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*T*HERE WERE curfews now. Jews were not allowed on the streets at night or in movie theaters, concert halls, or most public places.

Nazi cruelties had continued. Soldiers kept up their attacks on stores and homes, and beatings in the street became a common sight. Storm troopers broke into homes and arrested many of the men. It was whispered that they were being taken away to prison camps.

Abraham's tailor shop on the first floor was now closed by government order. A poster covered the cracked glass of the storefront window. Someone had tried to scratch out the letters, but it could still be read: "*Judenblut, Schweinblut!*"

Twelve-year-old Sonia could not understand why all of this was happening. She still went to school, but the Jewish children had been separated from the gentiles. She was not allowed to talk to any of her friends who weren't Jew-

ish. The day her best friend stopped speaking to her Sonia came home crying.

“Why, Mama, why?” she sobbed.

Malka tried to find an answer, but she had trouble understanding it herself.

“Do you remember the Purim story about Queen Esther and Haman?” she asked, holding Sonia.

The girl nodded.

“Haman was the evil adviser to King Ahasuerus very long ago and wanted to kill all the Jews. But the king fell in love with Esther, who was a Jew herself and very beautiful, so he married her and made her the queen. Esther then used her royal power to save all the Jews.”

“I remember,” Sonia said.

“So now,” Malka continued, “there is an evil man who is just like Haman; his name is Adolf Hitler. He is as evil as Haman, but he can’t hurt us if we are brave and act wisely. We must have faith. The Jews are a people chosen by God. If we keep believing in God, He will protect us.”

Malka kissed her younger daughter, then got up and went to the piano. “Come, Liseleh, let’s work on the ‘Clair de Lune.’” Lisa pulled a worn folio of sheet music from the pile and put Debussy’s masterpiece on top of the piano.

“Close your eyes for a moment before you begin. Where do you see yourself?”

“On a desert island. Across the ocean,” Lisa answered without hesitation.

“Can I go, too?” Sonia chimed in, shutting her eyes tightly.

“Of course you can,” her mother answered lovingly.

Lisa opened her eyes brightly and placed her fingers on the keys. The music shimmered softly like the moonlight bouncing off the waters of a distant ocean. Looking up

from the keyboard, she saw her mother close her eyes and smile. Malka's head began to sway as she was transported on the waves of her daughter's silvery tones.

Malka had begged her husband not to go out, but he'd refused. "If you are caught, what will we do?" Malka had pleaded. "Mr. Stern next door didn't come back last night!"

"I can't stay inside all the time, I'll go mad!" He had gathered his coat and left hurriedly, afraid to look his wife in the eye. He had gone out into the streets, pitch black since the smashing of the streetlights.

It was late when he returned.

Lisa strained to hear snatches of their conversation. "We must do something immediately. The chance may not come again."

Lisa crept out of bed and stood in the hallway. She heard the words *Holland* and *England*.

"They are not letting Jews out of Vienna," her father continued. "But they are allowing some trains to take Jewish children. Hundreds have already gone. Parents are fighting—they're begging for a spot on the trains. It's what everyone is talking about."

"Children are going away without their parents?" Her mother's voice was weak and frightened. "Where are they going?"

"England. Trains are being organized to take them to England. I think we have to consider this."

"Listen to what you're saying. Send the children without us! Without their family!"

"My cousins Dora and Sid live in London. This could be our only chance."

“Things will surely get better, Abraham. Things can’t be so bad. We must have faith.”

“Malka, there is chaos at the Kultusgemeinde. I hear such terrible stories, I cannot bear to tell them to you. Please trust me. We must do it!”

“How could we do it even if we wanted?”

“Let me finish. Mr. Rothbard said that his wife refuses under any condition to send their son on the train, he thinks the whole family can get out another way. We don’t have such a way. We can’t stay together right now. He will give the son’s place to us.”

Malka drew in her breath with surprise and anguish. “So you are asking me to send my precious daughters away?”

“Malka, you must hear me, he has only one place, for only one child right now. We must send Lisa or Sonia . . . Rosie is over eighteen, she isn’t eligible.” Abraham’s voice was wretchedly unhappy.

Lisa heard her mother start to cry.

“How could we do this? How could we bear it?”

Abraham pleaded, “One of our daughters can be safe. As soon as we are able, we will find a way to send the others. . . .”

“It can’t be the time for this. It can’t be,” Malka whispered in disbelief.

Lisa heard her mother’s footsteps as she emerged from the kitchen. Malka smiled sadly at her daughter. “Go to bed now, my darling. Go to bed.”

