

The Day My Life Changed Forever

It was Sunday. The day after my eleventh birthday. The year was 1939 and War against Hitler had just begun. However, this wasn't just any old Sunday. As I lay in my comfy bed, dreaming about playing football in the cobbled streets (just outside my house) I remembered...this was evacuation day. Tears streamed down the sides of my pale cheeks, like a waterfall. Shutting my eyes, I tried to fall back into a deep slumber. No luck. I could hear Mother shouting up to me,

"Are you awake yet Tom? Don't forget to put on your best Sunday suit."

"I don't want to!" I cried, pulling the covers over my scrunched up face.

To tell you the truth, I was petrified of leaving Mother. You see, that week during a night raid, a bakery just a few streets away was bombed by V5 German bomber planes, which killed the Hollyman family. I kept contemplating; what if that happened to mother? What if I wasn't there to protect her? Dad was about to be sent to War, so Mother would be all alone.

Reluctantly, I dragged myself out of my bed, wondering whether I will ever get to sleep in it again. Looking solemnly out of the window, I was suddenly reminded of the danger we were in. Demolished and destroyed buildings lined the pavements. I turned to look at my little sister Rose, who was still sleeping like an angel. Far from what she was really like! Trouble! That's what my Dad used to say. It was then I realised I had to go, it was my duty to look after Rose and she was not safe here in the city.

A few hours later, we hurried to the train station. Rose wore her best Sunday dress, soft and silky pink, with a bow in the middle and I wore my navy blazer along with a cap. Small cardboard boxes containing our gas masks hung from our shoulders and attached to our coats were large labels, which had our name, age and school written on. In our hands, we held a square brown suitcase, which carried our clothes and favourite toy.

Mother held our hands tight, as we stood amongst hundreds of other children, teachers and parents. I had never seen Mother so upset before, her crimson, red lips quivered and her body was shaking. Trying to look as brave as she could, she gave us both our last hug and kiss goodbye and whispered softly, "You are a brave boy Tom, look after your sister for me, I love you and I will see you very soon."

"I promise." I relied, as I hugged her tightly.

It all happened so quickly. Within minutes we were led onto the crowded train, by officials, in long black coats. Suddenly, the train doors slammed shut! Like a bolt of lightning, silence struck the train. Followed by the deafening screams and cries of

terrified and nervous children. Although my stomach was churning like a wheel, I kept strong and didn't shed a tear, as I didn't want to frighten Rose, whose blue, shiny eyes glared at me. Staring out of the steamed up windows, I could see mothers hugging in floods of tears. My eyes darted around the platform, hoping to catch a final goodbye from Mother, but I failed to see her.

Soon, the train rumbled and puffed out of the station. Steaming through luscious, lime green fields, where cows and sheep were peacefully grazing. Tremendous, tall trees swayed in the wind their branches waving goodbye, as we got deeper and deeper into the countryside. Clear, blue streams trickled down enormous hills, like the tears I wanted to cry. It was a long journey and soon Rose was fast asleep, her head gently resting on my shoulder.

After a few hours, the rusty train arrived at a strangely named place called Llandrindod. Rose could read, but she couldn't read this word! Everyone was tired, hot and miserable. Here we were marched into a nearby school with a silver gate and grey bricks. We were made to stand in rows like smartly dressed soldiers. My heart raced as a group of adults collected children one by one. Was I going to be split up from my sister? Even though she was annoying that would be like losing an arm or leg! How could I protect her? How could I keep my promise? Five minutes felt like five hours, as slowly the crowd of anxious children dispersed.

To my surprise, a lady in a bright blue coat and hat, stretched out her arm to shake my hand and in a soft voice she said, "Hello Tom, hello Rose, I'm Mrs Williams and you will be coming with me."

"Both of us?" I asked wearily.

"Yes, it is going to be a bit of a squeeze, you will have to share a room and of course there will be chores to do. Now are we ready to go."

Suddenly, I felt a weight lift off my shoulders, I knew we were going to be safe. Mrs Williams was a short lady with bouncy, brown curly hair just like Mothers. Walking hand in hand through the quiet village, Mrs Williams told us how her husband was serving in the army and that she now lived alone. She told us how she had always wanted children.

Eventually we arrived at a dainty cottage with a straw roof. Inside, a glowing amber fire lit up the room with dancing golden flames. Also in the room sat a tin bath and a wooden table and chairs. Mrs Williams insisted that we both had a bath.

Later on, I asked if I could write a letter to Mother and Mrs Williams helped me. Although, I felt safe I couldn't help but miss Mother incredibly. At the time, I remember thinking that this was one of the hardest days of my life. Little did I know it was about to get much harder!