

# A Child in Hiding

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*In 1940, at the beginning of World War II (1939-1945), the armed forces of Nazi Germany **conquered**<sup>1</sup> France. Benno Harte, Amalia's grandfather, was living in France at the time. He and his family were Jewish and had to escape from their home in Paris and hide in a farmhouse.*

**Q:** What was life like for you before the Nazis?

**A:** My parents were **well-to-do**<sup>2</sup> and provided everything I needed. I got an education when I was a child. When we moved to France, I didn't speak a single word of French. I went to a special school for **immigrants**<sup>3</sup>. Then the war started, in September 1939.

**Q:** What happened during the war?

**A:** When the French lost the war in 1940, we had to flee. We left the city and went south, away from the Germans.

**Q:** Was your father arrested?

**A:** My father was arrested when we moved from the city to the mountains on the train. He was arrested for having fake papers and because he was a Jew. He was arrested by the French, who were supposed to hand him over to the Nazis. Instead, he was set free.

**Q:** How did you survive?

**A:** We went to live in the mountains. Twice the police came to arrest me. But the apartment had two doors--one in the front, one in the back. The police came through the front door, and I escaped through the back.

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<sup>1</sup> **conquered:** gained control of land by fighting a war

<sup>2</sup> **well-to-do:** having plenty of money and possessions

<sup>3</sup> **immigrants:** people who have moved into a country

## Reading Passage

**Q:** Didn't you live in a farmhouse?

**A:** We stayed in a little farmhouse that belonged to a farmer. We bought food from the farmer—potatoes, chickens, and rabbits.

**Q:** How did you find the money to buy food?

**A:** It was a problem. My parents had a manufacturing plant in Paris. Before the war it was very successful. [When the Nazis came,] Jews couldn't own anything, so my mother put a lady in charge who had worked at the factory since the business started. My mother would travel to Paris every so often to get the money.

**Q:** Your father was arrested, but were any other family members or friends arrested or murdered?

**A:** Not my immediate friends. Many of my friends were not Jewish. They survived. But members of my family in Poland **perished**<sup>4</sup>. My father's mother and sister lived in [the Netherlands]. They disappeared.

**Q:** So your aunt was murdered?

**A:** Yes, she was murdered.

**Q:** How did you feel about life after the Holocaust?

**A:** I felt like I would never worry about anything again. I would be happy with anything that [might] happen. It would be so much better than what we had lived through.

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<sup>4</sup> **perished:** died