

The Fight For Freedom

By : LoveLiftedMe

After an immigrant family moves to the deep South, they are in danger after being befriended by two girls, who have relations with a trouble causer, leading to danger for the family and the two girls.



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Chapter 1: Firsts

The year was 1917. Things were changing in Atlanta, Georgia. Not only were things changing in Georgia, but across the country, also. New inventions such as the radio and the automobile were being made known. Immigrants from overseas countries were escaping the torture and strife of war and coming to America. The United States had entered the Great War after the Zimmerman Note had been written. Times were changing. Atlanta didn't seem to change too dramatically to two young citizens, Samantha Ellis Parker and Elizabeth Marie Martin. They had both lived there all their lives, and grew up together, best friends since the second grade. They loved their hometown, and had went through some quite strange events, such as being kidnapped by a secret society, rescuing a dog from an evil pastor, writing a letter to the newspaper asking for people to help the citizens in the slums, and stopped a potential murder at the state fair. All through that, they had met a new friend and changed part of town.

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It was a bright, sunny day in May in the city of Atlanta. Despite the warm temperatures and the beautiful weather, Samantha Parker and Elizabeth Martin chose to stay inside and read books. They weren't in the mood to go to town, or to go to the park. Samantha and Elizabeth felt that since now Elizabeth was fifteen, and that Samantha was fourteen, they were too grown up to do like they did before. Before, they used to go to town and go to the movies and go to the candy store. That used to be their favorite thing to do on Saturdays. But now, they were at the age considered to be young ladies, and they needed to act like it. Samantha and Elizabeth were growing up.

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Elizabeth shut her book quietly and sighed. She looked out the window and saw the neighbor kids cheerfully playing outside. Sure do miss the days when Samantha and I did that, she thought. She remained silent for awhile, until she saw Samantha close her book. Then she spoke up and said to her friend, "Remember when we used to play like that, Sammy?" She pointed to the window. "I sure do miss those days."

"You know, I was thinking that very same thing, 'Liza," Samantha said.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

"Wonder who that could be," Elizabeth said as she got up to answer the door. She opened it, and to her surprise, it was a sharply dressed deliveryman with an envelope addressed to both Samantha and Elizabeth.

"Delivery for Samantha Parker and Elizabeth Martin," he said, holding out the envelope.

"Yes, I am Elizabeth," Elizabeth replied, accepting the envelope. "Thank you."

"You're very much welcome," said the deliveryman, tipping his hat at Elizabeth. "Good day."

"Good day," Elizabeth said. She closed the door as the deliveryman walked away.

Samantha met Elizabeth halfway to the door. "What is it?" she asked.

"It's an envelope," Elizabeth answered. "It's addressed to both of us."

"Why, that's strange," Samantha replied. "It's not very often that we get mail. Let's open it."

"Okay." Elizabeth tore open the envelope and pulled out the slip of paper that was inside. "It's an invitation to the Town Hall dance! And we're invited!" she exclaimed.

Samantha was speechless. She and Elizabeth knew that the annual Town Hall dance was for the debutantes of Atlanta, the wealthy young girls who looked for a future of high society and fame. But Samantha and Elizabeth, why, they were just two plain girls who knew nothing of being debutantes. Surely, an invitation to the Town Hall dance was an exciting surprise.

Elizabeth was silent, too. She just stood and daydreamed of going to the elegant dance, wearing a beautiful dress and dancing with some of the richest boys in town. Then she looked down at the simple black and burgundy dress that she was wearing now. Elizabeth looked up and said to Samantha, "Well, if we're going to perhaps the most prominent dance in the state of Georgia, we need new dresses!"

"Yes," Samantha said. "Let's make our new dresses and be prepared." She was silent for a moment, but then spoke up and said, "When is the dance?"

"The invitation says it's on the twenty-sixth," Elizabeth answered.

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Samantha said nothing, but quickly went over to where the calendar was. "Perfect! About a week away," she said, after searching the page of the current month of May. "That's a Friday, so the dance must be that night." Elizabeth once more checked the invitation and replied, "That's right." She slid the invitation back in the envelope and said, "Who's going to be your date?"

"Oooh, that's gonna be a hard decision, 'Liza," answered Samantha. "Who's it going to be for you?"

Elizabeth seemed to think for a moment, then said, "Do you think Tommy would get mad if I asked him?"

"I don't know," Samantha replied. "He doesn't seem to annoy you as much as he did before. He seems shy whenever you're around. You know, 'Liza, I think he likes you."

"I never imagined that!" said Elizabeth. "For now, though, let's go inform our parents the news of the dance, then we'll go about sewing our dresses and deciding who our dates will be."

"Agreed," Samantha stated.

Both Samantha and Elizabeth were looking forward to the dance. This was their first time of being invited, and of course, they were nervous. It was a big moment in the lives of the two young Atlanta citizens.

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The night of the twenty-sixth soon arrived, and so did the Town Hall dance. Tommy reluctantly agreed to be Elizabeth's escort, and Samantha's date was Henry Houston, one of Tommy's closest friends.

The dance was to begin at eight o'clock and last until the early morning hours, long after midnight, but ending before dawn. At quarter to eight, Samantha, Henry, Tommy, and Elizabeth headed towards the town hall.

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"Sure is chilly tonight," Elizabeth said, pulling her shawl tightly around her shoulders.

"Yeah," Samantha answered in reply.

Other than remarks about the weather and events of the Great War, nobody talked much as they neared the Town Hall. All four of them were nervous; none had ever been to such an event.

Soon, the group arrived, but stopped abruptly when they saw the Town Hall building. It was a big brick building, extremely tall and elaborate, and it looked quite different than it did as usual. Although Samantha and Elizabeth passed it everyday on their way to school, tonight, it looked completely strange. It felt almost as if they were visiting a millionaire's home, except they didn't know the millionaire.

Debutantes and their escorts passed them and entered the building. Samantha and Elizabeth couldn't help but stare at the other girls' long, flowing, beautiful dresses, and feel out of place among the richest in town.

Finally, Tommy said to the others, "Let's go on in. We must look pretty strange to the others, standing out here like we don't know what we're doing. Come on."

The group slowly made their way forwards and into the building. The inside of the Town Hall was by far fancier than the outside. Chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and famous paintings were nailed to the wall. Two chairs and a loveseat sat on both sides of the fireplace, which was filled with a warm fire. The dim light of dusk shone through the giant windows, and the moon was rising in the distance.

The small group of four was suddenly taken from its daze when a voice behind them said, "Welcome to the annual Town Hall dance!"

Elizabeth was the first to turn around. Behind them stood a doorman, the exact same one who had brought her the invitation over a week before. "Thank you," she said.

After that, Tommy, Henry, Samantha, and Elizabeth waited for the next dance. While waiting, they drank punch and talked. Then, the dance started. Elizabeth teamed up with Tommy, and Samantha with Henry. This dance was a waltz, what all of the dances would be that night.

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The night seemed to go by slowly. Moonlight peeked in through the window, and the dancing continued. After awhile, Tommy and Elizabeth went outside into the courtyard, for a short break from dancing.

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Elizabeth looked up at the starry sky and the moon. She loved the outdoors and its beautiful scenery.

Tommy sat on a bench and looked around at the courtyard's brick walls. Suddenly, he stood up and said to Elizabeth, "I've got something to tell you."

Elizabeth turned around and asked, "Yes, Tommy?"

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"I'm going to tell you something to tell my family," Tommy answered. "They could probably handle it better if someone else told them."

"Tell them what?" said Elizabeth.

"I'm going to join the Army," replied Tommy. "I'm leaving tonight and I'll be headed out for France tomorrow."

Elizabeth took the news as a surprise, but she said, "Are you sure your parents will approve of it?"

"I don't think so, but that's why I want you to tell them. I'll be gone by the time they find out, then they can't stop me. I feel it's my duty to protect my country. Pa fought in the Spanish-American War, so I don't see no reason why I can't fight in this war," Tommy stated.

"Okay," said Elizabeth. "I'll tell them tomorrow morning."

"That's perfect," Tommy replied. "Now you don't tell anybody tonight, you hear? Just go to my house tomorrow and tell them."

"If you say so," Elizabeth whispered. "Let's go back inside." She stood up and went back in, not stopping to see if Tommy was coming. She trudged over to the loveseat and sat down. Elizabeth looked around and spotted Samantha and Henry talking to a girl and her date by the punch table. She stood up and went to where they were.

"Hi, Samantha," Elizabeth said.

"Hi, 'Liza," Samantha said. "Caroline, here, she was just telling me that an immigrant family was moving in over on Connecticut Drive."

"Really?" Elizabeth asked, her hopes brought up a little.

"Yes," Caroline said with a strong Southern accent. "I heard they were German. They might be spies for the German army! Wouldn't that be somethin' if they was! Spies, right here in Atlanta!"

"I don't think that'd happen," Elizabeth replied. She looked around at the others. Samantha seemed eager to go welcome the new family, Caroline looked surprised, her date didn't care, and Henry Houston had an angry look on his face.

"Samantha and I will go and visit them tomorrow, then. We'll bake some cookies and take them with us," Elizabeth said.

Henry glared at Samantha and Elizabeth, then walked away. Wonder what's wrong with him, Elizabeth thought.

About one o'clock that morning, Samantha, Elizabeth, Tommy, and Henry headed towards home. Everyone was quiet as they walked along; Elizabeth, troubled with the news of Tommy's joining the Army, Samantha excited about the arrival of the immigrant family, Tommy, about to run away, and Henry, with unknown anger towards Samantha and Elizabeth for some reason.

On the way home, Henry's house was the first stop. He said goodbye to Tommy, but he said it angrily to Samantha and Elizabeth. This left both the girls puzzled, wondering why he was mad.

The rest of the walk home was quiet and long. Nobody talked, that was, until they reached Elizabeth's house. Elizabeth said goodbye to Samantha, then said the same to Tommy. Samantha didn't know it, but Elizabeth was saying goodbye to Tommy for the last time, possibly. Elizabeth knew well what was going to happen, and felt terribly sorry for her friend and her friend's family, once they discovered that their only son had marched off to warâ possibly death.

Elizabeth turned and went inside. Instead of going to bed, she quietly sat down on the couch and began to think. She wondered what would happen the next day, when the Parkers found out Tommy was gone, and whether or not she and Samantha would go visit the immigrant family. Elizabeth then remembered an important fact that her mother had told her when she was very youngâ "We never know what will happen, today, tomorrow, not even the next second." Elizabeth sat recalling the events of the night, then slowly climbed the stairs and went to bed.

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"Elizabeth! Elizabeth, wake up!"

Elizabeth awoke the next morning to her best friend trying to wake her. "Samantha! What is it?"

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Samantha, who had been crying helplessly, brushed back a tear and answered the question. "It's Tommy! He's gone, and he left a note on the kitchen table saying he's left to join the Army!"

Elizabeth said nothing. Guilt swelled in her heart as Samantha cried. Elizabeth strained to think of words to say, but the only thing she could think of was to tell what she knew. She hesitated, then began to say, "Samantha, Iâ I, well, I knew Tommy was going to join the Army."

Samantha gasped. "What! How did you know?"

"He told me last night at the dance," answered Elizabeth. "He said he was going to leave last night, and that he'd be heading for France on a ship today."

"Then maybe we've got time to stop him! He'll have to get to Savannah before he can go!" Samantha broke in.

"No. Don't do that. He said himself that he wanted to protect America, and to be a hero, just like his pa," replied Elizabeth.

"I just want him to be safe! At home!" exclaimed Samantha. "Ma will be hysterical if Tommy gets.. gets.. oh, I don't want to say it!"

"He'll be all right. We've just got to pray. God will be sure Tommy's safe, Samantha," said Elizabeth. "For now, let me get dressed and then we'll go to your house and tell the whole story."

Samantha said nothing, but just went over to the window seat and sat down. She still cried, looking outside, staring at the sun, barely rising over the horizon.

Once Elizabeth was dressed, she and Samantha left the house and went down to the Parkers. The early morning air was chilly as they rushed along, and the first rays of sunlight began to fill the sky. People in the houses on Reville Street were just beginning to wake up. It was morning in Atlanta.

Samantha and Elizabeth hurried up the porch steps at the Parker's house. They burst inside and immediately went to the kitchen where everybody was. Mrs. Parker and Karen had been crying, Mr. Parker sat reading and rereading Tommy's letter, and little Amelia, who sat beside her mother, seemed to feel, too, the sorrow that hung low in the midst of the Parker house.

"I'm back!" Samantha said. "And Elizabeth knows what happened!"

From oldest to youngest, around the table, heads shot up.

Elizabeth began to tell the story. "Last night at the dance, Tommy said he was going to join the Army. He told me that he would leave last night, then head for France by ship. Said he wanted to be a hero. Told me not to say anything until I was sure he was gone."

"That doesn't sound like anything our Tommy would do!" Mrs. Parker exclaimed.

