

CHAPTER THREE





I visited my father more often in order to get more information about his past..



HAVE SOME MORE GREEN BEANS, ARTIE.

YES, LOOK - YOU DON'T EAT ANYTHING!

NO THANKS, I'VE HAD ENOUGH.



SO FINISH AT LEAST WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE!

OKAY... OKAY.



Y'KNOW, MALA, WHEN I WAS LITTLE, IF I DIDN'T EAT EVERYTHING MOM SERVED, POP AND I WOULD ARGUE TIL I RAN TO MY ROOM CRYING...

YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ARGUE WITH YOUR FATHER.



...MOM WOULD OFFER TO COOK SOMETHING I LIKED BETTER, BUT POP JUST WANTED TO LEAVE THE LEFT-OVER FOOD AROUND UNTIL I ATE IT.



SOMETIMES HE'D EVEN SAVE IT TO SERVE AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL I'D EAT IT OR STARVE.

YES! SO IT HAS TO BE. ALWAYS YOU MUST EAT ALL WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE.

ACCH, VLADEK.



1939? YES...WE WERE GIVEN ARMY TRAININGS FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN, BY THE START OF SEPTEMBER WE WERE ON THE FRONTIER.



IT WAS EVERYTHING
QUIET UNTIL NEAR
MORNING...



WAIT A MINUTE.
THEY ONLY TRAINED
YOU FOR A FEW
DAYS BEFORE
SENDING YOU INTO
COMBAT?

WELL, THE **FIRST** TIME I
WENT INTO THE ARMY FOR
18 MONTHS WHEN I WAS 21.
THEN EVERY 4 YEARS I WENT
TO LUBLIN
FOR A MONTH
TO TRAIN.



YOU KNOW, MY FATHER
TRIED TO KEEP ALL HIS
CHILDREN
OUT FROM
THE ARMY..



..BECAUSE WHEN HE WAS
YOUNG, HE HAD THEN TO
GO INTO THE RUSSIAN ARMY.
...AND THERE
THEY TOOK YOU
FOR 25 YEARS.
...TO SIBERIA!



MY FATHER PULLED OUT 14
OF HIS TEETH TO ESCAPE.
IF YOU MISSED 12 TEETH
THEY LEFT YOU GO.



SO WHEN MY BROTHER MARCUS
GOT 21 YEARS, FATHER PUT HIM
ON A STARVATION DIET.
ALWAYS MARCUS WAS SICKLY- SO THIN.

AND WHEN HE WENT
FOR THE ARMY EXAM-
INATION...THEY
DIDN'T TAKE HIM.

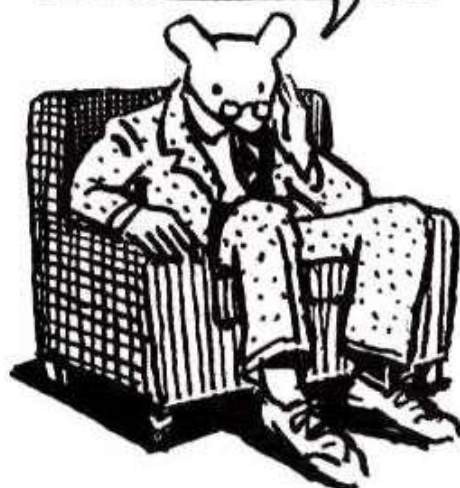


A YEAR LATER WHEN IT CAME
MY TURN, FATHER WANTED TO
MAKE TO ME THE SAME THING.

IT WAS SOMETHING
TERRIBLE!...



THREE MONTHS BEFORE
THE EXAMINATION HE
STARTED WITH ME...



WAKE UP,
VLADEK!

YOU'RE SLEEP-
ING TOO MUCH!

ONLY THREE
HOURS A NIGHT?



STOP, VLADEK. YOU
MUSTN'T EAT SO MUCH!

BUT I'M HUNGRY!



I OKAY-
HAVE ONE MORE HERRING.

FOR THREE MONTHS I ATE
ONLY SALTED HERRING AND
NO WATER TO LOSE WEIGHT.



AND A FEW DAYS BEFORE
THE EXAM, NO SLEEP
AND NO FOOD...

