

Prologue...

It's time...It's time I told my boys why they never met their Grandfather, or Grandmother. They've asked about them all their lives!! I guess, I have never had enough courage to tell them about what really happened. Or, maybe I was just afraid??

My name is Arthur. I'm now forty-nine and dying of cancer. I'm not happy, but at least I'm not dying in a Concentration Camp. I guess that's one good thing about it... I grew up during the Holocaust, and I am a Jew; so things were especially hard for me and my family then in that time period. I am the last of my generation from my family; and all I have to remember them is my father's wedding ring...

I survived Auschwitz. And now, I'm telling my story.

Chapter One...

"I was about fourteen at the time; That's when my mother died," I said to my sons. In my head, I was still contemplating whether to tell them or not, but I carried on.

"My mother, she was killed. By the Nazis'. By a man called Hitler; he truly was an evil man." They both stared at me. For a moment I froze. What do I say next?! Words started mixing up in my head. Once I finally worked it out, I started speaking again.

"He was the man that was in charge of the Nazis'. He sent them out to kill the Jews, he sent them out to kill, people like us." I glanced at their faces' and suddenly, they looked frightened. I comforted them both and assured them that they would be safe; and I was sure of this, because Hitler was dead.

"My mum's name was Linnie, but you already know that. She was a very loving mother. Always there for me, always there for of us... Growing up during the Holocaust was difficult. When I was young, I always was treated differently from everyone else; me and my little brother. My mother told us everything was fine, that we'd be ok, but deep down I knew that she was lying. That something was going to happen eventually, and when it did, it was going to be bad. It wasn't until I got older that I realised how serious the situation was. My parents pulled me out of school and I never saw my friends again. We moved around a lot growing up especially when my voice started to get lower and lower. Then my mother left us, she went to see her mother and said she would be home soon. At the time we we had all been arguing, I can't remember what it was about, but I'm guessing it was probably something really stupid. Anyway, we were all really mad at each other when she left to go visit her mum. We didn't talk for a long time before she left. All she said was 'Goodbye, I Love You' and walked out the

door; I remember this clearly, as the next news we had of her... She was dead."

Chapter Two...

My boys just stared at me for a while and then Jack (my youngest son) said, "That's it?! She just died! But how??" I think he is still too young to fully understand what really happened. As for Arthur (my eldest son) he understood very clearly about what went on when I was growing up. I forced myself to stay strong, to be completely open and honest with them both.

"She was killed in what we call 'Kristallnacht', or also known as, 'The Night Of The Broken Glass' . It was in 1938, November 9th and 10th when it all happened. 'Kristallnacht' was a series of organised attacks, that were enforced and encouraged by officials; It was a massacre against the Jews... I know it's horrible, but it's true! This is how my mum died." Now, I'm trembling a bit, as flashbacks whip back into my mind just reminding me of the dreadful time. The screaming I heard from a distance; the shattering of the glass scattering on the ground. I remember it all so vividly.

"I absolutely loved my mum and didn't know how I was going to live or survive without her! But after that experience, and with time, I came to realise that I would learn to cope without her after all. But if it weren't for my dad, I'd probably be dead right now. When mum passed away, my brother and I were his main priority. He did his very best to make sure we were safe; to make sure we stayed alive."

"So... Our grandmother was killed by people that had no right to harm her?!"

"Yeah, kind of. Hitler 'supposedly' had his reasons."

" Well to be completely honest, I think that it was extremely

uncalled for especially when she did nothing to them or him!! Can you tell me more about this Hitler guy?"

I was really hoping that James wouldn't ask about him, because even just thinking about Hitler makes me feel ill. Not Hitler himself, but the things he did, the people he hurt, the lives he took for no particular reason, unless you count wanting a perfect race of blonde hair and blue eyed people, but I don't think so...

"Well, Hitler isn't his actual name, it's part of it, it's really Adolf Hitler. He was a dictator in Germany from 1934 to 1945. He used his forces to get what he wanted. And he was a bit crazy, but everyone has their own opinion. Some people thought that he should be worshipped. As for others; well, they wanted him dead!!"

In my head at the time, I thought he should be dead!! What else was I supposed to think?! He killed everyone I loved. He took everything my family ever had! Especially after he killed my mum; I was so angry and upset, all at the same time.

Chapter Three...

I know it might sound pathetic;sw but I really missed her, and I still do. She brought so much happiness into our home, and on the day that she left and never returned I absolutely regret not talking to her. Not saying a word to her before she left; and after we found out that she had died I went through a phase where I was depressed... I cut myself off from everyone, I cried a lot of the time as well. You could probably say that I was completely reclusive. She was always there for me when I needed her the most; and it felt really strange, well, for her just not being there all of a sudden. For a while, our house was very quiet and mellow. We would all go about our days in complete silence which made it all the more

awkward.