"Well, he did it," replied Elizabeth. "He wants to protect the country, and I'm sure we all would do the same if we had a chance."

Nobody said anything. The house was silent.

Finally, Karen spoke up and asked, "Will Tommy be okay? He won't get hurt, will he?"

Mrs. Parker hung her head low, but said nothing. Mr. Parker answered Karen's question. "We don't really know. The only thing we can do is pray."

"Yes, pa," Karen whispered.

Elizabeth looked around and said, "Would you like for me to sew a blue star to put in the window?"

"You can if you wish," Mr. Parker answered.

Elizabeth turned to Samantha and said, "I guess I should have told last night. It's all my fault that Tommy ran away."

"No, 'Liza," Samantha replied. "It's not your fault. Like you said, he told you he wanted to be a hero. And so he is."

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The day passed by slowly, and an eerie stillness filled the residence of the Parkers. Elizabeth had sewn the blue star and had hung it in the window by a piece of ribbon. The blue star was both a sad and patriotic sight. Sad because it meant possibly death, and patriotic because it meant someone lived there who was brave enough to go protect the country they loved.

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Somewhere around noon, Elizabeth asked Samantha if she would like to go visit the immigrant family. Samantha reluctantly agreed, and they left the house.

When Samantha and Elizabeth reached the slums, they asked a lady standing by a tree for directions on how to get to the immigrant family's house.

"Where might we find the house of a German immigrant family who just recently arrived here?" Elizabeth asked politely.

"Right down there," the lady answered, pointing down Connecticut Drive. "That white house next to the green one."

"Thank you," Elizabeth replied. She and Samantha headed down the street.

When Samantha and Elizabeth reached the house that the lady had directed them to, both were surprised. The house was extremely small, only one story, with a small cement porch that was no bigger than the inside of a closet. The paint was peeling off the house and the front window was cracked, and rusty iron beams formed the porch railings. The house had seven windows all together, while a house Samantha and Elizabeth were accustomed to had fifteen or sixteen. This house was a quaint one to the girls, but they liked it.

Elizabeth knocked on the front door and waited until somebody came. A girl about their age came to the door and opened it. "Hello," she said.

"Hi," Elizabeth replied. "I'm Elizabeth Martin and this is my friend, Samantha Parker. We came to welcome you to Atlanta."

"Danke schön," the girl replied. "I do not speak good English. Ich bin Ingrid Goldschmidt. Kommen nicht." Samantha and Elizabeth followed Ingrid inside. The inside of the house was in better condition than the out. Little pink roses were painted onto the wallpaper, and the house had a faint feeling of home.

"Ich bin Ingrid. We moved here gestern, aus Deutschland. Ich habe drei sisters und ein brother. Mutter ist here, too."

"I hope you had a safe reise here," Elizabeth replied. She understood a little German, at least enough to understand what Ingrid was saying.

"Wir haben," said Ingrid. "Come und meet meine Familie." She led Samantha and Elizabeth into the dining room, where Ingrid's family was unpacking their boxes.

"Mutter, Schwestern, treffen Samantha und Elizabeth," Ingrid said.

Mrs. Goldschmidt and her other three daughters said hello.

Ingrid introduced her sisters, "Elizabeth, Samantha, dies ist Else, Gretchen, Magda, und Marlene. Mein bruder ist ein napping."

"We're very happy to meet you," said Elizabeth. She asked Ingrid, "Would you like to go to Kirche with me tomorrow?"

"Ja," answered Ingrid. "Danke schön."

"I guess Samantha and I should be getting on home now," Elizabeth replied. "I'll come by here tomorrow morning. Kirche starts at ten."

"Ja," Ingrid said. "Lebewhol."

"Lebewhol," Samantha and Elizabeth answered. They left the Goldschmidt's house and headed for home.

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"AND MARCH! HUT, TWO, THREE, FOUR, HUT, TWO, THREE, FOUR, ANDâ HALT!"

Thomas Phillip Parker marched with the army infantry at the base. He had been in the Army for over a month now, at the rank of Private, and was stationed in Nantes, France.

"DISMISSED!"

The infantry spread out among the Army base after marching. Tommy headed straight to the barracks and climbed onto his bed. He pulled out a scrap piece of paper and a pencil from under his pillow and began to write a letter to his family.

Dear family,

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I am doing fine, just so you know. France is a bigger country than I thought it was. I don't know a thing of what the French people are saying, although it's none of my business. How are things back home in the States? I already miss you all and Atlanta. The weather is awfully cold and dreary over here. That makes me jealous because I know you all are enjoying the warm weather and bright sunshine. Ma, Pa, I'm sorry I ran away like I did, but I want to protect America so that we all have a home. Folks like us soldiers will make sure those Central Powers won't hit close to home. Samantha, I miss the times when I would annoy you and Elizabeth. I had a wonderful time at the dance that night. When you see Elizabeth and Johnny, tell them I miss them, too. Amelia, Karen, I sure do hope you're doing well. I miss everything about home. I must close now. Sincerely,

Your son, friend, and brother, Tommy.

Tommy read the letter, made an envelope out of the paper, and took it to the base's post office. He watched as it slid down the metal shaft and into the mail bag. Then he heard a voice calling him.

"PARKER! REPORT TO THE OFFICE RIGHT AWAY!"

Tommy headed to where he was told.

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Samantha, Elizabeth, Chrystal, and Ingrid sat at the counter in the Italian restaurant. They tried to stay out of the hot temperatures and the bright sunshine.

"I like it here in Atlanta," Ingrid said as she took a sip of her soda. Samantha and Elizabeth had managed to teach her some English during the short while Ingrid had been in town.

"Yes," Samantha said.

"It feels so free und nobody ist telling you what to do and nobody ist angry at you!" said Ingrid.

Elizabeth shot Samantha a glance, and Samantha immediately knew what it meant. Should we tell her about 'them'?

Samantha sternly looked back, and that meant no.

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While the four girls sat at the counter and enjoyed their day, they didn't know they were secretly being watched. Henry Houston and two of Tommy's other friends, Michael Saunders and Edward Meyers, sat in a booth in the corner of the restaurant.

"Those two over there," Henry said, pointing to Samantha and Elizabeth, "the black-haired girl and the blonde-haired one, they're the ones I was telling you two about. They got the Colonel arrested, and now I say it's payback time."

Michael and Edward leaned closer in order to listen. "Whatcha gonna do?"

"I ain't gonna do nothin' right now; I got to think somethin' up. But not only am I gonna get rid of them two, I'm gonna get their 'friends', too," Henry answered. "There's one thing I know's gonna happen."

"What's that?"

"I'm taking up the Colonel's job.."

Chapter 2: Everything Is Going Wrong!

Things were peaceful in Atlanta all through the month of June. Tommy regularly wrote letters to home, Samantha, Elizabeth, Chrystal, and Ingrid got along well together, and the weather was perfect for the enjoyments of summertime.

Although things went well for the Martins, Parkers, Goldschmidts, and Chrystal's family in June, strange events started occurring in July.

It was mid-July, and Ingrid's birthday was coming up soon. She would be turning fourteen, one year younger than Samantha would be that following month.

Ingrid had been looking forward to her first birthday in America, wondering if it would be different than all those she had celebrated in Germany. She wondered how many girls would come, although she already knew five would be there: Samantha, Elizabeth, Chrystal, Karen and Amelia. Ingrid knew that she would have the best birthday ever, because of two reasons: she had wonderful friends and a new home.

Ingrid diligently swept the front porch of her house. The hot summer sun shone down brightly, heating the air and making it unusually hot out. Ingrid's mother and four sisters were in town, and Christian, Ingrid's baby brother was asleep inside the house. Ingrid hummed one of her favorite German hymns, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". She had learnt it when she was very young, but back in Germany, could only hum, whistle, or sing it in the privacy of her home or church, because the cruel German soldiers believed it was a crime to be a Christian.

When Ingrid was finished sweeping the porch, she shook the dust out of the rug and placed the rug back in front of the door. Then she washed the windows and knocked down the cobwebs than hung in the corners of the porch.

After Ingrid was through with her chores, she sat down on the porch for a break. She wiped the sweat from her forehead and shielded her eyes from the bright and shining sun.

There wasn't a cloud in the sky today, but flocks of birds flew in the air and landed in the cotton field behind the cluster of trees at the end of Connecticut Drive. Children ran back and forth and played games like marbles or hopscotch in the street. Dogs barked and cats meowed and at one point, Ingrid spotted a fat rat make its escape from a tomcat on the far side of the yard. It was a beautiful day in the city of Atlanta.

While Ingrid was enjoying the sights of her neighborhood, she felt a cold whoosh of air and a chill run down her spine. She looked to see what it was. A figure stood in the bushes with a scary looking mask on and laughed quite evil-like. And as quickly as it appeared, it disappeared. Ingrid half screamed at the sight of the figure. Was it real? Was it really there? She just didn't know. Suddenly, Ingrid heard a bump inside the house and heard Christian crying. She didn't feel safe at home that moment, wondering if someone had been watching her. She quickly went inside to check on her baby brother.

Inside, a vase had fallen off the shelf and had broken. Ingrid cleaned up the mess and threw it away. Then she pulled out a piece of scrap paper and scribbled a note to her parents. She said that she was going to Samantha or Elizabeth's house and that if they need to reach her, that's where she'd be. Ingrid left the note posted on Christian's crib, picked up her brother, left the house, and hurried to Revelle Street.

Ingrid knew that it was dangerous for her to be going to a neighborhood such as that of Samantha and Elizabeth. With Ingrid being an immigrant, there was always the possibility of being the target of a potential trouble-causer.

She hurried down Revelle Street and first went to Elizabeth's house. There, she learnt from Mrs. Martin that Elizabeth was at Samantha's house.

"Tell us exactly what you saw!"

Ingrid sat with Samantha and Elizabeth in the living room of the Parker's house.

"Well," Ingrid began. "After sweeping the porch, I sat down on the steps for a break. Then out of the blue I felt all cold and a chill went down my spine. Then I looked, and there it was: a scary looking 'thing' wearing a mask, laughing at me. Then it disappeared!"

Neither Samantha nor Elizabeth knew what to say. There was a long silence that filled the room, unbroken by the sound of the birds chirping outside.

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Elizabeth, always the logical one, spoke up and said, "You probably just imagined it. The heat could have been messing with you or something. Ghosts aren't real."

Ingrid hesitated and replied, "I hope you're right, Elizabeth, but I know I saw something."

"Let's just forget all this stuff about ghosts and talk about something else," Samantha stated. "Let's talk about what's to come. Ingrid, have you started planning your birthday party yet?"

"Not yet," Ingrid answered. "I know it would be nice to have all the balloons and decorations and a new dress, but my family needs the money that we would have to use to buy all those things." She hung her head low and added in a sad tone, "We're just too poor to do so."

Samantha and Elizabeth exchanged glances and then Samantha said to Ingrid, "Elizabeth and I will supply the decorations. Why, we'll even sew you a new dress!"

Ingrid looked up quickly and said, "Really! You'd do that for me?"

"Of course we would!" Samantha exclaimed. "After all, we are your friends, and what are friends for? You'll have the best birthday party ever, Ingrid Goldschmidt! We'll be sure of that!"

The days of July passed by quickly, and the day before Ingrid's birthday had arrived. Her birthday was on the eighteenth of the month, which would be on a Wednesday.

Samantha, Elizabeth and Chrystal had met at Ingrid's house that morning. They had to do some cleaning and make preparations for the party. It would be a hard day's work, but the next afternoon, it would pay off.

The small group of four began their work about ten o'clock. Elizabeth had written down all the things to do on a notepad: clean house, tend to flower bushes, plan party. There might not have been much written on the list, but there were going to be plenty of things to do.

Elizabeth called off the orders after they ate a hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs.

"Samantha, you go and trim back the rose bushes and water them well. Chrystal, you tidy up the inside of the house and do the small things such as dusting and mopping. Ingrid, you polish the porch railings and any other metal or glass thing that looks as if it needs it. And as for me, I'll go and see if I can borrow a lawn mower from a neighbor and see if I can't get this grass trimmed back some. Now let's get to work!"

Everybody scurried to get the supplies that they'd need and began to diligently do their jobs. It was fun, but it was also tiresome.

Morning went by well, that was, until Samantha found something quite frightening over by the rose bushes.

She was trimming the branches, when suddenly, to her surprise, she spotted an old piece of rubber come tumbling out of the thick bushes. Samantha nudged at the rubber with her shears and the cluster slowly unraveled. She jumped back at the sight of a frightening mask, with its eerie face staring back at her. "Ingrid!" she called.

Ingrid, who was polishing the porch railings, dropped the rag she was using and ran over to the rose bushes.

"What is it, Samantha?"

Samantha picked up the mask with the shears and held it up for Ingrid to see. "Was this what you saw that day?"

Ingrid, completely shocked, stuttered in reply, "Yes! Where did you find that?"

"It just fell out of the bushes," answered Samantha.

By now, Chrystal and Elizabeth had gathered at the bushes.

