

"The Forgotten Locket"
by Hannah Brown
Copley Fairlawn Middle School, Grade 7
Mrs. Jennifer Adair, Instructor
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My brother and I press our ears against the door as we listen carefully to what our parents say to the German officers. The doorknob slowly turns as Jacob and I hurry back to our beds to try and convince our parents we were asleep. I open my eyes just enough to see my parents creep in with a suitcase.

"Stefan, I don't want the kids to live this way," my mama whispered.

"I know Miriam, but would you rather get killed."

"We might as well be falling into the arms of death putting our lives in the hands of the Germans."

"Have you heard about the Goldbergs? They were last seen entering their own house with the Gestapo and never seen again. We cannot end up like that Miriam. The least we can do is protect our children," Father replied. Mama dropped to her knees and silently cried. She knew that we would never return to our beloved home again. My parents opened the suitcase and to my surprise, it was already half filled with their belongings. A couple of documents peeked out from under the stack of clothes. I recognized one of them as my mother's diary she wrote in, each night. I shifted my body towards the run-down suitcase to get a better look, unfortunately, I wasn't stealthy enough. My father looked at me just as I rushed to shut my eyes. He put his head in his hands and leaned over to my mama's ear.

"Sie ist wach," (*She is awake*) he whispered in German.

My mama frowned and walked over to me. "You can stop pretending Liebe. (*Love*)," she whispered in my ear.

"What is going to happen to us, mama?" I asked in a soft voice. Instead of answering me, she brought a small shiny box out of her dress pocket.

"I want you to have something, Liebe. It is very special to me." I got a better glance at the box and noticed it was a lilac square with a symbol on the top. The symbol was the star of

David. Back then it used to mean protection but ever since the Germans took over the star was a label that was sewn onto every Jew's jacket as a reminder that they didn't belong.

I slowly lifted the top of the box up. I gasped as I recognized the necklace that lay in front of me. My mama wore the locket every day. I asked her once what was inside, but was ignored. I never asked again. My hands shook as I lifted it from its resting place. There was a picture underneath it. A picture of my family sitting together in a happier time. I was unfamiliar with the smiles on our faces. I haven't seen or felt that joy in a long time. I did my best to hold back my tears, but I'm sure Mama noticed. She noticed everything. I pulled my hair up as Mama clasped the locket around my neck. The next morning I felt a bit happier as I touched the locket around my neck. Unfortunately, this feeling evaporated as I saw the half-full suitcase laying on the ground. I remember the conversation my parents had last night. I remember the tears that streamed down my Mama's face. I remember the fear when I realized why there was a suitcase in my bedroom.

My hand gripped my locket making my knuckles turn white. My heart wasn't as full as it was before. I took a few deep breaths and forced my hand down to my lap. I was a little unsteady as I got up from my bed. Several things happened in the next few minutes. My parents came rushing in with a German officer. I froze. I thought that if I moved even one muscle then my whole life would be gone within a matter of seconds.

"Lea gather your belongings in the suitcase and wake your brother," my father said. He stood up straight with a confident smile and yet I could still catch the quiver in his lip and the fear in his eyes.

"The truck will only be here for a limited amount of time. I expect your family on the truck and accounted for by the time we leave," the officer said in German. When I looked outside the window I understood what would happen next. I quickly packed all of my brother's belongings and added mine. My stomach grumbled. I hadn't had breakfast yet.

"Mama I am hungry," I complained. My brother nodded and pointed at some bread we had on the counter.

"COME ON! MOVE IT JEW!" A German officer was yelling at our 75-year-old neighbor as she was trying to grab a piece of bread.

"I am hungry sir. Please just one bite," he said. I looked away. The officer didn't say anything. He didn't need to.

"Ch, Ch Boom." Our neighbor was laying on the ground. A puddle of blood started pooling around the body. My mother covered Jacob's and my ears and hugged our heads close to her chest. I could hear her heart beating.

I held my locket close to my chest.

We got onto the packed truck and huddled as close as we could. By the time we got to the camp, I had seen several people die. It could have been from the heat or the lack of food. But every once in a while, we would hear a shot ring out into the air.

I gripped my locket tighter.

When we got to the camp the officers checked our bags. Underneath the clothes, they found the documents we were hiding. They took them out and suddenly threw them into a bonfire that was growing rapidly.

"NO!" My mama shouted. I then understood why she wanted to keep those documents safe. Once those papers hit the fire I realized no one would ever know our story.

My hand wrapped around my locket once more.

Works Cited

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