“Before the war started, life was so much happier! Obviously. My brother and I went to school every week day, and our friends used to come to our house regularly. In our village, everyone knew each other, and I mean everyone! We lived on Schaumainkai street in Frankfurt, next to the local store. Which came in handy quite a lot. Oh, and there was also a little old lady that lived in the house behind ours. I can’t remember her name but I do remember that she was Jewish like us and was very frail. She spent most of her time in the garden, just staring at the beautiful daisies and roses her husband had just recently planted for her before he passed away. My brother and I made sure that her gardens stayed in tip-top shape, so we would cut the grass and water the flower beds. Just making sure it stayed lovely and well kept for her, especially because we both thought that she might have had a heart attack if she tried doing too much because she’s so old. I think she was going on about ninety-four this year?”

“It was going on about a year or two after my mum died when my father told us we were going into hiding. And at the time I was extremely frightened, especially Jack, your Uncle...” I then realised that I’ve never actually talked or mentioned Jack before.

“Ummm well, Jack was my brother and you have both never met your Uncle Jack because he was also killed by the Nazis.”

Their faces looked even more horrified!! Even more than before. I think they were starting to realise how horrible and disgusting the Nazis were back then... But none of us had ever said that to their faces, because if we had, we would’ve been shot dead. Then and there! Even if they did call us ‘disgusting vermin’ or ‘filthy rodents’, we didn’t let them get to us.

“It came to the point when one day we were hiding from them when they started going on and on about how they hated the

Jews guts and after hearing what they said about jews, about us, it made me hate them even more! But as for my for my brother, well, he just couldn't put up with it anymore. He couldn't handle being criticized. I don't think he was as mentally as strong as I was. So he stepped out and and gave himself up. He basically wanted to die. He got shot.

After my brother was killed, I stood there, silently crying. I didn't want to end up like my brother, lying there, helpless, with a stream of a deep dark red blood, trickling down his forehead... I was hardly breathing as tears ran down my cheeks and dripping onto the ground beneath my feet, I wiped the tears away, not making a sound."

Chapter Four...

"After my brother passed away, it was just my father and I. I kept to myself most of the time and didn't talk to dad much, except when we had people over, I talked, I just didn't want to come across as that 'rude little boy that never talks to people' kind of kid."

"After that we were in hiding for about two years and then one day in the middle of the night, we were woken all of a sudden by someone banging at the door. We panicked!! My father pulled me towards him and threw me into the cupboard. He told me to stay quiet and that he would come back for me soon, that he'd be okay." I knew what was happening, it was pretty obvious. But I listened to him of course.

"Eröffnen Juden!!!" It means, 'open up Jews!' They screamed again in a piercing voice "Eröffnen Juden!!!"

And I knew at once that it was Nazis'. They had come for us; they were going to find us too.

The door swung open just as I shut the cupboard door behind me.

I peered through a keyhole, as I thought I was never going to see my dad again... We made eye contact. And for the first time in my life, my father's expression looked absolutely helpless. They walked in with their guns pointed at my father's head, who was now kneeling on the floor. I looked away. I didn't want to start crying... again.

I heard gunshots. And immediately had a vision in my head of my dad lying there, dead. Just like my brother Jack.

"Please! Don't hurt me..." said my dad,

"Warum nicht??" Why not?? I heard them say.

"I am only young. I don't want to die yet," I replied.

"Nun... Ich denke, wir können Sie ersparen. Aber Sie haben zu verlagern."

"Relocate?!" I instantly turned my eyes back and looked through the keyhole... What do they mean, relocate?? Will he come back to get me??

"Ja; varlagern." (Yes; Relocate.) They stared at him as if he were stupid.

Father's head dropped and his face looked even more helpless.

They stood him up and went to leave. They started walking out the door when one of the soldiers suddenly paused. Turned around and commanded the other soldier...

"SUCHE AUF DER REST DER ZIMMER!!" He yelled at the top of his lungs; 'CHECK THE REST OF THE ROOM!!'

I froze. And started shaking; I've heard rumours on what the Nazis' do to people like us... And it's not nice either.

Chapter Five...

They started searching on the other side of the room; thankfully. I'm still trembling. I'm scared that the beat of my heart is so loud

that it'll make the floor shake. I take a few deep breaths and stay calm...

I cross my fingers, toes, and everything that can be crossed. Hoping that they won't find me, hoping they won't open the cupboard I'm sitting in, curled up in the corner. I hear footsteps getting closer and closer, getting louder and louder from his strong soldiers boots. I silently say a prayer that everything will be okay for me, and possibly, for us.

