

# **PETER'S REFUGE**



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Summary: A story about a young watchmaker and his wife in Nazi-occupied Denmark.

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*I* dedicate this book to my grandparents:  
William and Virginia Bendt.

**DEDICATION**

**T**he LORD is my rock, my  
fortress, and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I  
take refuge,  
my shield and the horn of my  
salvation,  
my stronghold and my refuge,  
my savior; you save me from  
violence,  
I call upon the LORD, who is  
worthy to be praised,  
and I am saved from my  
enemies.

2 Samuel 22:2-4 NRSV

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During WW II 8000 people in the entire country of Denmark were Jewish. Around 95% of those Jews escaped to Sweden.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE RAID

***Bang! Bang! Bang!*** I heard several blows on the door.

I thought to myself, *Who could that be out in this terrible weather?* I laid the pocket watch I had been mending on my worktable and ran out into the hallway. "Who is it?" I shouted to be heard over the roaring thunder.

"The Gestapo. Open the door or we'll break it down!" threatened a gruff voice in an assortment of Danish and German words.

I glanced in the looking-glass and saw that my face was as white as a Sunday collar. I slid back the latch and opened the door. As soon as I had done

so, six Gestapo with swastikas on their armbands shoved their way inside.

"Where are the Juden you are hiding here?" asked the officer.

"There... there are no Jews here," I stammered.

The officer yelled to his men in a voice as loud as thunder, "Search the house!"

The Gestapo saluted, "Heil Hitler!" and clomped upstairs.



This photograph is of Hermann Göring the founder of the *Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police) also known as the Gestapo. The Gestapo was well-known for their abilities to track down Jews, Communists, etc. Some used force to get their way, and others threatened their victims to get them to obey.



The skull-and-crossbones and the eagle are both emblems of the Gestapo.

*Thank goodness Ingrid is shopping*, I thought. I could imagine my wife's expression if she saw the Gestapo searching through our house.

Half an hour later the Gestapo marched downstairs and filed out the front door. I closed the door on the retreating figures.

"I'll never hide Jews in my home. Never!" I said out loud.

But God had other plans.

## CHAPTER TWO: ARRIVALS

*Ding!* The little bell above the shop door jangled as a tall, broad-shouldered man strolled inside.

“Hello, Sir, what can I do for you?” I asked.

“My name is Emil Heinz. My watch is in need of repair and you were recommended by your brother-in-law, Nels Andersen, the fisherman. Nels spoke highly of your skills, Herr Johansen,” the man replied.

He unwound the watch off his wrist and handed it to me. I pushed aside a jumbled assortment of balance wheels, edge chips, screws, crystals, and crowns on my worktable to make room for the new watch. The pendulum of the shop’s clock on the wall swayed back and forth like Ingrid’s skirt when she used to dance before the war.

“Herr Heinz, what do you do for a living?” I asked.

“I train Hitler Jugend,” replied Herr Heinz.

“You do?” I dropped an edge chip on the floor. Herr Heinz nodded as I stooped to pick up the fallen part.

Ingrid ambled into the workroom. “Peter, it’s time for lunch. Who is this?” Ingrid’s smile was as bright as the May sunshine pouring through the shop windows.

“I am Emil Heinz. I made the acquaintance of your brother,



The Hitler Jugend was broken into three different age groups:

Little Ones: 6-10

Young Folks: 10-14

Senior Boys: 14-18

Nels, a few days ago down at the harbor, Frau Johansen.” Herr Heinz bowed and kissed Ingrid’s hand.

“Herr Heinz, why don’t you stay for lunch?” said Ingrid. “It will be pleasant to have company.”

I tried to protest, but Herr Heinz’s tongue was quicker than mine. “Danke, I’d be delighted, and please call me Emil.”

I noticed Ingrid went upstairs slower than usual. After grace I dished up the stew.

“Herr and Frau Johansen, would you be willing to take two young Jews in your home?” Emil wiped his mouth with his napkin; he spoke as casually as if this was the most common closing to a meal.

*Clunk!* I dropped my spoon on the table. “I must get to the bottom of this.”

“What is the matter?” asked Ingrid.

“Downstairs, Emil, you told me you train Hitler Jugend, and now you’re asking me to hide Jews?” I said.

“I also work for the Danish Underground,” said Emil calmly.

*He’s trying to trick us I just know it,* I thought to myself.

“This will explain everything,” said Emil. “When I was a young man, about sixteen or seventeen years old, I heard Hitler speak in Munich. I rashly enlisted in the Hitler Jugend. I was ordered to despise the elderly and the infirm: to hate anyone who was not Aryan and loyal to Der Führer. I tried to undo my mistakes like a tailor picking out uneven stitches from a square of cloth. Last

year I joined the Danish underground. Since then I learn from other Nazis which Jews are to be deported to concentration camps, and then I find Christians who are willing to take those Jews into their homes.”

