

We Were Friends

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I sat alone in my red reclining chair, sipping my green tea. I was having a moment alone, reflecting on my forty-year life. Much had happened in those years. Remembering my life was a thing I often did and usually when I did I thought about them. “Who are they”, you might ask. Well, my friend, let me tell you a story about how an eleven year old girl, myself, lost her best friends.

It started on the fifth of September, 1938. I was headed to school, eager to see my two best friends. Their names were Avigail and Kaleb. I had known them for as long as I could remember and we were closer than ever. And, of course, I did not have a small crush on Kaleb (maybe) so do not even ask. I did not love to stare into his beautiful brown eyes (maybe). I was a little jealous of Avigail because she was as beautiful as if God himself had caressed her head and sprinkled her with magic. I wished I had her dark brown hair and eyes instead of my plain blonde hair. After a few months of being friends I got over my envy, after all she was very nice.

I finally reached the school I attended and met my friends. We chatted about many things such as the heavy rain that happened last night and what we had for dinner. I loved talking with my two best friends, it was fun to do. As we walked through the hallways, we heard the first bell. Time to part ways. I sat through all my boring classes. I could not wait to get to Math class. Avigail and Kaleb shared that class with me. We sat near each other in the back of the classroom. We would pass notes back and forth and would often get scolded for this. We did not care.

Finally, the time came for us to go to Math class. I was excited as usual. Strangely, I went into

## We Were Friends

the classroom to see three men, dressed in ugly green military uniforms staring at us. I took my seat next to Avigail, who had a look of terror on her face. Before I could ask what was going on, one of the men spoke.

“If there are any Jewish students in this classroom, get your things and go home at once. You will not be permitted to attend this school any longer,” he said with a voice of authority. I now shared the same expression as poor Avigail because I knew what this meant. Avigail and Kaleb, who I definitely did not have a small crush on, had to leave the school we attended together. They had to go away and we would only have time together after school now, if at all.

Avigail, Kaleb, and another girl stood and left the classroom along with the men. I had to continue the rest of the day with the thought that ‘my friends cannot come to this school anymore because of something they cannot control’. Consequently, I did not learn much else the rest of the school day.

When school let out, I raced out of the building towards the field that the three of us usually went to after school. We would do our assignments and chat. As I reached the field, I saw them standing there. They waited for me with sad expressions.

We talked about what had happened and they told me they had to leave on Friday. They were going on a train to get away from here. They had to leave their parents. Half of me pitied them

## We Were Friends

yet half of me pitied myself. Who would I talk to and joke around with every day?

The time came for us to part ways for the night and I headed home. I silently ate dinner with my family and went straight to bed. I slept none of the nights leading up to Friday. Every day I went to the field hoping to chat with my two friends. There was no one there. I was too sad to go to their homes and ask why. I just walked home.

On the afternoon of Friday I went home. I did not bother to go to the field because there would be no one there. I was finishing my chores and heard the noise of a train nearby. I sprinted out of the house, my parents calling after me. That train was going to take them away. This was my last chance to talk to them.

I saw a group of children about my age boarding the train. I looked at the large mass of people and saw Avigail and Kaleb. I ran and squeezed the life out of Avigail. Surprised, she turned and hugged me back while Kaleb watched.

“I am sorry we did not come to see you, we were just too ashamed to be in front of you. You are German. You are better than us. Everyone knows that. Even the teachers at school treat you better than Kaleb and me,” she said with a sad look.

I thought about it. I never realized they felt that way. I certainly did not.

“I still do not wish for you to go,” I said between sobs.

I walked over to Kaleb and kissed him. If you were wondering, I actually did like Kaleb a little (a lot). That kiss was my first. We heard the engineer yell for them to get on. The three of

## We Were Friends

us said our goodbyes and I stood and watched as the train left.

Well that was my story. A perfect friendship ruined by prejudice. A prejudice I never felt.

Maybe I will see them later on in life. For now, I will refill my empty mug with more tea.