I close my eyes tight, in the hope that I was dreaming. Then the dark in my eyes seems to get brighter. I open them slowly, squinting and once my eyes come into focus I can clearly see that I am staring into the eyes of the soldier. He had an extremely angry face, and so I stand up and walk to where my father is standing. He is looking at me. I just look away. My dad explains that they are not there to harm us but to relocate us. I look up at them and they both give each other a smug and cunning grin, it doesn't look very good to me, but I act as if I'm completely naive.

We're then put on a train that stretches for miles and miles into the distance. I try and see if I can spot the end or the front of it. But no matter how hard I try, I just can't.

On the train, everyone looks so gloomy and depressed. I don't know why though?? The Nazis' didn't kill us, and now they're relocating us to a secret location. It sounds a bit strange, a bit dodgy if you ask me. So I thought I would brighten the mood, make it seem a bit more hopeful. Because if people around me are sad, I normally end up feeling sad as well.

I start a conversation with the lady squashed up against me. It wasn't very roomy, but I didn't mind. She gave me a weird glance and then looked away; so I decided to shuffle around and talk to someone else. I was talking to a man about dad's age when I asked him if he was Jewish and he said yes. I asked him where he was headed, and to my amazement he said that he was being 'Relocated too!' It was then that I clicked that everyone in every

single carriage of this train was going to somewhere I dreaded even talking about... I just carried on and acted like I didn't just discover where our 'Secret Location' was. Then after about an hour and a bit I excused myself and wanted to talk to dad. There was no way to get to other side than to crawl; so that's what I did. I got down on my knees' and crawled. It's actually harder than you think. Trying to get somewhere and ending in the exact opposite spot from where I wanted to be. I got down again and I eventually got to dad. I stood up and brushed myself off, and made sure I wasn't dirty or anything.

Then I looked up at him and I said to him, straight up... "Are we going to 'RELOCATE' in a Concentration Camp??"

Father looked at me and said... "Yes, we are."

Chapter Six...

"You mean, that whole story of us 'Relocating' was actually us being sent to a Concentration Camp? Did you know we we're coming here?"

Now I'm angry. I knew that he knew. I just don't get why he didn't tell me the truth when they the Nazis' came and took us away!?

"I couldn't tell you. I'm sorry. I was actually kind of hoping that you might've figured it all out yourself. But I'm guessing you didn't. I'm really sorry Arthur, I really am..."

"Of course I didn't!! Yeah I know I'm fourteen and all, but when YOU said 'Relocating' I literally thought that we were 'Relocating'! Not getting on a train completely full with people, and then just to find out that we're not 'Relocating' at ALL!! That we're going to die in a Concentration Camp!!

"You don't know that. You know, maybe one day for some strange reason, we might make it out alive. And if we do, I promise that

we'll never have to go back."

I know that there's an extremely high chance that we won't make it out alive, but I think words of enlightenment were all that I needed to hear at this stage.

"Well that's good to hear....."

Suddenly, the train screeches to a halt and dad grabs hold of me tight. I can hear his heart pounding. The train is silent as we wait for what we think is going to happen... And it does.

The doors of the carriage are pulled open from the outside. And most of us are blinded from the sudden brightness that fills the carriage. And then we are all shoved out of carriage and my ears hurt. There are people screaming, people crying, people yelling, music playing. It's like listening to a thousand lions roaring all at the same time. I step out onto the ground and I absolutely can't believe what I see... Hundreds and hundreds of people. From tiny babies, to elderly people.

Then... I see it. And to be honest, it actually looks really inviting. I think dad was just pulling my leg. He often does that. I think we actually are relocating. It looks too nice, it can't possibly be a concentration camp.

I stand corrected. A group of people were just taken into a room to have a shower. They're all screaming from the enclosed room.

Maybe the water's too hot or something, but then it's quiet. That's when I am reassured that this is indeed a Concentration Camp. All this stuff outside is practically human bait. They put out all this inviting stuff to lure us in. Gardens with flowers, An orchestra playing beautiful music, when I arrived they were playing Wagner.

I'm scared.

I turn around and look for dad. Thankfully he's right behind me and I feel safe.

Then I see a sign.. It says Auschwitz.

Chapter Seven...

Now we're walking in a huge group. Like a parade. But the line seems to be endless. Wait. What's that?? We're now entering the Concentration Camp, I think! It's completely blocked off from the rest of the world. With great big fences a lot taller than our what our house has back home, and at the top, there's barbed wire along the top perimeter. I'm guessing they don't want anyone to get away and be free in the world on the other side of the fence.