“You’re a brave man, Emil,” said Ingrid. “God bless your work.”

“Will you hide the boys then?” Emil asked.

“We are not going to hide Jews here. It’s too risky. The Gestapo raided here two days ago!” I said.

“Well, I’ll leave you two to think about it.” And Emil was gone before I could protest.

\* \* \*

*Ding-dong! Ding-dong!*

“Ingrid, could you answer the door, please?”

“Yes, dear.” I heard the clinking of the cashier desk drawer closing, followed by the sound of Ingrid’s footsteps in the hallway.

I removed the back of Emil’s wristwatch and began cleaning the interior parts one by one with a soft cloth. I stopped my work when I heard the front door open and close, and then I heard the sound of footsteps in the hallway. I gasped as Ingrid led two boys, about the ages of fourteen and sixteen, into the back workroom. Both had yellow stars on their coats. On the stars in black lettering was one word: **Jude**.

“My name is Benjamin Rosen, and this is my brother, Moses,” the older of the two said.



When the Nazis invaded Denmark on April 9, 1940. They demanded every Jew wear this star sewn to their clothing.

“What do you want?” I folded my arms across my chest.

“The Gestapo arrested Mama and Papa a few days ago while we were at school,” said Benjamin.

“Now they’re out to get us, too!” Moses added.

“Hush!” Benjamin covered his brother’s mouth, but it was too late. I had already heard Moses’ words.

Ingrid’s cornflower eyes filled with tears. “You poor dears, you must hide here in our home.”

“Excuse us a moment.” I beckoned to Ingrid who followed me into the hallway. “Ingrid, how could you even think of hiding those boys here?”

“Peter, they have no place else to go,” Ingrid said.

\* \* \*

A scene from my boyhood flashed before me. A grim-faced woman stared at me with her stone-gray eyes, her mouth set in a line as thin as a piece of string. I was a ragged, dirty-faced ten-year-old at the time. “No,” the woman had said to her husband. “I don’t want him. He can go to the orphanage.”

“But please, Ma’am, Sir, I have no place else to go,” I had pleaded. The lady and gentleman brushed past me without another glance.

\* \* \*

“Peter,” said Ingrid. The image of the grim-faced woman was replaced by my wife’s warm countenance.

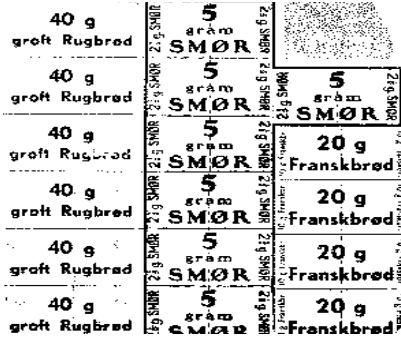
“Ingrid, the boys can stay,” I said. I wiped my eyes with my shirt sleeve.

“Danke, Peter!” Ingrid kissed me on the cheek.

“I don’t want to get arrested. The boys are the only ones we are hiding here,” I said.

The Rosen brothers were the keys that unlocked a new world for Ingrid and me.

**CHAPTER THREE:  
ADJUSTMENTS**



Danes were issued ration cards for anything they would need to buy: clothes, food, shoes, etc. These particular ration cards are for portions of black and white bread and butter.

As the months ticked by, Jews, sent via Emil, sought refuge in our home. Soon five more Jews were living in our little house. Among these Jews were: Isaac Van Veen, a shoemaker, and his wife Hannah; David Muller, a barber; and two young seamstresses, Rebecca and Rehab Hendricks.

One morning as we sat down to eat breakfast, Moses said, “What are we having to eat, Frau Johansen?”

“Black bread and milk,” said Ingrid.

Moses face turned as red as the flowers on Ingrid’s china dishes and shouted, “I’m not going to eat any breakfast!” He rose from his chair and stormed out of the dining room.

I didn’t run down to the shop after breakfast. Instead I went to Moses and Benjamin’s bedroom and rapped on the door.

“Who is it?” said Moses.

“Peter,” I answered. The door opened, and I stepped inside the small room. “I want to talk about what happened this morning.”

“I’m never, *ever* going to eat another piece of that black bread. I’d rather starve!” Moses said. His anger was evident.

I lost my temper. “My wife and I take you into our home, we give you clothes, feed you, and this is how you repay us! You’re an ungrateful boy!” As soon as I had spoken, I wished I could swallow my words. I ran out into the hallway and buried my face in

my hands. *How could I have said such terrible things?* I knelt down on the carpet, folded my hands, and prayed, "Lord, help me to control my temper." That was not the last time I prayed that message to my Heavenly Father.

A few minutes later I returned to the boys' bedroom. "I'm sorry that I lost my temper. Will you forgive me?" I asked.

With tears in his big, black eyes Moses said, "I'm the one who should be asking for forgiveness. I lost my temper, too."

I hugged him. "We'll both try to help each other conquer our tempers, won't we?"