"Ingrid," Samantha said. "I think someone might be trying to stalk you."

"Really?" Ingrid asked nervously.

"I'm afraid so."

No one said anything, but soon, Ingrid asked, "Will we still be able to have my party here tomorrow?"

This time, Elizabeth answered. "Yes. We're going to have your birthday party here tomorrow, just as we promised. Nothing will stop us."

"Okay," Ingrid replied, quite unsure.

The mask had brought a scary feeling to the Goldschmidt house. Was someone trying to stalk Ingrid? Was anything bad going to happen? Samantha, Elizabeth, Chrystal, and Ingrid had hope things would turn out for the best, no matter what.

The next morning arrived quickly. Plans had already been made for Ingrid's party. There was to be a tea party that afternoon, and a sleepover that night.

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Ingrid awoke to the sound of birds chirping and food cooking in the kitchen. She laid in bed for a few extra minutes thinking about her birthday party. Then the thought crossed her mind that she had went to bed when she was thirteen, and was fourteen when she woke. "Seltsam," she whispered.

Ingrid climbed out of bed and changed into the birthday dress that Samantha and Elizabeth had made for her. She pulled her hair back, just as she always did, then went into the kitchen.

"Guten Morgen," she said to her mother.

"Guten Morgen und Alles Gute Zum Geburtstag," Mrs. Goldschmidt replied.

Ingrid sat down at the kitchen table and patiently waited for her breakfast. She didn't talk much while she was eating, and her mother seemed to notice.

"Sie schrecklich ruhig an diesem Morgen. Stimmt etwas nitch?" asked Mrs. Goldschmidt.

"Nein, Mutter. Alles ist in Ordnung," Ingrid answered.

After breakfast, Ingrid went outside and sat on the front steps. She looked around to be sure that no one was watching her, then she focused on the beautiful sun rising over the horizon. Ingrid loved to watch the sun rise in the mornings, then to watch it set in the west in the evening.

Back in Germany, the Goldschmidts' house sat on a mountain, close to the sea. From the mountaintop, Ingrid could see the small village below, and the sea, not far from the village. Ingrid loved her old home, but she and her family had to leave and come to America when the German soldiers invaded the town. Frieden, the place where the Goldschmidts used to live, was mostly against the Central Powers and the German rule of that time. So, when the village was invaded, Frieden had to subdue to the German rule.

The day went by slowly for Ingrid. She looked forward to the party and sleepover, and meeting all her friends. She tried not to loose faith that nothing bad would happen, after finding the mask. Everything will be fine.

She repeated those words over and over in her mind again.

Samantha, Elizabeth, Karen, Amelia, Chrystal, and a girl that they knew from school, Jenny, were the only ones at Ingrid's party other than three of Ingrid's sisters. It was an all girl party: no boys allowed. Everything started out fine during the tea party, but things took a turn for the worst, very unexpectedly.

All the girls sat around a table in the front yard, drinking their tea and talking. The neighborhood was peaceful and quiet. Birds chirped and people strolled past in the hot summer heat. But suddenly, a rattling noise sounded from the wooded area at the end of the street across from the Goldschmidts' house.

The noise caught Karen's attention, and she asked, "What's that?"

"Probably just a squirrel moving," Samantha answered.

And then, out of the blue, a fox came running out of the woods. It was foaming at the mouth, which meant it had rabies, and the fox was positioned to strike at the girls at the tea party. Then the creature charged, sending the girls running from the table and scrambling to get inside the house.

Samantha and Elizabeth grabbed two of Ingrid's sisters and took them inside the house. They quickly informed Mrs. Goldschmidt of what was going on, then raced back outside to rescue the others.

Ingrid took Karen and Amelia inside. As Ingrid was going back out, Else and Gretchen, her two oldest sisters, were coming in. Chrystal bounded up onto the front porch. She looked around to see if everyone was safe. But just as she was about to race inside herself, she heard a terrified scream come from the other side of the porch.

She looked down, and saw little Magda, cornered by the fox, who was about to lunge at her at any given moment. Chrystal did what she knew to do. She jumped down from the porch and swung Magda up to her sister, who was watching. Chrystal was in danger now. She tried kicking at the fox. The fox snapped at her.

Chrystal kicked once more, but the fox dug its sharp fangs into her foot, and she screamed. And out of nowhere, Samantha appeared from the side yard with a big stick in her hand. She swung back, aiming for the vicious animal's head, and hit with all her might. The fox fell down, weakened by the strong blow, and slowly and painfully died. Chrystal freed her foot from the dead fox's mouth, and cried out in despair, "I've been bit!"

Elizabeth, Jenny, Karen, and Else ran outside. "What happened?"

"The fox bit me!" Chrystal repeated.

Samantha and Elizabeth immediately went to help Chrystal up the porch steps. They helped her inside and sat down on the couch.

"I'll send Karen and Else to go get the doctor!" Samantha exclaimed. She raced back outside to send the two girls to town.

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"Oh, my foot hurts!" exclaimed Chrystal, as she stretched out her leg and rested her foot on the foot stool.

"The doctor will be here soon," Elizabeth assured her friend.

Samantha rushed back inside. "They're on their way to get the doctor," she said, trying to catch her breath. She turned to Elizabeth. "If that fox was infested with rabies, what do we do?"

"I don't know, Sammy," Elizabeth answered. "But we need to know how to treat this bite."

"Ma has a medicine book at home!" Samantha said. "Should I go and get it?"

"If it'll help us, sure!" replied Elizabeth.

"Okay," answered Samantha. "I'll take Amelia home with me. I don't suppose she needs to be here right now."

Ingrid came back inside crying helplessly. She went over to the couch and said to Elizabeth, "Everything is going wrong! I just knew something terrible was going to happen! I just knew it!"

Elizabeth tried to comfort Ingrid. "That fox could have come at any time. My mother told me once when I was little that we never know what is going to happen in the future."

"I know that, Elizabeth, but why did it have to be now?" Ingrid asked.

"We'll never know, I suppose," answered Elizabeth. "I guess we aren't supposed to know. But we'll be fine. I promise."

Ingrid said nothing. She turned and quickly walked away.

Samantha and Amelia ran to their house as fast as they could. When they reached their house, they rushed inside, but stopped abruptly once they saw their parents sitting at the kitchen table, Mr. Parker holding a brown envelope, and Mrs. Parker crying.

Samantha let go of Amelia's hand and stepped forwards. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"We got a telegram from the Army saying that your brother was... he was wounded while going into battle," Mr. Parker answered.

Samantha gasped. "Was it serious?"

"He may have to get his left arm amputated," said Mr. Parker.

Mrs. Parker seemed to cry a little bit harder, and Amelia went to her side.

Samantha stood in complete shock. She didn't know what to say. But then, she slowly began to tell what had happened at Ingrid's birthday party. "I've got some bad news, too," she said.

"What?" Mr. Parker asked.

"A rabietic fox invaded Ingrid's birthday party, and it bit Chrystal. I came to get the medical book," answered Samantha.

"You go ahead and get it," Mr. Parker said in a worried tone. "Tell Chrystal that we'll be praying for her."

"I will." Samantha raced upstairs to get the medical book, then hurried back to the Goldschmidts.

When Samantha reached the Goldschmidt residence, the doctor was already there. He was examining the fox bite. Samantha rushed inside and said, "I've got the medical book."

"Good," Elizabeth said. She took the book from Samantha and searched the index until she found RABIES TREATMENT. She flipped to the right page and began to read.

"Rabies are treated by cleaning the wound with water and wiping the wound with a medicinal cloth. A shot will need to be given in order to prevent the disease from spreading. Rabies is a very dangerous disease, and needs to be treated immediately."

The doctor got a cup of water and poured it over Chrystal's wound. Then he pulled out a medicinal cloth and wiped the wound clean. The doctor then said that Chrystal would need to go to the hospital for the shot.

After the doctor had left, Samantha announced the news of Tommy. "Pa said he was wounded going into battle, and that he might have to get his arm amputated."

"That's terrible!" Elizabeth exclaimed.

"It sure is!" added Chrystal.

"Well, I guess Karen and I had better be getting home," Samantha said.

"All right," Elizabeth said. "Tell your parents I'll be praying for them. Tommy, too."

"Okay," said Samantha. She called Karen, and they headed for home.

Mrs. Goldschmidt took Chrystal around to her house. Elizabeth stayed at the Goldschmidts' house, and she and Jenny would stay for the sleepover.

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Nighttime fell. Everyone was pretty shaken after the rabietic fox attacked. Elizabeth, Ingrid, and Jenny sat in the Goldschmidts' living room. They discussed the events of the day, and wondered how the fox got there. Ingrid didn't want to talk about the fox, so she quickly changed the subject.

"What do you think you'll do when this war ends?" she asked.

Jenny was the first to answer. "I'll celebrate and go around and visit all the veterans that came home. Then I'll focus on the future, like getting married and moving away."

"Oh, you're too young to be thinking about that stuff. And so are we," Elizabeth said. "You know the legal age to get married in America is eighteen, and that's three years away for us, four for Ingrid!"

"Just day-dreamin'," Jenny said. She asked Elizabeth, "What are you planning on doing when the war's ended?"

"I'm not sure. How about you, Ingrid?" Elizabeth asked.

"Someday, when I'm grown and married, and got a family of my own, I'm going back to Frieden, and move back into my old house. That's only if it's still there," answered Ingrid.

"One day," Elizabeth said. "This terrible war will be over. And I hope it comes soon."

BOOM!

A shot rang out and the front window shattered. The three girls ducked and remained still.

"What was that?" Ingrid asked, shakily.

"Someone just shot at us through the front window!" Jenny said.

"Go in to the kitchen!" Elizabeth said. "Quick!"

Shots continued to sound and bullets whizzed past as Elizabeth, Jenny, and Ingrid crawled towards the kitchen. Just as they went through the swinging door that separated the kitchen and living room, a bullet shattered the vase that sat on the table next to the door. Once the three girls were inside the kitchen, they hid under the table and prayed for their lives. At any given moment, a bullet could come and kill one of the girls faster than light could travel.

The Goldschmidt family hurried into the kitchen. Ingrid's mother held little baby Christian in her arms, and Magda and Marlene clung to their mother's dress.

"Was ist passiert?" Else asked.

"Ich habe Angst!" Gretchen exclaimed.

Ingrid began to yell something to her family in German. "Wir haben hier jetzt gehen! Wir müssen fliehen! Zum anderen Haus! Beeilung!" She grabbed a heavy cooking pan and broke the kitchen window. One by one, everybody left the house, and ran towards town.

As they ran, Elizabeth said, "Let's go to my house! We'll be safe there! We can hide in the attic!"

"Ja!" Ingrid said. She told her mother and sisters, "Wir sind auf die Martin-Haus gehen. Sichere there!"

Elizabeth led the way to her house. She dashed through the streets of the Atlanta suburbs as fast as her legs would carry her, and the others had somewhat of a hard time keeping up with her.

Finally, they reached the house, and they barged inside without warning.

Mr. Martin stopped them as they came flying through the front door. "Hold it! Stop right there! What in the world is going on?"

"Someone was shooting at us at the Goldschmidt place!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "There's no telling if they might be after us now! We need to hide in the attic."

"Go, then! Hurry!" Mr. Martin said. He followed the group up the stairs and to the attic. Mrs. Martin and Johnny followed them. It wasn't safe anymore. Someone was causing dangerous trouble, and it needed to be stopped.

Once everyone was up in the attic, they locked the door and huddled in the corner. Magda, Marlene, and Christian had been crying ever since the beginning of the uprising, for the gunshots had startled them.

Elizabeth, Jenny, Ingrid, and Else sat in the corner of the attic. Ingrid was about to cry, but she was too angry to do so. "I want to go home! I want to go back to Germany where it's safe! Me and my family aren't welcome here! America hates us Germans!"

Elizabeth felt sick on her stomach. She couldn't stand to hear her friend say such things. She knew that America was safe, and that the country didn't hate Germans, but she didn't know what to say. She looked around the dark attic, and wanted to cry herself. Elizabeth said to herself through clenched teeth, "This just

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can't be coincidences. I'm going to get to the bottom of it. I'll be sure of that!"

Chapter 3: The Eve Of Danger

Morning arose, and the Martins and the Goldschmidts were still in the attic. Because of the possible and likely danger, they had to stay in hiding, confined in the damp darkness of the attic. When the first light of morning shone over the horizon, it barely shone through the small window at the end of the long attic. The window was dirty, and it would be safer if it stayed that way, for anyone could spy on them with binoculars if the window was clear.

Elizabeth was the first to wake that morning. She struck a match on the floor and lit a half melted candle. She shielded the flame with her hand and looked around. Mr. and Mrs. Martin had found some old quilts and hand-sewn pillows and had formed somewhat of a bed with the supplies. Mrs. Goldschmidt had done the same. Ingrid laid huddled tightly in a corner with her four sisters, and her baby brother was laid in an old box as a crib. Jenny laid flat on the floor, and was quite a rough sleeper. Johnny had went to sleep on the cold, hard floor; he would sleep any way he could, and Elizabeth, she did the same.