She kissed her mother’s cheek and walked into the bedroom, where Sonia was sleeping peacefully next to her rag dolls. Lisa stared at her sister and wondered what the decision would be.

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The next morning Lisa was reading at the kitchen table when her parents entered the room. Abraham stared at the beautiful fourteen-year-old who had inherited his red hair, his winning smile, and the same solid resolve.

“We have made a decision,” her mother said. “We are sending you to England. We would like to send all of you, but we are forced to choose only one. You are strong, Lisa. You are strong and you have your music to guide you. . . . We will send you first. As soon as we can find enough money, we will send your sisters.” Then Malka began to cry.

Lisa was silent, and although she felt like crying herself, she wouldn’t give in to her tears. It would be harder for her mother if she cried. She forced herself to push aside the images of good-byes and separation that flooded her mind.

“Where will I go? What will I do there?” She didn’t quite understand how she would live on her own but wasn’t sure that her parents had the answers, either. She would do what her mother had told her. She would have faith.

“There is an organization called the Bloomsbury House, that has arranged for Jewish children to come to England. It’s safer there,” said her father.

“Can’t we go together? Can’t we wait and go together?”

Abraham looked tenderly at his daughter. “Sonia will come next, and then Rosie and Leo and your mother and I will join you. Your cousins will take care of you until we get there.”

“Who are these cousins?” Lisa asked, forlorn.

“My aunt’s cousins. I have never met them, but I am told one is also a tailor. A tailor in London.”

Lisa forced herself to conjure up the image of a hand-

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some man in an elegant suit and hat. "Then I will work for him and send you the money, you'll see."

That Sunday, it was unseasonably warm and the family decided to have a picnic. Lisa and Sonia wore tailored dresses that their father had made, while Rosie chose a fashionable wraparound with the latest-style cape collar. Leo helped Malka carry the basket, which was packed tightly with meats and fancy foods that were a treat after weeks of thin soups and rough breads. They didn't go to the Prater as they had in other times; the sign on the heavy metal gates was clear: "*Juden Verboten*": "No Jews." They walked instead to a tram stop for the ride to the Vienna woods. It was the family's favorite summer picnic spot, but they had never gone in winter. When the tram finally arrived, a new sign had been added. "*Juden und Hunden Verboten*": "No Jews or Dogs."

They walked back silently to the apartment. Malka spread the tablecloth on the back landing overlooking the courtyard. A neighbor saw them and waved. "Nice day for a picnic!"

"You could not ask for better," Malka answered, trying to add cheer to her voice.

Abraham suddenly hummed the oompah-pah phrase of the Ferris wheel music from the Prater. Malka smiled and whistled along, and Lisa yelled: "Here comes the marching band!" and banged a rat-a-tat on the plate with her knife.

Sonia caught on and waved her arms in the air. "Look at me. I'm leading the band. Look at me!"

The family laughed and sang almost as they had in better years, when Vienna was still the old Vienna and they had not been forced to inhabit its new dark universe.

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The Kindertransport was set to leave the week after Hanukkah, although no one knew exactly what day. The family lit the menorah each night and said their prayers. No friends came by since Jews were no longer allowed on the streets without a special pass. Still, there was joy because the family was together.

Lisa's bag had been packed for several days. She would take only one small suitcase—enough to hold a change of clothes and her good Shabbat dress. She knew she would have little room on the train.

Then, one night, Abraham got the call: Lisa's train would be leaving the following morning. From her bed, she overheard her father's conversation. She had thought about this moment every day since the decision had been made. She had prepared for it; it had overwhelmed everything else in her mind. Yet when the call actually came, it took her by surprise.

Bathed in tears, she lay in her bed and with gentle motions stroked the stitching of her mother's embroidered sheets. How long until she would sleep under them again? How long until she would be reunited with her loving family?

She awoke before anyone else and laid out her blue twill coat with its matching checkered scarf. She stood at the mirror and put on the little felt hat with the blue ribbon, adjusting it to the perfect tilt.

She walked through the house, determined to remember everything she loved, yet already feeling like a stranger. She scanned the walls, counted the paintings, and fingered the beautiful bone lace across the dining table. Gently, she touched the blue-and-white porcelain figure of an old tailor, which her father had brought from

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Dresden years ago, and leafed through the worn leather scrapbook of hand-tinted postcards.

Then she stopped at the piano and brushed her fingers in the air above the keys. The copy of “Clair de Lune” was on the piano. Guiltily she rolled it up and put it in her pocket. It was a silly luxury, she thought, since she had so little space, but she couldn’t help herself.

Her mother came in from the hall and put on her heavy coat. “It’s time to go.”

“Mama, will you promise me something?”

