

The lady in the painting

I had gotten used to the life of being spoiled. My father and I were very wealthy and intended on being so for a long time. I had many people in my life that mattered much to me, such as the cook, the maid and my father of course. The only person I longed to have was my mother. But there was one thing that filled that space.

We waited very long, my father and I that is, for a package my father ordered. It suspiciously had no arrival date which made the coming of it quite odd. It was wrapped in brown paper and a large box with large words saying, FRAGILE! When it was opened my eyes grew larger than they ever have before. That was the best day we ever had in 1937. It was a painting. And in the painting was a beautiful lady, she looked like the sun and the moon and the stars in one package of beautiful gracefulness. My father hung it in the grand hall for all to admire.

Whenever we had people over they all mentioned the lady in the painting, and how beautiful she was, how she would make them smile. When anyone passed by her they smiled and everything became a little more cheery.

Until one night I was in my bedchamber when I heard something stirring down the hall. My eyes opened and I

crossed the hall and saw my father cursing with anger, but when he turned to me all that I saw was sadness in his eyes.

Fathers industries had been shut down, and every last penny we had was taken away. We were worth nothing and now owned nothing. We could no longer live in our nice large house and everything in it was taken away, including the lady in the painting.

Now my father and I live among the streets of 1938, France. The wrong time to have to roam the streets scavenging for food with Germans around scavenging for Jews like us.

My father and I huddled in a dark corner and my head nested on his comforting shoulder. I started to weep. "Sshhh" my father hushed me "it's going to be alright, Margaret, the lady in the painting will help us and everything will be alright." Just then I saw two tall men in dark suits and frowns, the last thing I remember were two big hands coming at me, then there was darkness.

When my eyes opened all I saw was dark. Had I died? Was this what it was like when you were dead? Then I heard a voice which made me jump. Then more voices. There was bumping and rustling all around, we must be in a van, I thought. It was filled with lots of people and the air was so musty you could hardly breathe. All around me, I saw dirty faces with tear stains praying, and calling for help. I scanned around for father. Then

I saw him and shouted with my loudest voice. I scooted my way over to him and he cradled me in his arms. Then the van doors opened. The full moon light streamed in and two men started forcefully pulling us out. I clung on to my father's warm shoulder as hard and tight as I could. Yet we were pulled apart. It was then I thought I'd never see my father again.

My fingers were red from the firm grips of the German soldiers. And I was sopping wet with rain and mud dripping down my torn and tattered clothing. I called for my father, but the German soldier dragging me by my fingertips through the cold and wet, screamed at me to be quiet, then barked something at more soldiers in a language I didn't understand. The man grabbed me by the hand and threw me into some sort of camp then with a crash closed a spiky metal gate.

I was surrounded by other girls and women separated from their families and husbands. It was like a cloud of misery enclosed by a sharp metal gate.

That night you could hear piercing cries from outside. It was the sound of death right in my presence. Many girls in the bunk room wept. And one got dragged away by a Nazi. Crying and screaming for mercy. I only thought about my father, my soft caring father, and just then I knew I was going to make it through this.

The ladies job was digging. We dug holes, doubtless for the ones we heard screaming outside the night before.

One night while I was digging a hole somewhere among the back of the camp a heard a ladies voice whispering.

“It is ok Margaret, I am here Margaret, and everything will be alright.”

It was the lady in the painting. My eyes welled with tears, then my face grew red with anger. I knew what I had to do.

Backing up I ran at the gate with everything my tuff thirteen year old self could do. My hands and feet starting to climb the old sharp metal gate. The broken wire stabbed into the skin and blood poured out. I let out a short ear piercing screech, loud enough for the whole camp to hear. I squeezed my hand into a tight fist and ran on. Through the depths of the dark forest scratches came all over me and my whole body started breaking down. A sickness had come over me the past three years, and death had become my enemy. At the edge of the forest I just could not run anymore. My arms were breaking, I was sick and covered in blood the color of a dead rose. No, I had to make it. My body forced itself up and I kept running. Until I saw it. My old home was in ashes. Except one wall, a wall that once was in the great hall of our great home. And on that wall was the lady in the painting. I ran to her, that moment I knew, that was not just any lady that was my mother. I breathed deeply, and that moment I smiled for the first time in three years since I entered that nasty camp. I leaned up

against the painting, and the lady, my mother took me in her arms and whispered,

“Its ok Margaret, you are free now”

And I smiled, my head fell back and I closed my eyes for the very last time.