"Yes, Herr Johansen." He laid his black, curly head on my shoulder.

\* \* \*

That night in bed I told Ingrid what happened. "With everyone working together, we can conquer our faults," she said.

I gave her small hand a gentle squeeze. "Goodnight, dear." I switched off the bedside lamp.

This small drizzle was nothing compared to the big thunderstorm that swept our way next.

**CHAPTER FOUR:  
BAD NEWS**

*E*ach Saturday afternoon, I recorded the money I earned from watch making and the money I spent on parts in the leather-bound ledger. One Saturday, while I was busy at this complicated task, the shop door flew open and in strode Emil.

“Peter, I have bad news for you,” Emil said.

“What happened?” I dropped my pen. A river of black ink trickled down the page; I didn’t mop it up. I was fearful of what Emil had to say.

“The Gestapo is going to raid your street next month!” replied Emil.

“What will we do about the Jews?” I asked.

“Help them relocate as soon as possible,” said Emil over his shoulder. “And try to make everyone look inconspicuous.”

“Won’t you help us?” I begged.

“I will do all I can to help you, but we must be cautious. Hitler’s men are lurking everywhere,” Emil whispered. The door banged shut.

\* \* \*

At the dinner table I broke the news. “Does anyone have any suggestions as to what we might do?”

Moses was the first to speak. "We could hide in the woods."

"I've heard that the Nazis track people with hounds,"  
whispered David.

"I hadn't thought of that," said Moses. He hung his head.

"In the cellar below the watch shop, perhaps?" said David.

"Nein, the Gestapo would be sure to search there," I said.

"What about the attic?" said Hannah.

"The floorboards are creaky, and the Nazis would hear us,"  
said Rehab.

"We could ride in a farmer's wagon under a load of fruits  
and vegetables to the next town," said Rebecca.

"How could we be sure that the farmer wouldn't turn us in  
once we arrived?" asked Rehab.

"We could have false identification papers made and travel  
to Sweden where there is no fighting," suggested Isaac.

"That is a good idea," said Ingrid, "but having those papers  
made is expensive, and we can only spare about ten kroner."

"We could sneak away in the night," said Benjamin.

"The Nazis patrol both day and night. Everywhere you turn  
there are Nazis," I reminded him.

No decision was reached that evening.



Many Jews had false  
identification papers like these  
made.



Ten kroner in 1943 was  
equivalent to eight American  
dollars.

**CHAPTER FIVE:  
UNIFORMS**

“*W*hy did I let Emil talk me into hiding Jews?” I muttered to myself as I climbed in bed. The clock in the hallway struck eleven; I pushed aside the bedclothes, being careful not to wake Ingrid. I knelt beside the bed. “Lord, show me how to help these Jews escape, and, Lord, give me the strength to carry out Thy will. Amen.” I climbed back into bed and soon fell into a deep sleep.

\* \* \*

That night just as Joseph of old was bidden to take Mary and the Christ Child and flee to Egypt, I was given a similar vision:

The Jews who were hiding in my home and I marched in two lines out the front door. We were dressed in Hitler Jugend uniforms, and we marched to the harbor where we boarded Nels’ fishing boat and sailed to the Promised Land: Sweden.

\* \* \*

At the breakfast table, forks and knives scraped against the china plates as I told the assembled family my dream.

“How are we supposed to dress like Hitler Jugend?” said Rebecca. “We don’t have any uniforms.”

“Emil trains Hitler Youth, and he could probably get us some uniforms,” said Moses.

I rose from the table and telephoned Emil. “Hello, is this Herr Heinz?”

A voice on the other side of the telephone line replied, "Ja."

"Herr Heinz, this is Herr Johansen. Your clock's minute hand is mended. Could you pick up your watch today?" I said in what Ingrid calls my "business manner."

I heard a rustling of papers, then Emil's voice. "I have several appointments today, but I could possibly attend to it this evening."

"Is five o'clock good?" I asked.

"Ja," was Emil's brief reply.

I hung up the receiver and returned to the dining room.

"Is Emil coming?" asked Moses as soon as I sat down.

I nodded. "We just have to be patient and wait." I tried to reassure everyone, including myself.

Emil arrived at our house at five o'clock precisely; we told him of our plan.

"I am sorry, I cannot obtain the desired uniforms," he said. "The Nazis would be suspicious if I placed an order for only nine uniforms; I usually order thirty uniforms, sometimes more. You will have to come by uniforms in some other way."

Disappointment encircled us.

"However, I can teach you all to *act* like Hitler Jugend," he said.

"What day is good for you?" I asked.



Jewish men believe they should cover their heads when they pray, so they wear a cap like this one called a *yamaka*.



The *Torah* consists of: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, it is written in Hebrew. All the writing on the scrolls is hand-written. The *Torah* is wrapped in velvet coverings there are bells attached to the scrolls. The *Torah* is kept in a special place in the *Synagogue* (the Jewish place of worship.) That place is called *The Holy Ark*.

