

La Lumiere
by Erin Boese-Ezard

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An old page from a newspaper blew across the rock-strewn street. The buildings on either side lay empty and decrepit, slowly falling in on themselves. Chimneys still seemed to smoke even months after abandonment, and layers of ash sifted, still coating everything in their testimony of horror. A ghost encampment, haunted by those souls still trapped within its barbed wire walls. The paper carried news from Before, a time many preferred to forget. No one would read this paper again, its hidden messages and stories long forgotten by those still alive. Even if one tried, the ink was faded and nearly indecipherable. It had served its purpose and was now to decay like the rest of the chilling story it had endured.

HEADLINES: Jews to go to Germany's New Camp Bergen-Belsen

The day began like any other with the printers steaming and the rhythmic thumping of each sheet running through the rollers. The news carrying gossip and other vital pieces of information to be distributed to everyone. The papers were shifted and folded together. Then tied with twine and to be picked up by the paperboys in the predawn light.

Fashion: Dresses To Brighten Your Glamour & Bring Out Your Features

It was passed from lady to lady, all of whom were gathered in Mrs. Schwarzenherz's parlor. The tidbits of gossip discussed ranged from who was to marry whom to the new acceptable length of one's dress. The real news was carefully avoided, like a disease that was quick to contaminate. They chattered softly while they drank tea with thick cream. A privilege for even those who were in the higher echelon of society. After an hour the ladies rose and gathered their things. They kissed one another on the cheeks and left quickly, to return to their homes. Homes that within each passing day became more and more like prisons.

Recipes: To Keep Your Husband Happy After His Long Day

The maid picked up the folded newspaper and tea cups. She tidied the room and took all the saucers to the kitchen to be cleaned. The stout older woman propped up the paper on the counter as she made to wash the dishes. Unlike the ladies, she dared to read the more dangerous sections where they spoke more freely. The lands the Reich had taken and the hundreds of more camps he had created. They were waging wars on all fronts, taking land and people that didn't belong to them. She knew, as many were coming to realize, that no one would be safe for a long time.

Help Wanted: More Drafted To Help The Third Reich

When the baker comes delivering a basket of buns and scones he takes the paper. For him the news will hold more than what most see. He reads between the lines and catches what the ordinary miss. The letters left for loved ones and the messages hidden in plain sight. He will take those pages and his wife will wrap up the loaves which his nephew will take to his father's drop. His father condemned to the concentration camp just outside their door because he dared to stand up for the unwanted. An

honorable act done without thought, without care for himself. All in the name of righteousness for what he believed to be true.

Comics: The War Won't Bring Down Mickey & His Friends

A dirty boy, small for his age of six, takes the loaves prepared by his aunt. He walks along the cobblestone streets, jumping around the mud puddles and sidling out of the way of the tanks. The soldiers leer down at the women bustling around doing midday chores. They yell raucously to one another, the only ones to do so nowadays. The small boy lifts his chin and straightens his shoulders as he walks alone, yet surrounded, through the streets. After he delivers the bread, he will visit his father whom he sees less and less often. Eventually the boy comes to a dirt alley that runs alongside the barbed wire fence, it curls through the town like a poisonous snake, one you'd best avoid. He turns away from the entrance of the camp and walks down around the corner and out of sight. Here he lifts a section of the wire and crawls beneath. Too late the boy remembers he is still wearing his school clothes. He knows it is too late to go back so he pulls his burlap backpack to his front. This he prays will be enough to sneak past the guards who never seem to notice him. He must be quick and bring the loaves to the mechanic who works within the barbed wire city. As he enters the main square he notices more people have come to the confines of the camp. It's overcrowded and reeking of urine and waste. He does not know why people would choose to stay here when the town has plenty of now empty homes. Turning away from the crowds, the young boy steps uncertainly into the yawning mouth of the garage. Here where the mechanic who doesn't believe in the red and black works. The broad man comes out from under an armoured truck, dark grease staining his clothes and coating his hair. He takes the loaves silently, freeing the boy to search the ever-riskier encampment of prisoners for his father.

Security Heightened: More Expected To Arrive As Neighboring Camps Overfill

The little boy bringing the loaves didn't comprehend the enormity of what he was bearing. Neither did anyone around the two of them, the mechanic desperately hoped. He relied on people seeing what they wanted, not on its true form. Like the baker, he had an eye for those secret messages hidden within plain sight. They lived in times where a man could get shot for standing in the wrong place. Children were slaughtered like pigs and thousands were corralled into the horrendous labour camps. Families were ripped apart -- as his was -- and never seen again. Neighbours turned on one another, anyone of "un-pure" birth or different views; all shoved and torn from each other. The people mistreated and forced to do labour, if lucky. The world had turned into a chaotic hell.

As he went to put the unheeded packages in his toolbox, he heard a sudden commotion outside. He turned and a shot rang out, muffling any noise for a few seconds. The mechanic went through to the street to see but what he saw made his blood stop cold. The soldiers had caught a small boy. The boy. There would be no judge to speak for this child nor any of the countless others caught. The boy was tossed into the back of a truck, his knapsack forgotten in the dust.

His father would never again see his boy.

Tonight they will have heightened security; for if someone could get in unnoticed, someone could get out. This night the mechanic knew there would be checks run on everyone inside; none exempted. He returned to the garage and unwrapped the still warm loaves. The man slipped the papers into the inner lining of his jacket and stepped out into the death trap known as Bergen-Belsen.

Women Needed To Man Radios & Telephones

A young lady stood outside in the growing dusk. She stood beneath an old street light, its power long having been redirected somewhere else. She was waiting for something, for someone. An airplane droned overhead, its destination unknown, its allies unknown. Slowly one by one the lights flickered out, leeching the last of the colours out of the shadows. The world had become a greying, war-torn land where only the strongest were capable of surviving. Out of the darkness came a broad figure. His strides even but rapid, the only sign of his uneasiness. He handed the girl a roll of papers and glanced over his shoulder. Behind him the sound of men shouting and running filled the twisting streets. The nightly hunt had begun. The girl gripped the papers to her chest and ran, her breath fogging, foreshadowing the coming of winter. At the end of the street she turned, the man still standing where she'd been not moments before. He nodded to her and in that second she truly understood the extent that people were willing to go to fight for freedom.

Then the deafening shot of a Karabiner 98k, and the man dropped through the shadows, his body slumping onto the ground. The girl covered her mouth with her sleeve and bit down, holding back her scream. She whirled away, running like only prey knows how. The soldiers continued their watch, searching the growing darkness for any last survivors. The young woman quietly shut the door to her sanctuary and felt her way over to the small lamp on her desk. There she laid down the last of the papers that the people had given their lives for. She took off her coat and hung it up by the door. She went over to the window and ran her fingers around the sheet of wood nailed in front of it. She pulled out a key, walked back over to her desk and sat down. There she unlocked a drawer and pulled out a radio. She lifted up the antenna and put on headphones. Once on, the girl seemed to relax. She became one with the forbidden machine, its knobs and wheels as comfortable to her as her own two hands. The sound of static filled her ears and she picked up the microphone. The girl spoke into the darkness; her voice carrying, traveling miles, speaking to the last of the people.