Elizabeth waited for everyone else to wake, and by seven o'clock, the attic was filled with low whispers and nervous voices. The younger children were hungry, and baby Christian was crying, Mrs. Goldschmidt trying calm her child. Everybody was in need of a change of clothes and some had to go use the restroom, but that last problem could be solved with an old bucket or pan.

Finally, Mrs. Martin pulled Elizabeth to the side and said to her, "I need you to go into town and get us something to eat. I know we have nothing to eat in the kitchen, so can you please just get a three loaves of bread, a gallon of milk, and a small bucket of water?"

"Yes, ma," Elizabeth replied. "But wouldn't it be too dangerous?"

Mrs. Martin hesitated, then said, "Go down quietly to your room and fix your hair a different way. Then put on a tiny bit of makeup in my room and that should be a good enough disguise."

"Yes, ma." Elizabeth tiptoed out of the attic, quiet as a mouse. She did as her mother had directed, and quietly opened her bedroom door. The slightest sound could set the dog to barking, and if the dog barked, people passing by could hear, and know someone was there. And if the shooter at the Goldschmidts' house just so happened to be passing by, he might possibly break in and do something terrible.

Elizabeth stood at the mirror, comb in hand, and thought, Wonder who that could've been shooting at us last night. They got no right to go around shooting and killing folks, to they've got to be stopped immediately! What could I do to stop them?

She thought about going around to the Goldschmidt residence to look for evidence, but quickly discarded the idea for the fear of losing her life.

Elizabeth began to comb her long blonde hair. Once she positioned it the way she thought was best, she took a hairpin out of the drawer and used it to hold the hair in place. When she was through, her hair was a braided coil, pinned to the back of her head.

Next, Elizabeth went to her parents' bedroom to put on a bit of makeup. She had never done so in her life, and couldn't help but wonder what it would look like. She put on a light coating of lipstick and a little blush, and a tiny shade of eye-shadow. Elizabeth feared that it would look ridiculous, but when she lifted her head and looked into the mirror, she noticed that she slightly favored Lillian Gish.

Elizabeth then took a little bit of money, no more than fifty cents, for the total price of the food she would buy would cost less than forty. She slid the lone coin into her purse then snuck out of the house. She looked around carefully as she made her way towards the front door. If shooter followed the Goldschmidts, Elizabeth, and Jenny to the Martins', he could have somehow gotten inside. But that's not likely, Elizabeth thought.

She opened the front door. It squeaked slightly because the door hinges were a little rusty. Elizabeth peeked outside and surveyed the homes and yards of the neighboring area. After seeing no sign of danger, she slipped outside and dashed towards town in a hurry, so fast that no one would be able to catch up with her, unless they had a better strategy to gain.

Elizabeth slowed her pace as she entered town. She calmly walked down to the grocery store with a friendly smile on her face, but on the inside, nervousness filled her mind as she passed the people around her. Any one of them could be the shooter. Any person that she passed could suddenly grab her and hurt her in an instant. It

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was dangerous for Elizabeth to do this. Trouble was everywhere.

Elizabeth bought the things at the grocery store that her mother had told her to get: three loaves of bread and a gallon of milk. She took them to the cashier and paid for them. The total cost was thirty-five cents, and she received fifteen cents back in change. Elizabeth took the grocery bags and headed for home.

When Elizabeth entered the small suburb in which she lived, she didn't know that she was being followed. She was being followed by the shooter, someone she knew and had met, but would never expect to be such a horrible person.

When she reached her house, Elizabeth set the grocery bags on the well platform. She went around back to the garden shed and got a five-gallon bucket. She took the bucket back around to the well and began to fill it with water. Elizabeth filled the bucket about halfway, and when she picked up the bags and the bucket, she heard a voice behind her say, "Elizabeth! What in the world are you doing?"

Elizabeth was startled at the sound of the voice, but she immediately knew who it was. "Samantha!" she said. "Go back home! It's not safe here!"

"Why, what do you mean it's not safe...."

"Go home!" Elizabeth exclaimed, trying to keep her voice low. "I can't tell you now! Just trust me, my family and the Goldschmidts, we're in trouble. And I don't want you to be, either. So, just go on and go home and I'll let you know when it's safe to come back."

"Okay," Samantha said slowly. "But I am worried about you, Elizabeth. You and Ingrid, try to stay out of trouble. Please. I don't know what I'd do without you. It's bad enough that Tommy's gone away. Can't loose you, too."

"All right," Elizabeth whispered sadly. She watched as her friend walked away and back towards her own house. Elizabeth once more picked up the bucket and bags and took them inside.

"Perfect. I know where they're hiding at now!" Henry Houston rose from his hiding position behind the bushes. "I got to run tell the boys!" He laughed and broke out into a fast run towards town. Yes, Henry was the one causing all the trouble, and he was about to cause more, and those hiding in the Martins' attic were in danger.

"All right, y'all, we gonna have us some fun tomorrow night!"

Henry Houston and a large group of six to seven friends sat in an alleyway between two buildings on Main Street.

"What're we gonna do?"

"Remember that technique at the Mount that night 'while back?" Henry asked.

"Yeah," one answered.

"We gonna use it at some traitors' hideout," answered Henry.

A loud cheer went up from the small group. "Who're the traitors?" one person named Todd Price asked.

"Girl named 'Lizabeth Martin. Her and her fam'ly's hidin' some immigrant fam'ly up in their attic. Went 'round to that immigrant fam'ly's home and shot the place up. Fam'ly come runnin' outta there like scared chick'ns.

Then they went 'round to that Martin girl's house and they's all hidin' up in that attic," Henry answered.

"Good," Todd replied. "It'll be easy to get 'em thataways."

A voice rose up from the group. It was Billy Taylor. "Shouldn't we go and ask the Colonel about that first?"

"I'll do that," Henry replied. "It's all a part of my master plan." He looked around at the group. "There's gonna be some fireworks in the Rosedale suburb. A real exciting show..."

The Martins and the Goldschmidts sat in the attic feasting on bread, water, and milk. The meal wasn't much, but at least it would hold them over for a while.

After eating, Else and Gretchen found a set of jacks and a rubber ball. They sat the game pieces up and played jacks while Magda watched, Marlene took a nap, and Elizabeth, Jenny, and Ingrid talked.

"It's been almost a whole day since we came up here," Jenny said. "I'll bet my parents are worried about me. I told them I would be back this morning, and they're probably out looking for me right now."

"Sure do wish there was a way we could tell them where you are," Ingrid said. She stood up and began to pace around. "But I guess it's just impossible."

"No. It's not impossible," Elizabeth replied. She said to Jenny, "We'll think of a way to tell your parents." She looked around, and then began to think it was hopeless, too. Then, suddenly, she exclaimed, "I've got it! Hold

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on a second!" She jumped up and hurried over to where Johnny was reading an old book.

"Johnny!" she said.

"What, sis?" Johnny asked.

"Can I get you to do something for Jenny. I mean, she needs to let her parents know where she is and I figured maybe you could do the job," Elizabeth answered, fingers crossed behind her back.

"Oh, no, 'Liza!" exclaimed Johnny. "I'm not getting caught up in all your problems!"

"Please?" Elizabeth asked. "I'll do all your chores, plus mine for the whole month!"

"Not good enough," Johnny snapped.

"Then for half the year, and I'll do whatever you want, too," begged Elizabeth.

Johnny seemed to think for a moment, then slowly said, "Okay, sis. What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to run down to Samantha's and ask to use their phone. Call Jenny's parents and tell them she's here with us, and she can't come home until tomorrow. Tell them we're having another sleepover," answered Elizabeth.

"All right. Ain't we going to tell Ma and Pa our plan?" Johnny asked.

"Yes," said Elizabeth. "You weren't there last night when that person started shooting, so if the shooter saw you, he wouldn't recognize you. You're the only one who could go, that is, except for ma and pa, but they've got to stay here and keep an eye on things."

"All right," Johnny said as he went to inform his parents of the Elizabeth's plan. "But don't forget our little deal."

"Okay. I won't," Elizabeth said.

Henry Houston sat in the jail talking to the evil Methodist pastor. He was telling him of his plan for the following night, known only to his friends and to himself.

"I was thinking about using that idea of your, you know, the fiery cross," Henry said in a low tone.

"That'll be fine," replied the evil pastor.

"Good, then," said Henry.

"Now tell me, just where are you planning on doing this at?"

"Revelle Street. The Martin house. Girl there, 'Lizabeth, her and her fam'ly's hidin' some immigrants up there in the attic. I'm gonna teach 'em a lesson."

"Go right ahead."

"All right. I'd best be going to get things ready. Non silba sed anthar."

The evil pastor didn't reply.

Nighttime fell, and things were quiet in the attic. Baby Christian and Marlene had gone to sleep. Elizabeth's plan to inform Jenny's parents of where their daughter was worked. Johnny made it back safely, and no trouble makers had followed him.

Elizabeth sat looking at an old photo album. She was tired and wanted to go to sleep, but whenever she dozed off, she had a nightmare.

Elizabeth turned a page in the album. These were pictures of her parents' wedding and a family reunion. She didn't know most of the people in the family reunion pictures, but she recognized her parents, grandparents, and some aunts, uncles, and cousins. Soon, Elizabeth got tired of looking at the old memories, so she laid down to try once more to get some sleep. This time, she drifted off to slumberland and dreamed of Atlanta the way it was before all the trouble and danger came to town.

The next morning arrived quickly, and the birds were chirping peacefully. The sun shone through the dusty attic window brightly, and it seemed that today would be a perfect summer day.

Elizabeth awoke early. She was still tired from the night before, but she stood up as soon as she yawned, and went to get some bread and water.

Elizabeth noticed that the water was getting low, and that the supply of bread would last a couple more days. She took two pieces of bread and a dipper filled with water and sat back down in her corner. She was getting tired of the same meal, and was longing for a mini cake and some tea. Elizabeth finished her bread and drank her water, then waited for her mother to wake. She was going to see if she wanted her to go get some fresh water. Finally, the moment came.

"Ma," she asked.

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"Yes, Elizabeth?" said Mrs. Martin.

Elizabeth answered, "Ma, the water in the bucket is getting awfully low, and I was wondering if I needed to go get some more."

"Let me see how low it is, first," replied Mrs. Martin. She got up and went over to the bucket. The water was about four inches deep, barely enough for two more dipper-fulls. "Yes," Mrs. Martin said, "it wouldn't hurt to go get a little more." She handed her daughter the bucket. "Be sure you dump this water out before you get fresh water. And be careful."

"Yes, ma," said Elizabeth. She left the attic.

"Ready to have some fun tonight?"

Henry Houston and his friends were once again in the alleyway, discussing plans for their 'show' that night.

"We sure are!"

"Okay, then," Henry replied. "I got the gas and the other supplies stashed in a secret spot, near where we're meetin' tonight. We'll be meetin' at the Martin place at ten o'clock sharp, right there in the front yard."

"Sounds good to me!"

"Yeah! We'll have them traitors screamin' terrified!"

"Keep it down," Henry said. "Can't chance nobody hearin' us." He looked around quickly, to be sure nobody was near. "Just remember, we ain't leavin' that place 'till they learn not to mess with the Klan."

At about nine thirty that night, Henry and his friends met where the supplies for the meeting were. Henry had put them in the Goldschmidts' deserted house.

"Now, Billy, Todd, Nathan, you three carry the cross. Dan, you carry the gas and the torches. I've got the matches, the rope, and the stakes. Christopher, Kenneth, and Ryan, you follow behind," Henry ordered. He pulled his Klansman hood down over his head and said, "Ready to go have some fun?"

"Ready!" was the others' reply.

Henry Houston laughed evilly. He was about to put an unstoppable chain of events in motion. Danger was coming to Revelle Street.

Chapter 4: Terror In The Night

Our chapter revolves around three views of our story. The view from the attic, Samantha's view, and the Reville Street residents' view, then finally, everyone's view.

THE ATTIC VIEW

"Tell us another!"

Else, Gretchen, and Magda sat in the attic listening to Elizabeth and Jenny tell stories. Ingrid sat off to the side, watching and listening, but thinking about the horrible events of the past three days.

"Oh, all right," Elizabeth said, smiling. "Let me think of one." Mentally, she scanned the list of fairy tales she knew. She couldn't think of any, so she told the others, "I'm sorry, but I don't know anymore."

Ingrid stood up. "I'll tell one," she said. "One I learnt when I was young back in Deutschland. It's called 'The Gnome'." She sat down in front of her sisters and began to tell the story.

"There was once upon a time a rich king who had three daughters, who daily went to walk in the palace gardenâ!"

Ingrid stopped abruptly at the sound of yelling in the front yard. "What is that?"

