



Video Story Transcript

Aunt Helen

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Link to YouTube Video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSujsqMMOY8>

Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

My great aunt Helen was in Budapest in 1944 when the Nazis rounded her up to take her to a concentration camp. The Jews of Budapest were forced to march the Austrian border to catch the train that took them to the camps. This is my great aunt's story, told in her words and in the way she told it.

They take us. Hitler take us. And I have boots and I have shoes. Saved my life. The lakes, they freeze but without shoes it is not enough. They take us. They say tomorrow all the Jews we take. And I have boots and I have shoes. And we walk and walk and walk. There were so many of us. People was dying with something terrible. And they take us into like a woods. And me and another girl, we run away. There was over there a soldier. He don't see us. What do we do now? Well, we go and we go and we go. Even with boots my foot was bloody from the walking.

We come to a farm. With a farm with a house and a field. And the house was straw. Nobody there. We want to go in. We go in, we dig a little hole in the straw to rest. What will be with us will be. So quiet we was. And then we sleep. And then I hear, "Oh, oh, oh! What you doing here?" It was the farmer.

I say, "We escaped from the ghetto."

He say, "You hungry?"

We say, "Yeah, very hungry." And he go away and he bring us hot milk and cake.

He say, "Tonight you come to my barn and wash up." And we go. His wife and kids, they look on us. She make a barrel of hot water. We bath, wash our hair and little bits of clothes. And they feed us. And then he say, "Follow me back to the house in the field but not right away. You watch where I go." We stayed there two days. And they feed us. And in Europe when there's news in a little town, they have like a drum and they bang it; boom, boom, boom. And we hear the boom, boom, boom. And the farmer he come to us and say, "Ah, kids...you gonna have to go. The Nazis say they're gonna kill anyone who helps the Jews. Tonight, when it's dark, you have to go."

So we go. But we don't know where to go so we go back to the line leading to the trains. And we walk and walk and walk. They take us to...I don't know where they take us. And they put us on the box trains. No windows, no nothing. They put us in that. And people was dying with something terrible. We had no food, no water. We was screaming, "Wasser! Wasser! Little Wasser!" And once we stopped and an old German, he come to the train with a bucket. But a German soldier knocked the bucket out of his hand and beat the man. We would look out of little holes. What was we looking for? And we go here and they don't want us and we go there and finally they take us to Belsen.

In Belsen, they put us in terrible barracks. Like a living room, maybe 200 people. You had to stand like this, one to another. And when somebody die, you happy...you happy...you have more space. They give us a little soup, a piece bread. And you hide piece bread. You hide it. For when you go to sleep because everybody's stealing. Everybody grabbing because everybody want to live. The girl who was hiding with me, she died. It was like you had to want to live.

It was so terrible... I, I look back now, I can't believe it was me... They died and died. I was so sick and yet still they made me to walk around and take the dead over to what was, was like a barn, and drop them there. And some, I swear to God, still breathing. They made us take them to that barn and drop them there.

Helen was in Bergen-Belsen. It was Anne Frank's concentration camp and she died of typhoid fever. My great aunt would have died of it too. She was delirious when the British entered the camp. And so when she came to, all she knew was that she was on a bed, being fed by people who were wearing white, and speaking a language that she didn't understand. She said, "I thought I was in Heaven." And it was three days before someone who could speak Hungarian told her she was alive in a British hospital. And she said, "To tell you the truth, I didn't believe her."