

WINNER OF THE ARTISTS AGAINST NAZISM AWARD

THE PERSECUTION AND MURDER OF  
THE ROMA PEOPLE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR  
IS A STORY THAT HAS SELDOM BEEN TOLD.

BASED ON AN INSPIRING TRUE LIFE STORY,  
SOFIA Z-4515 IS A GRAPHIC MEMOIR ABOUT SURVIVAL AND HOPE.

"*Sofia Z-4515* is a perfectly balanced vehicle  
to convey the painful, sad truths which need  
to be handed down to future generations."  
*Paul Gravett, author of Graphic Novels: Stories To Change Your Life*

"*Sofia Z-4515* is part of the process of  
acknowledging the Nazi crime against  
the Roma and Sinti in Europe."  
*Dr Adrian Marsh, researcher in Romani Studies, University of Greenwich*



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# SOFIA Z-4515

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Illustrations copyright © 2005 Amanda Eriksson

Edited by Ernesto Priego

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Published with the support of Stiftelsen Hela Sverige - Artisten mot nazister, Sweden.

The Publisher would like to thank Janna Eliot for the English translation and  
Dr Adrian Marsh and Greice Schneider for their contributions to the book.

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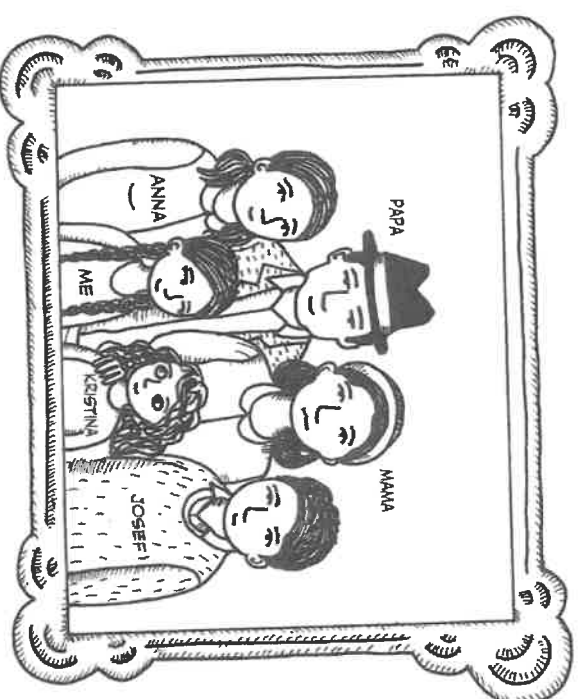
A CIP record of this book is available from the British Library.

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London N12 8NP, UK  
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Start Information English Language



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TOLD BY SOFIA TAIKON

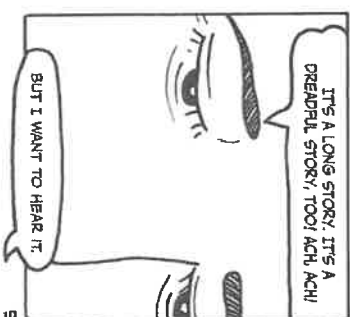
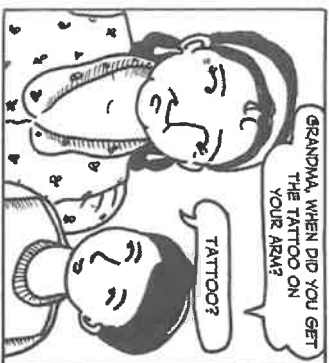
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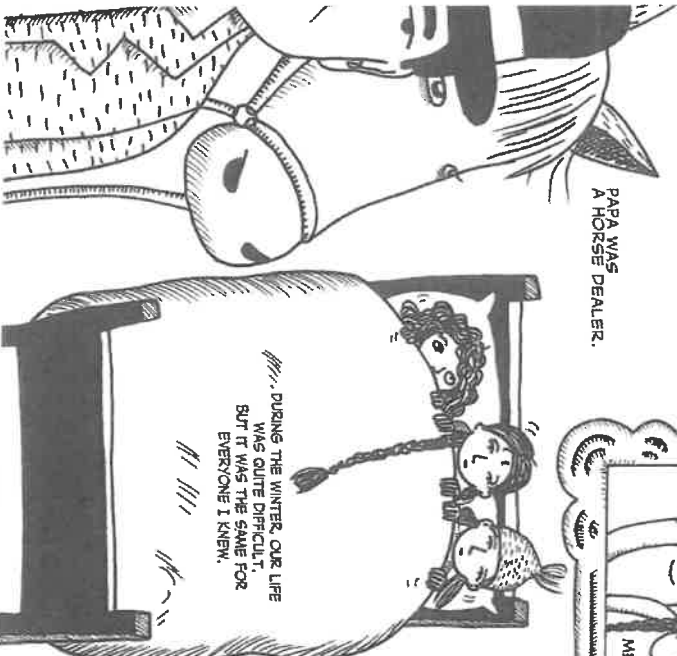
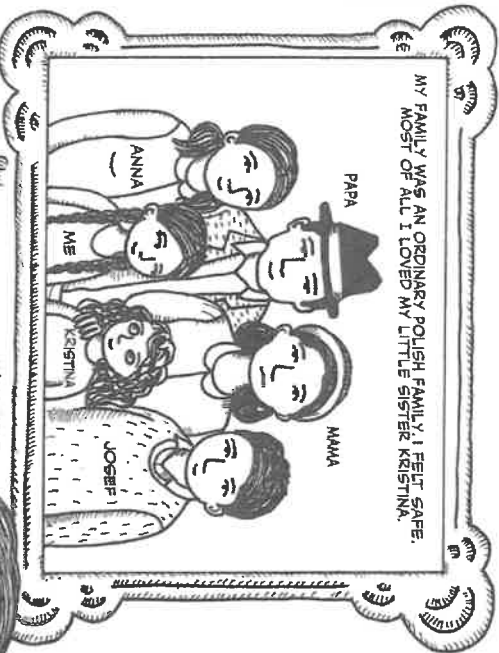
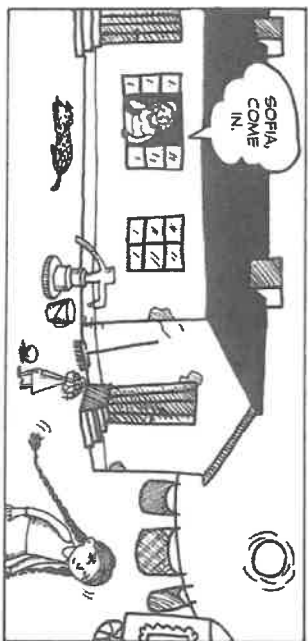
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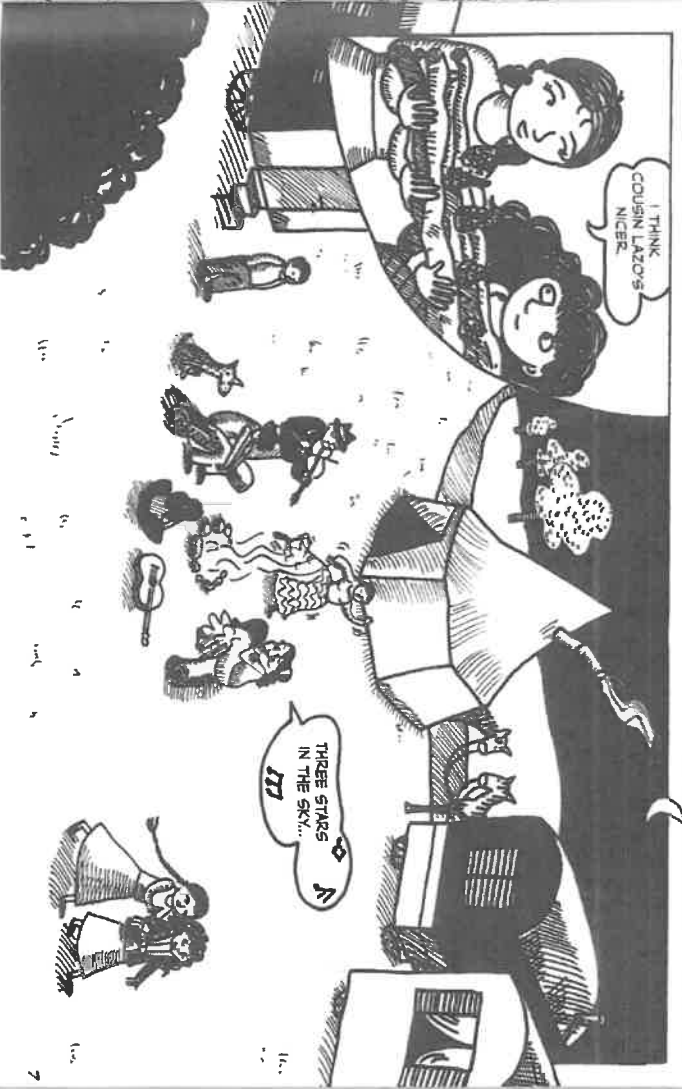
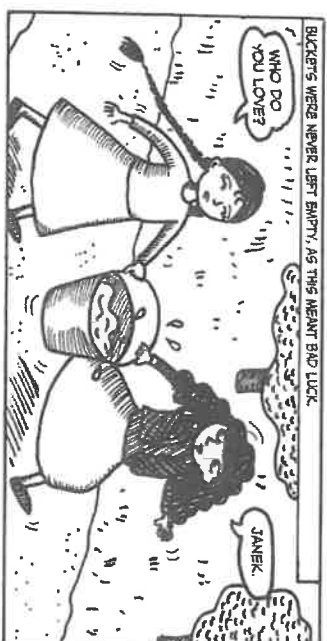
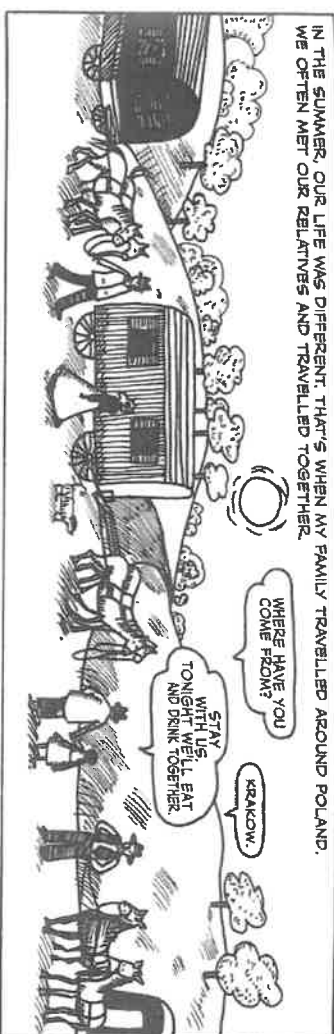
MANTRA LINGUA

