Twice a Refugee,

by

Ruth Haas.
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Chapter I.
Myself.

On the 21st of November 1927, I was born in Charlottenburg, Berlin. My parents named me Ruth but my Jewish name is Rachel and, in January 1939, by Herr Hitler's order all German Jewish women and girls had to take the name of Franka.

My mother, Martha was born in Poland, but my father, Gustav Haas (Hangel) had been born in both Germany. With Granny, he came to the capital in 1913.
to be a soldier, and after the Great War he received das Ehrenkreuz. After a year’s study of chemistry at the university he wrote chemistry books.

I have a sister called Jeanette, who is three and a half years older than me, is learning in a Jewish kindergarten how to play with little children. She would like to come to England.

My grammy, mother’s mother is living with my parents and is eighty one.
Chapter II

My home in Germany.

I lived in Germany first inside Berlin when I was a little baby. Then we went outside to the country, and now I am going to tell you all about my country house in Germany.

First of all I will tell you something that will be for you a surprise, but not for us in Germany. In Germany there are large houses. Perhaps you have people here speaking about the high houses in America, so it is the same in Germany only that there are 4 and 5 flat's. Of course nearly all the houses have lift's. Now then let's go back to our
little country house. My street was called "Krotnauer Strasse" and my number was 8. The front of my house was like this, first of all there was a big gate and if you rang the bell then we opened the gate from inside. If you came in, there is a nice big rose garden with all colours of flowers. Of course most kinds of flowers were roses. Then there is a nice broad way to some steps. When you went up the steps you came to a big green door. When you rang the bell we open the door.

We also have two other gardens. When you came into the kitchen there was a glass door, and if you went down the steps you came into the back garden.
The back garden was for we children to play in. I have forgotten to tell you that there was not only my sister and I, we were living with an uncle of ours with his wife, his mother-in-law and three children. After the garden is a little wood and at last comes a big gate, there was the third garden, but what was inside you cannot guess and so I will tell you. A big fruit garden. We have strawberries, apples, oranges, grapes, pears, peaches and a lot more which I don't get to know the name of yet. Then we had potatoes, vegetables and tomatoes. When we went in the garden that was every day 'it took us a half hour to go through. I wish you
would have been in the summer's there.
When I was six years old I went to school. Children do not go to school in Germany until they are six years old. The people began to get at the Jew's and mom said, "It is no use we shall have to go in the town," and so we went.
And now my parent's and family are still living in the house inside Berlin and about the school you will hear in the next chapter.
Chapter III

School days in Germany.

Now I told you in the last chapter I went to school when 6 years of age. Our new address was "Fybel" Strasse 35 and in the same street about five minutes from our house was our school.

My sister Jeannette went to the same school as I, except she went to a high school and I started school. The high school was in the same house as was ours, school except the council school was in the first and second flat and high school was in third and forth flat.
I went to that Christian school till I was nine years. Then I went to a Jewish high school. Jeannette left the same time as me the High school and Jeannette went to my uncle's grammar school. My uncle with whom we were living together at the country is running a grammar school in Germany, it is different in the school. In the beginning, you go to school at ten o'clock and go home at twelve o'clock. When you are in the Juniors, you go at nine and go home at one. When you start the last junior classes they start at eight till one, and at the Seniors you
start at eight till two in the afternoon.
In the afternoon on Tuesday we had four classes that day: games and English. But only from nine years you could start.

On Mondays I had Private Drill, but I still had to do my homework. In Germany it does not matter if you are in a council school; you have to do homework and not only that, you have to pay and buy your own books. We had ruled books of each lesson one whole hour, so that we had six lessons a
a day.
In every Jewish school also
council school you were
forced to learn Hebrew, and I learned a great deal.
half a pound of coffee. I went down and when I came out of the shop, the lady or Porter who looks after the house came crying round the corner. I said in German "Hallo! Are you out at this time?" She said "Yes Ruth I went for something in a shop next to your synagogue, and I said "There is nothing to cry? "Yes she said "Your synagogue is on fire. "What? I said, "Our synagogue on fire?" "Yes not only that one every in what Germany she said.
I went up as quick as my feet could take me. I went into my parents room and told them everything I heard. My uncle went to see, when he came back he said that it was burning. Mother went crying to the Telephone to ring my headmaster. He was not there, but the schoolmaster who is looking after the school house was there, and said that there is no school.
Jeanette and I had looked on our face like a dead cat. We went shopping for mother. At night about 10 o'clock my auntie rang up, Jeanette came from the phone as white as chalk, she could talk, her eyes were full of tears, she only handed it to mother. We went in the room, Jeanette started crying like a little baby.

