

# **A Friend, a good Friend**

A Novel

by

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## February 1933.

Maria is walking fast. They cannot get at her once she reached home. There will probably be a few of the others in her street, maybe Paul and Axel. That would be good. Then she would no longer be alone.

Maria walks on and doesn't dare to turn round. She walks so fast that she is getting side stitches. But she can't stop. At last, she has reached her street and slows down a little.

Children are playing outside number 18. Maria recognises Paul. Next to him Axel's blond hair glows in the sun. Relieved, she walks over.

"What is the matter with you?" asks Paul when he notices her.

But Maria only shakes her head.

"Paul just lost five to me", says Axel proudly, holding up the colourful marbles. Maria smiles.

Axel tells her how skilful he was to win the precious small balls. He is delighted and beams from ear to ear.

But Maria doesn't listen. She still has to think about what happened to her at school today. She had known for some time that Gunnar had joined the Jungvolk. His father works with her father at the post office and is raving about the Nazis. He has become a party member at the beginning of the year and is proud to be invited to the parties of the storm troopers of Sturmabteilung (SA). It is therefore no surprise that Gunnar is going to the Nazis' Youth Organisation. However, that Dieter Andresen, Kalle Koch and even Fritz Mann have joined them? And Hilda und Charlotte have become members of the Nazi organisation for girls, the Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM). She never really got on with those two. But Julia had been her friend once. Now she doesn't want to know her anymore.

"Because you are a Jew", she had whispered to her.

Susanne, who had heard this, had only laughed.

"Do you think, Maria will wolf you down or do whatever else to you?" she asked. Julia turned bright red and didn't reply.

"But the others said that the Jews are bad", she finally said.

"Do you like Maria or don't you like her?" Susie had asked. Julia had remained silent. Because Hilda and Charlotte came towards her.

"We will go swimming this afternoon", Hilda had mentioned to Julia in a loud voice so that everybody could hear her.

“We meet outside the swimming arena at four”, Hilda had said, putting on air of importance. “Afterwards it will be games evening.”

Julia had nodded.

Maria knows that she only goes there because of her father. He had joined the SA some weeks ago. Initially, Julia did not want to go to the BDM. Meanwhile, she is almost enjoying the meetings. She just didn't like this regimented order, she had confided in Maria.

“I expect you to come”, Hilda had added and went with Charlotte across to Gunnar Berger and Dieter Andresen.

Maria knows that Julia skived off a meeting last time because she had wanted to go to the cinema with Susanne and herself. Hilda really had held this against her.

“I don't want to go there”, Julia had suddenly whispered, making sure that only Susie and she could understand it. “But I have no choice. It's what my father wants.”

For a brief moment, she didn't say anything and only looked at Maria with her big blue eyes. And then she said something else, only to her ...

“We can no longer play together. My father has forbidden me. Because you're a Jew.”

Because I am a Jew, remembers Maria sadly. What is so bad about being a Jew? Why does Julia's father not want them to play together? She doesn't harm anybody. Susie has no problem playing with her. She couldn't care less whether someone is a Christian, Black, Chinese or Jewish. “As long as you are nice and I like you, you can be whatever you want.”

Shame that not everybody thinks like this.

Maria knows enough people who suddenly shun her father only because they found out that he is Jewish. Herr Braun, who lives in the same house as Paul, is particularly unpleasant. He became a party member two months ago. And since his Leader, the “Führer” Adolf Hitler came to power in Berlin, his behaviour is even viler than before.

Maria clearly remembers the day two weeks ago when the man with the funny moustache became the new Chancellor. Her father and her mother were horrified. Now it has happened, they had worried. Now it would get serious. It would not take long for the Brown Shirts to occupy government positions in Hamburg and Altona. The parents of Liza, Pauline, Axel and Paul too had become very sombre on this January day.

Herr Braun's reaction was quite the opposite: wearing his best coat, he walked up and down the street. And if he met someone by chance, he shouted exuberantly: “Now the clear out will begin! Now everything will be better!”

Her father had sat in the kitchen all day, brooding and with a sorrowful expression. In the evening, Itzak Giesemann, Liza's father came to visit. They had talked

quietly, in the living room. Maria had not been able to understand much, but two words had heard through the closed door: *America. Freedom.*

“Hey, I asked you whether you wanted to play with us”, Axel’s voice interrupts her gloomy thoughts.