“We will start tomorrow, if that is acceptable,” Emil said.

“Ja.” I shook his hand.

After Emil left, David said, “Peter, I am not going to train to be a Hitler Jugend on Shabbat. You know that is our day of rest.”

“David, don’t you realize we’re doing it for your safety?” I asked.

“I am not going to break the fourth commandment!” shouted David.

I ran out of the room and slammed the door behind me. I was too frustrated to say anything else.

\* \* \*

The clock in the upstairs hallway struck nine. I prayed for self-control as I knocked on David’s bedroom door. “David, are you in there?” I asked.

“Ja,” he replied. The door creaked open on its rusty hinges. David was wearing his striped prayer shawl and yamaka: his Torah on his lap.

“David, I realize that you wish to keep the fourth commandment, but this is a matter between life and death.” I tried to reason with him.

“I obey laws made by God, not laws made by men!” was David’s icy reply.

An idea struck me. I said, “David, do you think God would give me a vision of something He did not want me to carry out?”

David rocked back and forth and uttered some Hebrew words that sounded as incoherent to me as the static on our confiscated radio. Once the rocking and uttering ceased, David shook my hand. "You are right, Peter, God would never have given you a vision without a purpose."

\* \* \*

"I can't pretend to be a boy. That's deceitful!" shrieked Rebecca.

I raised my hands in the air. "Rebecca, it will only be for one night!"

"My parents taught me never to tell a lie, and I don't intend to start now," she retorted.

"Rebecca, it isn't being deceitful because the Nazis do not live by the truth; therefore, they do not deserve to know the truth," I said trying to be calm and rational.

Rebecca thought a moment, and then she said, "I never looked at it that way before, Peter." After a pause, she added, "I am willing to try it."

\* \* \*

Rebecca and Rehab agreed to make the uniforms. They rubbed the rough curtain between their fingers.

"A needle would not be able to go easily through this thick cloth," said Rebecca. "We need cotton or wool."

Ingrid's crochet hooks click-clacked.

"What are you making?" I said and peered over her

shoulder.

“A blanket.” She smiled a mysterious smile, one I had never seen on her face.

I paced up and down the room. “I have an idea.”

“What?” everyone asked at the same time.

“Ingrid, do you remember those old, wool blankets up in the attic?” I leaned my elbows on the back of Ingrid’s armchair.

“Yes, I remember them,” she said.

“We could dye the blankets and make uniforms out of them!” I told her.

“What would we use for dye?” asked David.

“Walnut juice,” said Hannah.

“Why walnut juice, Hannah?” asked Moses, his eyes as round as pastries.

“Boiling walnut juice makes a dark dye,” answered Hannah.

“Hannah, I have some herbs growing in window-boxes,” said Ingrid. “Perhaps if you mixed them with the walnut juice it would be the correct color.”

\* \* \*

During the week, Rebecca and Rehab were busy all day and into the night making the uniforms. Their only pattern was a drawing Emil had sketched for them on his last visit.

“Peter,” called Rebecca from the foot of the stairs, “I need

you to try on your uniform.”

I ran up to the sitting room and slipped on the jacket for what seemed the hundredth time that afternoon.

“Where’s Ingrid?” I asked Rebecca.

“She went to the doctor,” she said with a mouthful of pins. “I’m surprised you didn’t know about the…”

“I’m home,” called Ingrid from the downstairs hallway.

I ran down the stairs. “Rebecca said you went to the doctor. Are you ill?” I questioned Ingrid.

“No, Peter, I am not ill,” Ingrid replied.

“What is the matter?” I asked feeling anxious.

“I’m expecting a baby,” Ingrid said.

“I’m surprised I didn’t realize,” I said as we ascended the narrow stairway.

“Well, you were busy taking care of our guests and the shop,” said Ingrid. She put a hand on my shoulder.

“When is the baby coming?” I asked.

“The doctor said mid to late September.” Ingrid smiled.

“In a few months I will be a papa and you a mama.” I hugged Ingrid.

“God is good,” murmured Ingrid.

\* \* \*

"I am not going to wear a swastika!" said Isaac.

"Isaac, how else will you be able to pass as a Nazi?" I asked.

"I will not wear a symbol that stands for hatred of my people!" Isaac folded his arms.

I groaned and fled from the room.

That night I was brushing my teeth when Isaac came in the bathroom with his toothbrush.

"I thought about what you said this afternoon," said Isaac. "If I didn't disguise myself, I would be sent to a camp and Hannah would not have anyone to protect her. I will do anything to keep my wife safe."

"I'm glad you feel that way, Isaac," I said clapping him on the back.

"I will make modifications to everyone's footwear so they look like the boots I have seen on the Nazis on the streets," Isaac offered.

"Danke, that would be most helpful," I said.

