

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

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I remember how after the conversation with Bruno earlier I became so happy but I had to dissemble my feelings in front of the officers because they don't like it and they'd punish me for their pleasure by flogging me until my clothes become draped with blood. Bruno promised me that he'll come to the camp and find my father and we could maybe escape with Bruno to his house. But his family will kill us! We'll go to my house and my father, Bruno and I will eat a sandwich. My taste buds have gone dull because of eating porridge or tea or oatmeal everyday. Oh yeah, Bruno promised me that he'll bring a sandwich which will revive my taste buds. But I wonder what time it is because the ravens are having a loud chat outside. They might be talking about how I will be going on an adventure with a friend tomorrow! But I wonder if I can make it tomorrow because I can't sleep with all these thoughts whirling around my brain. I'll make myself busy by plan for tomorrow's event. OK, firstly I have to get the clothes for Bruno... Oh wait, I might be able to get it now while everyone's asleep! I can get it to rest my body from shivering every few seconds by wearing it. OK let's go!

I push my aching body off my bed and listen out for any signs of the officers

but I only hear the snores of the men, the cries of the ravens and the whistle of the wind. As I place my left leg onto the floorboards below, it creaks. I then freeze, listening but nothing changed except the odd coughing of a Jew. I slowly lift my right leg off the bed while the muscles are hurting me and place it gently on the floorboard which didn't complain. I tiptoe to the showers and luckily, there are spare clothes there left by the dead. I search for a small size that would fit Bruno. I wonder though, how is he so small when he has fun, food and drinks? Maybe he doesn't eat a lot and gives it to me. But why aren't *I* like Bruno? I remember my father telling me that being Jewish isn't bad because I used to tell him that none of my friends are Jewish and don't talk about it. He said this before the Nazis declared that Jewish people, if found, are to be reported to the police so they can take us to concentration camps. I wonder what he would say now about being Jewish. I remember when my father used to tell me about our ancestors and prophets like Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Ezekiel and more. Also how most of their people gave them hard times and they were patient. I didn't like when the denouement of the stories came because I wanted to hear more and that when he finishes, my questions flood my poor father. Oh what a good man he was, what a good man. Bruno says his father is a good man. If he is then I guess he would be helping the Allies defeat the Nazis. I hear so many conversations and rumours about the Allies and how they're going to save us. I think of it as fake... But who cares about what I think of...except the ones who I love, but they're probably

already dead.

I feel a tingling sensation on my body and sense that someone is in my presence. I slowly turn my head to look behind me and see a man. Fortunately he's a Jew, judging by his raggedy clothes. He comes up to me and I feel his ghostly presence. He opens my clamped hands and presses an object into it and folds my hand. When I look at the object and look back up, he's gone along with my tingling sensation. I think, was he there? Was he a ghost? Is my mind playing with me? My mind whizzes with thoughts. I unfold my hand and identify the object as a main part of a watch. My eyebrows slowly close into each other. I wonder who it's from and why me. I turn the watch around and see words engraved. I try to read the word and it says in a familiar handwriting, 'Shmuel' and a heart beside it. I felt surprised and incredulous. I then put it in my pocket in my pants which a Jewish tailor made from me as a favour because he owed my dad something.

I search the pile some more and find pants, cap and a shirt that would fit Bruno. I swiftly wear the pants and shirt and stuff the cap into my pocket and walk to my bed with pride and happiness. They shatter when the floorboards creak a little too loudly like they're singing. Some of the snoring abruptly stops. Then some men lift their upper body up while trying to rub sleep out of their eyes. When they see it's me, they slump back into their beds and then their snoring continues. I wonder that

they must've woken up to the floorboards creaking everyday when the officers step onto it wearing pride that they now do it a little unconsciously. I didn't want to be like them and live here for more than five years and memorise the officer's steps on the floorboards. I reach my bed and lay down. I close my eyes and think of where my father would be in the camp if he even is. My body is now shivering not only because of the cold but of happiness. The first time I saw him, I didn't know who he was and what he wanted. He introduced himself and then we conversed and bonded. But one day he betrayed me by giving me food and then when I was caught, denied all involvement. But that bad and cruel man beat me up and I cried until no tears came out and by sight was blocked with *blood!*

