laughed. But some tears had come into her eyes and were running down her cheeks all at the same time.

'Oh well, we're lucky to be here at all,' said Max.

'What do you mean?' asked Anna.

Max looked carefully past her out of the window.

'Papa heard from Heimpi,' he said with elaborate casualness. 'The Nazis came for all our passports the morning after the elections.'

Chapter Six

AS SOON AS Anna was strong enough they moved out of their expensive hotel. Papa and Max had found an inn in one of the villages on the lake. It was called Gasthof Zwirn, after Herr Zwirn who owned it, and stood very near the landing stage, with a cobbled courtyard and a garden running down to the lake. People mostly came there to eat and drink, but Herr Zwirn also had a few rooms to let, and these were very cheap. Mama and Papa shared one room and Anna and Max another, so that it would be cheaper still.

Downstairs there was a large comfortable dining room decorated with deers' antlers and bits of edelweiss. But when the weather became warmer tables and chairs appeared in the garden, and Frau Zwirn served

everybody's meals under the chestnut trees overlooking the water. Anna thought it was lovely.

At weekends musicians came from the village and often played till late at night. You could listen to the music and watch the sparkle of the water through the leaves and the steamers gliding past. At dusk Herr Zwirn pressed a switch and little lights came on in the trees so that you could still see what you were eating. The steamers lit coloured lanterns to make themselves visible to other craft. Some were amber, but the prettiest were a deep, brilliant purply blue. Whenever Anna saw one of these magical blue lights against the darker blue sky and more dimly reflected in the dark lake, she felt as though she had been given a small present.

The Zwirns had three children who ran about barefoot and, as Anna's legs began to feel less like cotton wool, she and Max went with them to explore the country round about. There were woods and streams and waterfalls, roads lined with apple trees and wild flowers everywhere. Sometimes Mama came with them rather than stay alone at the inn. Papa went to Zurich almost every day to talk to the editors of Swiss newspapers.

The Zwirn children, like everyone else living in the

village, spoke a Swiss dialect which Anna and Max first found hard to understand. But they soon learned and the eldest, Franz, was able to teach Max to fish – only Max never caught anything – while his sister Vreneli showed Anna the local version of hopscotch.

In this pleasant atmosphere Anna soon recovered her strength and one day Mama announced that it was time for her and Max to start school again. Max would go to the Boys' High School in Zurich. He would travel by train, which was not as nice as the steamer but much quicker. Anna would go to the village school with the Zwirn children, and as she and Vreneli were roughly the same age they would be in the same class.

'You will be my best friend,' said Vreneli. She had very long, very thin, mouse-coloured plaits and a worried expression. Anna was not absolutely sure that she wanted to be Vreneli's best friend but thought it would be ungrateful to say so.

On Monday morning they set off together, Vreneli barefoot and carrying her shoes in her hand. As they approached the school they met other children, most of them also carrying their shoes. Vreneli introduced Anna to some of the girls, but the boys stayed on the other side of the road and stared across at them without speaking. Soon after they had reached the school

playground a teacher rang a bell and there was a mad scramble by everyone to put their shoes on. It was a school rule that shoes must be worn but most children left them off till the last possible minute.

Anna's teacher was called Herr Graupe. He was quite old with a greyish yellowish beard, and everyone was much in awe of him. He assigned Anna a place next to a cheerful fair-haired girl called Roesli, and as Anna walked down the centre aisle of the classroom to her desk there was a general gasp.

'What's the matter?' Anna whispered as soon as Herr Graupe's back was turned.

'You walked down the centre aisle,' Roesli whispered back. 'Only the boys walk down the centre aisle.'

'Where do the girls go?'

'Round the sides.'

It seemed a strange arrangement, but Herr Graupe had begun to chalk up sums on the blackboard, so there was no time to go into it. The sums were very easy and Anna got them done quickly. Then she took a look round the classroom.

The boys were all sitting in two rows on one side, the girls on the other. It was quite different from the school she had gone to in Berlin where they had all

been mixed up. When Herr Graupe called for the books to be handed in Vreneli got up to collect the girls' while a big red-haired boy collected the boys'. The red-haired boy walked up the middle of the classroom while Vreneli walked round the side until they met, each with a pile of books, in front of Herr Graupe's desk. Even there they were careful not to look at each other, but Anna noticed that Vreneli had turned a very faint shade of pink under her mouse-coloured hair.

At break-time the boys played football and horsed about on one side of the playground while the girls played hopscotch or sat sedately gossiping on the other. But though the girls pretended to take no notice of the boys they spent a lot of time watching them under their carefully lowered lids, and when Vreneli and Anna walked home for lunch Vreneli became so interested in the antics of the red-haired boy on the opposite side of the road that she nearly walked into a tree. They went back for an hour's singing in the afternoon and then school was finished for the day.

'How do you like it?' Mama asked Anna when she got back at three o'clock.

'It's very interesting,' said Anna. 'But it's funny – the boys and girls don't even talk to each other and I don't know if I'm going to learn very much.'

When Herr Graupe had corrected the sums he had made several mistakes and his spelling had not been too good either.

