

# A Story Passed Down

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800 words

"Tell me a story Grammy."

"What type of story would you like?" I ask.

My granddaughter is visiting my house. It's right before her bed time but she wants a story. I can feel the fire warming me, and I can hear my rocking chair go creak, creak.

"Tell me about when you were a child," she says.

"Very well," I close my eyes and take a deep breath, "When I was a child I lived a pretty normal life, I went to school and played with my friends. Then one day the Nazis came to my country. Nazis were not good people. Now not all Nazis wanted to be bad, but Hitler, their leader, forced them to. Hitler would say, "Join the Nazis fight for your country" and when people didn't he said, "If you don't join the Nazis I will hurt you and your family." The Nazis started to hurt Jews."

"I'm Jewish!" she exclaims.

"Yes, you are and so am I. The Nazis would destroy Jewish shops and they would treat them like they weren't humans. They'd say Jews were full of sickness and don't go near them."

"Were the Jews actually full of sickness?" she questions. "I don't understand why people didn't like Jews."

"No, we weren't actually sick. But Hitler only wanted people who had blond hair blue eyes and were Christians to live. He said everyone else was subhuman. The Nazis started taking Jews away one night. One night they took my family and put us in a ghetto."

"What's a ghetto?"

"It's a very small section of the town where all the Jews were expected to live. The ghetto was full of disease and really small. A normal sized room like this." I point around me, "Thirty or more people would be expected to live there. My family lived in the ghetto for a while. Every week or so the Nazis would take some of the Jews put them on a train and sent to them to concentration camps."

"What's a- ? "

"Hush, I will tell you. At the concentration camps Jews and other people would have to do the hard work for no pay. Like the ghettos, the camps were full of disease; people starved and the barracks were crowded. If you were sent to some of the other concentration camps you would die immediately."

I remember the shots of the gun and the lifeless bodies in the ghetto.

"Luckily, my Mama managed to contact our friend outside the ghetto. He smuggled us out of the ghetto one night. He brought us to his home and hid us in a secret room under his barn. During the day we had to stay in the small room cramped all together. We tried to sleep but it was hard when you're all scrunched up. During the night he would let us out so we could walk a bit then he'd give us each a bowl of soup and some crusts of bread. Though sometimes he'd have to give us less because he didn't even have enough food for himself much less five more people."

"Every day was the same, we started to lose hope; we thought the war would never end. But then one day it did and out of the blue in the middle of the day, our friend came running to the barn yelling the war is over, the war is over! We were so happy that day! We had a feast of what little food we had left and we danced for joy!" I pause savoring the moment.

"We could have stayed in our town but there were too many terrible memories. We gathered as much money and food as we could and with no money left bought five tickets to America. We sailed day and night for twelve days, and finally we reached America. We lived in New York City for a while. My mom, sister, and I cleaned houses and my dad got a job working at a shop. Eventually we bought a nice house in the country where we had a farm and animals. We could sell meat, vegetables and other things.

"We lived there and had a happy life. My Mama and Papa died and my sister, your Aunt Sara, moved away. I stayed in this house. I had your mom your mom had you and I think you know how the rest of the story goes. Now enough stories time for bed."

"Noooooooooooo, can I have another story?" she begged.

"Now, now you have to go to bed, maybe some other time."

"Are there kids today who are treated like the Nazis treated Jews?"

"Not where we live, but there are places where people are treated terribly."

Do you think I could ever be as brave as the person who hid you? "

"If you try hard enough and always try to help people in need, why not" I say "but first you have to go to bed."

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