AT FIRST, I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, BUT MY GRANDCHILDREN ASKED ME TO.





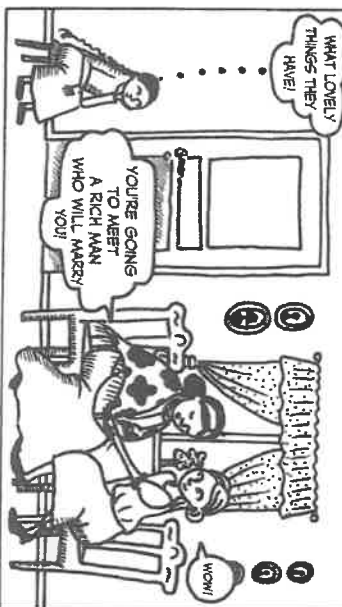
IN THE SUMMER, OUR LIFE WAS DIFFERENT. THAT'S WHEN MY FAMILY TRAVELLED AROUND POLAND. WE OFTEN MET OUR RELATIVES AND TRAVELLED TOGETHER.



SOMETIMES I WENT WITH MAMA WHEN SHE TOLD FORTUNES.

I FEEL SABER IN STRANGERS' HOUSES WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME.

IF YOU SIT QUIETLY NEAR THE DOOR, THEY MAY GIVE YOU SOME CAKE.

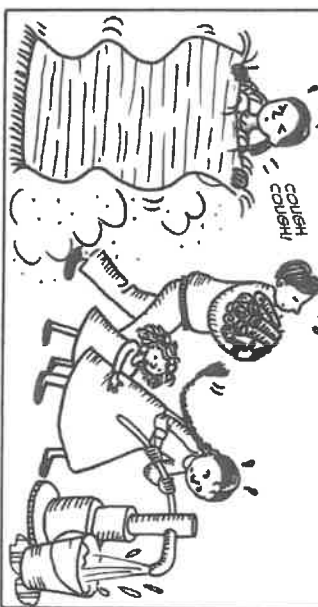


AS I GREW OLDER, I REALISED THAT MY FAMILY WEREN'T AS ORDINARY AS I'D THOUGHT.

WURH! GYPSIES! DON'T OPEN THE DOOR!



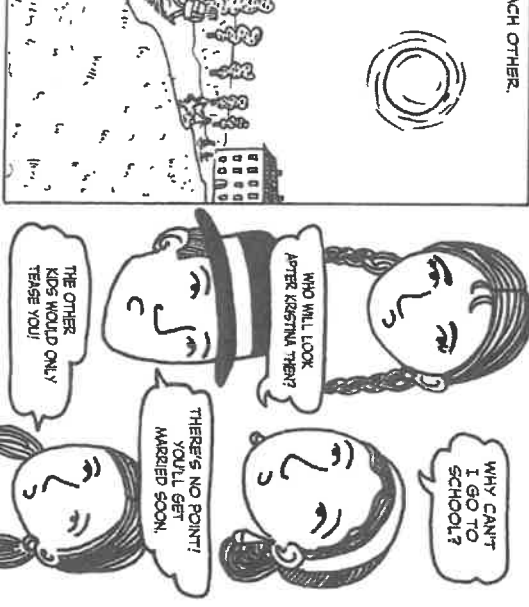
OTHER POLISH CHILDREN WENT TO SCHOOL, BUT ME AND MY BROTHER AND SISTERS DIDN'T.



OTHER POLISH CHILDREN SPOKE POLISH TO EACH OTHER. IN MY FAMILY WE SPOKE ROMANI.

IS IT NICE TO GO TO SCHOOL?

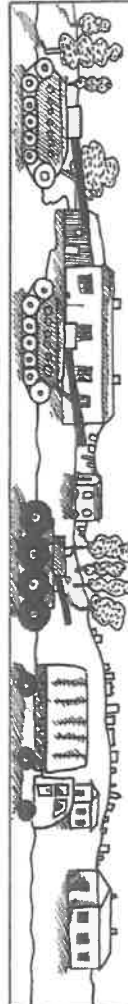
I DON'T KNOW.



1 SEPTEMBER 1939. WHEN I WAS EIGHT, MY LIFE CHANGED. WAR BROKE OUT. GERMANY INVADDED THE PART OF POLAND WHERE MY FAMILY LIVED. THE SECOND WORLD WAR BEGAN.

DOES GERMANY RULE OVER POLAND NOW?

YES, I GUESS SO.



WE HAD NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT HITLER.

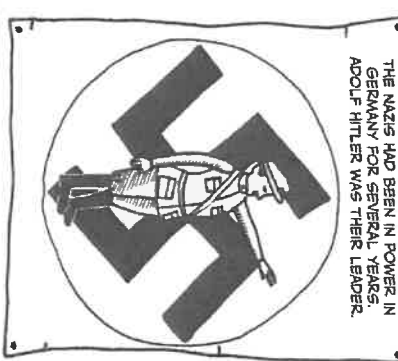
WHAT DOES THAT HINTER WANT?

NAZIS? WHAT IS THAT?

RIKERS?



THE NAZIS HAD BEEN IN POWER IN GERMANY FOR SEVERAL YEARS. ADOLF HITLER WAS THEIR LEADER.



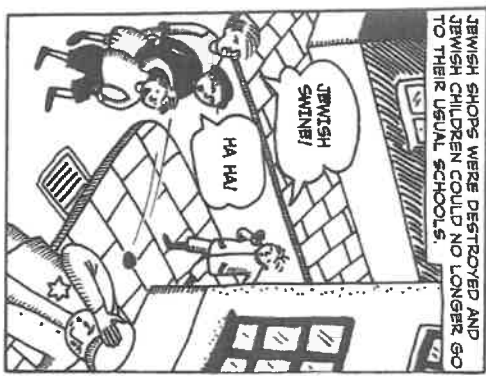
THE GERMAN RACE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER RACES. JEWS, GYPSIES AND SLAVS ARE INFERIOR RACES AND MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE RACES IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN.



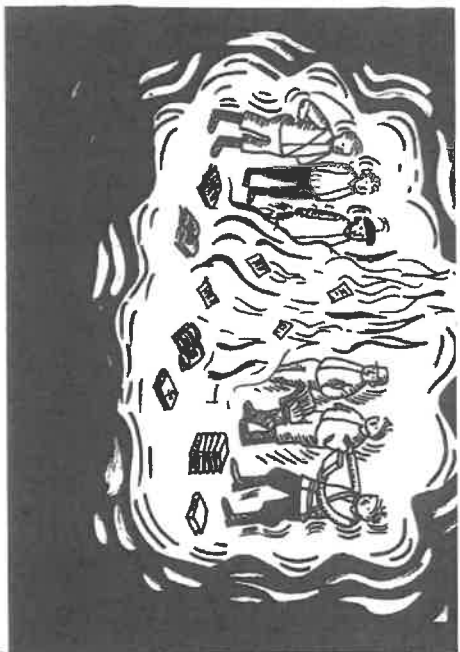
JEWISH SHOPS WERE DESTROYED AND JEWISH CHILDREN COULD NO LONGER GO TO THEIR USUAL SCHOOLS.