When mother came in, she did the same as my sister. After a while she said, "They have put uncle into a concentration camp." Well I was so upset that I started crying too. I was frightened to go alone to bed. I said to mother, "What will you say to father?" If they could not answer, we went to bed. The next morning we thought we were alone with out father, but when we came in the kitchen, father was on his chair near the window reading the Bible. Jeanette and I not like the face of father.
so we laid the table and made father a 
drink of coffee and gave him some bread 
rolls with jam. After that father looked 
much better. I kissed father and we will 
go a little in the park daily. After we 
came home we told father we would 
do some English with him. We went in 
our room and did so. 
The pastor and still father was still 
there. As last the 21st of December came 
and I thought that I will not receive 
anything for my birthday that year, 
but I did. In about the beginning 
of December they started children 
transports and that is why I am 
in England and about coming I 
will tell you in the next chapter.
Chapter V

Getting Ready.

I have a cousin in Hull called Dr. Robert Haas. One day my cousin heard some one mention about having a refugee, so he went up to them, and said, that he had two cousins whom he would like to bring to England. So the lady asked him down. Robert went to Mr. Lavinie and talked about it. Then he wrote to us to send a picture of us both, so we did. Mr. Lavinie choose me, because I was only eleven years then, and my sister was fourteen. In June, it was January.
then) so that I would have to go to school. We said I would go.

For many weeks we did not hear anything. One day (it was the 29th of May) my mother had a letter. When I came home, from school, there was only my auntie, Trude and Grammy. (Jeanette was at school.) I said, " Grammy, where is mother?" She said, "I have a surprise has come. We heard from the English consulate that your permit will be coming through in less than six weeks."

So I sat down and had dinner. I had just finished my homework when I heard the door. My sister who had come home
from school and heard all the exciting news, was doing her homework: we were in the dining room.) The dining room door opened and mother and father came in. "Well?" I said very excitedly. "Don't be so rude, said Jeanette, let them get first settled." "Next year at this time you will be in England, dear," said mother, "Oh," I said, "that will be grand. Oh but I don't want to leave you, many dear." "Well we have it all down darling, so we will have to bear the pains." Mother and father were trying to pet me up and said (Father did), "Nevermind dear you will be happy once you get them." But by the looks I could
tell that it was very hard for him to say this.)
So the weeks were very short and on the 24th of June my father got a letter. It said something in English so I did not know what it was.
Father opened it and said very happily "It is the permit." Oh! I said. Now the time went on very quickly. We had a lot of running about. We got to know that holiday on the 28th of June till the 8th of August, so I could not get much schooling the last few days. The last day of the German School for me came. It was very hard for me to part from all my good friends.
When I had left school, mother said it was a lot easier with preparations so that
one worry had gone. We had much running about getting more clothes and things, to take. The week sped along and the parting I will explain in the next chapter.
Chapter VI

Good Bye.

After getting ready I came to know, that my transport goes at the 4th of July. It then was the 27th of June. It was a real exciting time. For the first time I was to leave my parents. At last the Sunday (the last one for me at home) came. I remember my cousin Rita, a friend Ruth Mendelson and another friend Ilia Mendelson came. My mother and I had an exciting time. I remember mother made us each an egg. We both had an exciting time. My sister of course as well. Monday came and I was
half happy and half unhappy. In the afternoon my two friends Ruth and Mie came. I was running in and out to say, "Good Bye," to people in our house.

The last night came at last. I went to bed at eight o'clock. When I was about one hour in bed Jeannette came in and I got up again to help Mother to pack my things. At last I got to bed at half past nine. My sister slept with me the last night and I promised her not to make my Grandma cry. My father woke me at five o'clock. I did not think Grandma would get up, but she did.

All was well and I
thought I behaved my self very well, I never let one tear come out of my eye. My father took me to the Tileisicher Bahnhof (that is the name of the station) and went in the train at 9 o'clock. On the Charlottenburger Bahnhof (that is the station near our home) my parents came again and relatives came to see me off. That was the hardest part of all. "But I think it will be all right," I said to my self and so it was. About through Germany I will tell you in the next chapter.
Chapter VII

In the Train through Germany.

When the train goes its sign to go, I had a last look at my mother and father. I made a very happy face for my parents to cheer up. It left the station and then I had a little weep for myself when nobody watched me. When I got over it I talked to the girl's to try and forget (it nearly like a holiday for us.) It was beautiful to look at the fields and rivers.
We stopped at many places and got more children. It was rather a long journey so we played games, talked, ate, and slept or looked a little out of the window. The girl who sat across from me had no money with her so I felt very sorry for her. My father had given me 2 marks (60 pence) with me so I gave her half of it (1 mark 30 pence). At every stop we used to get something like ice cream, toffee, chocolate etc. We used to say bye and good luck and went on. I really cannot tell.
much more as the train went much too quickly for us to see everything.
When we came to the custom "The book of Holland" that is what it is called before Holland we were all so frightened that one of the girls called Renate fell asleep. When the official came in he was trying to wake her by whistling which he could not do so we all started giggling. At the end when she did wake up she only asked us how much money we had. He never looked at our
cases.

When he had gone, one of the girls said, "He did not open the cases because they were so nice and tidy, one upon another." Going through Holland you will hear in the next chapter.
Chapter VIII

Going through Holland.