"I don't hear anything," Elizabeth said. She motioned for everyone in the attic to be quiet. The yelling grew louder. "I hear something now," she said. She cocked her head to listen. "It sounds like someone fighting." Johnny spoke up. "And it's in our yard," he said.

"Ed, you'd better go and see what it is," Mrs. Martin said in a worried tone.

"All right, Marie," Mr. Martin replied. He stood up and grabbed a metal crowbar that was propped up against an old lamp stand.

"I'll go with you," Elizabeth said.

"And so will I," Ingrid added.

The three quietly left the attic and slowly made their way downstairs. Stopping at the front window, Elizabeth, Ingrid, and Mr. Martin peeked through the curtain. What they saw was a familiar sight to Elizabeth. Ingrid was terrified. Mr. Martin had heard talk of it, but had never seen it or imagined it would happen to his family. The KKK was burning a cross on the front lawn.

Ingrid gazed at the sight with terror in her eyes. "What is that?"

Elizabeth gulped nervously and answered, "That's the Ku Klux Klan. We're the reason they're here. They know we're hiding in the attic."

"What are they doing?" asked Ingrid, quickly looking away.

Elizabeth hesitated. "I'll tell you later, if I can talk and you can listen."

"What do you mean 'if I can'?" Ingrid said. "Are they going to hurt us? Are we going toâ!" Her voice trailed off.

Elizabeth didn't answer.

Suddenly, Mr. Martin said, "Girls, you stay in here. I'm going to put an end to this once and for all." He tightened his grip on the crowbar and stepped to the door.

"Don't do anything hasty," Elizabeth said, looking over at her father with tears in her eyes.

Mr. Martin said nothing. He opened the door and stormed out.

SAMANTHA'S VIEW

Samantha sat in the parlor writing a letter to Tommy. Her brother was in a hospital in London, awaiting left arm's amputation. A bullet had torn through the muscle, and Tommy couldn't move his left arm. And if he lost his arm, he would be discharged from the Army.

Dear Tommy,

Things have been strange here lately. Something terrible happened at my newest friend's birthday party: a rabietic fox came and tore up the party. Chrystal's foot got bit, and I plan to go see how she's doing tomorrow. And Elizabeth has been acting quite strange recently. The day after Ingrid, my new friend, had her birthday party, and the fox attacked, I didn't see Elizabeth or Ingrid. But yesterday, I caught Elizabeth outside in her yard pumping water into a bucket. She said it wasn't safe for me to be there, and I do wonder why. I am worried about her. How are things in England? I have heard that the weather there is often cold and dreary.

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The sun has been shining here and the temperatures have been warm. I must close now.

Your sister, Samantha Parker

Samantha reread the letter, then sealed it in an envelope. As she began to write the address on the envelope's front, she heard Karen call her from upstairs.

"Samantha! Come up here, quick!"

Samantha dropped the letter on the table and hurried upstairs. She burst into her sister's room, which was right next to her own, and asked, "What's wrong, Karen?"

"Look out the window!" Karen exclaimed. She grabbed her sister's dress sleeve and pulled her to the window. She pointed in the direction of Elizabeth's house and asked, "See that big cross? Someone set it on fire!"

Samantha gasped. She, of course, knew what it was, but her younger sister didn't. She recognized the place of where the fiery symbol was, too: right in Elizabeth's yard.

"You stay here," Samantha said to Karen. She ran towards the bedroom door. "And don't look out your window, either." Samantha was gone like the wind. Down the steps she flew and said quickly to her parents, "Come quick! There's a cross burning in Elizabeth's yard! We've got to stop it!" She bounded out of the door and ran down the street.

"You come back here right now, Samantha Ellis Parker!" her mother called after her.

Mr. Parker jumped up and went to see what was going on. Mrs. Parker hurried to the door and looked out, and saw the terrible sight. She quickly shut the front door and locked it. She knew in her mind that her husband and daughter were both running into danger, possibly death.

THE REVELLE STREET RESIDENTS' VIEW

At this hour of night, some families would still be awake, others wouldn't. But with all the noise from the nighttime terrors, most of the people living on Revelle Street would be wide awake and looking to see what the trouble was.

One particular family, the Askews, weren't alerted of the ruckus until a neighbor kid, Jason Campbell, came running over with a bucket of water, yelling, "Fire! Fire!"

Mr. and Mrs. Askew, accompanied by their three young children, Ernest, Beverly, and Milton came racing out of the house.

"Where's the fire?" Mr. Askew asked.

"Down the street," Jason answered. He was no more than eleven years old.

Mr. and Mrs. Askew and their children turned their heads in the direction in which Jason pointed. They saw exactly what was on fire and who had done it. Mrs. Askew took the children inside their house, and was not ready to explain to them what they had just seen. Mr. Askew and Jason ran down the street, ready to stop the scene.

Mr. Askew didn't believe in the things that the Klansmen did. He fought for the rights of all people. Jason Campbell was the kind of boy who was always around when he was needed. On Saturdays, he stood on the street corner and gave out newspapers, and earned a quarter every day he did his job. During the summertime, he worked odd jobs like painting and mending pots and pans. At night, he liked to look up at the stars and read.

Another family on Revelle Street, the Reeds, did agree with the Klansmen. Mr. Reed was known to be one, and his wife let him. Their children, Cedric, Avery, Diana, and Anthony were raised learning to ignore the 'others' and to treat them unequally.

When the Reeds learnt of the cross burning, they merely laughed and went to watch the show. They didn't care if anyone's feelings were hurt; to them, the evils of inequality were right.

A crowd gathered fast around the terrifying scene in the Martins' front yard. The 'lesson' had torn the residents of the street apart, one side for the Klan, and the other side against.

Those on the against side included Mr. Martin, Mr. Askew, Jason Campbell, and some others that lived on Revelle Street: Thomas Tillery, Joe Hershner, and Albert Hicks.

Those for the Klan included the Reeds, Brian Mabine, Jonathan Hamilton, and Cole Reeves.

The two sides stood on opposite sides of the yard. It looked as if war was about to break out. Mr. Martin stood clutching the crowbar, and Jason Campbell was ready, at any given moment, to throw the water on the burning cross.

The Fight For Freedom

Things were not the same anymore.

THE ATTIC VIEW

Elizabeth and Ingrid still watched from the window. Ingrid was crying and didn't know what to do.

"Oh, me and my family should have never came to America!" Ingrid cried. "I would much rather have subdued to the German rule if I'd have known this was going to happen! I don't like America! It is not free! I want to go home. Home, I say. Back to Freiden. Home! I want to be where I belong! I do not belong here!" It saddened Elizabeth to hear her friend talk like that. Ingrid did belong in America. She didn't feel welcome, and she certainly wasn't according to the Klansmen outside the window. Elizabeth knew she had to do something, and fast at that. She said to Ingrid, "Now stop crying and go back upstairs to the attic. I'll straighten this out. You're just as

much an American as I am. You do belong here. Go on, and this will all be over soon."

"Yes," Ingrid whispered. She trudged back up to the attic and said nothing else.

Elizabeth went into the kitchen and got her mother's heavy frying pan. It was a hand-me-down from her great-great-grandmother, who had carried that very pan with her over the plains on the trail to California in 1848. She had used it to cook over the campfires when the wagon train stopped, and many good meals had been cooked in that pan.

But now, that frying pan was to be used as a weapon. Either it would hit the empty head of some foolish Klansman in her front yard, or it would be used as a dipper for water to rid the fire. This pan was to be a hero. Elizabeth stormed outside with the pan. She let the front door slam loudly, and the windows rattled furiously. She said nothing once she stepped out into the frightening night, but went to where the Klansmen were. She raised the pan and swung back, letting the pan fly forwards. The heavy frying pan hit one of the nighttime terrors, and the victim fell to the ground unconscious.

Elizabeth pulled the hood off the unconscious Klansman's head, and was surprised to see that it was Kenneth Rogers, who had a job at the ice cream parlor.

Elizabeth struggled to pull her victim out of the way so that she could hit another. But before she could lift the pan, someone grabbed her from behind.

"Elizabeth! Please stop it!"

Elizabeth turned around quickly, and to her surprise, saw Ingrid standing behind her. Mrs. Martin and Mrs. Goldschmidt stood in front of the house, watching the terrifying scene.

"No, Ingrid!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "The only way you'll be welcome in America is if we stick together and stop these criminals! Let me take care of them once and for all!"

Ingrid said nothing. She ran forwards to the fiery cross and pulled one of the stakes up out of the ground. The burning symbol leaned and sparks flew in the air. The crowd screamed and backed away, afraid of what might happen. Ingrid got ready to pull yet another stake from the ground, but before she could do so, a Klansman grabbed her and threw her from the area. Ingrid landed on her hands and knees, and her ankle was sprained. She jumped up, her ankle hurting terribly, and headed back towards the area from which she had been thrown. She had almost made it there, but fifteen year old Cedric Reed grabbed her and pulled her to the side.

"Mutter!" Ingrid screamed. She was terrified and wished that the whole thing would end.

Mrs. Goldschmidt didn't know what to do. She couldn't just stand there and watch her daughter be taken away. Her daughter and family were in deep trouble.

SAMANTHA'S VIEW

"Stop it! Let her go!"

Samantha raced forwards and tackled Cedric Reed. Cedric fell to the ground and Ingrid ran to where her mother was.

Samantha held Cedric tightly in a headlock until he was crying out to Samantha to let him go.

"You promise to leave her 'lone?" Samantha asked seriously, staring at Cedric.

"Yes! Promise!" Cedric exclaimed.

Samantha let Cedric go. She watched as he went back to where his family stood watching. She was strong for her age, and she could wrestle just as good as any boys could do. Some might would consider Samantha a tomboy, but she didn't care. It was her personality.

The Fight For Freedom

Suddenly, one of the remaining Klansmen yelled, "We will have no more eccentric immigrants invading our United States. America belongs to us, true Americans. This is not Germany, land of the Germans. This is not Russia, land of the Russians. This is not Africa, land of the Africans. This is America, land of the Americans, and the Ku Klux Klan will be sure that it stays that way. Now who will help us rid the great United States of these invaders?"

The Reed family, Brian Mabine, Jonathan Hamilton, and Cole Reeves stepped forwards.

"Good," replied the Klansman. "Now," he said. "Is there any others loyal to the cause out there in that great crowd?"

A quite large group of ten to twelve people stepped out of the crowd. Elizabeth and Samantha knew most of them; some of the people they thought knew better than to support discrimination. Even little children no more than eight years old stepped out. It was a sad sight.

Once the Klan and their supporters had rallied 'round the burning cross, the speech-making Klansman said to the supporters, "We're going to search that house for the rest of them invaders. We're gonna send them back to their foreign land where they belong. Who knows, might even kill 'em, depends on what the Colonel has to say 'bout it."

"Right," the others replied.

"And once we get inside that place," said the Klansman, "we're gonna tear that place to pieces. Dead or alive, them invaders are comin' outta there."

"Right," the group of supporters said. They sounded like a hypnotized choir, saying the same thing, at the same time, the same way.

Then, the group went forwards, pushing and shoving, just to get inside the house.

EVERYONE'S VIEW

Inside: Jenny, Else, Gretchen, Magda, and Marlene huddled in the corner of the attic behind boxes and other things. They could hear the Klansmen and their supporters moving around downstairs, but, of course, they didn't know that was who it was. At any moment, the Klansmen could come storming through the door, and that would be terrible. It was dangerous for them to be in the attic, but the girls had nowhere to go.

Suddenly, there was a loud 'BOOM!'. The attic door was kicked down, and four Klansmen entered in, and now they had come to search the attic for whom they called 'invaders'.

Jenny and the Goldschmidt girls peeked out from behind the boxes in front of them. They saw the evil looking 'ghosts' throwing things around, and soon, they would be spotted amongst the boxes and other things.

Then, one Klansman pulled a blanket off the top of a small box. He looked inside the box and said quite evilly to the others, "Well, well, well. Look what we have here: a little German baby. Whatever shall we do with it?"

"Oh no!" Else said from her hiding place. She watched in terror as her baby brother was found.

"I say we send it back to where it came from. Send it on back to Germany!" one Klansman said.

"I'll fix it," said the Klansman who found Christian, closing the box shut.

Those hiding behind the boxes began to cry. The Goldschmidt girls had lost a sibling.

Jenny, being the oldest, knew she and the younger girls couldn't stay where they were. If they did, they had a good chance of being caught, and possibly killed. And if the five girls ran past the Klansmen, chances were even more of getting caught. Jenny's decision was hasty, but she chose for them to try to escape. She whispered her plan to the girls.

Waiting for the right moment to escape was the scariest thing of all. The Klansmen got closer and closer to where the girls were hiding. But as soon as Jenny caught them not looking, she signaled to her German friends to run.

One by one, Jenny, Else, Gretchen, Magda, and Marlene dashed from behind the boxes.

"There's no looking back now!" Jenny said as the girls made their escape.

Suddenly, the Goldschmidt girls stopped abruptly at the sight of the box.

"Bruder!" Else and Gretchen cried out in German.

