

WINTER IN 1940'S GERMANY WAS ALWAYS COLD,
but somehow this year the snow came down stronger
than ever before. Papa said the weather reflects what
we do on Earth.

I used to have friends at school but now all the girls
look at me with weird faces. My best friend, Lucy, told
me that her parents didn't want us playing together
anymore. She said it would get her in trouble. I ran
home and told Mama and she drew me in for a hug.
I know she didn't want me to see, but Mama never
hides her tears very well.

One day, I was playing with my brother, Abraham,
at school when two Nazis ran by after Mr. Ephron,
the local candy store owner. I saw him on the walk to
school every day and he always was so nice to me.
"Shalom, dear Esther. Be good at school," he would
say with a smile. He always gave me and Abraham a
piece of candy for our walk.

They began to beat him with a stick until his eyes were
swollen and his screams echoed across the play-
ground. I knew I shouldn't, but I couldn't bear it any
longer.

"You bullies get away from him! What did he
ever do to you," I yelled.

"He's a Jew, little girl. That's all the evidence
we need," the officer with the blonde moustache
barked.

I began to tell him I was Jewish as well, but
Abraham quickly dragged me away. At dinner that
night, he told our parents what had happened at the
park.

"You stupid girl! Do you realize how lucky you
are that they didn't beat you too," Mama screeched.

"They were so cruel," I said, "I couldn't just
stand there and let them hurt that man!"

"Esther, you must promise me that you do not
speak to those men ever again," Papa warned.

"Ja, Papa." I kept my promise for I didn't
want to make Papa angry, and I began to fear what the
Nazi's would do to me if I tried anything. My family
said I was lucky, but I didn't feel it.

I was eventually kicked out of school because
they were scared of me and my people. They didn't

Duck
Duck
Goose
Samantha Lodge

want to be associated with the Jewish girl. I wasn't allowed to see my friends and no one on the street would look me in the eye. I stopped going outside. All because of this stupid patch on my coat. I prayed that life would get better, but I think G-d had too much on His plate to hear me.

My days were slow and I had little to do. It was too dangerous to go outside most days, so I would play jacks with Abraham and help Mama prepare dinner. I was so bored, I even offered to wash the dishes. Papa pretended to have a heart attack when I volunteered. We thought it wouldn't get worse, that this would all blow over in time. We were dead wrong.

It started with the Zingel's. Then with the Schartzwz's. One by one the Jewish families around us began to disappear. Some escaped at midnight, others were dragged out of their homes at noon. I had never seen my parents so scared. They wouldn't tell us what would happen to us if Nazi's came to our house. I imagine it was to not scare us. I think not knowing was the worst part. I asked why we couldn't just leave but Papa said he couldn't leave the small grocery shop that he ran.

"We would have no money, and then what would we do, Esther?"

So we stayed and waited. We waited for the day they would knock on our door and tell us we had to leave. We were in the middle of a giant game of Duck Duck Goose, silently waiting to be selected. I couldn't sleep at night, terrified that I would be woken by some strange man with a red band on his sleeve. Mama cried all the time.

A few days after the Zimmerman's left,

we heard a bunch of shouting in the street. I ran to the window and pushed aside the curtain. The men from my nightmares were there, rounding up our neighbors. One came up to our house and pounded on the door.

"Everyone out! No use in hiding."

Mama wailed as Abraham opened the door. This was what we had all been dreading but we still weren't prepared.

"Men in the first, women in the second!"

They were separating the men from the women onto different trucks. I burst into tears, not wanting to leave my family. My stomach dropped and I began to feel sick.

"Papa, tell them you can't go! They'll understand," I cried, clutching onto his jacket sleeve. I was desperate to hold onto the people I loved.

"Be strong for you mother. Be strong, my Esther."

"Papa, don't leave me! Don't leave!"

"*L'Hitraot*," he whispered as he kissed the top of my head.
Goodbye. Δ