Maria shakes her head. Axel shrugs his shoulders and opens a new game. Paul has a good start and eagerly tries to get his property back.

Maria sits next to them, still dwelling on her thoughts. That had been a bad day then. Just like the day a week ago, when the funeral of a locksmith, who had been murdered by the Nazis, had taken place. Many opponents of the Nazis had gathered at the man’s funeral. Probably the last demonstration of the Left, her father had said. Really bad, what was happening in Germany right now. The brown uniforms made their presence felt everywhere, demonstrating their new power. This is as bad as last year when the Nazi Party in neighbouring Hamburg had been elected with over two hundred and thirty thousand votes.

But today has almost been worse, thinks Maria. Cold shivers are running down her spine when she thinks back to the lunch break. How Gunnar had gone to Johanna and started to sniff at her. You can tell a Jew by his smell, he said.

Hilda and Charlotte had laughed. So did Dieter and Kalle. Julia and Fritz did not laugh; they just stood there - silent.

How Susie planted herself in front of Gunnar and scowled at him. You bastard, Susie had hissed and spat out in front of Gunnar. He just stood there, unable to move. Susie didn’t wait for his reaction; she took Johanna and her, Maria, by the hand and pulled her away.

During the next lesson, Gunnar passed Susie a note: **Traitor!** it said. **We make short work of traitors and friends of Jews.** Susie scrunched up the note with demonstrative composure and threw it into the bin.

During the break, Susie and Gunnar clashed again.

“Watch it!” hissed Gunnar. “We’ll kill you”.

But Susie only laughed. Dieter Andresen and Kalle Koch started to pull one of Johanna’s pigtails, ripped the hair slide off and threw it to each other so that Johanna could not reach it. Johanna started to cry. Hilda and Charlotte began to hurl abuse at her. *Bastard, parasite, rat, Jewish pig* and such things.

Suddenly, Susie began to shout:

“Nazi pigs! Damned brown pigs!”

She only stopped shouting when Gunnar threw her to the ground. He kicked her in the stomach and repeatedly punched her. Susie continued to scream but now in pain. Maria tried to help her, kicked, scratched and hit Gunnar.

Now Dieter Andresen and Kalle Koch barged in and Hilda and Charlotte also no longer held back. Finally, Dieter and Hilda grasped Susie, whilst Gunnar furiously

continued to punch her. Maria herself could do nothing but look on as she herself had been kept in check by Kalle and Charlotte.

"Say that you take it back!" shouted Gunnar.

Susie remained silent. Tears were running down her cheeks. Whether out of pain or rage, Maria didn't know. Susie had not said a word and just glared at Gunnar. She took blow for blow and kick for kick without uttering a single word. Fritz and Julia stood there and watched, unable to move. Susie had remained silent throughout. Gunnar gave up and finally turned to her, Maria.

"And you, are you also a traitor?"

He came closer, trying to intimidate her.

"Or what are you?"

He raised his fist.

"Don't hit her!" screamed Fritz and jumped between them.

"Really" hissed Gunnar. "You protect her? The rotten Jewish pig?"

Fritz froze.

"Maria?" he whispered in disbelief.

"... is a Jewish pig", completed Gunnar.

Fritz looked at her sadly. He could not believe it. But Gunnar only laughed and pushed her away.

"We'll bump you off too", he hissed at her.

The bell rang for the last lesson.

Maria supported Susie. She looked awful: her knees were grazed, an eye swollen and her nose was bleeding. With her last ounce of strength, she made it into the classroom. Frau Kleinert did not comment and appeared not to have noticed the injured girl.

After school, they rushed to get away from the school grounds. Maria remembered, how she walked next to Susie, who did not have to go far to catch the bus. Then she had to walk home on her own.

When the bus left, she had seen Gunnar, Kalle, Dieter and Fritz coming round the corner. That is when she started to run. She had never run so fast in her life.

She didn't dare to think what would have happened if they had caught her...

Maria is shaking with fear. How glad she was when she saw Axel and Paul! They would have protected her if needed. But Gunnar didn't follow her at all. The street is deserted; nobody is to be seen, apart from Axel and Paul.

She is in safety now. But what will happen tomorrow?

They know that she is Jewish. And Gunnar has threatened her. He wants to bump her off. Does that mean that he wants to kill her? What has she done to him?