"I feel your sympathy," Jenny said quickly, "but we've got to get out of here. Now!" She picked up Marlene.

"Come on!" She trusted that the other girls were behind her, but Jenny didn't know she had made a mistake by not stopping to look.

The Fight For Freedom

Jenny, Else, Gretchen, and Marlene escaped the house safely, but five year old Magda stayed in the attic stayed where she was, too terrified to move, and longing to get her brother. She was too young to know what was going on, but she vowed in her mind that she would not leave the attic without her brother, no matter what.

"Bruder! Aufwachen! Wir haben zu entkommen! Beeilen!" Magda exclaimed. She tried shaking her brother, but nothing happened.

"Well, look at thisâ!"

A Klansman stood behind Magda, looking down at her.

Magda looked up and saw the evil thing, and screamed helplessly. There was nothing she could do, not even run. The Klansmen would easily catch up to her, then who knows what would happen.

"Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide," the Klansman said. "Looks like you'll just have to come with usâ!"

"Nein! Nein!" Magda screamed, backing away.

The Klansman, saying nothing, grabbed Magda and held her tightly.

"Let's get out of here," said the Klansman to the others. "We done got us at least one captive."

The Klansmen took Magda with them as they left the house. They went back outside and stood in the center of the yard. When Mrs. Goldschmidt saw that her daughter had been caught, she tried going after the Klansmen. But Mrs. Martin held her back.

"Give me my daughter!" Mrs. Goldschmidt yelled.

"You'll never see your child again," the Klansman who was holding Magda replied. He, the other Klansmen, and their supporters angrily walked away. Magda was forced to go with them.

Mrs. Goldschmidt stood crying. She could do nothing to save her daughter. Things would just have to work out for the best, and there wasn't a very good chance of that happening.

The Goldschmidt family had been torn apart.

One had gone to Heaven, one taken away, and five left helpless, in the long and lonely night.

Chapter 5: Samantha's Idea

The next morning went by slow and sorrowfully. Grieving the loss of her baby brother, Ingrid sat in the corner and cried. It was no longer necessary for the Martins and the remaining Goldschmidts to hide in the attic; the Klansmen knew where they were.

The funeral for baby Christian was going to be held that afternoon. Magda hadn't been found yet, and nobody but the evil Klansmen knew where she was.

A low cloud of sorrow hung over the Martin household.

"Why did it have to happen?"

Ingrid had never gone through such a terrible time as what she was going through now. She had never lost a family member as close as her baby brother. Ingrid remembered the death of her grandmother, but she was too young to really experience what it was like.

"We've all got to go when it's our time."

Elizabeth sat beside Ingrid. She tried to comfort her friend in her time of loss, but nothing seemed to cure the dreaded feel of death.

"Someday, Ingrid, you, your mother, and your sisters, you'll all be reunited with him in Heaven."

Samantha tried to give helpful advice, but it didn't seem to help.

"And where is Magda?" Ingrid asked. "She's too young to have to go through all of this! I mean, being kidnapped and taken and all. If I could've, I would have took her place!"

"We'll find your sister," Elizabeth said. "But I just don't know how. Maybe we can think of something."

Everyone was silent, and all that could be heard was the sound of crying through the house. The grandfather clock ticked lowly from its place in corner, and birds could be heard chirping outside.

Samantha looked around the room. She, Elizabeth, and Ingrid were the only ones in the living room downstairs. Mrs. Goldschmidt, Else, Gretchen, and Marlene were staying in a guest bedroom that was downstairs, and that's where they stayed for most of the day.

Although the sun shone brightly through the windows, and all outside was bright and cheerful, it was silent and gloomy inside.

Samantha began to think of different things, such as the time she and Elizabeth rescued Elizabeth's puppy from the evil former pastor of her church. She thought about the Christmas when she ran away and how Elizabeth, Tommy, and Chrystal had found her. And most of all, she thought about when the Goldschmidts had come to town.

Then, suddenly, Samantha got an idea.

We know who at least one of the Klansmen are, she told herself in her mind. Kenneth Rogers. We could go around to his place and see if we can bribe him into telling us who some of the others were last night. Then we could sneak inside the other Klansmen's houses and see if Magda is there.

"Elizabeth, Ingrid," Samantha said. "I've got an idea on how to get Magda back."

Ingrid perked up and Elizabeth turned to face Samantha.

"How?"

"Well," Samantha said. "We could go by Kenneth Rogers' house. Ingrid, Kenneth was one of the Klansmen who was here last night and we could bribe him into telling us who some of the other Klansmen were.

Ingrid, you'd have to stay here for your own safety, but Elizabeth and I could go."

"Anything to get my sister back!" Ingrid exclaimed.

"That sounds like a good plan," Elizabeth replied. "If you think Kenneth will give in."

"Oh, he will," Samantha said. "What we'll do is we'll get him out of the picture for a little while, and then we can see what we can find."

"What do you mean by 'get him out of the picture'?" Elizabeth asked.

"I was thinking we could write a fake letter to him saying that a relative in another state needs help on their farm or something like that," Samantha answered. "And then, when he's gone, we could sneak into his house and see if there's any evidence. After all, folks 'round Atlanta don't lock their doors much."

The Fight For Freedom

"You know, Sammy," Elizabeth said. "I think you might be getting somewhere with this. It just might work. Let's go write that letter. We need to find Magda before it's too late!"

Elizabeth, followed by Samantha and Ingrid, raced upstairs.

It didn't take the girls long to write the letter, and they mailed it as soon as they were done. Kenneth would probably get the letter the next day, and hopefully, he would fall for it and go where it said. But that could only be hoped for, since it was unknown to Samantha and Elizabeth if Kenneth had any relatives in Kentucky.

"Mail's come early todayâ!"

Kenneth Rogers stepped out onto his front porch to get the mail. He had just eaten breakfast and was about to go to work at the ice cream parlor.

Kenneth went through his mail quickly, but was puzzled when he saw a quaint envelope addressed to him, from someone named Lee Rogers from Louisville, Kentucky.

Wonder who that could beâ! he thought. Kenneth ripped open the envelope and began to read the letter that was enclosed.

Dear Kenneth,

I am your father's uncle, Lee Rogers Sr. I need some help on my farm way up here in Louisville. Enclosed is a train ticket, round trip to Louisville. I will pay you for the work you do on my farm, and I sure do hope you'll take me up on this offer. Please reply soon.

Your great-uncle,

Lee Rogers Sr.

I could use the money, Kenneth said in his mind. And it would be nice to get out of this big old city, Atlanta. I think I will go to Kentucky.

And so Kenneth Rogers posted a sign in his front window that said:

GONE TO LOUISVILLE, KY. BE BACK SOON.

He packed his bags and left Atlanta, but not before he stopped by the ice cream parlor, telling the owner that he had to go to Kentucky. The owner let him go, and told him that he'd better be back in a month. Kenneth agreed, then hopped on a train, non-stop to Louisville.

"Good."

Samantha and Elizabeth had made a special stop by Kenneth Rogers' home, checking to see if he'd gone to Kentucky. When they saw the makeshift sign that Kenneth had posted on his window, they were relieved.

"Time to slip inside?" Elizabeth asked Samantha.

"Yeah, I guess," Samantha answered.

She and Elizabeth stepped up onto the front porch. Of course, they hoped nobody saw them, because if someone did, that meant danger for both them and little Magda.

Samantha slowly opened the front door. It creaked slightly. She and Elizabeth went inside, not forgetting to shut the door behind them.

They looked around.

It was dark inside the house, and the temperature was quite warm. From upstairs to downstairs, everything was silent. The clock's ticking was the only thing to be heard, and the bright July summer sun shone brightly through the windows.

"Let's start looking," Samantha whispered.

It was going to be a complicated situation, looking for evidence that they didn't know they needed. Samantha was hoping to find a list of those other Klansmen that were at the Martins the night before, but it was very unlikely for her to find such a thing.

Elizabeth searched the living room and the kitchen. In the living room, she looked in the places that she figured would be best for hiding things. She looked under the couch cushions, the lamp, in books, and even in the fireplace. Elizabeth found nothing in the living room, so she futhered her search into the kitchen.

On the kitchen table, there lay a pile of papers and things of the sort. That was the only likely place for evidence in the kitchen, so Elizabeth decided to go through them.

Elizabeth pulled out a bill, a shopping list, then another bill, then an unmailed letter. Although she knew the letter was none of her business, Elizabeth opened the envelope and read what was inside. It was a letter to Kenneth's cousin in Macon, nothing associated with the Klan and the kidnapping of Magda.

The Fight For Freedom

Samantha was searching the upstairs bedrooms. Most of them were empty, because Kenneth was the only person who lived in the big house. There was nothing of evidential value in any of the upstairs rooms, so she went downstairs to where her friend was searching the pile of papers.

"Have you found anything important yet?" Samantha asked when she reached the kitchen table.

"Not yet," Elizabeth answered as she sat another envelope to the side. "Just bills and shopping lists and unimportant letters."

"Ohâ !."

Then, suddenly, Elizabeth pulled out a note from the bottom of the pile. Apparently, Kenneth had been in a rush when he had written the note, for it was quite hard to read, with the letters jumbled up.

"I think I've found something," Elizabeth said excitedly. She read the note to herself first, then gasped.

"What is it?" Samantha asked.

Elizabeth didn't answer Samantha's question, but instead, handed the note to her friend.

Samantha began to read.

July 21, 1917

Meet Henry and the gang at Martin house at ten. Cross burning there, rid place of immigrants. Will not leave till lesson is taught. Cross burning, Martin place, ten p.m.

"So Henry's behind all this!" Samantha exclaimed when she finished reading the note.

"I reckon so," Elizabeth replied, completely shocked.

"Then we'll just have to have a talk with him, won't we?" Samantha asked angrily.

"You're right," said Elizabeth. "He thought he taught us a lesson, now we'll be teaching him one."

"Yep," Samantha said. She slid the note into her pocket and added, "We'll keep this note for evidence." She looked around then said to Elizabeth, "Come on. We're going to straighten out that Henry Houston."

Samantha and Elizabeth quickly walked to Henry Houston's house, which wasn't far from their own. Revelle Street crossed over Aberdeen Lane, where the two girls found Elizabeth's puppy two years before. Henry lived on West Revelle Street, in the greener part of the area, while Samantha and Elizabeth lived on East Revelle Street, the part of the road with no trees offering shade from the sun. Actually, it was only a short walk between the two houses.

Finally, Samantha and Elizabeth reached Henry's house. They stepped up to the door and knocked firmly. Henry came to the door and opened it.

"Good morning," he said.

"I don't see how it can be good," Samantha said, "when the night before, you and your 'friends' go around burning crosses, killing innocent folks, and kidnapping little girls."

"Why, I don't believe I know what you're talking about," Henry replied.

"You know good and well what I'm talking about!" Samantha exclaimed. "You, Kenneth Rogers, and some others came and burned a cross on Elizabeth's front yard last night. Then you killed the immigrant girl's baby brother before you left. And not only that, you kidnapped her five year old sister, too. I have proof."

And proof is a pretty powerful word, for Henry stood there completely shocked. "What proof?"

Samantha held out the note. "This."

Henry skimmed over the note, then asked, "Where did you find that?"

"We found it in Kenneth Rogers' house," Samantha answered. "Elizabeth and I sent him to Louisville, Kentucky, to work on a farm for an uncle that doesn't exist."

Henry had nothing to say. He stood there amazed for a couple of minutes, thinking about how the girls had gotten Kenneth out of town. He wondered if it would be best to admit what he had done or to skip town. He chose both.

"All right, all right," Henry said. "I admit to all those things you accused me of, even the killing and the kidnapping. And I've got the girl with me right now, locked in a closet. But you won't get her back, and you definitely can't stop me!"

Samantha tried tackling Henry, but before she could do so, Henry threw a glass vase at her. The vase hit Samantha on the head, and she tumbled backwards on the steps. Her forehead was cut slightly, but Elizabeth caught her before she fell.

"You are a terrible person, Henry Houston!" Elizabeth shouted.

The Fight For Freedom

Henry didn't answer. He ran back into his house and threw some clothes into a suitcase. He took Magda out of the closet and untied her hands. Henry grabbed some money and shoved it into his pocket. Then he hurried out of the house, and ran as fast as he could towards town. He took Magda with him, and that meant no good.

"And unless you can outrun a train," Henry yelled, "you can't catch me!"

Elizabeth and Samantha watched as Henry made his escape.

"We have to stop him!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "Follow him or something!"

"You're right!" Samantha said. She stood up slowly.

"Are you sure that cut is okay?" Elizabeth asked.

"I'll have to make due," Samantha said. "I've been hurt plenty of times in my life, but I'd rather be hurt once more than for little Magda to be hurt for the first time. We've got to stop Henry. Fast."

"All right."

Samantha and Elizabeth ran back to the Martins' and burst inside. Everyone was sitting around the kitchen table when the two girls came barreling inside the house.