## CHAPTER SIX: TRAINING

“**P**eter,” said Ingrid, “I am not going to array myself as a Hitler Youth.”

I made a question mark with my eyebrows.

“I wouldn’t pass as a boy in this condition. Besides, someone should be at the house at the time of the raid. The Nazis would be suspicious if the owners were not at home,” Ingrid reminded me.

“Are you certain you’ll be all right here?” I looked down at her.

“Peter, God will protect us if we are together or far apart.” Ingrid’s countenance was placid.

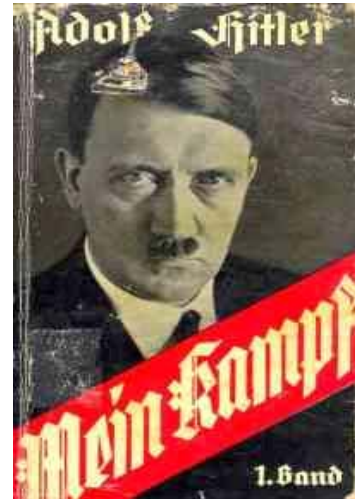
“God bless you, darling, for those hopeful words.” I left the room; then I returned in a few minutes. “Before I forget, I talked to Nels today, and he says he has enough room for three more people in his boat. Are you certain you won’t come?”

Ingrid nodded, “I am certain.”

\* \* \*

“Repeat after me,” said Emil, “Heil Hitler!” and he raised his arm in the Nazi salute.

“Heil Hitler!” everyone echoed Emil’s gestures and words.



Hitler’s famous book *Mein Kampf* is over 1000 pages. The original title was: *Four-and-a-Half Years of Struggle against Lies, Stupidity, and Cowardice*, the publisher suggested the shorter title: *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*.

“Ein volk, ein Reich, ein Führer!” Emil continued his tutoring.

I took classes along with the rest of the household, which were held in our cellar. We called the classes our “night school.”

\* \* \*

One evening while everyone was at the dinner table, the doorbell rang. All the Jews scattered like mice to their holes.

I ran down the stairs two at a time and opened the door. A Hitler Youth stood in the doorway.

“Good evening, Herr Johansen.” The youth’s voice was cool.

I felt every muscle in my body grow tense. *Could this boy be sent here to spy on us? Are there more Nazis lurking nearby?* These thoughts terrified me; then I recalled a verse I had read from the Bible, *What time I am afraid; I will trust in Thee*. It gave me courage to answer. “Good evening,” I greeted the boy.

“I have a package for you,” he said. “Sign here please.” The boy handed me a card and a pen.

“Danke,” I said trying to sound as casual as Emil had when he first told us about the Rosen brothers. My fingers trembled as I scrawled my name.

“Heil Hitler!” the boy saluted. He hopped astride his bicycle and accelerated down the street.

The package said: ***Bendtsen’s Booksellers***. “I wonder what this is about.” I took the box upstairs to the sitting room. “It’s all right. You can come out of your hiding places, everyone,” I

called.

The household gathered around the box as I attempted to open it.

“Would one of you please fetch me a knife?” I said wiping my brow with my sleeve. Mysterious packages delivered by Hitler Jugend made me uneasy.

“I will,” said Moses. He ran in the direction of the kitchen and returned with a knife.

I pried the box open. Underneath a mass of tissue paper was a copy of *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler. *Who could have sent me this?* I wondered. At the bottom of the first page scarcely visible, was the letter W, the next page was blank, but the third page had an E. As I leafed through the book, I decoded a secret message. Pieced together it read:

*We leave Sunday 9:00 P.M.*

*Emil*

**CHAPTER SEVEN:  
PREPARING FOR  
ESCAPE**

**I** can't cut my hair!" said Hannah looking in the mirror at her waterfall of black hair cascading down her back.

"You have to, Hannah," I insisted. "It's the only way for you to pass as a boy."

"Couldn't I pin up my hair and wear a cap over it?" she pleaded.

"What if we should meet up with Nazis and your hair came undone?" asked David whose barber skills were in great demand in our household.

"They would know I was a girl," replied Hannah.

David reached in the pocket of one of Ingrid's aprons that he had tied around his waist and pulled out a pair of scissors. "Are you willing to have me cut your hair or not, Hannah?" he asked.

Hannah closed her eyes, "Please do it quickly, David."

*Snip! Snip! Snip!* Thick, shiny black locks tumbled to the floor. David admired his work.

"Hannah, you can look now," I said and passed her a hand mirror.

Hannah opened her eyes and gazed at her reflection. "That is not me!" She felt her short hair. "It doesn't look as dreadful, as I thought it would."

\* \* \*

Half an hour later, Rehab followed me into the bathroom.

“There must be some misunderstanding,” she pleaded.

“What do you mean?” I said as I opened a glass cabinet door and took a bottle down from the top shelf.

“Benjamin said you are going to dye our hair with peroxide.” Rehab clutched her hair.