GOOD BOY - JUST
A LITTLE MORE
COFFEE!



ONLY A GALLON COFFEE
A DAY FOR MY HEART.

AND WHEN FINALLY I WENT FOR
MY MEDICAL EXAMINATION...

HERE'S A HEALTHY ONE.

UM!...



NO...THERE SEEMS TO BE
SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM.

BUILD YOURSELF UP FOR A YEAR,
YOUNG MAN, AND WE'LL REVIEW
YOUR CASE AGAIN.



...THE NEXT YEAR FATHER WANTED I WOULD AGAIN DO THE SAME THING. BUT I BEGGED HIM AND WENT IN 1922 TO THE ARMY...

BUT LET'S GET BACK TO 1939!

YES. YOU SEE HOW YOU MIX ME UP?
...IN 1939 WE WERE ON THE FRONTIER,
DIGGED INTO TRENCHES BY A RIVER.

IT WAS QUIET UNTIL NEAR MORNING. THEN I HEARD SHOOTING ON BOTH SIDES.

AN OFFICER SNEAKED OVER TO ME.

DIG IN DEEPER.
YOU'LL GET KILLED.

YOUR GUN IS COLD!
WHY AREN'T YOU SHOOTING?

I DIDN'T SEE AT WHAT TO SHOOT...

...BUT I DIGGED DEEPER
AND STARTED TO SHOOT!

THEN BULLETS CAME
IN MY DIRECTION.



I DUG DEEPER MY TRENCH
BUT I STOPPED TO SHOOT.



BUT WHEN I LOOKED IN
MY GUN, I SAW... A TREE!...



AND THE TREE WAS ACTUALLY MOVING!

WELL, IF IT MOVED, I HAD TO SHOOT!



IT HELD UP A HAND TO SHOW
IT WAS HURT. TO SURRENDER.



BUT I KEPT SHOOTING AND SHOOTING. UNTIL FINALLY THE TREE STOPPED MOVING.
WHO KNOWS; OTHERWISE HE COULD HAVE SHOT ME!

AFTER TWO HOURS OF FIGHTING, THE NAZIS
OVERCAME OUR SIDE OF THE RIVER.

GET
UP!



GIVE ME YOUR GUN!



IT'S HOT! YOU WERE SHOOTING AT US!



MY COMMANDER MADE ME SHOOT.
I ONLY FIRED IN THE AIR!



I ANSWERED IN GERMAN AND HIS PART-
NER STOPPED HIM FROM BEATING ME.



THEY MARCHED ME TO WHERE IT WAS
MORE LIKE ME. WAR PRISONERS.



AND ALL FROM US WHAT WEREN'T INJURED THEY MARCHED OVER
TO THEIR SIDE OF THE RIVER TO LOOK FOR DEAD SOLDIERS.



THEY TOOK US TO A PLACE NEAR NUREMBERG WHERE IT WAS MANY WAR PRISONERS. THE JEWS THEY MADE TO STAND SEPARATE.



WE SHOULD HANG YOU RIGHT HERE ON THIS SPOT!



OF COURSE, NOBODY OF US SAID A WORD.

PUT DOWN ALL YOUR VALUABLES!



HE CAME UP TO ME... I HAD MAYBE 300 ZLOTYS.

WHY SO MUCH MONEY, JEW?



MANY OTHERS HAD ONLY 5 OR 6 ZLOTYS.

DO YOU EXPECT TO DO SOME BUSINESS HERE? SHOW ME YOUR HANDS!



YOU NEVER WORKED A DAY IN YOUR LIFE!



LIKE YOU, ARTIE, MY HANDS WERE ALWAYS VERY DELICATE.



WELL, JEW, DON'T WORRY. WE'LL FIND WORK FOR YOU!



AND THEY DID.

ANOTHER GERMAN TOOK 4 OR 5 FROM US TO A STABLE.

SEE THIS MESS? IT BETTER BE
SPOTLESSLY CLEAN IN ONE HOUR.
UNDERSTAND!

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DO IT IN ONE HOUR!

WE REALLY WORKED VERY HARD.
BUT, AN HOUR LATER...

SO!

NOT
FINISHED
YET?

