

APPENDIX 4.9 Sample Diary Entry 1

September 26, 1941

Dear Journal,

I wish everyone would stop telling me how brave I am. I don't feel brave, I feel very sad and very scared. Ever since my parents made me leave our apartment in Warsaw I have felt confused. I wake up in a strange room and don't know where I am until I remember my escape from the Jewish ghetto where I used to live. A week ago, my parents told me that it was not safe for children to live with them anymore because diseases were starting to spread and people were dying from sickness or hunger. The German soldiers that guarded the street were not afraid to shoot at residents who looked, talked, or dressed the wrong way.

A woman named Irena snuck me out of Warsaw. She is allowed to travel in and out of the ghetto because she is not Jewish. I don't understand why we had to move here in the first place. I grew up in a nice house and my mom and dad worked as teachers. Then a war started, our city was invaded, and we had to move to a tiny, cold apartment like all the other Jewish families in Poland. For some reason there are people that seem to hate me because I am Jewish. Not even my mom has been able to explain this to me, so I looked very closely at Irena when she came to pick me up. We both have two legs, two arms, two eyes, and a nose. We didn't seem very different at all, I couldn't find anything unusual about her. Once she arrived I had to get ready to leave so fast. Everyone was nervous and no one was talking much except to give me instructions, or to tell me they loved me, not to worry and of course, what a brave little girl I am. While Irena pulled me by the hand down the hallway of my apartment I looked over my shoulder, trying to memorize the faces of my mom and dad. I was not allowed to take a picture of them and no one could tell me when I would see them again.

Irena put me in the back of an ambulance in an old potato sack and we drove toward the exit of the ghetto. Writing it sounds like something I would read in a storybook, it's hard to believe it actually happened. The ride was bumpy and dark and seemed very long. The potato sack smelled like mold and the ambulance smelled like sweat and medicine. I was terrified that a soldier would stop the ambulance to inspect the inside and find me. I bit on my hand to keep from crying or screaming but I couldn't help shaking. Eventually I arrived at my new house. It is warm inside and I have my own room with a closet of clothes and a shelf of books. I can go outside and smell fresh air, I eat more than once a day and I even had a cookie for the first time in a year.

The man and woman I live with are a nice old couple. I know I am lucky to be alive and safe, but I miss hugging my mother and the way she always smelled like soap. I miss my dad's silly stories about a dog named Pip Pop who always gets into trouble. I have no way to talk to them and I don't know if they are OK. I don't bother asking when the war will end and if I will see my parents again, because the answer is always, "I don't know."