Once we are all in, they shut the gates behind us. I watched, and you could hear the lock click into place; it was then that I knew it would be hard to escape now. Auschwitz didn't really turn out to be what I pictured it to would be like, it was actually quite the opposite. I imagined the outside to be completely crammed full with people, which it was but most of them tended to stay inside and rest. I don't know why? Maybe it was safer to stay inside or something. I was going to find out eventually. I looked around and all I saw was dirt on the ground, no pavement, no grass or anything. There were shelters where I guess the majority of the people here stayed in. There were rows and rows of these shelters that stretched for miles into the distance. I wondered which one I was going to be staying in, me and my father. We saw one shelter being evacuated and the people were being yelled at. The group must have been about fifty people plus babies; and a lot of them were bawling their eyes out. The Nazis' were yelling at them to hurry up and threatening them with their guns. Then they disappeared. I don't know where they went but they never came back. I know that because we went into their shelter and that's where we stayed.

Chapter Eight...

After the first couple of days I felt a million times weaker. Mentally and physically. We were only allowed out of our room twice a week, but on rare occasions we were given extra time outside. But that was extremely rare. I think it only happened maybe four times the entire time I was there. I spent most of my time talking to another boy that I had made friends with on the first day.

Dad has been looking very down lately and spends most of his time sitting on the end of the bunk we share along with my friend and his brother. Anyway, dad keeps looking down to his wedding ring from mother. It's gold and really cool. It has their names engraved on the inside; and so I guess that's one way of remembering her. I'm actually quite surprised that it wasn't taken from him when we got here. I mean because everyone else's valuables and personal things were removed and so I think that dad probably hid it when we were checked, I don't know where though.

My head is constantly cold now that I have no hair. It was all shaved off on the first day and I absolutely hate it! But there is nothing I can do now. They took my clothes off me and gave me a set of clothes like everyone else is wearing, they look like pyjamas to me. They're white and dark blue, and they're stripy too. It's funny because dad is wearing the exact same as me; and that's never happened before, us, wearing the same clothes. I wouldn't particularly pick these to wear but there was nothing else to choose from. You either wore the striped pyjamas or you have no clothes at all; you were naked.

I miss home. I miss everything beyond the walls that restrict me from happiness... I can see the outside world but yet the fencing, this prison holds me back. It's been two weeks at least and already the conditions here are taking a toll on my Father and I. I feel

weak and malnourished. Here, they only give us food to eat a couple times a week. Everyday, more and more people are tending to stay indoors as much as they can. That's besides when the soldiers here force us to carry large rocks from one end of the camp to the other, and then back again. My friend has been lying in one of the bunks for two days now. I honestly don't think he's going to survive much longer here. He's getting weaker as the days pass by. I don't think he'll last until Monday... Either he'll just die in our shelter, or a Nazi will take him to the 'Execution Wall'. I hope not though; I hear at least five shooting sessions each day. I wish that I could say that I only heard five gunshots each day but then I would be lying. You see, the 'Execution Wall' is the wall just outside our shelter and I can see it from the bunk I sleep in. Which isn't very convenient, because I get woken up at crazy hours of the night by gunshots. Anyway... The 'Execution Wall' is where the soldiers here, make the prisoners take their clothes off and stand up against the wall facing their backs towards them. Then, a group of Nazis have an open fire shooting and all aim for the person standing there.

Once, I watched one, and now I'm scared. I completely, absolutely regret even thinking about laying eyes on what I knew was going to be horrible.

Chapter Nine...

My friend, didn't even last till the following day. I woke up and nudged him and he didn't move, I sat up and nudged him again because I thought that he might've been in a deep sleep or away in a dream he didn't want to leave. Then I started to panic, I shook him vigorously and told him to wake up!!

He never did.

I started crying, and I accidentally woke up everyone else while doing so. But I didn't care; he was my best friend, well, here anyway. Now I'm wondering what happened to the rest of my friends?? They were all Jewish too. Maybe they're here in the same Concentration Camp as me?? I highly doubt it, but it might be true. I'm not going to even bother looking. I don't have the stamina to do it even if I wanted to. That glimpse of hope I had just a moment ago has instantly faded. I mean, what if I did look and I never found a single one of my friends. What was I going to do then?? Just come back to my bunk and sit here; I think it's best just to leave things as they are and concentrate on staying alive from this point onwards.

