

Penguin



Readers

The Boy
in the
Striped
Pyjamas

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CHAPTER ONE

Change

One afternoon, Bruno came home from school and was surprised to find Maria, the family's **maid**, in his bedroom. She was **packing** his clothes and his things in large boxes.

"What are you doing, Maria?" he asked as **politely** as possible because his mother always told him never to be **rude**. "Please don't touch my things!"

But Maria shook her head and then pointed to Bruno's mother, who was standing at the top of the stairs. She was a tall woman with long red hair that she wore in a ball on top of her head. She held her hands together tightly and was watching Bruno with a worried face.

"Mother!" said Bruno. "What is happening? Why is Maria packing my things?"

"Come downstairs with me," replied Mother, so he followed her down to the family's large dining room.

He looked around it and remembered that his parents and the Fury, and the Fury's friend Eva, were sitting here a week ago. His father was wearing his new **uniform** and he looked very **proud**.

"Who is the Fury?" Bruno remembered quietly asking his sister, Gretel, while they watched the four adults.

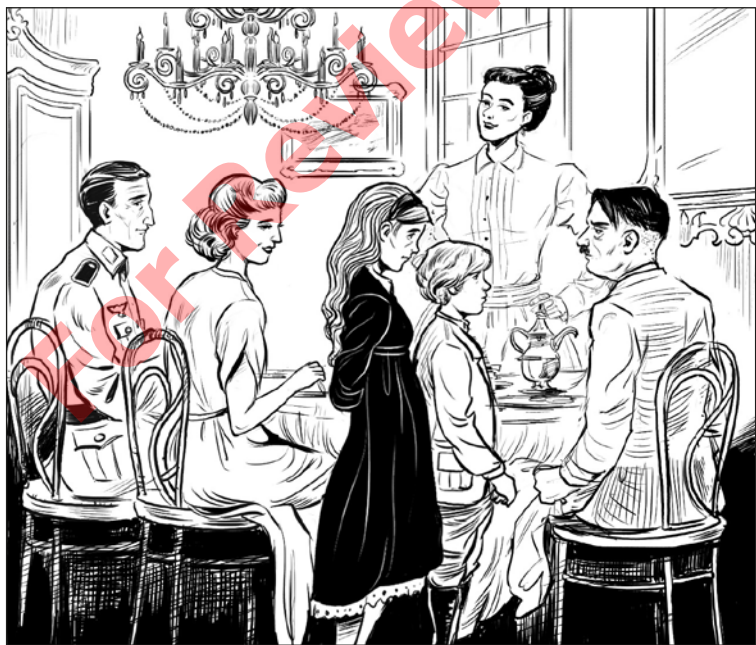
"He is the **leader** of Germany, stupid! And that's his girlfriend, Eva," Gretel replied. "They've come for dinner with Mother and Father!" she added, proudly.

Bruno remembered that the Fury was much shorter than Father and not as strong. He had dark hair and had a strange small square of black hair above his mouth. The woman with him was very beautiful. She had blonde hair and a red mouth, and she smiled a lot.

Then Bruno and Gretel came into the dining room and Father introduced them to the Fury. "These are my children, Fury," he said. "Gretel and Bruno."

"Which one is which?" replied the Fury, and laughed. But Bruno did not think this was very funny.

"I'm twelve and he's nine," explained Gretel. "I can speak French."



“Why do you want to speak French?” asked the Fury, and he laughed again. Then he sat down in Father’s chair and Bruno remembered thinking that this was very rude. Mother’s face was red when she asked Lars, their cook, to bring the soup. Then she told the children to go upstairs.

The Fury and Eva stayed for more than two hours. Bruno and Gretel were not invited to say goodbye to them. Bruno watched them leave from his bedroom.

“What a horrible, rude man,” he remembered thinking.

Later that night, Bruno heard some of Mother and Father’s conversation in Father’s office.

“ . . . to leave Berlin for a place like that . . . ” Mother was saying.

“ . . . we cannot choose . . . my work must continue . . . ” replied Father.

“ . . . we cannot let them live near a place like that . . . ” said Mother again.

“ . . . and I don’t want to hear another word about it!” shouted Father.

And now, a week later, something strange was happening and Bruno guessed that it was because of the Fury’s visit. Bruno sat at the dining room table and looked at his mother. He noticed her white face and red eyes.

“You must not worry, Bruno,” she said. “It’s going to be an adventure.”

“Am I going away?” asked Bruno.

“Not just you,” she replied. “We are all going away. Your father and I, Gretel and you. All four of us.”

Bruno thought about this and **frowned**. He did not really want Gretel to come because she WAS A LOT OF TROUBLE FROM THE BEGINNING. He knew this because his parents often said it.

“But where?” he asked. “Where are we going? Why can’t we stay here?”

“We have to leave here because of your father’s job,” explained Mother. “You know how important it is, don’t you, Bruno?”

“Yes, of course,” said Bruno. He knew that lots of people came to the house because of Father’s job. Men in wonderful uniforms came and secretaries, too. Everyone was very **polite** to Father. “He’s an important man,” he heard them say. “The Fury has big plans for him.”

But Bruno was not sure what job Father actually did. At school, his friends often talked about their fathers. Bruno knew that Karl’s father worked in a shop, and Daniel’s father was a teacher. But when his friends asked about Bruno’s father, he just said, “Father is an important man and the Fury has big plans for him. And he wears a wonderful uniform.”

“We must leave because Father will be **lonely** in his new job without us,” Mother said now. “You don’t want Father to be lonely, do you?”

“But what about Lars and Maria?” asked Bruno.

“They’re coming with us,” explained Mother.

“Where are we going?” he said. “Is it more than a mile away?”

Mother **sighed** again. Then she laughed a little. "Yes, Bruno. It is more than a mile away. A lot more."

Bruno's eyes opened wide and his mouth opened. "So we're leaving Berlin?" he said.

"Yes," Mother replied. "Your father's job is . . ."

"But what about school?" cried Bruno. "And what about Karl, Daniel and Martin? How will they know where I am?"

"You'll have to say goodbye to them for now," said Mother. "But I'm sure that you'll see them again later. And please be polite, Bruno," she added. "Do not talk when I am talking."

"Say goodbye to them?" said Bruno, and he was nearly shouting now. "Say *goodbye* to them?"

"You'll make other friends," said Mother. "I'm sorry Bruno, but we don't have . . ."

"But Mother . . .!"

"Bruno, that's enough!" she **snapped**, and then she stood up. "Now go upstairs and help Maria with your packing."

CHAPTER TWO

Out-With

When he first saw the new house, Bruno's eyes opened wide and his mouth made the shape of an O. Everything about it was the opposite of their house in Berlin and he could not believe that they were really going to live there.

The house in Berlin had five **floors**. It stood on a quiet street next to other big houses which also had boys living in them. And around their street were lots of other streets full of more large houses and cafés and a fruit and vegetable market. But their new house only had three floors. It stood alone in an empty, wide area and there were no other houses near it. This meant that there were no other families near and no other boys for Bruno to play with. When he closed his eyes he felt that he was in the loneliest place in the world.

"I think that this was a bad idea," said Bruno to Mother a few hours after they arrived while Maria was unpacking his boxes. Maria was not the only maid at the new house – there were three others now who were very thin and only spoke very quietly. There was also an old man called Pavel, who **prepared** the vegetables for lunch. He looked unhappy and a bit angry.

"We did not choose to come here," replied Mother and frowned. "Somebody decided for us." When Mother said "somebody", she usually meant Father.