

Honorable Mention
Division II – Writing

Sadie Carpenter, Grade 9

“The Sky Was Dark and Full Of Clouds”

Our Lady of The Elms

Elaine Fippin, Instructor

Word Count: 1000

January 1st, 1939

Dear Frida,

You didn't visit this weekend. I hope you're alright. Mama made an outfit for my doll for my birthday. All she could afford were rags because nobody came to the shop this week. She's been working extra hard lately because Papa isn't well. At night I hear her rummaging through the kitchen, trying to tidy before bed. Sometimes it's just Mama and me, when Bertha's at school and Papa's in the other room resting. That's when it's quiet and all I hear are the people outside. German boys run outside our house and throw rocks at it. They laugh as they go to their next target. If you were here you would stand up to them. No one here does. Mama calls them wretched little children. I hope you like your job, but we miss you and we want to come home.

Bye for now,

Nelly

May 10, 1940

Dear Frida,

Today, I was awakened by the hollering of German officers in the streets. They yelled, “Gestapo!” I'd never heard that word before. It gave me a chilling feeling. They commanded people onto the streets. I heard Mama's footsteps outside our door. She rushed us out of bed and into our clothes. She told us to stay in our room no matter what and then she was gone. I overheard her say a Jewish family was kicked out. Bertha looked as confused as I felt. Then I realized Papa wasn't here. He got up early this morning to go to the bank. I worried about him. I looked out the window in our room and saw tall, angry men wearing grey uniforms with swastikas on their arms. They didn't look like the officers I used to see in the square. One wall separates them from us.

Your sister,

Nelly

May 12th, 1940

Dear Frida,

Today I played outside with Bertha. We saw two boys that used to play hopscotch. They stood still and didn't say a word. We walked home and saw Mama and Papa talking in the kitchen. There were four papers on the table with our pictures on them. The names on them weren't ours. I asked Mama what they were. She said, "We're going to play a game where we pretend to be characters. Like the plays we used to see down by the square? It's a fun game the officers came up with!" I was confused. Why did the officers want us to put on a play? But I agreed that it would be fun. My character is my age and has two sisters. I asked Papa about the game and he told me not to ask questions.

Bye for now,

Nelly

June 22, 1943

Dear Frida,

I haven't been allowed outside. I sat by the window this morning and I saw an officer with a tight grip on a screaming woman holding a baby. He was trying to take her. No one helped her. She struck his face and crawled away with her baby. Then she ran. I stayed awake all night, trying to think of good things in the world.

Your sister,

Nelly

May 17, 1944

Dear Frida,

Early this morning, there were men at the door, yelling. Mama rushed around outside my room as the yelling got louder. I was so afraid they would grab Mama like they grabbed the woman from before. I started to cry once I heard the crash of the officers pushing open the door. Mama yelped, but it was masked by the Gestapo's cries. "Where is your husband?" Through my cracked door, I saw her kneeling on the living room floor. I locked eyes with the officer leading the group, and I slammed my door shut. He threw the door open and grabbed both of my arms. "Where is your Papa, stupid girl?" My body shook along with my voice. "H-he has been ill, he's in t-the hospital, sir." He slapped my face and I dropped to the floor. Seconds later, a tall, angry man rushed Mama out the door. Her hands were behind her back. One of them grabbed my arms and soon we were all moving in a line outside. It was still dark outside. I couldn't see anything. I heard hundreds of voices and babies crying. Thick hands gripped me firmly and led me towards a train car. All I could think of was Papa and you.

Your Sister,

Nelly

May 20, 1944

Dear Frida,

I've been on this train with Mama and Bertha for three days. I've had one piece of bread, and they made us change into gray suits with patches on the shoulders. I had to sneak my journal on the train car. Mama said the officers will take it if they see it. I don't know where we're going, and why we're in these clothes. But I found Bertha again, and if I'm with them, I'll be okay. People on the train talk of a park called Auschwitz. Mama says she's never heard of it. Everyone says it has green meadows as far as the eye can see. I hope we'll be better once we get there.

Goodbye for now,

Nelly

May 21st, 1944

* Dear Frida,

We’ve arrived at Auschwitz. It’s gloomy and the sky is gray. Once everybody was off the train, the officers lined us up. Mama, Bertha, and I stayed together. We inched towards a large building. Mama said we might get food or a shower. I noticed that the people who went into the building didn’t come out. We are almost inside now. There were many rooms marked *Brausebad*. I saw steam. I hear machines whirring and children crying. I’m holding Mama’s hand, and Bertha is on her other side. We go in the room together. This isn’t a shower at all. Why isn’t anyone fighting back? We are weak, and they are too strong.

Goodbye,

Nelly

*Nelly wasn’t able to write this letter. She died at Auschwitz on May 21, 1944.

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