Today has been really quite sad. A lady in the shelter next to us committed suicide. Which is unfortunate because she had a young child that needs nurturing. I think about how she committed suicide because I was outside at the time, someone told me that she was holding a sharpened piece of wood in her hand; so I'm guessing she cut a vein or something, that's what I'm thinking anyway, it must've been a pretty crucial vein. I'm feeling even weaker, more than I was the other day. But I think that I'll survive this horrible hell living I'm in... As for the baby, well I don't think it'll last survive another day; she was already weak when her mother was alive and able to care for her, but now that she's dead the baby will die too. I wish there was something I could do to help the poor child, but father said that there wasn't and that I was too young anyway. So even if I had tried to help her, she still probably would've died. Which is probably good because what if I had taken care of her. Then what would I have done?! I would've become emotionally attached and be even more upset than I already am.

Now I'm embarrassed.

Everyone's staring and watching me cry for someone I didn't even have any contact with... Then I get annoyed and stare back at them and say...

"Am I not allowed to cry when someone dies? ! Is there a law against it or something?! Because I don't think so. I may be a bit sensitive, but these tears are purely from having a heart and using it to have some compassion for this poor lady that's been lying here for a while now; and no one's even concerned that she might need to be removed from the room?!"

I know; I sound retarded, but it's true! No one here even gives a damn about other people and their feelings. I know the lady's dead but that doesn't mean that she didn't have feelings or deserve the respect and dignity of others just because she's lying there dead and helpless.

I try to move her and I finally manage to haul her up onto the bunk closest to us and cover her with a sheet. After that I stood back and bowed my head for a moment of silence.

Then, all of a sudden, I hear screaming and shouting from the shelter next to the one I'm in now.

Wait.

I pause.

It's coming from MY shelter. The one with my father in it.

I race to the window; desperately trying to see what's happening. Then the room looks empty. And that's because it is.

The group of people are now outside. In the rain.

I see dad, panicking.

Chapter Ten...

"Oh no!" I say.

I should've stayed in my shelter! Where I was supposed to be the entire time. But once again, Arthur never listens; and soon, there will be no one to give me a lecture, well that's what I'm thinking anyway. I am 99.999% percent sure of that, because the soldiers

are leading them towards the chambers, the 'Gas Chambers.'
For a moment, I think I should just run out and go with dad . Even if they are going to die.

I don't though. And now I feel selfish. I should've gone to spend the last moments of my life with the last person alive that I love... My father. Instead, I just stay here and sit down on the bunk behind me and peer out the window into the distance, trying to catch the last glimpse of my dad as he looks back and through his thoughts, I can hear him say...

'I love you son...'

Then he's gone; forever.

Now I start crying again, even harder than before, and this time, no one can judge me. And if they do, they're going to wish they hadn't.

I feel guilty but dad's probably relieved that I'll still be alive after today. What's going to happen now? What am I going to do once I am freed? That's, IF I ever get out of here.

I've heard a rumour that a group of Jews are planning to break free in the next couple of weeks and I was maybe thinking about tagging along with them, if they don't mind. I don't think they will, the guys are from the same town as me, so we'll be heading in the same direction. And I'm fast, because when I was at school, I came first in cross country so maybe that's another thing that I can use to help them persuade them to agree to letting me come with them.

Now that I think about it, I'm going to find the man now and ask him. I really hope that he says yes. Plus I can't let the opportunity slip. Being able to return home would be absolutely amazing and in fact, it would save my life. My dream right this very minute is to return back home to Frankfurt, go and reunite with my friends, find someone I want to spend the rest of my life with and have children of my own. That's what I want to do.

I find the shelter of the man and walk right in. Which is very unlike me because I usually knock first, but I didn't this time. It surprised me. After I finished fussing, I look around the room and try and find him.

There.

He's there. Sitting on the edge of the bed with an emotionless expression. I walk up and sit next to him. He doesn't move or look at me.

"I want to come with you and escape from all of this." I say straight to him. He turns his head and looks amazed.

"D'you really know what you're in for here kid??"

Chapter Eleven...

What does he mean; I know that there is high risk that if we do escape that there's a possibility that the Nazis' will be after us and shoot us dead. But I think this will be my only chance to even attempt at getting out of here alive. This place is surrounded by soldiers, all of them with guns hanging from their shoulders.

"I know what I'm putting myself up for. And I know that it will be one hell of a challenge, but I'm up for it." I tell the man with eagerness in my eyes.

"Well ok. But don't complain. My one goal is to be out of here by the end of this week," he said to me.

To be honest I think his 'GOAL' is near impossible to me, but I'm going to go with him anyway.

I've been spending a lot of time with the man, whose name is Borris. Weird I know but I can't change that... Anyway, Borris is planning to go ahead with the escape plan for Saturday evening. Because that's when there's the least amount of guards are on

patrol, they all go out at the closest pub and get really drunk.