Is this only because she is Jewish?

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“What was the matter with you yesterday?” asks little Paul.

Axel too looks worried.

They are on their way to school. Today, Pauline is joining them again. At last, she has recovered from her flu. Happy and cheerful she walks besides little Liza Giesemann. The thought of being fit again and allowed to go outside makes her almost jump with joy.

Paul repeats his question. But Maria only shakes her head.

He is too young to understand. Admittedly, he is clever for his nine years, but he is not Jewish. But his father is a communist. Axel’s father is a socialist. But Max Kirchhoff and Bernd Sommer are still good friends, in spite of their somewhat different beliefs. They are also always friendly and polite to Jews.

Maria knows that her father likes the two men who live across the street very much. He is also getting along well with Liza’s and Pauline’s parents. But they belong to them. They are also Jewish. They have that in common.

“Was someone nasty to you?” asks Axel.

He looks up, worried. He is eight and not exactly small for his age, but just like Paul, he is a head shorter than she is. Pauline reaches up to her eyebrow; Liza is even smaller than Paul.

Nevertheless, Maria knows that she can count on her friends. Axel and Paul would defend the two girls like lions.

Axel repeats his question because Maria still has not replied.

Maria looks long into his cute face, which is framed by his beautiful blond hair. His blue eyes look worried. The little boy would love to help. She feels it. The same goes for the three others. At last, Maria nods, somewhat hesitant.

“Who?” asks Axel immediately.

Maria pauses, but then she says: “Gunnar Berger.”

“The one who is in the Volk?” Paul wants to make sure.

Axel and he have not joined the Jungvolk; their fathers did not want them to and both of them do not like the military discipline and all that fuss because of the Führer in any case. Apart from that, they have been told that Nazis are dangerous.

“Yes, that’s the one”, replies Maria.

Axel clenches his fists. One can see that he would make mincemeat of the older boy if could get hold of him now.

“What did he do?” little Liza wants to know.

Maria looks at her, but doesn’t say anything. She notices that Pauline tries to catch her eye. She looks firmly at her and then lowers her head. She has understood. Maria knows that some weeks ago her friend had been abused and kicked by a Hitler youth in the same way as Gunnar swore and kicked at Susie.

They have reached the school gate. Maria quickly casts her eyes over the grounds. Gunnar is nowhere to be seen.

Axel goes with Liza to his classroom, Paul to his and Maria together with Pauline to hers. Gunnar, Dieter and Kalle have not yet arrived. Julia already sits in her seat. Hilda and Charlotte have just arrived; Johanna is coming through the door.

“Looks as if we are complete”, calls Hilda across the room.

She has spotted Pauline, who sits in her seat next to Johanna again.

Fritz enters. He briefly glances at Maria and sits, without saying a word, down in his seat in front of Hilda and Charlotte.

The next to arrive is Gunnar, closely followed by Dieter and Kalle. They are all wearing their Jungvolk caps with the badge.

“The rat pack has a new member”; Gunnar laughs an evil laugh. He knows or suspects that Pauline is also Jewish.

The teacher arrives and the lesson starts. She talks about the family tree of human beings and about the adaptability of the various species to nature. That black peoples have a dark skin, which protects them against the sun.

Suddenly she is interrupted by Gunnar; he gets up and says in a loud voice:

“You forgot to talk about the Jews. We Germans are the only master race. All others have to obey us; we have been chosen to rule over all other races. They have to do whatever we want.”

The teacher has gone pale.

“Please sit down”, she says.

But Gunnar remains standing and continues to talk about the “superb Nordic race”, which has the power over all lower races. It is amazing to see with how much eagerness and enthusiasm the 11-year old speaks. Where does he get all these complicated words?

Maria suspects that he has learned them from his father, who is in the SA. In the same troop as the infamous Sonne brothers. One of them is the Gruppenführer (section commander). His Storm Troop 25 is always present if there are brawls somewhere or attacks on Jewish shops or political dissidents. It has been alleged that the Sonne brothers simply shot some Jewish shop owners when they attacked their shop.

Maria has met them only once. She stills feels shivers down her spine when she recalls the cold winter’s day a year ago, when she saw how one of the Sonne brothers pulled out his weapon in the street and shot a man. The man died. As it transpired later, the man had been Jewish.

They say that the Sonnes can smell Jews. That they are like bloodhounds.