THIS WILL COST YOU YOUR
SOUP, YOU LAZY BASTARDS!

AND SOMEHOW WE DID MAKE THE
JOB IN ONLY AN HOUR AND A HALF.
BUT LOOK WHAT
YOU DO, ARTIE!

HUH?

YOU'RE DROPPING ON THE CARPET
CIGARETTE ASHES. YOU WANT
IT SHOULD BE LIKE
A STABLE HERE?

OOPS.
SORRY.

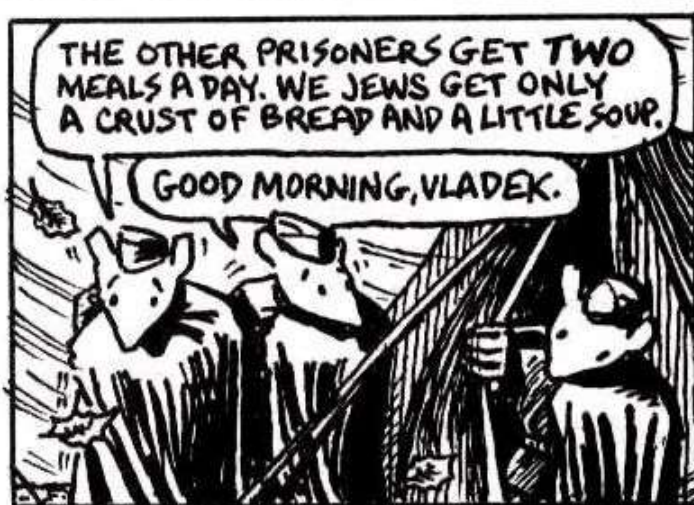
CLEAN IT, YES? OTHERWISE
I HAVE TO DO IT. MALA
COULD LET IT SIT LIKE
THIS FOR A WEEK AND
NEVER TOUCH IT.

AND SHE KNOWS HOW WITH MY
SICKNESSES IT'S HARD NOW FOR
ME TO DO SUCH THINGS.

OKAY, OKAY.
IT'S CLEAN.



TO KEEP WARM WE HAD ONLY OUR SUMMER UNIFORMS AND A THIN BLANKET.



MANY OTHERS GOT FROSTBITE WOUNDS. IN THE WOUNDS WAS PUS, AND IN THE PUS WAS LICE.

EVERY DAY I BATHED AND DID GYMNASICS TO KEEP STRONG. ...AND EVERY DAY WE PRAYED.



OFTEN WE PLAYED CHESS TO KEEP OUR MINDS BUSY AND MAKE THE TIME GO.



AND ONE TIME A WEEK WE COULD WRITE LETTERS THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS.



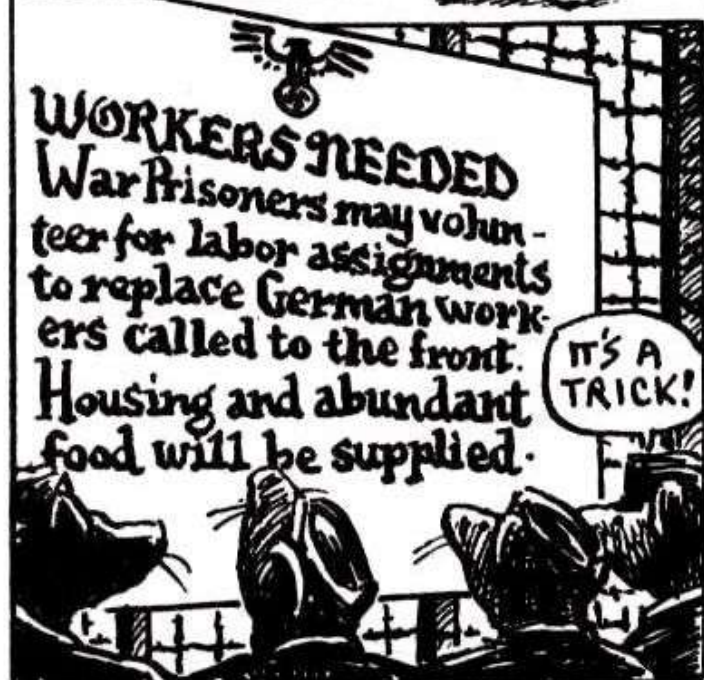
AND THROUGH THIS IT CAME A PACKAGE...