JEWISH SWINE!

HA HA!



BOOKS BY JEWISH AUTHORS AND BY ANTI-NAZI WRITERS WERE BURNED IN BONFIRES. ALSO, ROMA AND GYPSIES, JEWS' WITNESSES, HOMOSEXUALS AND PEOPLE WITH VARIOUS DISABILITIES WERE PERSECUTED AND IMPRISONED. ONLY FAIR-SKINNED, HEALTHY AND STRONG PEOPLE COULD LIVE IN THE GERMAN REICH.



WINTER 1942. GERMAN SOLDIERS BEGAN MARCHING IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE. THEY WERE SEARCHING FOR ROMA.



WE RAN TO THE WOODS.



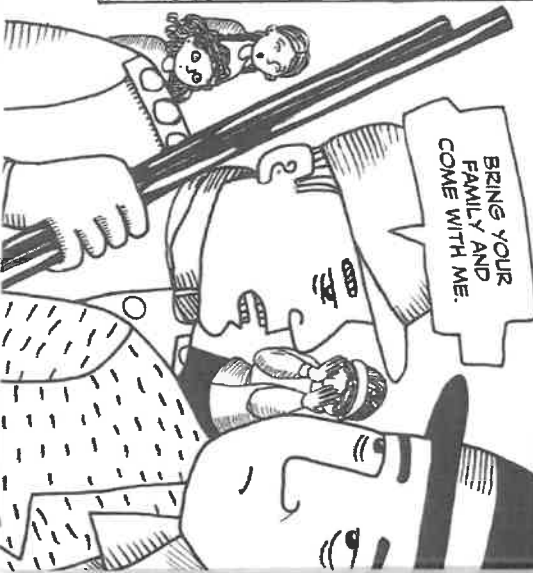
A MAN WHO HAD ESCAPED FROM A CONCENTRATION CAMP HID IN OUR HOUSE.



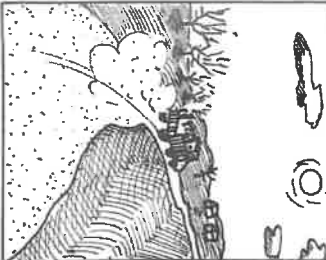
NOW WE WERE EVEN MORE SCARED.



WE TRIED HARD TO STAY IN HIDING, BUT WERE FINALLY CAPTURED.



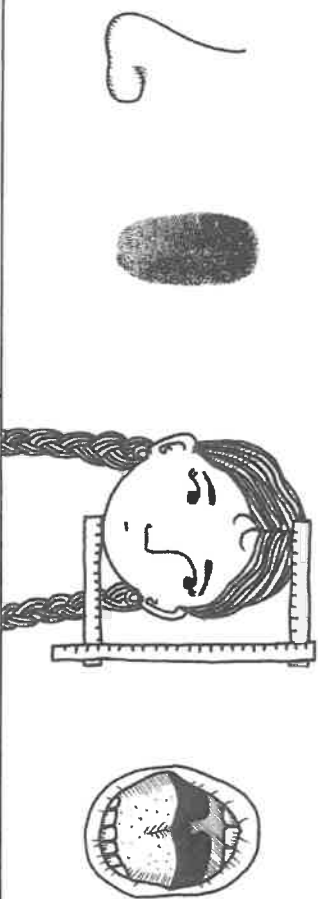
WE TRAVELLED IN THE LOREY TO A BATH.



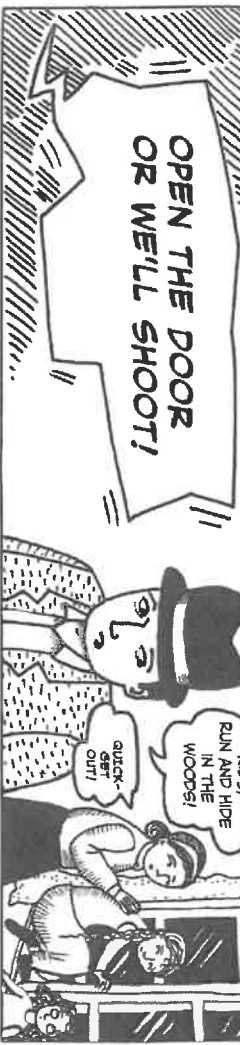
THERE WE HAD TO ANSWER LOTS OF QUESTIONS AND WE WERE PHOTOGRAPHED.



A DOCTOR EXAMINED OUR LIPS, COUNTED OUR TEETH, MEASURED OUR NOSES, HEADS AND FOREHEADS. THEY TOOK OUR FINGERPRINTS AND DID BLOOD TESTS. THEN THEY SENT US HOME AGAIN.



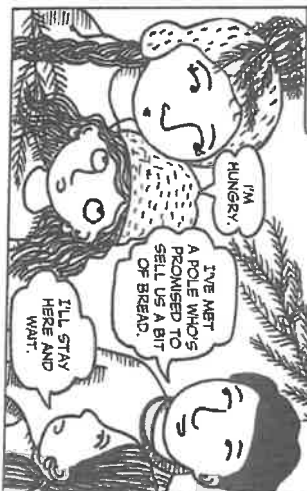
BUT SOON THE SOLDIERS RETURNED.



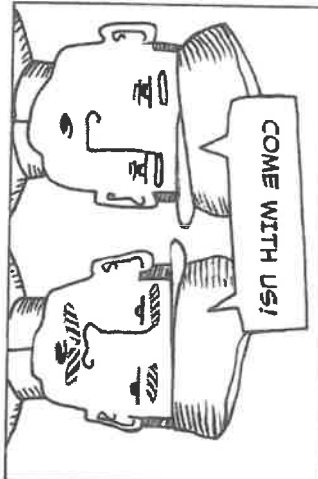
WE WANTED IN THE WOODS THE WHOLE OF THE NEXT DAY. AT NIGHTFALL, WE CREEPT BACK TO OUR HOUSE.



WE HAD IN THE WOODS FOR SOME DAYS. JOSEF TRIED TO GET FOOD.



BUT WHEN WE CAME TO GET THE BREAD, THERE WERE SOLDIERS THERE.



THEY SHOVELED US INTO A LORRY AGAIN. A TAPPAULIN WAS STRETCHED OVER THE ROOF SO IT WAS REALLY DARK.

I THINK THAT POLE GOT MONEY TO BETRAY US.

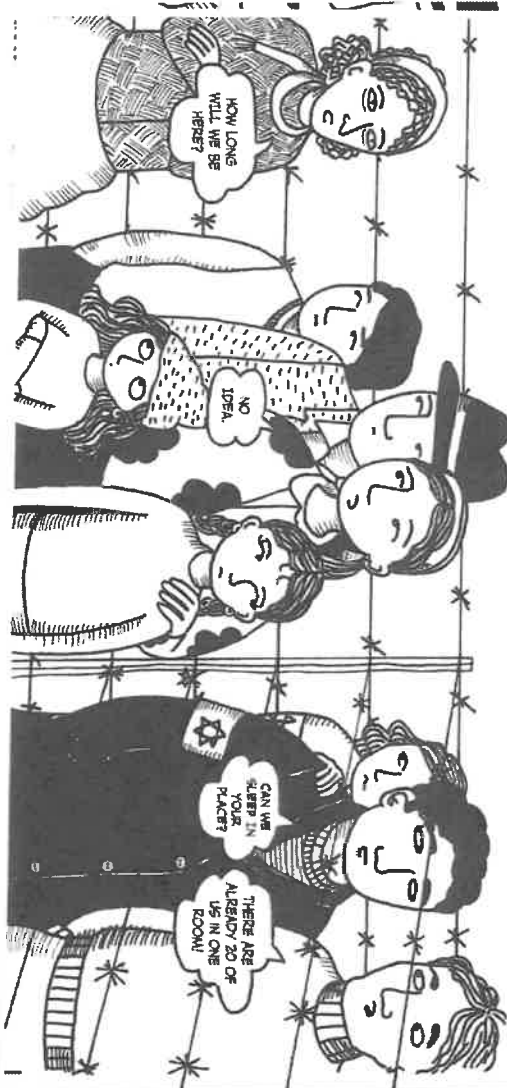
AFTER A LONG JOURNEY WE GOT OUT IN A STRANGE PLACE.



WE FOUND MAMA AND PAPA THERE!



EVERY DAY, LORRIES ARRIVED WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE: POLES, JEWS, ROMA, SINI AND OTHERS. WE WERE IMPRISONED BEHIND BARBED WIRE IN A GHETTO.



SPRING 1943. ONE DAY, THE SOLDIERS FORCED US INTO A LORRY ONCE MORE.