Maria is not the only one who fears them. She fears all Nazis; they are all bad and dangerous. But those two are the worst and the most dangerous.



“The Jews are worthless. They have to perform slave labour. Otherwise they are unworthy to live”, Gunnar announces.

The teacher awakes from her frozen state.

“Just be quiet!” she yells. “Don’t tell the others such nonsense! All people are equal”, she continues, now talking to the class. “All people are born with the same rights. No person shall have power over another person!”

Gunnar laughs his evil laugh. Then he screams:

“Communist! Lousy red whore! You and your people, it is you who brought so much misery over the fatherland. Because of you, we have lost the War, because of you, the French could come into the Ruhr area and because of you, the economy has collapsed. But now the Führer will make good everything you messed up. And he will punish you for betraying the beloved fatherland!”

The teacher looks pale like a freshly starched sheet. She realizes that she inadvertently said some things just a little bit too loud.

“Let’s leave it there”, she asks Gunnar in a weak voice.

But Gunnar does not react. Instead of sitting down, he runs outside. The teacher runs after him and tries to stop him. But Gunnar does not see or hear anything. Finally, the teacher gives up. Slowly she turns round and comes back to the classroom, shuffling her feet. She looks tired and old. In fact, she is only in her late twenties. But she is so resigned and desperate that she looks much older.

“Please don’t believe what he just said”, she pleads quietly.

Even Hilda’s face shows something like pity. Frau Kleinert is her favourite teacher. Still, one can clearly see her inner conflict: whether to stand by her favourite teacher or to be friends with Gunnar and continue to believe what she has learned from her father and the uniformed girls?

“If all people are equal, why does the Führer say that they are not?”

It is Fritz, who asked this question. It really seems to occupy his mind.

Maria remembers that some were saying that Fritz really liked her. But that was before the man with the funny moustache came to power and proclaimed that all Jews were bad.

The teacher thinks for a while before she answers.

“He doesn’t like certain people”, she replies finally. “Just like you don’t like some people. He takes the easy way out and says that they are worthless. Look around, Fritz. Who from this class do you like?”

All eyes suddenly turn to Maria. She feels blood rising to her head.

“I am Jewish”, she says without thinking.

“And you like her nevertheless, don’t you, Fritz? And why not? Maria is not bad just because she is Jewish”, the teacher continues.

“But the Führer said ...” Hilda throws in.

“The Führer does not always tell the truth”, the teacher says calmly. “Everybody makes mistakes. Everybody tells lies sometimes.”

The class remains silent.

Maria notices that Hilda and the other Nazi children are torn between who to believe: the nice teacher or their parents and the youth leader, who told them of their inherent strength and intelligence. And who does not like it to be told to be a truly very special person with inborn greater rights than those who are of „lesser value“?

There is silence. Nobody dares to say anything. They remain quiet.

Suddenly there are heavy footsteps to be heard outside. The door swings wide open. SA men in uniform are barging in. Two grab Frau Kleinert and pull her outside. A car drives past the window a short time later. Speechless, the children follow it with their eyes.

The headmaster enters the room, followed by Gunnar and three men in dark coats. Staring at everyone with piercing eyes, they are looking into the soul of each one of them.

Maria feels hot and cold all over. She is frightened of these men. She has never seen any like them. She does not know who – or what – these men are, but she clearly feels that they are very dangerous. They scare her. They probably also are somehow connected to the man, who claims to be Germany’s Leader.

“You may go home early today“, announces the headmaster.

Nobody seems to be glad.

“When does Frau Kleinert come back?” asks Hilde quietly.

The headmaster wants to reply but one of the coat-wearing men cuts him off.

“Your teacher is suspended”, he snarls with a strangely cold, emotionless voice.

“She is sick and takes a longer rest cure.”

“She is so weak, that she will probably not come back”, says the second man.

“She needs rest”, confirms the third. “A long rest.”

A gleeful smirk flashes across his face. Afterwards he is as emotionless and callous as the other two. Without saying another word, the three turn on their heels, ready to leave.

“Herr Hauptmann (captain)”, Gunnar calls out.

The man, who spoke first, stops and turns round.

“Haven’t you forgotten something?” asks Gunnar excited.

“Ah yes”, mutters the man and gets out a pencil and a piece of paper. He writes a few words, puts his signature underneath and hands the piece of paper to Gunnar, who folds it, as if it was something of the utmost importance, and puts it into his pocket.