"What's wrong?" Mr. Martin asked, jumping up from the table.

"It's Henry Houston!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "He's got Magda and he took off towards the train station!"

Mrs. Goldschmidt stood up quickly. "My daughter!" she exclaimed.

"Dad," Elizabeth said, "Samantha and I have to follow Henry or who knows what might happen to Magda."

"I agree," Mr. Martin said. He gave his daughter some money, enough to buy two train tickets. "You go and stop that evil person."

"And please, bring my sister back home safely," Ingrid said.

"All right." It suddenly struck Elizabeth that Ingrid had just called America 'home'. It was a good feeling.

Samantha and Elizabeth rushed to the train station. They hoped Henry was still at the station, but that wasn't likely. He could be halfway to New York for all they knew.

The two girls quickly stepped up to the ticket counter.

"Hello," Samantha said. "Has a young man about the age of twenty come here with a little girl about five years of age?"

"Yes," the ticket lady answered.

"Can you please tell me where they were headed?" Samantha asked. "I'm his sister, and this is his wife." She pointed back at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth gave Samantha a disgusted look.

"They were headed for Savannah," answered the ticket lady.

"All right. We'd like two tickets to Savannah, then," Samantha said. She paid for the tickets, and then she and Elizabeth hurried to board the train.

It was nonstop to Savannah for them, and neither Samantha or Elizabeth were going back to Atlanta without Magda. Henry Houston was going to be stopped. They were sure of it.

Chapter 6: We Have To Stop Him!

The train chugged down the tracks quickly and noisily. Samantha and Elizabeth were on their way to Savannah, chasing after the kidnapper Klansman, Henry Houston. Henry had kidnapped Ingrid's sister, Magda, and was fleeing to Savannah, Georgia.

Samantha sat watching the scenery outside the window zoom past. She was impatiently waiting for the train to pull into the Savannah station, but that was going to be a while.

Henry and Magda were on the train ahead of the one that Samantha and Elizabeth were on. So hopefully, Henry would still be at the station when Elizabeth and Samantha disembarked the train.

It was late at night before Samantha and Elizabeth saw the city lights of Savannah. They were relieved when their train pulled into the station, and they got off their ride quickly and in a rush.

Samantha scanned the vast crowd of people for a young man and a little girl. She saw no one who looked like Henry or Magda, that was, at first. Then, she spotted someone who looked like Henry standing far away in the corner with a little girl. And it was them.

"Liza! I see them!" Samantha exclaimed. "Over in the corner!" She pointed in the direction she had seen the two.

"You're right, Sammy!" replied Elizabeth. "Let's go and rescue Magda."

Samantha and Elizabeth pushed their way through the crowd, and finally neared the place where Henry and Magda were. Henry spotted them quickly. He picked up Magda and his suitcase and ran towards the exit doors.

"We have to catch him!" Samantha said. "Hurry up!" She and Elizabeth dashed after Henry, who had already made his way out of the building.

Samantha and Elizabeth followed Henry closely. He had to run across two train tracks to completely leave the train station, and so he did what he had to do. The two girls following him used the same strategy, and it worked.

Down the Main Street of Savannah they ran, trying to keep up with the fast running Henry. It was a hard race, but Elizabeth ran with all her might, Samantha keeping up.

"Stop that man!" the girls tried yelling at the onlookers that they passed. It was no use, though, for the onlookers only stopped and watched as the passing girls continued their race.

Henry and Magda were a good few yards ahead of them now. Samantha and Elizabeth were getting tired now, but it depended on little Magda's life for them to continue running.

Samantha could tell they were getting close to the sea, because the air was a little colder and she could hear waves crashing on the shore. If Henry kept going towards the ocean, things had a good chance of not ending well.

Then, suddenly, Henry ran into the ship yard.

As Samantha and Elizabeth watched him, they realized that they had to follow him, for the safety of Magda. They then ran forwards and into the big and dangerous ship yard.

The ship yard was like a maze before Samantha and Elizabeth. Henry could be anywhere within the midst of boxes, crates, and sailing supplies. It was cold and dark in the unfamiliar place, and the tall, black shadows of ships loomed against the sky.

War supplies, such as guns and cannons sat on the docks, waiting to be loaded on the battle ships that were docked in the harbor. Boxes of grenades and rockets sat stacked neatly in the shipyard, and barrels of gunpowder sat under a tarp to protect it from rain. Danger lurked, and it clearly was not safe in the Savannah shipyard.

Samantha and Elizabeth looked around nervously, but determined, and saw no sign of Henry and Magda.

There was no telling where they were; they could be drowning somewhere off shore. It was very important that Magda be rescued and Henry be arrested, for the good of the Goldschmidt family and the safety of others, too.

Then, suddenly, Samantha and Elizabeth heard a terrified scream throughout the shipyard. It was hard to tell where it sounded from at first, but then Samantha figured out that it came from the direction of the docks.

The Fight For Freedom

Samantha and Elizabeth raced to the docks as fast as they could. They slowed their pace as they neared the end of the pier, and they ducked behind the boxes to avoid being seen. When they peeked around the boxes, they saw a terrifying sight at the very end of the pier.

Henry stood clutching a grenade, aiming it at Magda, who was at the tip of the pier. At any moment, Magda could fall into the roaring ocean and be drowned, or, Henry could throw the bomb.

"Stop it!"

Samantha stepped out from behind the pile of boxes. She stood ready to pounce on top of Henry, but it would be too dangerous, because she could miss him and slip off the pier in an instant.

Henry said nothing, but threw the grenade like a baseball at Samantha. Samantha ducked, and thankfully, wasn't hit by the hand-thrown bomb. The grenade went into the ocean and exploded loudly, making the water shoot up in the air like a fountain. It was a close call, but things worked out for the better.

Henry rushed forwards to Magda and picked her up. He pushed past Samantha and ran quickly away from the pier. He disappeared into the dark shipyard, out of Samantha and Elizabeth's sight.

"Hurry!" Elizabeth exclaimed. "Before he gets away!" She bounded after Henry, not waiting for Samantha to catch up.

Elizabeth, followed by Samantha, raced down the pier and retraced Henry's steps. She followed the barely visible footprints in the sand, hoping they belonged to the kidnapper. Although it was easy tracking the footsteps at first, it soon became hard, for the prints led all the way into the ocean.

"This means trouble," Elizabeth said, turning around to face her friend.

Samantha, out of breath from running, replied quickly, "You're sure right."

"Well, we'll just have to go into the water, I guess," Elizabeth said. She stepped forwards into the cold waters of the Atlantic Ocean, and was soon knee-deep in. "Come on, Sammy, if we want to catch Henry."

"All right." Samantha reluctantly stepped into the water and followed Elizabeth. Both of the girls were excellent swimmers, and enjoyed going to a small fishing pond, just outside of their hometown.

Then, from out of nowhere, Samantha and Elizabeth heard faint voices from above.

"You'll never see your family again, little girl. You don't belong here, and I'm going to prove it to you!"

Samantha and Elizabeth looked up and saw Henry standing on the deck of an old retired battleships docked in the harbor. He evidently was talking to Magda, and making threats to hurt her.

"We've got to save Magda!" Elizabeth whispered.

"Come on," replied Samantha. "We're going to have to get on that ship somehow!"

The girls quickly swam towards the battleship. At first, they saw no way to get up onto the deck, but they soon found a rope ladder thrown over the side of the ship.

Elizabeth climbed first, and Samantha followed, and they finally reached their destination. They tiptoed past the smokestacks and carefully made their way to the stern of the ship, where Henry and Magda were.

There were no railings on this ship; they were taken for extra parts. The ship itself was a hazard, because it was rusted and worn out. It was dangerous for Samantha and Elizabeth to be on it, even more so for Henry and Magda.

The girls knew they had to stop Henry. He could throw Magda off the ship and she could fall to her death, or, Henry could be stopped. Samantha and Elizabeth were sure they would rescue Magda.

Peeking around the side of the smokestack they were hiding behind, Samantha and Elizabeth saw that Magda was very close to the edge of the deck. She could slip and fall easily, especially if Henry pushed her. Their game was for one to catch Henry and one to rescue Magda. The plan, when the girls thought about it, sounded easy, but when played out, would be very complicated.

Elizabeth and Samantha jumped out from behind their hiding place quickly.

"Leave her alone!"

Henry whirled around and picked up Magda.

"Stay away or I'll jump, and I'll take the girl with me!"

"Put Magda down and stop all of what you're doing!" Samantha yelled.

"No!" Henry argued. "I'm going to rid this country of all these invading immigrants!"

"Henry," Samantha said. "This country needs to be ridded of people like you, who don't believe in sharing and kindness."

The Fight For Freedom

"Them doggone immigrants need to stay in their own foreign land!" Henry exclaimed. "They don't belong here!"

"Put the girl down."

Tommy stepped out from behind one of the smokestacks. He held a crowbar in his hand, supposedly one he had found somewhere on board the ship.

Samantha turned around quickly, and so did Elizabeth. They were both overly excited about Tommy's return, but couldn't run to him, because Henry needed to be stopped and Magda saved before it could happen.

"And what are you going to do about it?" Henry asked smartly. "You've only got one hand now, and that's no good for fighting."

"A hand's not the only thing I'll use to stop you, Henry Houston," Tommy replied. "Now this is your last chance. Put the girl down, I say!"

"I may've lost this time, but somebody's going to take on my job of fixing America!" Henry said. He let Magda go, and the little girl ran towards Samantha and Elizabeth.

Henry backed towards the edge of the ship. "I'll make sure America is only for Americans! The life of Henry Houston may be over, but the Ku Klux Klan lives on forever!" Henry jumped off the ship to his death, and was to be seen no more.

Samantha, Elizabeth, Tommy, and Magda listened as Henry struggled in the water beneath the ship.

"That's the end of himâ€"!" Samantha said.

Elizabeth asked Magda in German, "Sind sie alles in Ordnung? Er wollte dir nicht weh tun, nicht wahr?"

"Ich bin okay," Magda replied shakily. "Nein, er hat mir nicht weh."

Samantha turned around and asked her brother, "Tommy, what are you doing here in Savannah?"

"I just got back from the war, and you can see my arm's been amputated," Tommy answered.

"I see," replied Samantha. "How did you know we were in the ship yard?"

"I was walking past the shipyard entrance and I heard voices coming from inside. I went to see what was going on; it sounded like arguing, and I saw you, Elizabeth, Henry, and the little girl on this ship," said Tommy.

"Thanks for coming and saving the day," Samantha said.

"I couldn't help but wonder, what are you doing here?" Tommy asked.

"It's a long story," answered Samantha. "Elizabeth and I will tell you on the way home."

"All right," replied Tommy.

It was in the early morning hours that the four arrived back home in Atlanta. None of them had gotten any sleep, that was, except for Magda, who had taken a nap during the long train ride.

When they disembarked the train in Atlanta, Samantha, Elizabeth, and Tommy were exhausted. Little Magda was still sleeping, so Elizabeth and Samantha took turns carrying her.

As they walked home, Tommy told Samantha and Elizabeth of his adventures across the sea in the Great War.

"Well, when I got shot, I didn't really go into battle; our fort all of a sudden was fired on. I forget who it was, think it was the Germans. Got the bullet right through my arm, so I had to get it cut off. It won't a very good feeling, and I sure didn't like it none."

Neither Samantha nor Elizabeth could think of anything to say. It would be painful to suffer through an amputation like that, but for Tommy, it was either lose his arm or his life. He chose his arm.

"Strange how out of your whole infantry, the bullet chose you," Elizabeth said quietly.

"I reckon it happened for a reason," Tommy replied.

Everyone was silent for a moment, but Samantha spoke up and said, "Can we change the subject? I don't like talking about war or amputations."

"All right, sis," Tommy answered. "Let's hurry on home. I'm dying to get there again, and I know Ma, Pa, Amelia, and Karen'll be glad to see me."

"Yeah," Samantha said. "And I'm sure Ingrid, Else, Gretchen, and Marlene will be glad to see their sister again, and Mrs. Goldschmidt will be glad to see that her daughter's safe."

"Are they the immigrant family you wrote to me and told me about?" Tommy asked.

"Yes," Samantha answered. "Two days ago, when the Klan came and burned a cross in front of Elizabeth's house, they killed baby of the family. It was a really sad thing, and we sure do wish it didn't have to happen."

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"Henry planned the whole thing," Elizabeth added. "He admitted to it when Samantha and I confronted him."
"You two must've had exciting time while I've been away," Tommy said. "I used to get into trouble when I was your age and younger, but not the kind of trouble you've been in. I mean, what normal kids would get into trouble with the Ku Klux Klan, out of all things?"

Samantha and Elizabeth pointed at one another and said at the same time, "Us."

"Yeah," Tommy said. "You."

The three laughed and continued their walk home.

Finally, they reached Revelle Street. Tommy stopped at the end of it and looked down the street.

"Just how I remember it," he said.

A faint glow of light shone in the window in the Parker house.