'Well, it doesn't matter if you don't,' said Mama. 'It won't hurt you to have a bit of a rest after your illness.'

'I like the singing,' said Anna. 'They can all yodel and they're going to teach me how to do it too.'

'God forbid!' said Mama and immediately dropped a stitch.

Mama was learning to knit. She had never done it before, but Anna needed a new sweater and Mama was trying to save money. She had bought some wool and some knitting needles and Frau Zwirn had shown her how to use them. But somehow Mama never looked quite right doing it. Where Frau Zwirn sat clicking the needles lightly with her fingers, Mama knitted straight from the shoulder. Each time she pushed the needle into the wool it was like an attack. Each time she brought it out she pulled the stitch so tight that it almost broke. As a result the sweater only grew slowly and looked more like heavy tweed than knitting.

'I've never seen work quite like it,' said Frau Zwirn, astonished, when she saw it, 'but it'll be lovely and warm when it's done.'

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One Sunday morning soon after Anna and Max had started school they saw a familiar figure get off the steamer and walk up the landing stage. It was Onkel Julius. He looked thinner than Anna remembered and it was wonderful and yet somehow confusing to see him – as though a bit of their house in Berlin had suddenly appeared by the edge of the lake.

'Julius!' cried Papa in delight when he saw him. 'What on earth are you doing here?'

Onkel Julius gave a little wry smile and said, 'Well, officially I'm not here at all. Do you know that nowadays it is considered very unwise even to visit you?' He had been to a naturalists' congress in Italy and had left a day early in order to come and see them on his way back to Berlin.

'I'm honoured and grateful,' said Papa.

'The Nazis certainly are very stupid,' said Onkel Julius. 'How could you possibly be an enemy of Germany? You know of course that they burned all your books.'

'I was in very good company,' said Papa.

'What books?' asked Anna. 'I thought the Nazis had just taken all our things – I didn't know they'd burned them.'

'These were not the books your father owned,' said

Onkel Julius. 'They were the books he has written. The Nazis lit big bonfires all over the country and threw on all the copies they could find and burned them.'

'Along with the works of various other distinguished authors,' said Papa, 'such as Einstein, Freud, H. G. Wells . . .'

Onkel Julius shook his head at the madness of it all. 'Thank heavens you didn't take my advice,' he said. 'Thank heavens you left when you did. But of course,' he added, 'this situation in Germany can't go on much longer!'

Over lunch in the garden he told them the news. Heimpi had found a job with another family. It had been difficult because when people heard that she had worked for Papa they did not want to employ her. But it was not a bad job considering. Their house was still empty. Nobody had bought it yet.

It was strange, thought Anna, that Onkel Julius could go and look at it any time he liked. He could walk down the street from the paper shop at the corner and stand outside the white painted gate. The shutters would be closed but if he had a key Onkel Julius would be able to go through the front door into the dark hall, up the stairs to the nursery, or across into the drawing room, or along the passage to Heimpi's

pantry . . . Anna remembered it all so clearly, and in her mind she walked right through the house from top to bottom while Onkel Julius went on talking to Mama and Papa.

'How are things with you?' he asked. 'Are you able to write here?'

Papa raised an eyebrow. 'I have no difficulty in writing,' he said, 'only in getting my work published.'

'Impossible!' said Onkel Julius.

'Unfortunately not,' said Papa. 'It seems the Swiss are so anxious to protect their neutrality that they are frightened of publishing anything by an avowed anti-Nazi like myself.'

Onkel Julius looked shocked.

'Are you all right?' he asked. 'I mean – financially?'

'We manage,' said Papa. 'Anyway, I'm trying to make them change their mind.'

Then they began to talk about mutual friends. It sounded as though they were going through a long list of names. Somebody had been arrested by the Nazis. Somebody else had escaped and was going to America. Another person had compromised (what was 'compromised'? wondered Anna) and had written an article in praise of the new regime. The list went on and on. All grown-up conversations were like this

nowadays, thought Anna, while little waves lapped against the edge of the lake and bees buzzed in the chestnut trees.

In the afternoon they showed Onkel Julius round. Anna and Max took him up into the woods and he was very interested to discover a special kind of toad that he had never seen before. Later, they all went for a row on the lake in a hired boat. Then they had supper together, and at last it was time for Onkel Julius to leave.

'I miss our outings to the Zoo,' he said as he kissed Anna.

'So do I!' said Anna. 'I liked the monkeys best.'

'I'll send you a picture of one,' said Onkel Julius.

They walked down to the landing stage together. While they were waiting for the steamer Papa suddenly said, 'Julius – don't go back. Stay here with us. You won't be safe in Germany.'

'What – me?' said Onkel Julius in his high voice. 'Who's going to bother about me? I'm only interested in animals. I'm not political. I'm not even Jewish unless you count my poor old grandmother!'

'Julius, you don't understand . . .' said Papa.

'The situation is bound to change,' said Onkel Julius, and there was the steamer puffing towards them.

'Goodbye, old friend!' He embraced Papa and Mama and both children.

As he walked across the gangplank he turned back for a moment.

'Anyway,' he said, 'the monkeys at the Zoo would miss me!'