The men in coats leave. So do the others in brown uniforms. The headmaster follows them and disappears into the main building.

The class does not stir. Nobody can move. Everybody seems to be frozen. Except Gunnar. Proud and pleased with himself, he takes his things and swaggers outside. At the door, he turns around again and calls:

“There is a meeting in the gymnasium at four later today.”

Nobody reacts.

Gunnar strides towards the exit like a proud lion. When the door has closed behind him, everybody is still sitting in eerie silence for a few moments. Only slowly, the children come round.

Maria packs her things. She sees that Susanne and the others do the same, but it feels as if she was looking through a thick cotton wool curtain. Everything seems so unreal.

When she steps out into the yard, she has to close her eyes.

The fine snow, which covers everything, gleams so dazzlingly that it almost blinds her. It is hardly a centimetre deep. It is freezing cold. And somehow unreal. The trees ooze a rich dark brown. No leaves are to be seen yet, but spring is definitely in the air. Tiny buds are peeping out. And above it all, soars majestically the endless blue sky.

Maria wanders through the urban landscape, which is covered by the thin layer of powder snow. It almost feels as if she was floating. She does not look right or left, she does not see or hear anything; she just walks, as if in trance, through the still wintry cold streets, which quietly and lifelessly seem to daydream. An eternity must have passed when she finally arrives home.

The stairs are filled with a smell of vegetable soup. Her mother is already home. Her father will only leave the post office at six. He is a post office clerk. He does not earn much, just enough for the three of them.

Her mother stands by the iron stove. The hot soup is steaming, misting up the window.

“Why are you home already?” she asks surprised.

Maria does not answer. Her tongue sticks to the roof of her mouth. She sits down on the kitchen bench, crosses her arms on the edge of the table and buries her face. She is crying. She does not really know herself why. Maybe because Frau Kleinert has gone, maybe because she still shudders with fear of the men in their long coats.

A hand strokes her hair, tenderly and calming at the same time. Her mother stands beside her, comforting her. Maria cries long and bitterly. Finally, she has no tears left.

The soup is ready. Her mother fills a plate.

“That will comfort you”, she says and puts the full plate in front of her.

Maria takes her spoon and mechanically begins to shovel the soup into her mouth. Her mother sits down in the chair opposite her and silently watches her

for a while. Then she fills Maria's plate again and gets a plate for herself. They spoon their soup in silence.

"Would you like some more?" asks Mother, carefully breaking the silence.

Maria slightly shakes her head. She is not feeling well, her head is pounding and her eyelids are getting heavy.

"My God, what is the matter with you? You are really hot."

Her mother picks her up as she used to when Maria was younger and carries her to the bedroom.

"Try to sleep a little", she says, tucks her in and quietly closes the door.

Maria closes her eyes and falls asleep immediately.

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"Axel and Paul left this for you", says Mother. "They were here yesterday."

She hands Maria two liquorice sticks.

"They waited for you after school yesterday, but couldn't see you. The sticks are from old Frau Silberstein."

Maria nods.

"Thanks", she says weakly.

"Pauline has told me that Frau Kleinert has been taken away", says her mother.

Maria nods sadly.

"Someone said she has ranted against the Führer."

Maria shakes her head.

"Gunnar Berger started it", she whispers. "He betrayed her."

Her mother sits down on the bed, tenderly taking her hand and stroking it.

"You don't have to tell me if you don't want to", she assures Maria. "Try to sleep again. We will speak with father about it tonight. But of course only if you want to."

Maria slightly nods.

"Try to sleep", says Mother. "You've got a slight fever. But a few more hours sleep can do miracles."

The mother kisses her on the forehead and quietly gets up. Maria closes her eyes.

Someone is knocking at the door.

"Who's there?" she hears her mother asking.

The door opens.

"How is Maria?" she hears little Axel ask.

"She slept for a while, but now she is awake", says Mother.

Steps toddle along the hall. Someone knocks at the door.

"Yes", Maria invites them quietly "Come in."

Axel enters. Behind him, Pauline, little Liza and little Paul push through the door.

“Hi, how are you?”

Axel is looking at her.

“Not too bad”, replies Maria slowly.

“We’ve got something for you”, beams Liza and pulls a chocolate star out of her pocket.