I HAD A SIGN MY FAMILY WAS SAFE, AND— BECAUSE I NEVER SMOKED—I HAD CIGARETTES TO TRADE FOR FOOD.



AND SO THINGS WENT FOR MAYBE SIX WEEKS, THEN...





WE WERE RIGHT AWAY SENT TO A BIG GERMAN COMPANY.



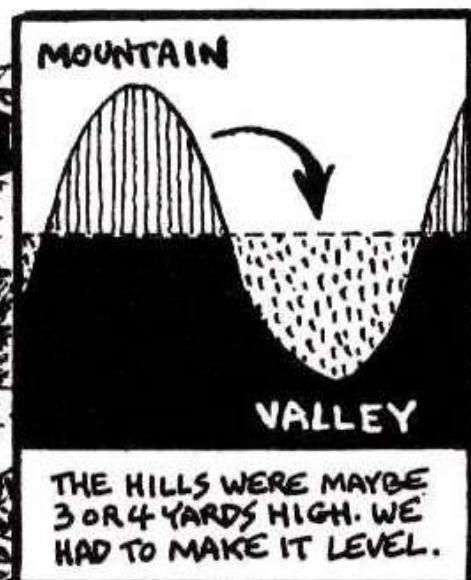
THE NEXT DAY WE WERE GIVEN SHOVELS AND PICKS ...



AND THE WORK WAS REALLY VERY HARD-
WE HAD TO MOVE MOUNTAINS.



MOUNTAIN



VALLEY

THE HILLS WERE MAYBE
3 OR 4 YARDS HIGH. WE
HAD TO MAKE IT LEVEL.

SOME COMPLAINED - THOSE WHAT WERE
TOO OLD OR WEAK FOR SUCH WORK:



BUT WHAT HAP-
PENED TO THEM,
I DON'T KNOW.

STILL, EIGHTY PER CENT STAYED. THERE WAS ENOUGH
TO EAT, AND A WARM BED. IT WAS BETTER TO STAY...



...ALWAYS I WENT TO SLEEP EXHAUSTED.
AND ONE NIGHT I HAD A DREAM...

A VOICE WAS TALKING TO ME. IT WAS,
I THINK, MY DEAD GRANDFATHER...



"DON'T WORRY..."



"...DON'T WORRY,
MY CHILD..."

IT WAS SO REAL, THIS VOICE...



"YOU WILL COME OUT OF
THIS PLACE - FREE!
...ON THE DAY OF
PARSHAS TRUMA."

I WOKE UP RIGHT AWAY. AND WHEN
I WENT TO SLEEP, AGAIN IT WAS:
"PARSHAS TRUMA! PARSHAS TRUMA!"

SO WHAT'S
PARSHAS TRUMA?

EACH WEEK, ON SAT-
URDAY, WE READ A SEC-
TION FROM THE TORAH.

THIS IS SO CALLED - A PARSHA...
AND ONE WEEK EACH YEAR IT IS
PARSHAS TRUMA.

BEFORE WORK A FEW
FROM US PRAYED. IT WAS
A RABBI THERE WITH US.

ONE MOMENT, RABBI.
WHEN WILL WE
READ PARSHAS TRUMA?

PARSHAS TRUMA?...

...IN THE MIDDLE OF FEB-
RUARY - ALMOST THREE
MONTHS FROM NOW. WHY?

THREE MONTHS -
AND EVERY DAY WAS
FOR US A YEAR!

I TOLD HIM MY DREAM...

LET'S HOPE IT'S TRUE.
I'M AFRAID WE'LL NEVER
GET OUT OF HERE.



SO WE WORKED,
DAY AFTER DAY.
WE SURVIVED.
WEEK AFTER
WEEK. THE SAME.

UNTIL, ONE TIME...



LOOK-
SOLDIERS!

IT CAME VERY MANY GESTAPO AND WEHRMACHT.



ATTENTION! LINE UP ON THE ROAD
IN TWO ROWS! IMMEDIATELY!