I'm actually really quite excited, and I just want Saturday to come faster but when I want something, it always seems to take forever and a day to finally come around! But here, that's almost about everything besides dying, which is kind of an obvious one. I'm still trying to get out of Borris exactly how we're going to escape without being caught before we even get to the fence in time. I mean, I'm still quite energetic still but Borris seems to be getting weaker. I think that he will, I hope he makes it!! I hope we make it.

Chapter Twelve...

Today is Friday and I'm glad our escape is planned for tomorrow because the troops have been just clearing out all of the shelters, one by one, making way for new prisoners. And they're getting extremely close to ours. But they won't be here until at least midday Sunday, so we have plenty of time to get out of here, even if it takes us all night.

We have to plan our escape very strategically because we going to have to cut the wire fencing to get through and out into the open Polish landscape. The only major problem that is standing in our path is the fact that we have to get from the shelters to the fence without being seen, and that could be a major flaw in our plan especially when the fence is a good five-hundred metres from here. I don't think it's that far, but for Borris it might be. He's getting more weary, more worn out. But I think his eagerness will be what makes him push himself that little bit more. He really wants to get out of here; out of this hell we're stuck in. It's honestly like prison, actually, in some ways, it's worse than a prison... In prisons you get fed regularly, as for here, we can only pray that we're going to get something maybe only twice a week, if that. At the moment I'm scared and frightened but really excited as

well.

I'm hoping no one notices after we get out, well not for a good couple of hours, so that at least we can do our best to get as far away as we can by foot. I'm not sure what direction we're going to have to go in once we're out in the open. I'm just going to follow Borris.

Lately I've noticed that I'm getting quite thin and bony looking, but I hope we'll be able to get some proper food tomorrow. My skin is pasty white and very fair.

Chapter Thirteen...

"Hurry up!" I whisper. "Come on Borris, we haven't got much time."
"I'm coming."

He's frantically trying to get some blankets so that we'll be warm if we have to sleep out tonight. I don't think they're that necessary, but I see what he's trying to do. I just think that it's one more thing we have to carry.

He's coming now.

We get out of the shelter and I'm looking around for any Nazis that might be out.

There's none. We carry on; Now we're running toward the fence that's nowhere in sight yet.

I'm puffed already. I put my hand up to my chest to feel my heartbeat, then I feel something in the pocket of my shirt. It feels rather small.

I reach into my pocket, still running as fast as I can and pull out something. It's a ring. My father's ring. I stare at it for a while and hold it close to my heart; with tears running down my face.

Finally we reach the fence line and Borris pulls out some type of scissors from his pocket. I wonder where he got them from? I'm

not going to ask though, I'd rather not know. He hands them to me and I start at the wire, cutting it vigorously . After some time, the wire suddenly came away and there was a clear path for us to get out of here!!

We waste no time and I'm the first one to start sprinting. Borris follows me.

After a few steps I freeze... I pull my fathers ring out of my pocket and I gaze down at it and then I turn around and look back at the camp which I had just been freed from, yet I'm still sad. I wish my father could be here with us, he would've liked to see the outside world again before he died.

But he never did. And now he's dead and I feel terrible for leaving him behind, but I know that he would've wanted it this way.

*I will keep this ring with me for the rest of my life,
Now that you're reunited with your son and your wife.
I will pass it onto the generations to come,
And tell them how you used to hum.
You will always be remembered father,
Now that you're gone.
Thank you for all those years,
Keeping me safe and alive.
Just remember that I'll always I love you.
I'll miss you.
Goodbye.*

Chapter Fourteen...

I need to move on with my life now. I can't change that my family are all dead. I miss them terribly and I'm really sad at the moment. But I need to leave the past behind me and focus on the future, I

need to survive.

We've been traveling now for about four hours and I think I can see a village up ahead. I can see a glimpse of hope.

As we walk through the small town we know we need to get out of the pyjamas so that we don't stand out. We knock on the front door to a cottage and a lady opens it. She looks very friendly and she invites us in. We ask if she has any clothes she can spare us and she goes away to fetch some. She returns a few minutes later and hands us each a set of clothes for us.

"Thank You Ma'am, we are very grateful," I say.

"You're welcome," she replied.

Then Boris says... "Do you know which way we go to get back to Frankfurt?"

"Well you're in Klucznikowska and so you will need to catch a train, or some type of transport going west. You'll cross the border that separates Germany from Poland; and it'll probably take about eight hours to get there."

"Ok, thanks... Well I guess we should head off now, but thank you for the clothes, they're much appreciated." Boris said, and after that we left.

It was early Sunday morning now and we had just woken up from our nap that we desperately needed. I think it was only an hour or two, but that was all we really needed. It took the edge off. We went further into the village to see if there was any food.