When we came out of Germany, we came into Holland. We first did not take any fancy to it. When the ladies and men came in and gave each compartment a big box of biscuits and bottles of lemonade we began to like them. It was lovely through Holland. The people were so friendly. I remember one road crossing the children and grown ups waved to us. On one station a very good looking young porter asked us if we would like some choco-
late we answered him, that we had to much chocolate out there, but we took it and enjoyed it very much. There is not much to say really. Oh I remember there was a big field with chickens and so on. In the middle there was a big farm house. It was seen very plain. We travelled in the train till 9-30 p.m. then we had to get off and go to the ship. Everybody was shivering. We received a card with a number my was 88 and that was our bed number. I was very pleased because 88 was top and 87 was bottom, so I slept on the top.

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"We waited about half an hour till we could go on board. We were sent straight to bed.

About across the North Sea you will hear in the next chapter."
Chapter VIII.

Across the North Sea.

We got undressed and I just got on my bed, when a nurse came in to see if we were all all right. "Some girls have been sick already," said the nurse. "Oh, I hope I will not be sick," I said to the nurse. At last we got to sleep, after a real good pillow-fight. In the middle of the night I woke up and I was very frightened. Ruth Joltschmidt (the girl who slept under me) said, "Are you awake, Ruth?", I answered, "Yes, Ruth." "I feel sick." "Just wait a minute, Ruth," she said and she gave me an aspirin. If I lay on my stomach and after a bit of groaning I went off.
to sleep. In the morning about 5 o'clock, Ruth three other girls and I were going to get up and see the sunrise. We all awoke at the same time, but we were too tired to get up. Ruth and I got up, we were ready washed and dressed, so when the nurse came to wake us at 6:30 am. she was surprised to see us up. Don't you do that when you get to Hull will you? she said in a laughing tone. She promised her and I am sure I have not broken the promise till this day.

In the morning Ruth, Kita Jacob (a girl who went to the central school with me) and myself went on the top deck, when a big storm came on, my new hat flew off my head down to the cabins and of the girls who found it
gave it to me afterwards.

The next chapter is journey to Londo
and Hull. It will be quite
long.
Chapter X

Journey to London and Hull.

At last in London. After all the lovely stories I have heard about London, I really did enjoy the three and a half hours there. In fact I did not want to leave it after I had to go in the train to Hull.

Well, when we got on Kings' Cross Station, there were the King, Queen, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret Rose on the platform. It is the first time in my life I have ever shaken hands with a King or a Royal family. I had a very funny feeling inside me.

Because I did not carry my case, none of us did. England is a free country, all I had
on my back was my haversack. (Well I mean to carry.)

After we left the station we went to Bloomsbury House. There our names were called out and they took many particulars. Some of the girls' relations and guardians of the girls who were going to live in London were there.

When everything was finished Ruth Goldschmidt and I were taken in a taxi to another station. "Lean back," said the gentleman who came with us. "When "Oh there are my auntie and uncle" (of course I said this in German.) I got out of the taxi, when it stopped and ran into my auntie's arms. After saying "How I am and how they are..."
my auntie asked me if I would like to have something to eat first. So off we three went into a cafe. It was the first time in my life for months and months that I had been in a cafe, as in Germany in front of every cafe it says "Juden Unterwünscht", which means in plain English "we are not wanted". I had coffee, eggs on toast, cream bun, jam, and jam. "Well I really did enjoy it!

When I had finished my tea, we went round London. I think London was very different to Berlin. Well the time went on and we had to make our way to the station. The time came for the two to come in. Another 'good-by'.
but this time not as a hard one. I also sped with the gentleman. After I recognized him to be the man who came with him in the taxi.

The train came in. My came into the compartment with us, and as the lady and gentleman see we arrive safely to Hull. They said they wo and they did. I said, "Oh and the train went off. The people who were looking a we had a little baby with and it was very bloom. Ruth was looking at and I was looking at a little while later we to each other. All at one the waiter came. The gent said something to him. Th
waiter came back, and put two bottles of lemonade and two glasses on our small table. "Oh don't, don't," I said, "We no money, me cannot pay," "It's all right," said the gentleman. "I'll pay for you." "Oh thank you, thank you," said Ruth and I. You see we did not know it was thank you. From that time it taught me that English people are very kind and helpful.

At last it was half past eight. The train stopped. "Well girls this is Hull," the lady said. Before we got off the train we said, "Thank you and thank you." When we got off the train I saw my Auntie, cousin, Mr. downton and one of his daughters and a friend.
I was very pleased to see them all. My cousin brought his car. I sat on my new uncle's knee. I found they were all good and kind to me. The car stopped, we all went out. "Well Ruth", said my cousin (in German) to me, "this is your new home". We went into the house, which I found very different to German houses! [here]. All the family were there. When I was about a week with them I grew to love them very much. I had my supper. I was also very tired and homesick, but my Auntie found that out very much. When I got to bed I cried very much, but my Auntie was there to comfort me, till I fell asleep.