WE WERE NOT AT EASE. WE DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT THEY COULD DO WITH US.

I STOOD ALWAYS IN THE SECOND LINE.



(PSST-VLADEK.)

I DIDN'T WANT THEY SHOULD SEE ME MUCH.

SOMEONE SNEAKED
NEXT TO ME...



RABBI!

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT DAY IT IS?

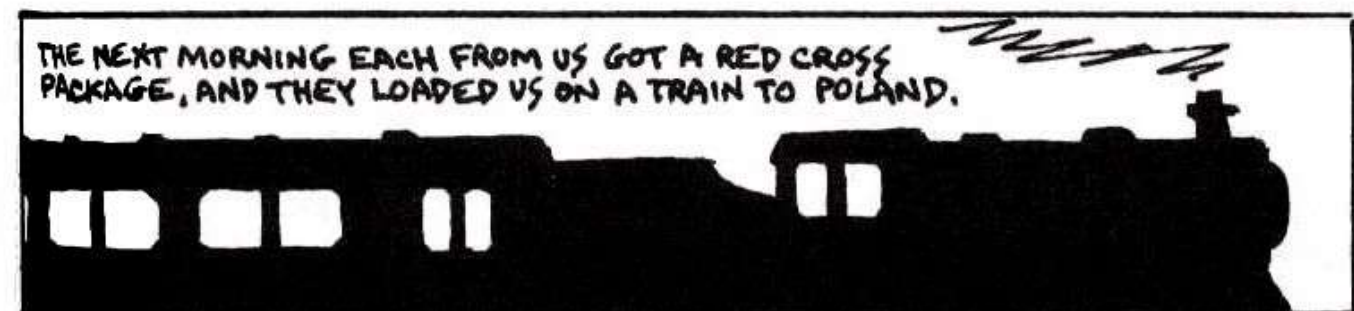
SATURDAY, OF COURSE.



BUT DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
A SATURDAY?...

IT'S PARSHAS
TRUMA!





DURING THE JOURNEY I SAT WITH THE RABBI.

SO, MY SON. NOW I SEE YOU ARE A "ROH-EH HANOLE," ONE WHO SEES WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING.



YOU SEE, THE NAZIS DIVIDED POLAND INTO PIECES: PROTECTORATE AND REICH, WITH A GUARDED BORDER BETWEEN.



HEY! THIS TRAIN SEEMS TO BE PASSING SOSNOWIEC!



WHEN THEY DIDN'T STOP THE TRAIN I BECAME VERY WORRIED.

THE TRAIN WENT COMPLETELY PAST MY PART OF POLAND - THE REICH - AND STOPPED ONLY IN THE PROTECTORATE.

THOSE WITH PAPERS FOR KRAKOW - OUT!



AND, WHEN IT STOPPED IN WARSAW, THE RABBI GOT OUT.

I'LL WRITE TO YOU.



BUT I NEVER HEARD AGAIN FROM HIM. IT CAME SUCH A MISERY IN WARSAW, ALMOST NONE SURVIVED.

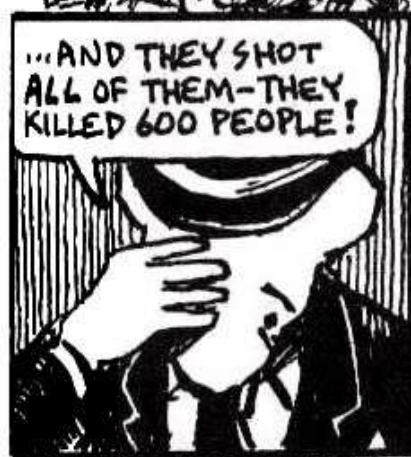


AND THE TRAIN WAS A LONG WAY PAST SOSNOWIEC. THEY TOOK ME UP, UP, VERY FAR - MAYBE 300 MILES - UNTIL WE CAME TO LUBLIN. THERE THEY UNLOADED ALL OF US FROM THE REICH.

IN LUBLIN, THEY TOOK US TO BIG TENTS...



EVENTUALLY CAME SOME PEOPLE TO SEE US FROM THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES...