We come across a stall on the side of the street and there's a loaf of bread just sitting there. I get excited. It feels like forever since I've seen bread. In fact it's been over a year...

Chapter Fifteen...

I can't resist it and I know I shouldn't. But I did.

I stole it and we ran away. I feel guilty but we were getting desperate! We hadn't had a proper meal, or something good to eat for over a week! We've only survived from drinking water, which wasn't even that clean. At least we're hydrated. That's the only reason I'm alive.

After we finished eating what we had we went to find a train. One that won't take us to a concentration camp. We walked for a while and we eventually came across a train station, but it looks run down and out of business. We walk up to the window and it's shut down. So we decide to hitch hike our way home; catch a ride back to Frankfurt.

We were driven straight past by a few people but then finally a lady stopped and asked where we were planning on going; we told her and she said, 'Hop in boys.'

She was an elderly lady, she was very nice and her name was Elizabeth. She said that her husband was on the front line fighting for their country; and that she was going to meet up with him in Frankfurt in a day or two. So it was kind of coincidental that she happened to pass us when she did. I told her what had happened and she didn't really mind. How we had broken out of Auschwitz and how the Nazis' killed my family and all that stuff. Then Boris told her about his life. We spent a good maybe four hours just talking to one another, she was extremely intrigued; she thought we were very interesting to listen to apparently. I didn't think so, but oh well; I'm not going to argue with her, she's nicely given us a free ride back home when she had every right to just keep driving. But she didn't. So now I'm loyal to her. She will always be 'The lady who helped me and Boris get back home.'

After I had run out of things to say I sat there, gazing outside, feeling thankful for all the things that have occurred recently; meeting Boris, breaking out of Auschwitz, and getting to know Elizabeth more.

I think I'm pretty lucky to have come across so many new people over the past year, I know it might've not been in a nice place, but the people I met have been really lovely. I can just imagine still being back at the concentration camp now; on my way to my death bed, which in this case, a pit in the ground. No coffin for me to rest in; no funeral to send me off. Nothing.

Chapter Sixteen...

It's morning and I wake up. I can see the sun rising over the horizon; it's absolutely beautiful. We're still driving. I sit up. Borris is still asleep, he's snores really loud he actually woke me up a few times, I don't mind though because it's been a long time since we both have had a decent sleep.

I ask Elizabeth if she wants Borris to drive so that she can rest. She said no. She must have a heap of energy in her if she can drive all night; or maybe she's just afraid that Borris might crash her car. Anyway she keeps driving and she says that we're only about twenty minutes away. Suddenly I'm wide awake. I'm over excited now; I'm ecstatic, I want to run back home and visit my friends. Go back to school. Then I wonder who will look after me now? I think I'm going to ask Borris if he wants to be my new dad, or maybe I think he can be my uncle, 'Uncle Borris'! Yeah, that's what I should call him. It might be a bit awkward for me to call him dad right now.

I wake up Borris and he stretches and yawns. Once I think he can hear me, I tell him that we're almost home. He is also excited and he's wide awake now too. After about fifteen minutes we see sign that says...

'Frankfurt, 13 kilometres.'

“Look Borris!! We’re almost there!!” I say.

“Are you excited Arthur? I am.”

“That’s a bit of a stupid question... I’m just kidding!! I can’t wait to be home...” I say.

“Here you are young lads. Home; Frankfurt.”

“Thank you so much Elizabeth, you’ve been so amazing,” Borris says.

“I appreciate it more than you will ever know!! ” I tell her.

We hop out of her car and wave goodbye as she drives away. I admit that even just the seven or eight hours that we spent in the car with Elizabeth, has made friendships that will last forever. As we turn our backs and head up the road I look up at Borris to ask him, well a life changing question...

“Ummm Borris, I was maybe thinking, well now that I have no family, would you want to come and stay in my house, you know, so that I don’t feel as lonely... Would you be my uncle??”

That sounded extremely stupid but at least it’s out in the open now. And now I can’t take back anything.

Chapter Seventeen...

He looks down at me like I’m crazy; which I probably am but then he gives me an answer...

“Sure!”

That’s it!! He doesn’t carry on he just moves on from that and on with his life. I stay cool, I don’t want to show how excited I am on the inside, now I will be able to have someone to talk to, someone other than my father.

After a few more minutes we reached the end of my street and I peer down it, trying to see if I can spot my home.

There it is. All safe and sound, I've missed this place for a long, long time and I'm finally back. I tell Borris that this was my street. He gives me a smile and says...

"I'm going just go and fetch my belongings and then I'll come straight back. I promise. You'll be alright staying here on your own for a while??"