“Most Germans are blond-haired, I thought that...”

“First cutting our hair and now dyeing it!” interrupted Rehab.

My patience was rationed like food. “It’s now or never, Rehab!” I bit my lower lip. “I’m sorry I got angry,” I apologized.

“Will my hair ever be the same again?” Rehab looked worried.

“You’ll be as beautiful as Queen Esther before we know it,” I assured her.

Rehab was quite willing to do anything after my compliment.

\* \* \*

“My beard has barely been growing a month and you want me to shave it?” gasped Benjamin.

“David and Isaac have to shave too, Benjamin,” I said, “and they have longer beards.”

“My father never shaved his beard,” he retorted.



*Hydrogen Peroxide* is a combination of water and oxygen. People use it for a variety of reasons: one of them is to “bleach” their hair blond. Some people have tried it and unintentionally dyed their hair a vibrant orange!

“Benjamin, if your father were here, what do you think he would want you to do?”

“He would...” Benjamin hesitated, “want me to do what I thought to be right.”

“Which is what?” I asked.

“He would want me to be obedient to my elders, especially to someone that has saved my life and the life of my brother,” he answered.

“Thank you, dear boy, for those kind words.” I gave him a pat on the back and a razor.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: NAZI ENCOUNTER

The clocks in the house tolled half-past eight in unison. Everything was in order for us to leave for the harbor where we would meet Nels and sail across the sea to Sweden.

“It will be hard to be separated from you,” said Ingrid. She stood on her tiptoes and threw her arms around my neck.

“I know, but God willing, we shall not be separated long,” I encouraged her.

“I cannot wait for that day to come.” Her eyes filled with tears.

\* \* \*

Half an hour later, Emil arrived, and we began our perilous journey. We marched up one lamp-lit street and down another just like Emil had taught us. Everyone was at their ease because the harbor was only a block or two away.

A wave of white light flashed in our eyes. “Halt! Who goes there?” said a loud man’s voice.

Rebecca squeezed my hand until my knuckles turned white. I felt Moses’ body quiver like leaves shaking in the autumn breeze. *God, give Emil the right words to say, I prayed.*

“It is Herr Heinz with some Jugend for the Führer,” said Emil in answer to the man’s question.



Being near the sea; fishing was and still is of great importance to the Danes. This is a fishing boat from the period.



This is a photograph of Jens Moller, who was a fisherman and helped smuggle Jews from Denmark to Sweden during WW II.

The man who had spoken marched with his hands behind his back and examined everyone with ice-blue eyes. He made speeches about every member of our party. I remember only two of them.

“You need to stand straighter. Der Führer cannot have slouching soldiers now, can he?” he asked Moses.

Moses stood as straight as a lamppost. He said, “No, sir. Heil Hitler!”

“Keep your hands at your sides at all times,” said the officer. He was speaking to Hannah who was biting her fingernails.

“Yes, sir,” she said in her best German accent.

Isaac nudged her gently.

“Heil Hitler,” she added.

“Herr Heinz, have a good evening. Heil Hitler!” said the officer.

“Heil Hitler,” replied Emil.

As we marched, I looked at the swastika on the officer’s armband; it was a venomous, black spider in a web waiting to capture innocent victims and take away their lives.

*Just like Nazis!* I thought.

## CHAPTER NINE: TO SWEDEN

**W**e continued on our way through the narrow streets halting at the harbor. The moonlight illuminated a fishing boat with white sails.

“There’s Nazis, Nels.” A fisherman grabbed a young man, unmistakably my brother-in-law, by the arm.

“Please do not harm us. We are only fishermen,” said Nels.

“Nels,” I whispered, “It’s Peter.”

“Thank the Lord you are all safe.” Nels gave me a brotherly embrace.

“We must get everyone in the cabin,” I said.

We waved goodbye to Emil as the boat sailed out of the harbor.

\* \* \*

The water splashed up against the sides of Nels’ boat. I had never been on a sea journey. It reminded me of Hans Christian Andersen’s tale ***The Little Mermaid***, and I half-expected to see one of those fanciful creatures spring from the water and plunge down again.

“Danke, Nels, for all you have done.” I gripped Nels firmly by the hand.

“It isn’t anything, Peter.” Nels smiled.



This statue, erected in 1913, is of Little Mermaid from Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale. The statue is in Copenhagen, Denmark to this very day.



Hans Christian Andersen was a famous Danish writer living from 1805-1875. He was born Odense (now Fyn), Denmark. Besides *The Little Mermaid* he wrote: *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, *The Brave Tin Soldier*, and many more wonderful tales.

“It is!” I protested. “You are saving the lives of several people and at the same time risking your own.”

“I wanted to do it, Peter.” Nels shook my smooth, white hand with his calloused, brown one.

I looked up at the starry heavens and prayed, “Danke, God, for Thy protection over us. Keep Ingrid and the baby within her safe in Thine arms. Amen.”

