night mama and us had a big party celebrating. Oh, and she loved the present.

10th August 1939

When I came downstairs this morning, I saw Papa reading the papers. That's very unlike him because he usually thinks it contains a 'load of rubbish'.

“Papa, why are you reading the papers? I thought you didn't approve of it!” I asked him, suspiciously.

“Yes Flora. But this is breaking news so of course, I have to read it,” Papa said, nervously. He doesn’t like discussing things that are close to the subject of something that he can’t tell us. He must’ve seen me frowning, so he passed me the newspaper.

“I suppose you’re old enough to know,” he sighed.

I read it three times but it didn’t make any sense.

“Why are these ‘Natzis’ kidnapping Jews? We didn’t do anything wrong!”

“We don’t know either, but we have our suspicions,” Papa said.

“What do you mean ‘suspicions’?” I asked, getting even more confused.

“Well, there’s a man called Adolf Hitler who rules a sort of gang called the Nazis. He blames us Jews for ruining the First World War,” Papa said, miserably.

“But why?” I asked persistently.

“He’s a racist,” mama said, joining in on our conversation. “Now no more questions, Flora. Your papa needs a rest,”

I stayed quiet most of the morning, trying to digest what Papa had told me. So Adolf Hitler was capturing Jews? But why? And where did he take them? I decided to take Jan out for a walk and tried to figure it out as I walked along.

I closed the door to the house and held Jan’s lead as he basically led the way. He knows this town like the back of his paw.

As I passed a back alley, Jan started barking. I was too lost in my dreams to really notice. But the gun shot brought me out of my trance. I looked down, thankfully Jan hadn't been shot. The sound had come from further away, but I was still curious to find out more. Pulling Jan to a halt, I picked him up. I ran down another street and found myself looking at a brick wall. The shouts and screams that I had heard earlier came from behind the wall. Quickly, I tied Jan's lead to a tree and climbed up. At one point, my foot slipped on a slippery part of the wall and I was left hanging by one hand. I held my foot up and found a hole in it, and pulled with all my might. I was on top! Peering over, I saw two men with olive green uniforms. They carried rifles. In the centre there knelt an old man who was pleading "No, please, no!" He had a bloody gash right where his heart was. He had been shot! I thought.

"Hans, vat happens ven somebody insults our leader?" asked one of the green uniformed men.

"Vey pay for vat vey have done!" The other uniformed men (Hans) sneered. They both cackled and walked down the street. One of them kicked the old man. He moaned then stopped. He was dead.

11th August 1940

I dreamed of the dead man last night. I rolled over in my sleep and the echo of the gunshot sounded in my head. My forehead was baking hot and in the morning, mama made me stay in bed because she had heard me last night groaning in my sleep. It turned out I had a fever..

I slept most of the day so there isn't much to put in this diary entry. Lets just hope that I'm better tomorrow!

15th August 1940

Ok so maybe I was wrong. Maybe, just maybe, it took me four days to recover. I was actually feeling fine yesterday but mama said that I should stay in bed just in case. She also said I shouldn't write in my diary because it could give me a headache.

I've been thinking, and I think that the old man who was dieing was a Jew. Those people in the uniforms were Nazis. I just know it.

Me and Hanna played piggy in the middle with Jan today. He was in the middle and me and Hanna would throw it over his head. I was starving by the time mama said it was lunch time.

18th August 1940

I think this is going to be the longest diary entry ever! How can I start?

It was early in the morning and I had only just got up. Mama was busy making breakfast and Hanna and I were playing snap. Jan was eating his breakfast and papa was upstairs washing his face.

"Sna-!" I began to say.

CRASH! SHATTER! BANG! Three sounds at once. Glass shattered, Hanna screamed and Jan barked. Five figures appeared from the

broken window. *The same people who killed that old man!* I thought. Had they come to kill us too? Before mama could say anything the soldiers grabbed Hanna and me and shoved us towards the door. One of the others ran upstairs and we heard a yell of surprise from papa. He was brought downstairs as well. Mama was held by another soldier. So many of those men! I started kicking the soldier who was holding me. His grip was firm and his sharp nails dug into my skin. "You're a fiery one aren't you?" he said, with a heavy German accent. His breath smelt of tobacco. "We'll soon quench dat fire," I struggled in his grip as we were all led away.