I WAS VERY
FRIGHTENED.

THEN WE HEARD SOMETHING TO GIVE US A LITTLE HOPE...

WE'VE BRIBED THE GERMANS TO RELEASE
PRISONERS INTO THE HOMES OF LOCAL JEWS
WHO WILL CLAIM YOU AS RELATIVES.

MY NAME'S SPIEGELMAN. THERE'S A
FRIEND OF MY FAMILY NAMED ORBACH
IN LUBLIN. I MET HIM WHEN I WAS
HERE FOR ARMY TRAINING.

FINE! WE'LL TRY TO REG-
ISTER YOU AS HIS COUSIN.

THAT NIGHT I WENT OUT FROM THE TENT.

I HAD TO URINATE.

I RAN QUICK
INSIDE ...

AND THOUGHT ALL NIGHT DIFFERENT
THINGS WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO US.

AND A GUARD BEGAN SHOOTING TO ME.

THEN AS SOON AS IT WAS LIGHT...



SPIEGELMAN!..
SPIEGELMAN!..

VLADK!

ORBACH! AM
I GLAD TO
SEE YOU!

AND IN TEN MIN-
UTES, I WAS FREE!

ORBACH WAS A FRIEND FROM MY UNCLE - HE HAD
TWO BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS NEAR TO MY AGE.



I'M SORRY WE CAN'T OFFER YOU A BETTER MEAL,
VLADK - BUT THE JEWS OF LUBLIN GET VERY
FEW FOOD COUPONS.

ONE MOMENT, GIRLS - I HAVE
A GIFT FOR EACH OF YOU...



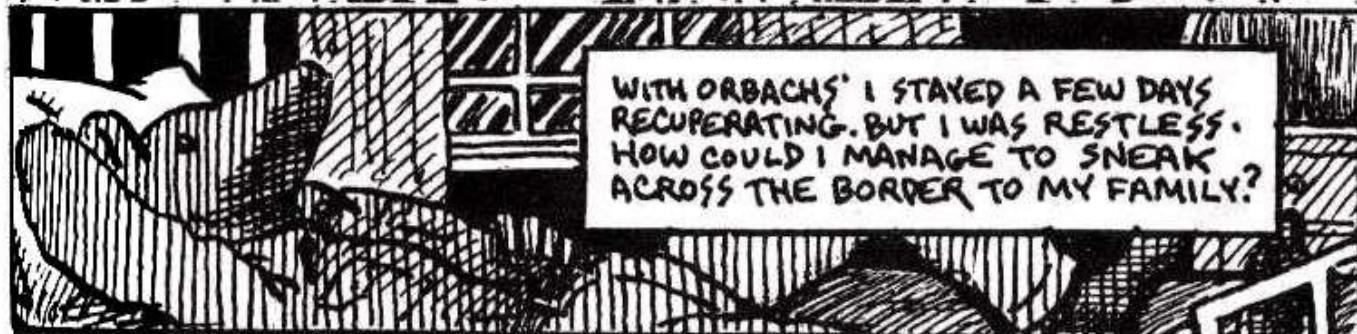
OH MY GOD!
CHOCOLATE!

THESE I SAVED FROM A
RED CROSS PACKAGE.
ALWAYS I SAVED...
JUST IN CASE!

EVENTUALLY, WHEN I
CAME AGAIN TO SOSNO-
WIEC, WE SENT THEM
FOOD PACKAGES...

...WE WERE FOR A WHILE
A LITTLE BETTER OFF...
AND THEY WROTE BACK
VERY HAPPY HOW IT
HELPED SURVIVE THEM...

...THEN THEY WROTE THAT
THE GERMANS WERE
KEEPING THE PACKAGES.
AND THEN THEY STOPPED
TO WRITE.
FINISHED.



WITH ORBACH'S I STAYED A FEW DAYS
RECUPERATING. BUT I WAS RESTLESS.
HOW COULD I MANAGE TO SNEAK
ACROSS THE BORDER TO MY FAMILY?

TRAINS WERE STILL GOING FROM PROTECTORATE TO REICH. ONLY, ONE NEEDED LEGAL PAPERS. OF COURSE, THIS I DIDN'T HAVE ...