Malka smiled at her daughter. “Of course.”

“Will you promise me that you won’t move anything in this room? That you will leave it all just as it is? I want to know it’s still like this when I think about it,” Lisa whispered so quietly that her mother could barely hear her.

“I promise, Liseleh.” Malka smiled back at her, then took her daughter in her arms and rocked her.

The Westbahnhof station was overflowing with people; Lisa had never seen it so crowded. Hundreds of desperate families rubbed shoulder to shoulder in panic and confusion, and pushed belongings of all shapes and sizes toward the waiting train. At the door to each car Nazi soldiers in long brown coats shouted into bullhorns as they inspected suitcases and documents.

When the crowd became too dense, the Jura family stopped for their final good-byes. It had been decided that Rosie, Sonia, and Abraham would say good-bye first, then Lisa’s mother would walk her to the train. Abraham had been carrying the small suitcase for his daughter. When he stopped and handed it to her, Lisa could only clutch the handle and stand frozen. She felt that if anyone moved

from her side, she would fall to pieces like a broken china figurine.

Abraham put his arm around Rosie, easing her toward Lisa, and the two sisters embraced. "Don't forget to take the window seat so we can see you," her beautiful older sister shouted above the noise. "We'll all be together again soon, be brave for us."

Next, Abraham gently pushed his youngest daughter forward. Lisa kissed her, reached into her pocket, and slipped Professor Isseles's tiny gold charm around Sonia's neck. "Close your eyes and picture all of us together soon . . . and keep this for me until I see you again. . . ."

Then Abraham took Lisa in a hug so tight that neither one could breathe. He was crying, something she could never remember seeing him do before, not even on Kristallnacht. Finally, Malka took her hand and guided her through the crowd toward the platform.

The children were lined up, waiting their turn to board. Some of them were Lisa's age, some older, some younger, carrying their cherished toys and dolls. Teary-eyed parents buttoned their coats, brushed their hair, and laced up untied shoes.

"You be on your best behavior. . . ."

"Don't forget to eat your lunch. . . ."

"Don't take your sweater off; you'll catch a cold. . . ."

In front of Lisa and her mother was a little boy of about ten. Along with his suitcase he carried a large red accordion. "You'll have to leave this here," said the guard. "No valuables are to leave the country."

"It's not that valuable," protested the boy. "I need it to practice."

"Show me that you can play it," insisted the guard.

The boy sat down his bag and strapped on the accor-

dion. His head was barely visible behind the huge instrument. He began to play a simple polka—his hands shaking from fear. Its unexpected three-four beat drifted down the platform and for an eerie moment, the clatter of the crowd stopped, as they listened. The guard stared, then motioned for the boy to move forward with his instrument as the clamor of good-byes began again.

Malka looked at her daughter, who was next in line, and held her close. “You must make me a promise.”

“What is it, Mama?”

“You must promise me . . . that you will hold on to your music. Please promise me that.”

“How can I?” Lisa sobbed. “How can I without you?” She dropped her little suitcase and embraced her mother tightly.

“You can and you will. Remember what I’ve taught you. Your music will help you through—let it be your best friend, Liseleh. And remember that I love you.”

“Move forward now,” the guard commanded, and waved Lisa up the steep metal stairs. At that moment Malka slipped a little card into her daughter’s hand. Lisa didn’t even have a chance to glance at it: Before she knew it, she was separated from her mother and carried along onto the train car.

Pushed up the steps and swept down the long corridor, Lisa moved quickly to a seat by the window. The glass was covered by the condensation of many fevered breaths, and she furiously wiped a patch clear with the sleeve of her coat. She watched as children were wrenched bodily from their mothers and shoved onto the train. Trembling, she searched for her mother’s dark hair and black coat. She thought she could see her and waved frantically, but she did not know whether her mother could pick her out.

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She yelled through the glass, “Mama!” but her voice was lost in a chorus of similar cries.

Finally there was a low clank releasing the brakes, and the train began to move. For a moment she thought she could make out her family, pushed behind a barricade, waving faithfully. Then everything disappeared into the steam and the smoke.

She looked down for the first time at the envelope she clutched in her hand—the last thing her mother had given her. She tore it open and inside found a photograph of Malka standing straight and proud, taken on the day of Lisa’s last recital at school. On the back was written, “*Fon diene nicht fergesene mutter*”: “So you will never forget your mother.”

The train gathered speed, and the buildings passed in a blur. The snowy fields came into view and the city shrank into the distance. She stared and stared at the disappearing skyline. Finally the giant silhouette of the Ferris wheel was the only landmark visible—turning slowly above the white roofline of Vienna.