19th August 1939

It stinks in here. Stinks, stinks stinks. Thank god those soldiers didn't notice me put my diary in my pocket! I'm writing now, in the light of the moonlight. Yesterday those Nazi soldiers came and took us away. They locked us up in Cattle trucks - still stinking of animal manure. I looked over at papa. He's looking very thin, for we haven't eaten anything all day. And worst of all it's freezing. Me and Hanna huddle up together. Mama is comforting another woman on the other side of the train and papa is absentmindedly staring through a crack in the floor.

"It's o-ok," Hanna chattered.

"N-no, it isn't. H-how c-could it?" I asked.

Hanna stared at the wall opposite her, sadly.

"I m-miss Jan," I shivered, starting to cry.

"We all do," Hanna said. Jan had been gone for four days now. I was glad because I knew he would already have been dead if he hadn't run away. Lots of people have already died on here. I think I would've been a goner too if I didn't have mama, Hanna and papa with me. I'm sorry, my hand is shaking so badly I can't hold the pen properly. I'll write tomorrow, right now I feel like floating off to sleep...

21st of August

I woke today with a jolt. Overnight, about another fifty Jews were piled into the truck too. A baby cried a piteous wail. Me and Hanna are crammed up against the wall. The air is filled with the smell of sweat and poo. I still don't understand. Where are we going? Oh, how I wish the Nazis would tell us. Every time I ask papa, he just sadly shakes his head.

"Give your questioning a break, Flora. It's not helping," Mama mumbles. It's not my fault, you would be curious too if you were trapped in a cattle truck, that smells of poo, for two days!

It's stifling hot as well, with hardly any fresh air. The floor (a dark shade of green) was now a dark beige colour. I guess you can guess what happened there!

I slept on and off all morning. Loud shouting and running feet woke me up. I opened my eyes to find myself being stamped on all over. An arm pulled me back and Hanna's pale face appeared.

"Thanks," I said, wearily.

“You would have been killed,” Hanna shrugged. Sunlight streamed into the compartment, the doors wide open. Jews piled out of all the trucks, screaming and shouting. Mama blinked in the light.

“Well, I guess we’ve arrived,” she said, shakily. Papa leant on her arm heavily. We stepped out and were immediately surrounded by Nazi guards.

No one spoke. We were trudging towards a grey building and a sign said ‘Auschwitz. Arbeit macht frei (work makes one free)’ Papa started muttering under his breath quickly.

“No not Auschwitz. Not this. Please,”

A guard poked his rifle into papa, and he let out a cry of pain.

“Be quiet, you dirty piece of filth,” The guard growled.

Mama let a sob and I shivered under Hanna’s grip. We passed through the electric wire fence, prisoners forever.

There were rows and rows of huts. People in striped uniforms trudging passed us.

“Welcome to Auschwitz,” Voices seemed to sneer. My eyes widened as I looked around. Everywhere was full of Jews!

The Nazis marched us into yet another, grey building. In there we had to change into uniforms. As I pulled the shirt over my head, I made the mistake of breathing in through my nose. The smell of sweat and muck filled my nostrils and I suppressed a disgusted cough.

I had to cut off my hair too. I didn't mind that because I thought it would be fun to look like a boy. When I peered at hanna I couldn't tell the difference between us. I ran my hands through my hair. My short bristles felt uncomfortable on my hand.

They took all our belongings too. Even papa's golden tooth! I hid my diary up my shirt, afraid they would it ('They', as in the Nazis) Mama's watch was taken, my silver clip and my pinafore, Hanna's necklace and blouse and papa's golden tooth and his family heirloom, a round silver coin.

We were marched back out into the sunshine and led to work.