**CHAPTER TEN:  
FAMILY REUNION**

*M*any dawns and sunsets passed before I saw Ingrid again. When she finally arrived in Sweden I scooped her in my arms.

“Oh, Ingrid, thank God you’re safe!” I said.

That evening Ingrid told Nels and me about the raid. The Gestapo had barged in the house and the officer in charge said to Ingrid,

“Where is your husband? And where are the Jews you are hiding?”

Ingrid told them I was in Sweden purchasing watch parts and that there were no Jews in the house. The Gestapo searched the house thoroughly, and when they left they were infuriated.

\* \* \*

Shortly after Ingrid’s arrival, a little man came to live with us.

“Isn’t he handsome, Peter!” exclaimed Ingrid.

“He certainly is.” I rocked my son in my arms. “What do you want to name him?”

“I thought I would let you decide that.” Ingrid laid her head back on the bed pillows.

“As you wish, dear.” I thought for a moment. “What about ‘Christian’?” I placed the baby in Ingrid’s arms and sat down in the



This is a photograph taken of King Christian X, he was born on September 26, 1870 not far Copenhagen, Denmark. He reigned from 1912-1947. He used to ride through the streets of Copenhagen on a horse without a single body-guard! When the Nazis invaded his country he told all his people to wear the "Jewish star" He even wore one himself! He passed away in 1947.

chair nearest the bed. "After King Christian X of Denmark."

Ingrid nodded. "I would love our son to be named after that great man."

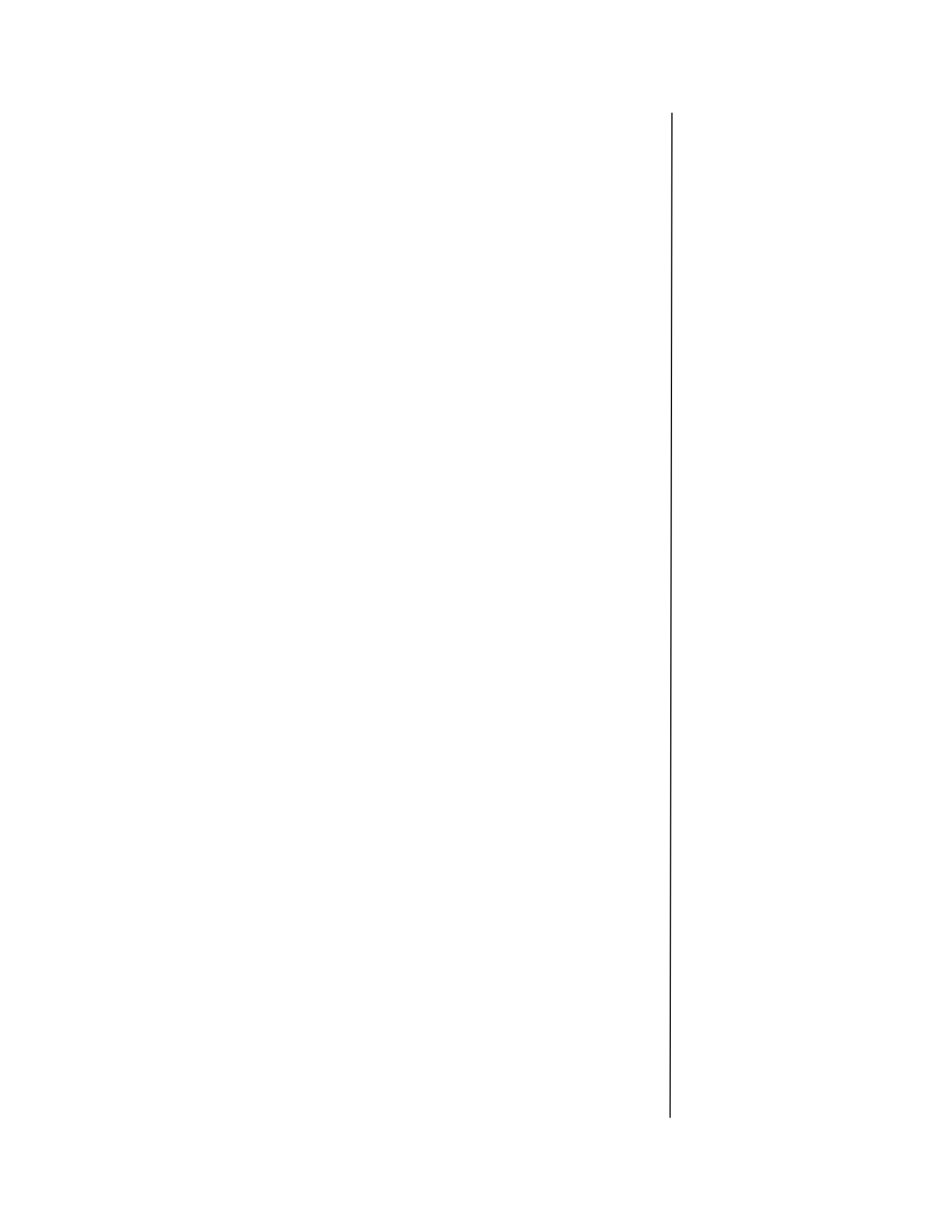
I picked up the gold-edged Bible and turned the yellowed leaves to a page labeled:

### *BIRTHS*

By the light of the lamp I penned:

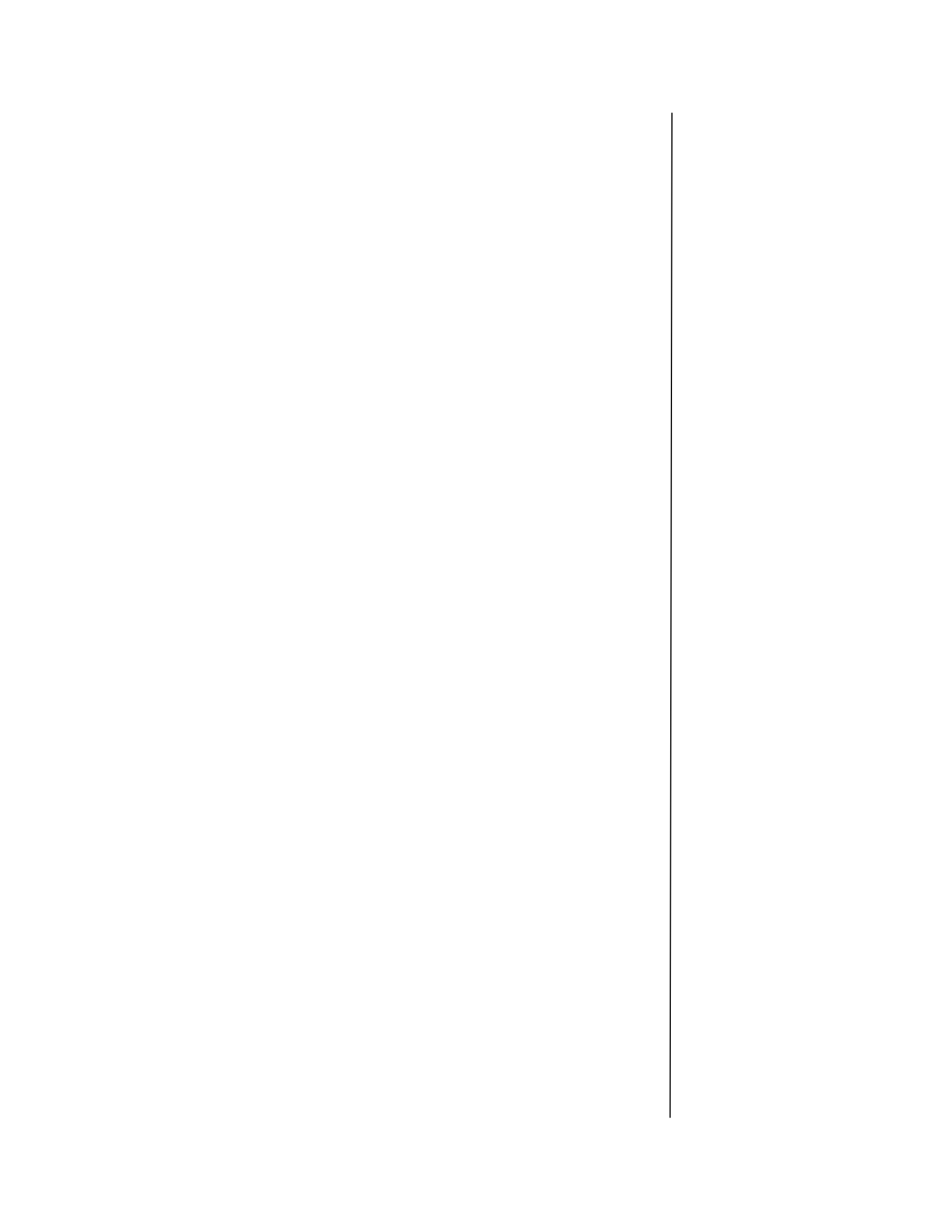
*Christian Johansen born on September 15, 1943*

I took Baby Christian in my arms again and pointed to where I had written his name. "That's you," I whispered in his wee, red ear. "That's you."



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## About the Author

Mandy V. Bendt is fourteen years old. She has participated in nine plays. She loves reading and writing. She is learning American Sign Language and to play the Highland Bagpipes. She also enjoys baking, reenacting, and babysitting her two nephews: Justin and Anthony. Mandy is the fifth child of six and resides with her family in Tampa, Florida.



Mandy as Madame Rondeau in the play *Les Miserables* performed by the homeschool acting troupe "Acting up for Him."