"Oh yeah, I'll be fine."

Then Borris goes and walks off down the street.

As he gets further into the distance I turn my attention to my home, gazing at my house I sprint to it and then I stand at the gates that now don't seem that high anymore. I must've had a growth spurt since the last time I was here.

I open the gate into the front lawn and I walk up the steps of our house, well I guess now it's mine and Borris'. I open the front door and I take a step in. It's just like I remember it from, I think it's three years now, with going into hiding and all that stuff.

I'm really glad to be back home . I feel it's the only place I feel completely safe, especially with the war going on.

After about an hour or so Borris comes back with all his stuff. I tell him he can have my brother's room for the mean time. That's the tidiest bedroom in the house.

While he moves his things into his new room I walk around the house that brings back so many old memories, good and bad. I miss those old times with my family. Still in the living room drinking hot cocoa next to the fire. I'm wondering if this whole thing with Borris staying will work out?? I have a strong feeling that it will. It has too.

Chapter Eighteen...

Borris has been staying with me for a week now and he seems fine. We get on really well. I went around to my friends house yesterday and it was completely empty. I have thoughts that maybe they're somewhere in a concentration camp, maybe the one I was in? I really hope not. I hope they're not experiencing the things that I had too. It's honestly hell on Earth . I really like having Borris here to hang out with, we play basketball a lot of the time. Although I miss my real family I absolutely love having Borris around. He makes me laugh when I'm sad; he talks to me whenever I need advice, and that's a lot lately . I've started having strong feelings for girls, especially one in particular, and her name is Lucy.

She's absolutely gorgeous. She got amazing eyes and a stunning smile. I think I'm in love. She's a couple months younger than me. She likes me too. We've got along with each other like best friends ever since met. I think she's the one. My heart skips a beat everytime I talk to her.

The war is still going on but the Nazis' haven't come back to Frankfurt since we got back home; and I don't think they're going to either. It's been a while now and the tension is dying down a bit. I hope it stops soon, because it has, and is tearing families apart. Personally I've hated every single minute of this damn war, and I'm sure I'm not the only one that thinks that. My only dreams now are... Wishing the war would end soon, my family being here with me, and to marry the love of my life, Lucy.

Chapter Nineteen...

The war has finally ended and I'm overwhelmed!! It was made official over the radio this morning, the 6th of May 1945. As for Hitler, well he committed suicide in April. He and his wife both

ended their own lives in their underground bunker in Berlin. I think he was scared that he would be hated so much that someone would come after him.

I am currently 21 years old. Borris passed away a few months ago from heart disease. He was quite old and frail; obviously not as frail since we were in Auschwitz. I'm sad now that I have no one to look up to, but I will always have my amazing wife. Lucy and I got married last year and Borris was my best man. She is honestly the most amazing woman I have ever met in my entire life, well, besides my mum.

Lucy and I are expecting our first child soon, we are both very excited to have a child of our own; yet we're very worried and anxious about becoming parents, will we be any good?? I'm just hoping the pregnancy goes well and that there are no complications. I'm just hoping for the best when it all happens. I currently work as an engineer down at the local garage. It's a good job but heaps of work and it tires me out a bit but I'm happy. I guess that's a good thing. When we got married, I wanted my wedding ring to be my father's ring; the one he gave to me back at Auschwitz and it is.

Every now and then I look down at it and it reminds me of my time with my father, all the battles we fought together. Some I miss and others I don't, but any time I spent with my dad was precious, and will be treasured until the day I die.

Epilogue...

I am Charles Wawelberg, the child of Arthur William Wawelberg. My father had an extremely rough life growing up, and times were tough. My dad is severely ill and is dying in hospital from lung cancer. He has been a very dedicated father for me and my brother; and an inspiration to many people throughout his years.

He will be missed dearly when he passes.

The other day when we found out the cancer was terminal, he wanted to give me something and talk to me one on one. So I went up to the hospital, and as I entered the room I saw him laying there, helpless. Tubes going up through his nose.

I closed the door behind me and as I did he turned his head to me. I walked over and sat down beside him. We both sat there for a few minutes in silence. Then he reached into the drawer beside his bed and pulled out a ring, he gave it to me and said...

"Keep this, pass it down the family and keep it safe for me and your grandfather. I love you son, I always have, and always will."

After that I just sat there staring at it. Then I looked up, to the heart rate monitor making a beeping sound that never stopped.

And at that moment I cried, not just for my dad but for the rest of my family that were killed during that tragic time period.

As doctors rushed in and took away my view of my father, I stood up silently and walked out.

At the doorway, I turned for one last look at him...

"Goodbye dad. I love you."

THE END.