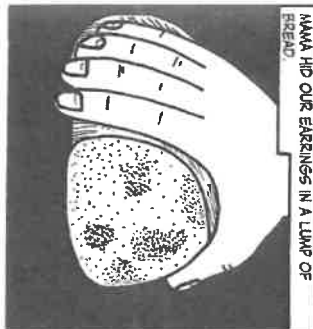


WE WERE DRIVEN TO A RAILWAY STATION AND HAD TO SIT AND WAIT.

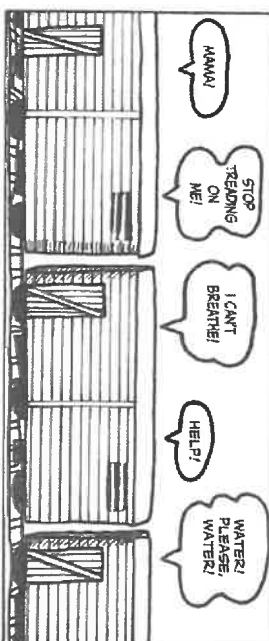
YOU MUST LEAVE ALL YOUR VALUABLES! IF YOU HAVE WATCHES AND WEDDING RINGS, TAKE THEM OFF NOW! IF YOU DON'T OBEY, YOU'LL BE SHOT!



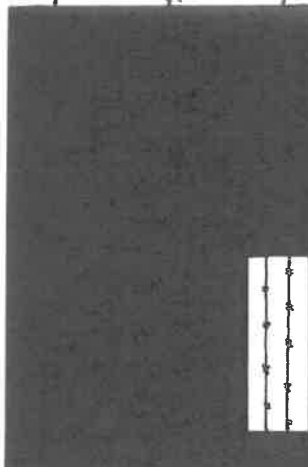
MAMA HAD OUR EARRINGS IN A LUMP OF FRIEND.



IN THE EVENING, WE WERE PUSHED INTO A GOODS WAGON. WHEN IT WAS FULL THE DOORS WERE LOCKED FROM THE OUTSIDE.



IT WAS DARK INSIDE. A LITTLE LIGHT CAME FROM SOME HOLES HIGH UP IN THE ROOF.



THE WORST THING WAS THAT THERE WAS NO TOILET. ONLY A BUCKET THAT WAS ALREADY FULL.



IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SLEEP BECAUSE OF ALL THE NOISE.

MY CHILD NEEDS WATER!

STOP SHOVING!

DEAR LORD, HELP US!

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THE JOURNEY LASTED.

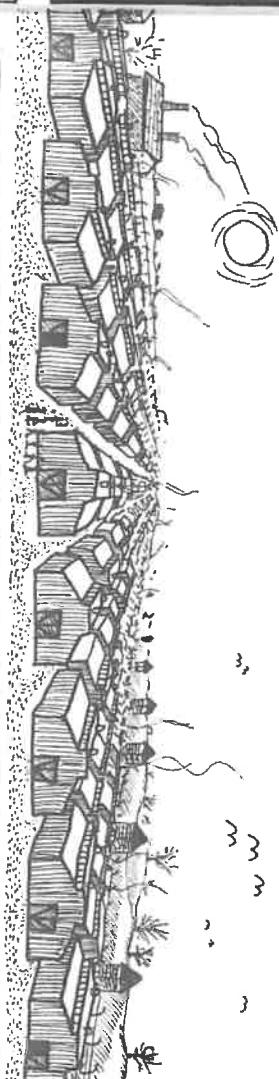
MY HUSBAND IS SICK.

OH, OH!

THE LONGER WE JOURNEYED, THE QUIETER IT BECAME.

...

18 MARCH 1943.  
WE'D ARRIVED AT AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.



WHEN WE GOT OUT, WE HAD TO CLIMB OVER THE DEAD AND THE SICK.

SCHNELL!

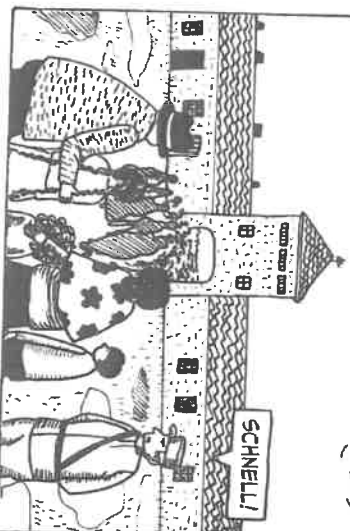
RAUS!

LOSI!



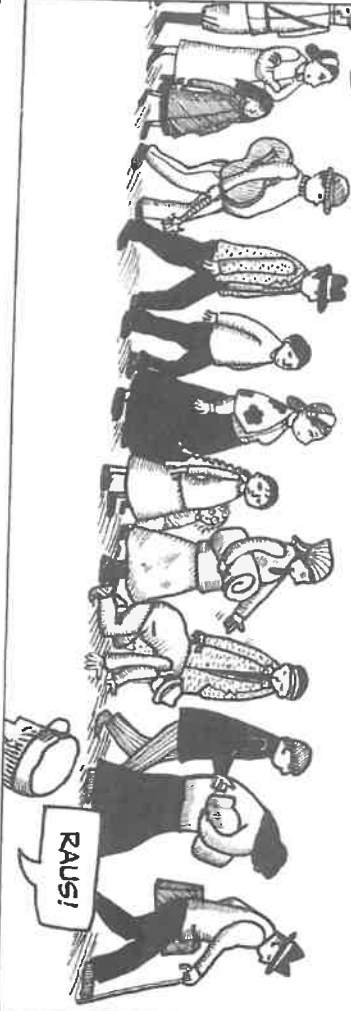
WHERE HAD THEY BROUGHT US?

SCHNELL!

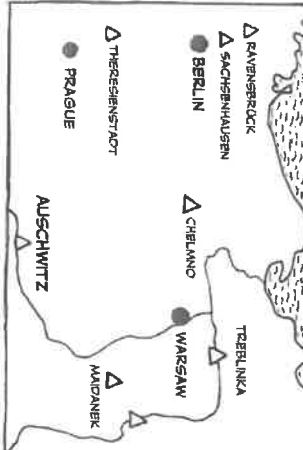


WE WERE PUSHED FORWARD IN A LONG LINE. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE GUARDS WERE SAYING AND EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO QUICKLY.

SCHNELL!

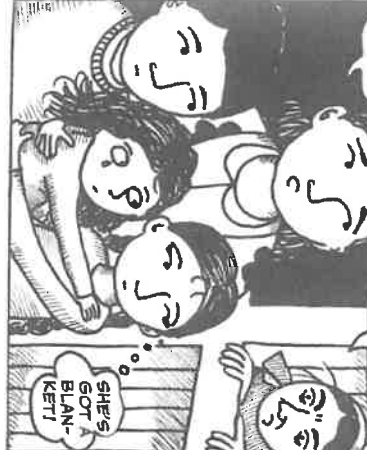


WE DIDN'T KNOW THEN THAT THE NAZIS HAD SET UP CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND DEATH CAMPS IN GERMANY, POLAND, AND OTHER OCCUPIED COUNTRIES. AUSCHWITZ WAS THE LARGEST.



ARE THERE ANY BLANKETS?

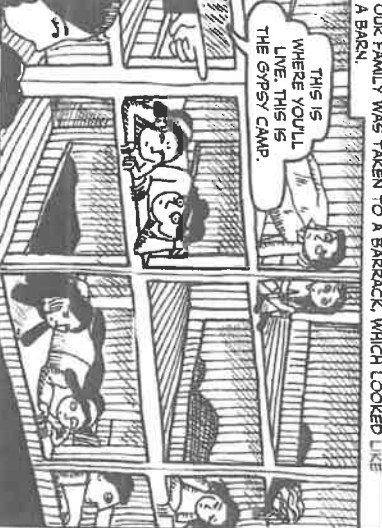
WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS? A HOTEL?



SHE'S GOT A BLANKET!

OUR FAMILY WAS TAKEN TO A BARRACK, WHICH LOOKED LIKE A BARN.

THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL LIVE. THIS IS THE GYPSY CAMP.



HOW LONG WILL WE STAY HERE?

TILL YOU LEAVE THROUGH THE CHIMNEYS.



WE CLIMBED TOGETHER INTO A CUBICLE.

I'M FREEZING!

DON'T GO AWAY, SLEEP!



MEALS FOR A DAY:



BREAKFAST:  
WEAK COFFEE.



LUNCH:  
BREAD ONCE A WEEK.

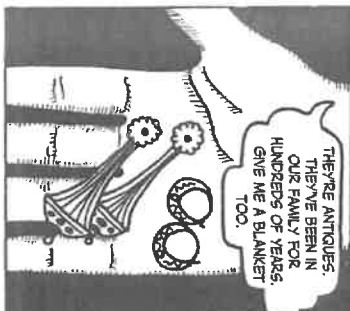


SUPPER:  
WATERY SOUP.

EVERY DAY IN AUSCHWITZ WAS THE SAME. WAKING UP BEING COUNTED, WORKING AND SLEEPING. CONSTANT HUNGER.