"Home!" Tommy said. "I'm so glad to be home."

"I know you are," Samantha replied.

"Let's take Magda back to the Goldschmidts," Elizabeth said. "Tommy, I'm sure your folks are at my house. Let's head there first."

"All right," Tommy said in return.

The trio headed down Revelle Street and walked up to the Martins' front door. Remnants of the burnt cross still lay in the front yard, and a mark of evil stained the grass, a burnt circle where the cross had once stood. Tommy, followed by Samantha, and Elizabeth carrying Magda, walked inside.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin were sitting on the couch, and Mrs. Goldschmidt and her daughters sat around the kitchen table. Chrystal's foot had healed from the fox bite, and she had come over to the Martins'. The Parkers weren't there, but were at their house.

All inside the Martin house were surprised when Samantha, Elizabeth and Magda, and Tommy walked inside. Mrs. Goldschmidt and her daughters jumped up from the table and ran to their young daughter. They were all so very grateful to Samantha and Elizabeth for bringing their daughter back safely, and what a joyful reunion it was.

The Martins and Chrystal were excited about Tommy's return, but they, too, hated the fact that Tommy's arm had to be amputated.

"Tell us what happened in Savannah!" Ingrid said to Elizabeth.

Elizabeth gave everyone a quick summary of what had happened in the city. She told of the train ride and the pier scene, and most of all, the death of Henry Houston.

"It was an exciting adventure," Elizabeth said. "But all the time we were there, and until we saved her, Samantha and I were deeply concerned for Magda. We saved her, and we sure are glad we did."

"Yes," Ingrid said. "Thanks for saving my sister."

When Magda was reunited with her family, Elizabeth, Samantha, and Tommy went down the street to the Parkers' house. The candle in the window gave an eerie light to the blue star hanging in the window, and it made Tommy remember what he had gone through during the short time he had been in the war. It made him think of the feeling his family most likely had when he had ran away to war. Then, Tommy thought of a good thing the star meant, patriotism.

Samantha and Elizabeth stepped inside the house first. Nobody was awake, it seemed.

"I'll go upstairs and get them," Samantha said. "You two stay down here."

"All right."

Samantha quietly went upstairs to wake her parents and sisters. It was going to be a wonderful reunion of the Parker family.

"Ma, Pa, wake up! I'm back from Savannah and I've got a surprise! Wake up!" Samantha said.

Mrs. Parker opened her eyes and asked sleepily, "What is it, Samantha?"

"I've brought a surprise back from Savannah! It's downstairs. Come and see!" answered Samantha excitedly.

"We'll be down shortly," Mrs. Parker answered.

Samantha left her parents' bedroom and went to Karen and Amelia's. The younger girls were fast asleep in their bed, and Samantha hated to wake them, but she didn't want them to miss out on the wonderful reunion.

"Karen, Amelia," Samantha said softly. "I've got a surprise for the whole family."

"What is it?" Karen asked. She immediately awoke; it didn't take much to wake her.

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"I've got a surprise. It's downstairs and I want you and Amelia to come and see," Samantha answered.

"I just love surprises!" Karen said. She jumped out of bed and woke Amelia.

Samantha waited until her whole family had gotten ready before she returned downstairs. And when Mr. and Mrs. Parker and Karen and Amelia saw that Tommy was home, all were extremely happy and rejoicing.

After the reunion of the Parker family, Elizabeth went home. She was very tired, and hadn't slept in a day.

When she walked inside, the clock in the corner said two o'clock. It would only be four more hours until it was time to wake up again and greet a new day.

As Elizabeth was going up the stairs, Ingrid stopped her and said, "Elizabeth, me and my family's got something to announce tomorrow at breakfast."

"What's that?" Elizabeth asked.

"I'd rather not say until morning," Ingrid replied.

"That's okay," said Elizabeth. "I can wait until morning. You go on to bed and I'll do the same."

"Okay," Ingrid answered. "Gute natch, and thanks for reuniting my family. As they say in German, Danke."

"Gern geschehen," Elizabeth replied. She continued her climb up the stairs and went to bed.

It had been a long day, and a quite adventurous one, at that. Magda was rescued, Tommy was home, Henry was gone for good. Things seemed to be back to normal, but the surprises were not over yet.

Chapter 7: The End Of It All

Morning arose and everyone staying in the Martin house was up early. Everyone had been informed of the Goldschmidts' announcement, and no one knew what it could be.

Elizabeth, Ingrid, and Samantha were in the kitchen cooking breakfast. Cooking was one of their most favorite things to do, and whenever offered the chance, always did it.

As Samantha flipped a pancake, she said to Ingrid and Elizabeth, "I sure am glad all that mess with the Klan is over with."

"I know," Elizabeth replied. "So am I."

"You know," Ingrid said, "I hate that group."

"So do we," Samantha replied. "Elizabeth and I have been into trouble with them more than a dog digs holes."

"Must've been awfully scary," said Ingrid.

"It sure was," answered Samantha.

Soon, breakfast was ready, and the girls set the table. The Parkers were coming over for breakfast, too, so the table would be crowded. Although it was big and round, fourteen people could fill the seats fast.

Once the food was on the table and the blessing was said, everyone began to eat. For breakfast, Samantha, Elizabeth, and Ingrid had fixed pancakes, bacon, eggs, and sausage. They had also fixed biscuits, which sat in a small plate next to the pancakes.

"This food sure is good," Tommy said after swallowing a mouthful of eggs. "They don't cook it like this in the Army."

"I have heard talk of how bad the food tasted over there," Samantha said as she passed the plate of biscuits.

"It's been a long time since I ate anything this good," Tommy replied. "Once in a while, we would get pork-chops or some kind of meat, but just before the Germans shot up our camp, food was getting a little slow. Maybe that's why I got shot. So that I could come home and get some good cooking for a change."

"Could've been," Samantha said.

Breakfast went by just as it did most times, with the dining room filled with the aromas of freshly cooked food. Everyone discussed different topics, such as the events of the war overseas and the news locally in Atlanta.

Ingrid sat quietly at her seat at the table. Her family's announcement would bring mixed emotions to her friends sitting around the table, and she wasn't sure how Samantha and Elizabeth would take the news.

Finally, the chance came for the Goldschmidts' announcement, and Ingrid stood up. She had been given permission to say the announcement, and she was very nervous.

"Everyone," Ingrid said.

All those sitting at the kitchen table turned to face the speaker.

"My mother asked me to tell you all what I'm about to say. She told me and my sisters last night, and we think it's very important that you know."

"What is it, Ingrid?" Elizabeth asked.

"My mother, my sisters and me, we're going back to Germany," Ingrid blurted out sadly.

A look of surprise came over Samantha's face, and Elizabeth jumped up from the table.

"Why?" Elizabeth asked suddenly. "Why are you leaving?"

Ingrid hung her head low and answered Elizabeth's question. "Because it's not safe here. It'd just be better if we went back to Frieden and stayed with our relatives."

"You could stay with us, right here in Atlanta. The Klan won't bother you again, because Henry's dead," Elizabeth said.

"We've saved up our money, and we're to be taking the ferry back home. It would be the best thing to do, and it's not safe here. If we belonged here, we would be welcome," replied Ingrid. "Mother says we're going to leave next Sunday, right after church."

"Can't you stay?" Elizabeth asked hopelessly.

"No," Ingrid answered. "We're going home."

Elizabeth and Ingrid sat back down, and everyone finished eating their breakfast in silence.

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The days of the week passed by quickly, faster than Samantha, Elizabeth, and Ingrid hoped it would. Samantha and Elizabeth hated for their friend to leave, and they wished Ingrid didn't have to go. Chrystal had been informed of the Goldschmidts' plan to return to Germany, and she wasn't happy about it, either.

The circle of friends seemed to be falling apart, and there was nothing to be done about it.

The day before the leaving of the Goldschmidt family came and went fast. The Goldschmidts spent most of the day packing up clothes and the little luggage they had. Elizabeth, Samantha, and Chrystal helped them.

When the day was over and night time had come, Samantha and Chrystal stayed overnight at Elizabeth's house. This was their last chance for a perfect sleepover, unlike the ruined one on Ingrid's birthday.

"I wish you didn't have to go."

Samantha, Elizabeth, Chrystal, and Ingrid sat in Elizabeth's bedroom.

"It's for my family's safety. I wish we could stay here, too, but we couldn't risk losing anymore family members than we already have," Ingrid replied.

Nobody said anything after Ingrid said that. They didn't have anything to talk about, and of course, they didn't want to talk about Ingrid's return to her homeland.

"Let's just go to bed," Samantha suggested. "Morning will be here soon enough, and we're going to be facing a long train ride here to Savannah and back."

"All right." All the girls agreed, and they went to bed earlier than usual.

Morning arose quickly, and everyone prepared to go to church. Ingrid and her sisters put on their best Sunday dresses, and so did Samantha, Elizabeth, and Chrystal. The Martins, the Parkers, the Goldschmidts, and Chrystal would all be going to church together. They were going to the Baptist church, where the Martins went every Sunday.

The large group of families walked to church, quietly and fast. The Baptist church wasn't far from the Martins' house, unlike the Methodist church that the Parkers went to. Actually, the Baptist church was on the next block down the street from Henry Houston's former home.

When the church service started, everyone listened intently to the pastor speak the sermon. And it just so happened that at the end of the service, the congregation sang "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". Ingrid beamed as she sang the words to her favorite hymn.

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and,
Armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not His equal."

It was a perfect ending to the last church service that Ingrid would go to in America. She would miss the United States and its freedoms, but it wasn't safe for her or her family to be there.

Right after church, everyone returned to the Martins' house to get the Goldschmidts' luggage. It was a sorrowful walk to the train station, but it had to be done.

When everyone boarded the train, they rode in silence. Samantha and Elizabeth had taken the trip over a week before, and dreaded to take it again. It was quite a long train ride from Atlanta to Savannah. At least two hours long it was all together, and the sights along the route were terribly boring. The only things to be seen during the ride were trees, a few houses, and an occasional pond or lake.

The train ride that Samantha and Elizabeth had taken was long and boring, but this ride was unusually fast. The reason of the rapid journey was probably because they didn't want the time to fly, and wanted their friendship with Ingrid to last a lifetime.

Finally, the train pulled into the Savannah station. The Martins, Parkers, Goldschmidts, and Chrystal were the last to disembark the train. They walked slowly from the train station to the harbor. Once they reached the dock, they had to wait for the ferry. The next ferry would be arriving at the dock at three thirty in the afternoon, so everyone had to wait about fifteen minutes.

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It wasn't long before Ingrid heard the low rumble of the ferry horn, and she knew it was time for her and her family to return to Germany. She watched as the people flocked off the ship and knew that soon she would be boarding the ship and leaving.

The Goldschmidts stood up as soon as they saw other people getting on the ship. Ingrid went over to Samantha, Elizabeth, and Chrystal, her only American friends.

"I don't want to leave, but I've got to," she said.

"We know," Samantha replied. "We're going to miss you."

"I'm going to miss you all, too," Ingrid answered. She gave each of her friends a hug and asked, "Promise you'll write?"

"Yes." Samantha, Elizabeth, and Chrystal agreed.

"You three are going to be my best friends forever," said Ingrid.

"That's good," Elizabeth replied. "Let's teach you the oath of friendship."

"What's that?" Ingrid asked suddenly.

Elizabeth answered, "It's an oath to assure that we're best friends for life. Chrystal's taken it, and now it's your turn. Repeat after us...."

"Neither rain nor snow or any kind of weather

Will sep'rate our friendship together.

Always friends, always true,

We'll stick together like glue."

Ingrid carefully repeated the words and looked up at her friends. "Best friends forever?"

"Best friends forever," Samantha, Elizabeth, and Chrystal replied.

Then the ferry horn blew once more, signaling that the boat was about to set sail. Ingrid, her mother, and her sisters scrambled to get on the boat.

"Bye!" she called to her friends standing on the dock.

"Bye!" they called back.

The Martins, Parkers, and Chrystal stood and watched as Ingrid and the Goldschmidts disappeared from sight.

The ferry boat grew smaller and smaller as it moved off into the horizon and eventually was out of sight.

And yet another try of a new life in a new country was unable to happen, only because of the evils of inequality and the foolishness of some people.

Those victims of the harassments of inequality and its supporters learned that the world would be a better place if people got along, and up from that crowd would rise some of inequality's biggest enemies, who would someday have plans and dreams to end it.

Ingrid and her family returned home to Germany safely, and the friends that they had left behind in America would help to clear a pathway to make sure that all immigrants were welcome in the States.

The Goldschmidts' dream of a better life in a new land may have been shattered, but things would be better for those newcomers to follow.

Hopefully, those like the Klan and their supporters had learned their lesson, but Elizabeth and Samantha knew that there would always be some who just can't get along, and they felt it was their job to fix that.

Someday, they knew, equality would come to America.

THE END

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

- Romans 12:18, KJV

The Fight For Freedom

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