When I eventually healed my bruises, I was OK physically but not mentally. Even my teacher at school didn't beat me up so hard! But I forgave him and to be honest I would've done the same under all the pressure and fear. Ever since I've been friends with Bruno, my stomach doesn't rumble. Everyday I don't cry in my bed because of grief, sadness and pain. Everyday I don't wake up in the middle of the night crying of the nightmares. Everyday I don't pee myself because of the pain of getting up, going to the toilets, enduring the stink and waiting in line only to get pushed of the toilet seat by a stronger man. I have become happier. Thank God...actually if there was a God, he wouldn't have done this to us. He wouldn't make us starve, scarred, be slaves and get hurt physically and mentally just for the pleasure of the Germans.

But who do I thank? Myself? Bruno? My father? The Jews? The Germans? The Allies? Who? Forget about it, I'll answer this question another time. One day I'll just let go of this world and live in peace under the soil. Just like Mother and Sister when the Nazis tortured and killed them by putting in a cage full of German Shepherds who didn't eat in two days while they forced Father and I to watch. I remember Mother's face when she said her last words, "Bye love, strive for freedom, see you in heaven," while the dogs sunk their sharp teeth into her caring body that raised me for who I am now. The officers threw a beer glass at her and it bounced off her head and hit a dog which turned its anger into ripping the flesh from my mother while they laughed. Then to add onto the pain, Sister was getting mauled on her limbs while tears slipped down her face and went to different ways because of the thrashing of the dogs while they struggled to get into her soft flesh. Then her tears made its way into the stomach of the dogs. I cried and wailed and cried and wailed and I couldn't hold on any longer so I tried to end my life but the officer said, "Ihre Zeit kommt noch Ungeziefer, warten geduldig" - *Your turn will come vermin, wait patiently* - and held onto my collar. I was lucky because ending my life in that way was unbearable but I couldn't think and happiness being Bruno's friend would've never penetrated my heart.

I come back to the world and feel the bed wet and I realise it was tears. I must be crying because of sadness and happiness mashed together. Oh well. Luckily I'm

not cold because the second pair of pants and shirt acted as a stronger blanket than the thin blanket that comes that comes with the bed. I should've gotten another pair of clothes before...Oh I forgot about the plan. First to get the clothes for Bruno, check, meet Bruno, eat the sandwich, find father with Bruno, escape and live in a house. Oh what a great plan! We could swim in a river, eat, play and sleep in a comfy bed. This is what Bruno would probably be doing in his house right now.

I want to sleep but I can't wait for tomorrow! But I need to sleep and rest to get energy so I guess it's better sleep. I wonder if I try different sleep positions but I guess they won't work. Maybe if I think about an officer going to whip me, I'll sleep. Yes that'll probably work. Smart Shmuel. Genius. OK imagine in great detail an ugly and scary-looking officer turns the knob on the door and I see it move it on my side. The door creaks at it moves. The officer enters with his whip, he squeezes the whip so tightly it looks like it's going to burst blood and tears. With each heavy boot pressing on the floorboards, they cry in pain. The officer is in a new, shiny and grey Nazi uniform with his dark and shiny hat and boots. The black and polished whip has three different leather strips. As the officer walks, the straps softly hit each other taunting the next victim they will hurt. The officer's lips unwillingly twist in ugly smile. One of his eyes is shut tight and sealed and the other shines delight. The fragrance of the officer is of heavy beer and soap. His skin wrinkled like waves in an ocean. His blood on his face boil of the hate of the Jews. The pupil of the officer

points directly at me like a laser. The other Jews pretend that they don't see but they've grown extra eyes while living in Auschwitz. The officer finally arrives right beside my bed. My body curled up and my backside open. The officer raises his strong arm holding the whip and the straps click when they meet each other. Then in a matter of seconds the arm is swiftly lowered and that means the whip is making its way and then the three straps make strong contact with the flesh of my back. The pain erupts like an erupting volcano, spewing the sound of the whip making contact with my back go around the room and reaching the ears of the humans in the room screaming CRACK. Every Jew winces around the room sympathising for the now dead flesh on my back. My mind suddenly shuts off.