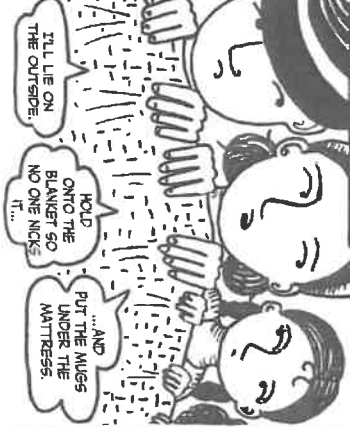


MAMA GAVE OUR EARBINGS TO THE KAPO FOR A LITTLE EXTRA FOOD.



THEY'RE ANTIQUES. THERE'VE BEEN IN OUR FAMILY FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. GIVE ME A BLANKET TOO.

WE WERE ALWAYS SCARED. EVEN AT NIGHT WE DIDN'T FEEL SAFE.



I'LL LIE ON THE OUTSIDE.

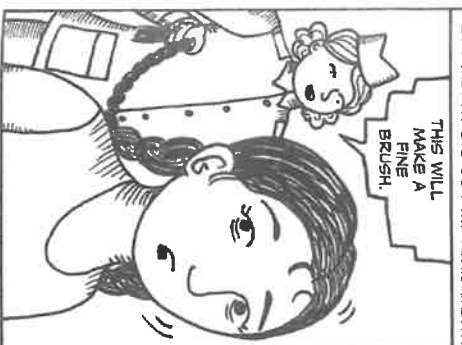
HOLD ONTO THE BLANKET SO NO ONE NICKS IT...



I WANT TO BORROW YOUR DAUGHTER FOR A BIT.

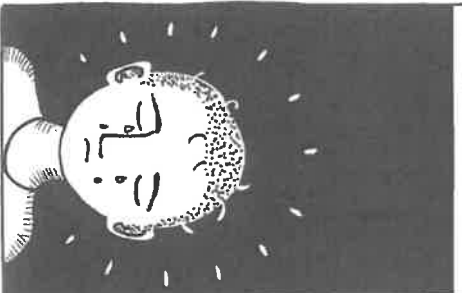
NO, NO. SHE'S ONLY A CHILD!

NEXT MORNING I GOT MY PUNISHMENT.

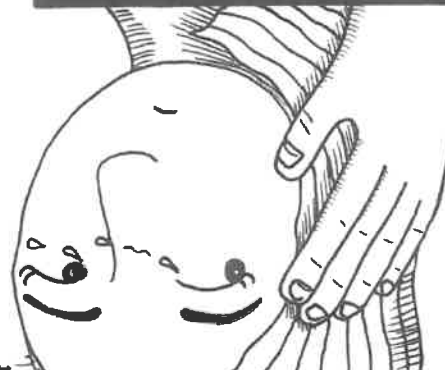


THIS WILL MAKE A FINE BRUSH.

THEN SHE SHAVED MY HEAD.



IN THE EVENING WHEN MY BROTHER RETURNED FROM WORK, HE COVERED MY HEAD WITH A RAG. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT.



NEXT MORNING, WE WERE WOKEN BY A PIERCING ALARM.



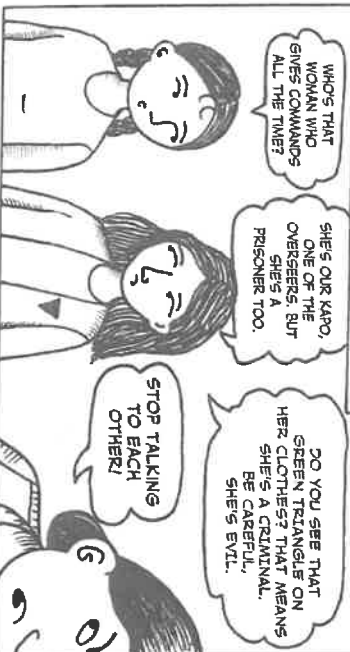
GET UP! IT'S ROLL CALL!

LATER, THAT WOMAN GAVE US OUR TASKS.



YOU WILL PICK POTATOES!

WE MARCHED AWAY TO A BIG FIELD.



WHO'S THAT WOMAN WHO GIVES COMMANDS ALL THE TIME?

SHE'S OUR KAPO. ONE OF THE OVERSEERS, BUT SHE'S A PRISONER TOO.

DO YOU SEE THAT GREEN TIE-DIE ON HER CLOTHES? THAT MEANS SHE'S A CRIMINAL. BE CAREFUL, SHE'S EVIL.

STOP TALKING TO EACH OTHER!

LINE UP! FIVE BY FIVE! DON'T MOVE! WE HAVE TO COUNT YOU.

SOME NEWLY ARRIVED GYPSIES DIED IN THE NIGHT.

LATER, SOME PRISONERS BROUGHT A LARGE BOWL. WATER AND POTATO FEELINGS, THAT WAS OUR SUPPER.



ONE LADLEFUL, STOP PUSHING!

IN THE EVENING THERE WAS ANOTHER ROLL-CALL.

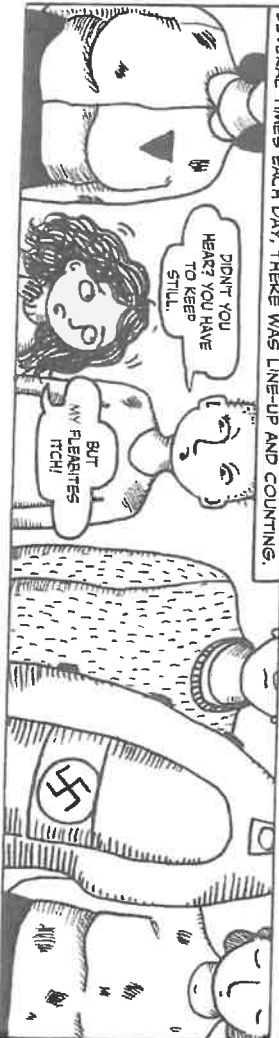


WE WORKED THE WHOLE DAY IN THE MUD. MY SHOES WERE SO HEAVY I COULD HARDLY LIFT THEM.

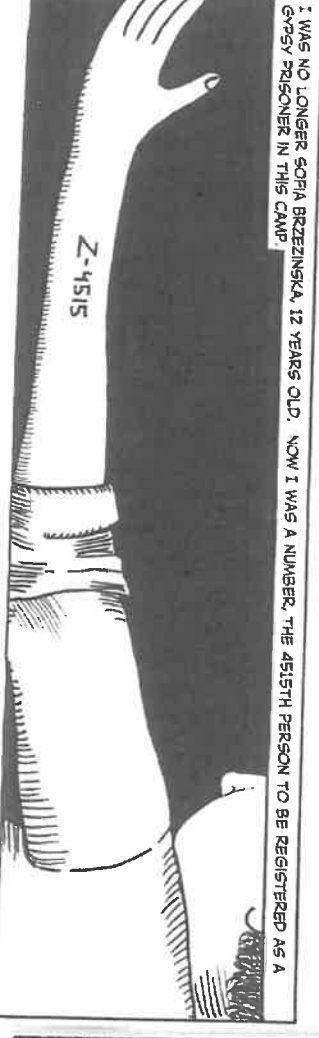
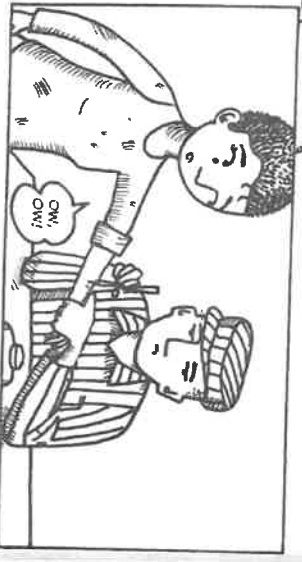
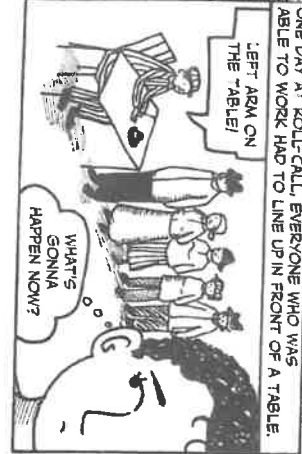
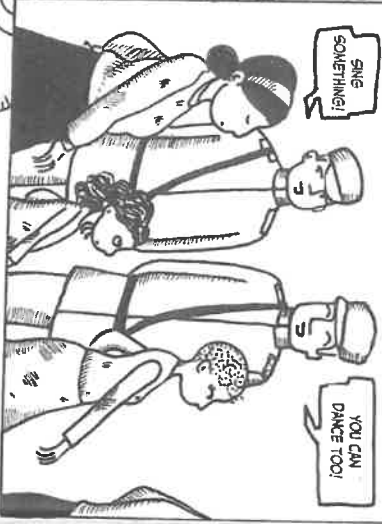


...204, 205, 206...

SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY, THERE WAS LINE-UP AND COUNTING.



SOMETIMES WE WERE FORCED TO MARCH.

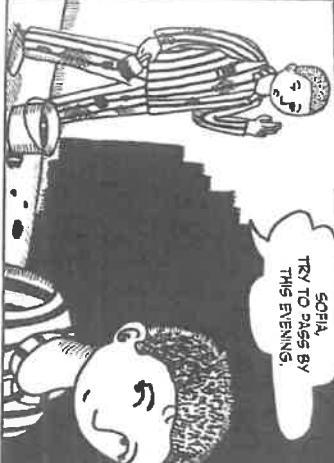


I WAS NO LONGER SOFIA BRZEZINSKA, 12 YEARS OLD. NOW I WAS A NUMBER, THE 4515TH PERSON TO BE REGISTERED AS A GYPSY PRISONER IN THIS CAMP.

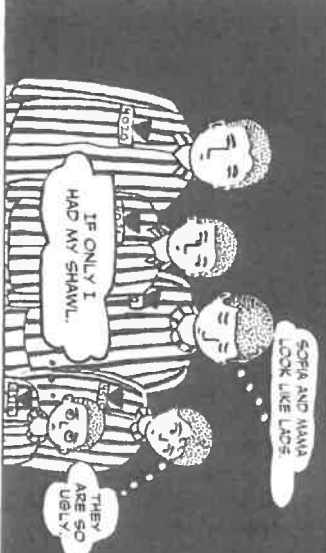
I WAS THE FIRST PERSON IN MY FAMILY TO BE SHAVED. LATER WE WERE ALL SHAVED, ALL OVER.



I WAS SENT TO A WOMEN'S BARACK AND SEPARATED FROM MY FAMILY, BUT SOMETIMES I WAS ABLE TO SEE THEM ON THE WAY TO WORK.



WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO KEEP OUR OWN CLOTHES. WE FELT NAKED AND ASHAMED IN OUR PRISON CLOTHES.



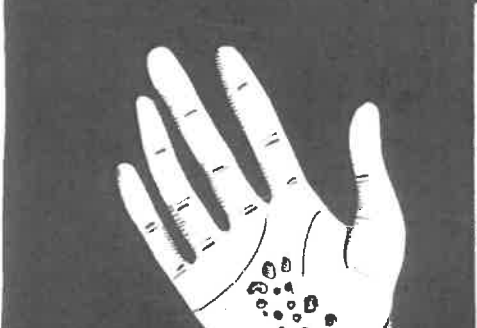
JOSEF WAS SELECTED AS A PANITER AND WAS ABLE TO MOVE AROUND FREELY IN THE CAMP.



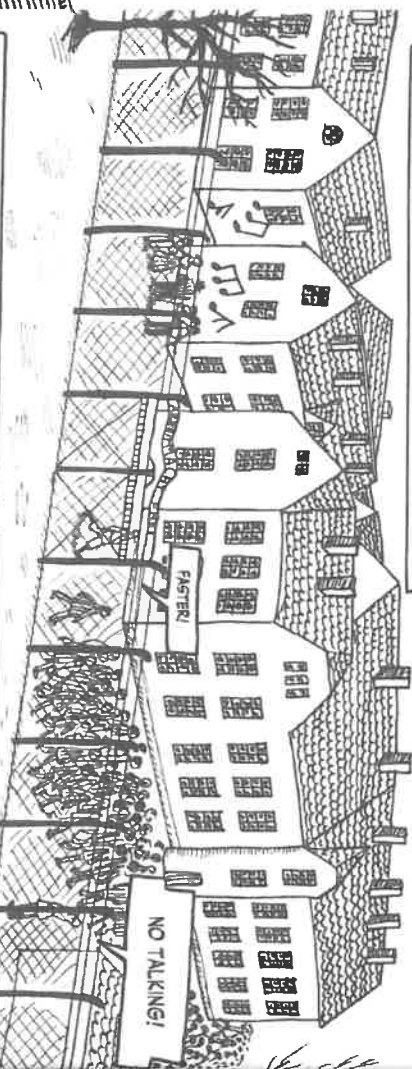
ALL THE PRISONERS TALKED ABOUT FOOD. WE THOUGHT ABOUT FOOD, WE DREAMT ABOUT FOOD. WE STOLE FOOD FROM EACH OTHER.



I SAVED BREADCRUMBS IN MY POCKET AS IF THEY WERE SWEETIES.



AS WE WENT TO WORK, WE PASSED PRISONERS PLAYING LOVELY ROMANI SONGS.  
WHAT WAS THAT FOR? WE WALKED PAST CRYING.



PAPA BECAME ILL. HE LOST WEIGHT AND WAS SO WEAK HE COULDN'T STAND UP DURING ROLL CALL.



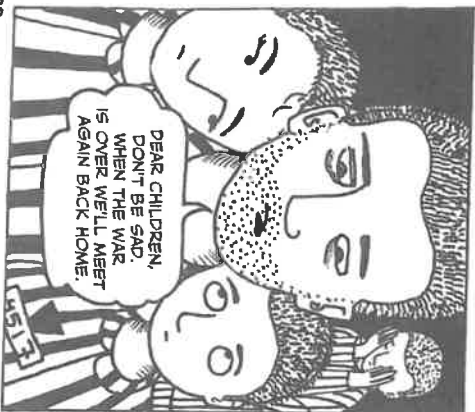
I FOUND A ROTTEN POTATO IN THE RUBBISH.



THAT GOT ME TWENTY-FIVE STROKES OF THE STICK.



A LITTLE LATER, PAPA WAS TAKEN AWAY.



THE SMOKE FROM THE CAMP CHIMNEYS SMELT AWFUL. I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE WHAT THE OTHER PRISONERS SAID.

THE GUARDS TELL LIES. THEY SAY IT'S TIME FOR A SHOWER.

THEY GIVE PEOPLE SOAP AND TOWELS.

BUT INSTEAD OF WATER GAS COMES OUT OF THE TAPS.



THEN THEY SHOWER THE BODIES TOGETHER AND BURN THEM IN A HUGE OVEN.

AFTER PAPA LEFT I FELT EVEN MORE FRIGHTENED. IN THE EVENINGS, SOLDIERS WOULD COME TO OUR BARRACK.

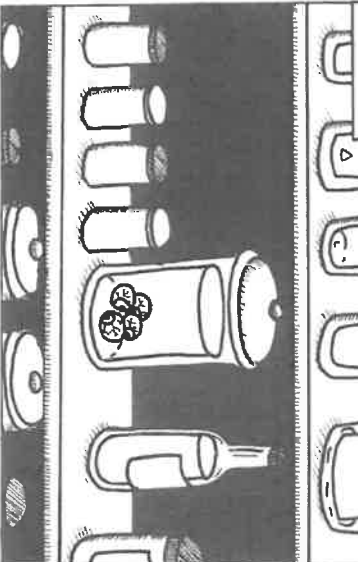


ONE OF THE BARRACKS WAS A CHILDREN'S HOME FOR ORPHANED ROMANI CHILDREN.



HE'S ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN TWINS.

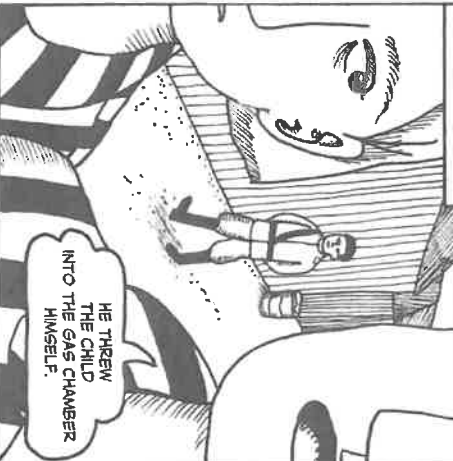
BUT I WAS MOST FRIGHTENED OF THE CAMP DOCTOR. IN THE CLINIC THERE WERE JARS CONTAINING EYES TAKEN FROM TWINS. THE DOCTORS GAVE PATIENTS INJECTIONS TO MAKE THEM ILL.



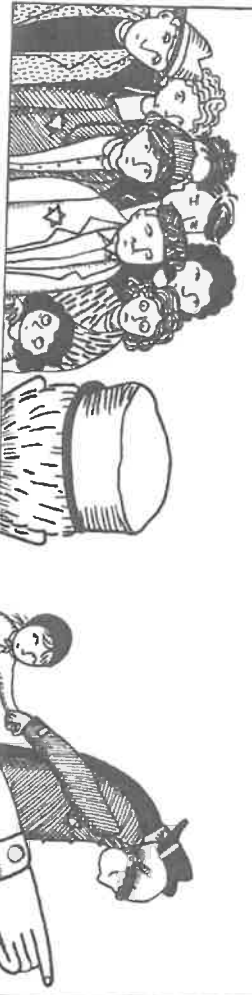
DOCTOR MENGLE HAD TAKEN CHARGE OF A LITTLE ROMANI BOY FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME. IN THE EVENINGS, HE WALKED AROUND WITH THE LAD.



