

Title: The Light at the End

Chapter 1 – Being Taken

My name is Lea and I am eleven years old. I lived in Amsterdam with my parents and my little brother Simon. Everything used to be happy. I played outside with my friends, smelled fresh bread at the bakery, and helped my mother bake cookies. But since the Germans came, the world didn't feel safe anymore.

One morning, soldiers knocked hard on our door. They shouted names and forced us outside. My heart was pounding, and my hands were shaking with fear. My mother grabbed my hand and pulled me behind her, while my little brother cried softly. My father walked silently beside us, but I could see the fear in his eyes. Nobody said anything. We knew there was no choice.

On the street, other families were waiting. Soldiers with hard faces and guns were everywhere. Some neighbors cried, others stood frozen with fear. It felt like the world had suddenly become a dangerous place. We were pushed into a truck and taken to the station, our future unknown.

Chapter 2 – The Train Ride

At the station, a long train full of people was waiting. The carriages were dark, stuffy, and almost empty of air. People sat close together. Some cried, others whispered prayers. My heart was pounding. I held Simon close and tried to comfort him with stories about our home, our friends, and Mom's cookies.

The train moved for hours, maybe days. Sometimes it stopped, sometimes we passed empty lands. It was cold, and the air smelled strange. There was hardly any water or food. I felt small and scared, but I tried to stay quiet and hope we would be safe again. I looked at the faces around me: old people, children like me, all scared and tired.

I wrote a few words in the dust of the carriage with a small piece of wood: "Hope." That word kept me going. Every day I tried to believe that this journey would end somewhere.

Chapter 3 – The Camp

When the train finally stopped, there were tall fences and barracks. Soldiers called names and separated families. I saw my father being taken away. My heart broke, and I could only cry and hold Simon even tighter.

In the camp, we had to work, stay silent, and follow orders. Every day felt heavy, cold, and scary. Sometimes people cried softly in the barracks. Sometimes I whispered stories about our home and family to keep courage. Those stories were the only hope I had.

Life in the camp was hard. We had little food, the beds were hard and cold, and every day there was fear. I saw people disappear, and I learned that courage means continuing, even when you are scared. I tried to draw what I saw: the barracks, the shadows of soldiers, and the people I tried to protect in my mind.

Chapter 4 – Surviving

Every day, I tried to survive. I kept Simon close, whispered stories, and tried to hold onto the small moments of light: a friend's smile, a sunbeam through the fence, a kind word from a caretaker. I learned that even in the darkest hour, hope is the most important thing.

Sometimes it was hard to believe we would ever escape. But I kept dreaming of a place where we could laugh and play again, a place without fear and shadows. My mother sang softly, and it helped me forget everything for a moment.

Chapter 5 – Liberation

One morning, we heard strange sounds outside. Soldiers came who didn't seem angry, and some gates opened. People around us began to cry and cheer. It was liberation. For the first time in years, I felt that there was light again.

My family did not survive completely. I missed my father, my friends, and many people we had known. But I held Simon tight and felt that we were still alive. For the first time in a long time, I felt that maybe we could dream, laugh, and play again.

That day, I learned something important: even in the darkest hour, there can be hope. As long as you keep hoping, there is always a chance for a new beginning. And while I watched the sun shining over the camp, I felt that there was a future we might be able to win back.