“From Frau Silberstein”, says Paul, handing Maria his present: a colourful lollipop. Axel adds a handful of mints.

“To make you fit again soon”, he explains his generosity.

Pauline presents her with a little chocolate Santa.

“Gunnar came in his Volk uniform today”, she reports. “He is now Stammführer (leader of a group section).”

Maria and her friend both pull a scornful face.

“Herr Schürmann was also taken away by the Gestapo”, says a seriously looking Paul.

Maria wrinkles her forehead. Herr Schürmann might not have been the best of maths teachers, but he certainly is a “good man” as her father puts it.

But these men in their long dark coats ... they are called “Gestapo”? What is that supposed to mean?

Maria does not ask, but leaves Paul to tell what happened: how Schürmann had explained multiplications to them and how the door suddenly opened and several tall, strong men in coats grabbed the teacher and pushed him outside; how the headmaster came in with a small man, also wearing a coat, whom he called “Major” and sent them all home.

“They picked up two others”, knows Pauline. “Dr. Hanstein and Herr Abendrot.”

Maria only knows them as break and lunchtime supervisors. She had heard that they were very nice.

“We’ve got a new teacher now”, says Paul. “His name is Wolf. A Nazi.”

One can see from the expression on the small dark haired boy’s face that he is not particularly keen on the new teacher.

“We have to jump up, stand stock-still and answer his questions as briskly as a soldier”, he grumbles. “And he always talks about the Führer and all that stuff. He repeats the same junk during every lesson.”

Paul is angrily looking to the floor. Maria feels with him. He doesn’t like the Nazis. He does not yet understand everything that is going on but has long understood that the Brown Shirts are dangerous – extremely dangerous.

Axel also knows that the Nazis are bad. The boys are very clever, in spite of their young age, and know that they have to keep a distance from SA men and the like. They stick to their (fathers’) opinion and are deterred by Pimpfe, such as Gunnar Berger, to be friends with Jews.

Maria is very fond of them both. They are like Susie. "As long as we like you, you can be whatever you want to be" could also be their maxim.

Just like Pauline and herself, they do not understand why the Nazis stir up so much hatred against the Jews, who did them no harm.

"Wolf has said today that all Jews are bad", Paul reports. "They always steal and cheat, he said."

The outrage over this accusation chokes him for a moment.

"I almost called out that he was lying", he continues. "I mean, you two are also Jewish, aren't you?"

He is looking from one girl to the other.

"And you are honest; you never cheated anybody or stole anything."

All three are shaking their head.

"See!"

Paul is satisfied with his line of argument.

Liza obviously has had enough of this serious discussion. She pushes past Paul and looks firmly into Maria's face.

"When do you come downstairs again?" she wants to know.

Maria lifts her shoulders.

"I have a new dress for Nathalie", declares Liza proudly. "Mummy has made it herself."

Maria smiles. She knows how much Liza loves her doll. It means the world to her, even though it only consists of wool and scraps of fabric. But for Liza it is the most precious thing in the world. It is the only memory of her grandmother.

Last year, SA men shot her grandparents during the election campaign. The men burnt their small allotment-garden cottage and their bodies. A day before, the grandmother had given Liza the doll for her seventh birthday. A day later they were dead, murdered...

Maria cannot remember her grandparents. Her mother's parents died in quick succession when she was just one year old.

Her father's parents have also passed away. His mother died before her granddaughter was born. His father had been a pilot in the Great War. He was in the same squadron as Hermann Göring, who is now a big shot with the Nazis. Maria only knows photos of the two men, standing proudly next to their planes. Her grandfather had even been highly decorated by the Kaiser. Many people in Altona regarded him as a folk hero after the War. In spite of this, the Nazis murdered him in 1925...

An accident, reported a tiny article in the newspaper. But a man, who had witnessed everything, visited her parents the same evening and told them about the hot-headed man who had punched her grandfather during an argument and

pushed him into the road – deliberately, straight in front of a lorry, which was driving at great speed. The man was the elder of the two Sonne brothers...

“I have to go now”, says Pauline. “We’ll have our evening meal soon.”

Axel, Paul and Liza also say good-bye. When they have left, Maria remains on her bed, eyes wide open, staring holes into space. She cannot stop thinking about the same question: What have the Nazis against them, the Jews?

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SAMPLE

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