ONE EVENING, DOCTOR MENGLE WALKED ALONE, SEEMING AS PLEASED AS USUAL.



FULLY LOADED TRAINS BROUGHT NEW PRISONERS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OCCUPIED BY GERMANY. ON CERTAIN DAYS MORE THAN 3,000 PEOPLE ARRIVED. MOST OF THEM WERE TAKEN AWAY AND KILLED.



THOSE WHO REMAINED ALIVE HAD TO WORK HARD. DIFFERENT SYMBOLS WERE SEWN ONTO THEIR CLOTHES SO THEY COULD BE IDENTIFIED BY GROUP.

- BLACK/BROWN = RED = POLITICAL
- GREEN = CRIMINAL
- BLUE = JEHOWAH'S WITNESS
- PINK = HOMOSEXUAL
- FRANCE
- POLAND
- JEV

I WAS GIVEN NEW WORK.



ONE DAY A NEW GIRL WHISPERED MY NAME. HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?



THEN I RECOGNISED MY OLDER SISTER, NOT BY HER APPEARANCE, FOR SHE HAD NO HAIR, BUT I KNEW HER VOICE.

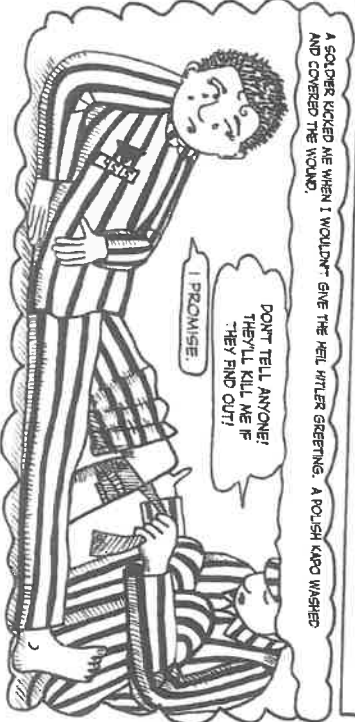


WE WORKED NEXT TO EACH OTHER AND TRIED TO TALK WITHOUT THE GUARDS NOTICING.



DON'T EAT ALL YOUR BREAD AT ONCE, OR YOU'LL BE HUNGRY FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LEG?



DON'T TELL ANYONE! THEY'LL KILL ME IF THEY FIND OUT! I PROMISE.

A SOLDIER KICKED ME WHEN I WOULDN'T GIVE THE HITLER GREETING. A POLISH KAPO WASHED AND COVERED THE WOUND.

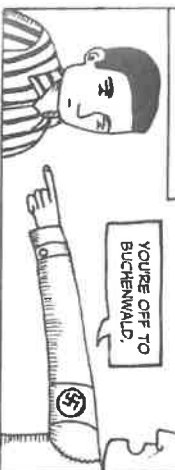
ANNA AND I DIDN'T LIVE IN THE SAME BARACK. IN THE EVENINGS SHE CREEPT IN TO ME.



I WANT TO SLEEP WITH YOU.

ANNA, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. LISTEN TO ME! I'M YOUNGER THAN YOU BUT I KNOW MORE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN HERE LONGER. THEY'LL PUNISH YOU.

ONE EVENING, AT THE LINE-UP, MY BROTHER JOSEF WAS TAKEN AWAY.



YOU'RE OFF TO BUCHENWALD.

ANOTHER EVENING IT WAS MY TURN.



YOU'RE GOING TO RAVENSBRUCK.

SHE STAYED AND IT TURNED OUT AS ID SAID.



WHY WERE WE BORN GYPSIES?

I WAS SHOWN INTO A CRAMPED CATTLE WAGON ONCE MORE. DAY AND NIGHT WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER. WITHOUT A TOILET AND WITHOUT WATER TO WASH WITH.

IDE - MEY GOING TO KILL ME NOW?

RAVENSBRUCK WHAT IS THAT? IT'S WORSE NOW. I'M WITHOUT MY FAMILY.

2 AUGUST 1944.

A LONG TIME LATER I FOUND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED. ON THE SECOND OF AUGUST 1944, ALL THE ROMA LEFT BEHIND IN THE GYPSY CAMP OF AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU WERE GASED.

RAVENSBROCK WAS ANOTHER CONCENTRATION CAMP. I WORKED IN A FACTORY. THE WAR WAS GETTING CLOSER. THE AIR-RAID SIREN HOWLED CONSTANTLY AND BOMBS EXPLODED OUTSIDE THE WINDOW.



WORK FASTER.

"KABOOM"

ISN'T THERE A SHELTER?



I WORKED LIKE A ROBOT.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

I DON'T KNOW.



I HAD COMPLETELY LOST COUNT OF DAYS, MONTHS AND YEARS.

DO I HAVE MY THIRTEENTH BIRTHDAY IN AUSCHWITZ?



I CAN'T CARE, ON ANY MORE.

YOU MUST. OTHERWISE THEY'LL KILL YOU, OR SEND YOU TO THE CAMP HOSPITAL.

THE CAMP HOSPITAL WAS A DANGEROUS PLACE. THAT'S WHERE THEY CARRIED OUT EXPERIMENTS ON WOMEN.



IF YOU GO THERE, THEY MIGHT STEAL USE YOU.

NO! WHEN I GROW UP, I WANT TO HAVE CHILDREN.

WALTRAUT USED TO SHARE HER FOOD WITH ME.



EAT, LITTLE FRIEND, YOU WILL GROW BIG AND BE PRETTY AND HAPPY ONE DAY.

IN RAVENSBROCK I MET MANY BRAVE WOMEN. WALTRAUT WORE A BLUE TRIANGLE. THAT MEANT SHE WAS A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS.



WHY ARE YOU HERE?

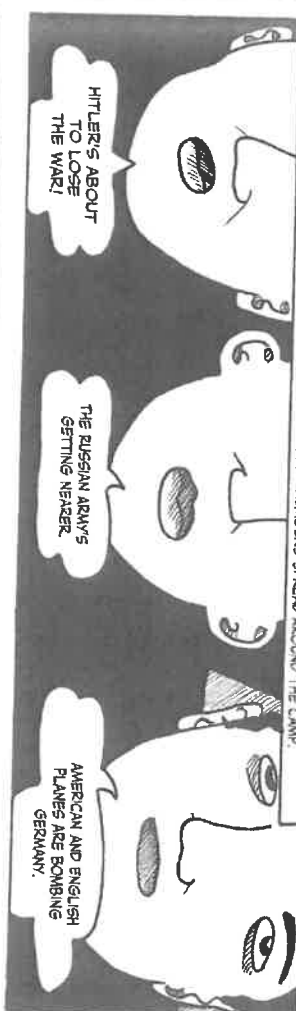
I REFUSED TO SAY HELLO, HITLER. ISN'T HOLY? HOW CAN ANYONE SAY HELLO HITLER?

BUT I FELT HOPELESS. AT NIGHT, I CLASPED MY HANDS AND PRAYED.



DEAR GOD, LET ME DIE. END MY LIFE! I DON'T WANT TO EXIST IN THIS DREADFUL PLACE.

SPRING 1945. THE BOMBS WERE FALLING EVEN NEARER, AND RUMOURS SPREAD AROUND THE CAMP.



HITLER'S ABOUT TO LOSE THE WAR!

THE RUSSIAN ARMY'S GETTING NEARER.

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH PLANES ARE BOMBING GERMANY.



SOON WE'LL BE FREE.

I DON'T THINK I'LL GO TO WORK TODAY.

I THINK I'LL RUN AWAY.



WHO SHOULD WE BELIEVE? IT WAS AN ANXIOUS TIME IN THE CAMP. THE GUARDS COULDN'T KEEP CONTROL ANY LONGER.

NO, I THINK IT'S A TRAP. THEY'LL SHOOT IF WE MAKE OFF!

WHEN THE PRISON GUARDS FLED, WE DARED TO RUN AWAY TOO. WE DIDN'T KNOW IN WHICH DIRECTION TO GO, SO WE WANDERED ALONG THE ROAD WE BELIEVED WOULD LEAD US HOME.



WE WERE MISERABLE, SICK AND DRAINED.



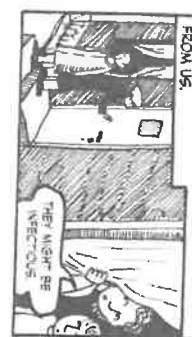
SOMETIMES WE GOT A LIFT.

CAN YOU GIVE US A LIFT?

ARE YOU FROM A CONCENTRATION CAMP?

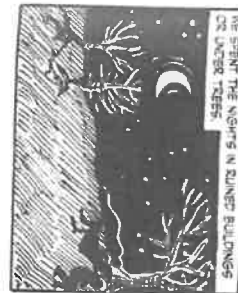


BUT SOMETIMES PEOPLE TURNED AWAY FROM US.



THEY MIGHT BE INFERIORS.

WE SPENT THE NIGHTS IN DINED BUILDINGS OR LINED TREES.



ONE MORNING, I JUST COULDN'T GO ON.



I CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP.

A JEWISH WOMAN SAVED MY LIFE.



SOFIA, YOU CAN'T GIVE UP NOW. SOON WE'LL FIND HELP.

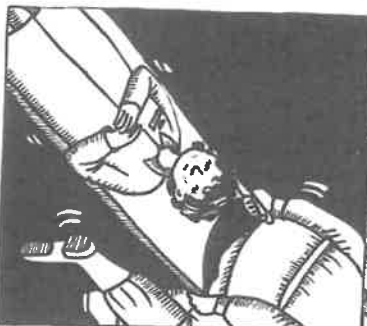
SHE WAS RIGHT. WE CAME TO A RAILWAY STATION AND GOT ON A TRAIN.



WHERE IS THIS TRAIN GOING?

I DON'T KNOW.

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT. I WAS TOO SICK.



I ONLY KNOW THAT I WASN'T ON A TRAIN ANY MORE.



HELP ME, DEAR LORD. SOLDIERS!



TRY TO CALM HER DOWN, AXEL.



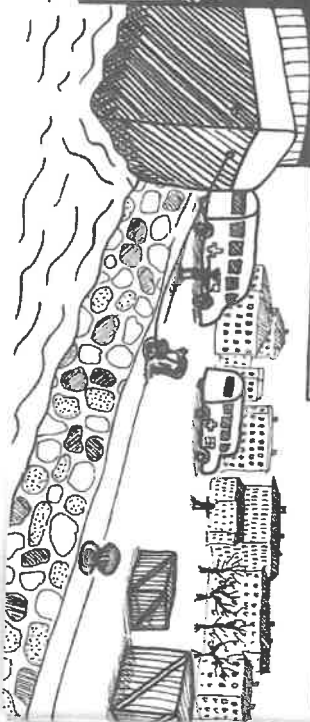
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING. THEY WERE SOLDIERS, YET THEIR EYES WERE KIND.



THE ANGELS CARRIED ME TO A WHITE BUS.



I SLEPT AND SLEPT. THE BUS JOLTED. WHEN I WOKE UP I WASN'T IN PARADISE, BUT IN MALMO, IN SWEDEN.



2ND MAY 1945. WE REFUGEES WERE TAKEN TO A HOUSE. I THINK IT WAS A SCHOOL. MY STOMACH WAS SHAKEN LIKE A BALLOON AND THE REST OF MY BODY LOOKED LIKE A SKELETON.



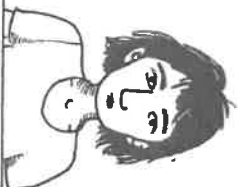
SHE'S GOT TYPHUS.

WHEN I WAS STRONGER I WALKED AROUND AND TALKED WITH THE OTHERS.

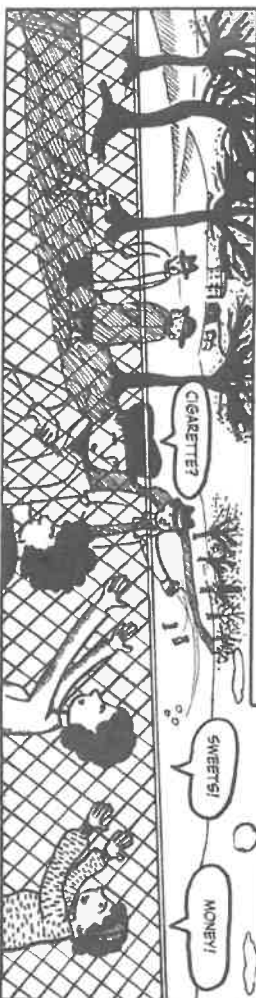


HAVE YOU SEEN MY LITTLE SISTER? SHE'S CALLED KRISTINA.

NO.



AFTER A FEW DAYS WE WERE PUT INTO QUARANTINE. THAT MEANS WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE GROUNDS IN CASE WE INFECTED OTHER PEOPLE. EVERY DAY PEOPLE CAME BY.



CIGARETTES?

SWEETS!

MONEY!

THEY GAVE ME A LOVELY NIGHTDRESS.



THEY BURNED OUR CLOTHES. THEY WERE FULL OF LICE.



WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

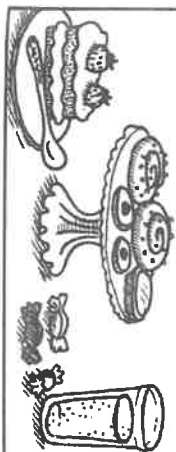
I SEWED A PHOTO OF MY FAMILY INTO THE SEAM OF MY DRESS. NOW I HAVE NOTHING LEFT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WERE CALLED.

THERE WERE SO MANY.



LATER I WAS TAKEN TO THE CHRISTIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. IN JUNKING. WE REFUGEES HAD TO LIVE THERE. I LONGED FOR SOMETHING SWEET. BUT MY STOMACH WAS FULL OF WORMS. EVERYTHING RAN STRAIGHT THROUGH ME.

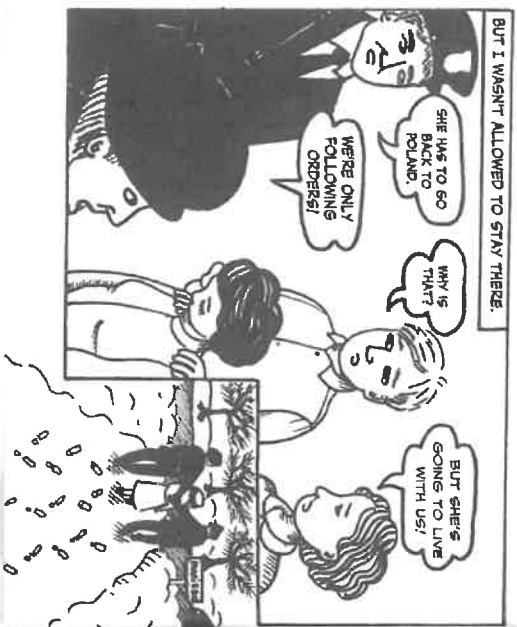


I CRAMMED MYSELF FULL ANYWAY. THE OTHER GIRLS DID THE SAME. WE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO FEEL FULL.

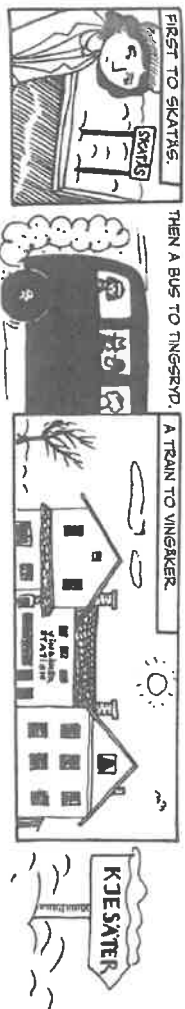


IT WILL SOON BE TIME TO EAT AGAIN. IT'S SUPPER IN THREE HOURS.

A LADY CALLED VIOLA CAME TO THE SCHOOL.



WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WAS INVESTIGATING WHEREABOUTS IN POLAND TO SEND ME, I WAS MOVED TO OTHER REFUGEE CAMPS.



# LISA JOHANSSONS CAFE

I GOT A JOB IN VINGAKER.

DON'T ENTER IN YOUR COUNTRY WITH THEIR PHONE NUMBERS ON THEIR ASKES?

SSSH!

DON'T TALK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ORDER?

TWO PLATES OF BACON AND ONION AND THREE CHILDREN'S PORTIONS OF THE SAME.

AND HAVE GLASSES OF MILK.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOUR ARM?

OH, THAT'S JUST MY TELEPHONE NUMBER.

I WAS QUITE HAPPY DURING THE DAY, BUT AT NIGHT I COULDN'T SLEEP.

I CAN'T TELL CHILDREN ABOUT THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS, OR ABOUT THE SMOKE FROM THE CHIMNEYS. NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE ME, ANYWAY.

THE ROMA IN SWEDEN HAD HEARD ABOUT A LONELY GYPSY GIRL IN VINGAKER. THEY WANTED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ME.

COME WITH US. YOU'LL BE LIKE A DAUGHTER TO OUR FAMILY.

I WENT WITH THE WOMEN AND THEY GAVE ME A HOME. THEY SAID THEY WERE MY RELATIVES. SO I WAS ABLE TO STAY IN SWEDEN.

THE WOMEN GAVE ME FOOD AND MEDICINE AND SCOTCHED ME WHEN I COULDN'T SLEEP.

ASH! HAS MY FAMILY TURNED INTO ASH? DO YOU THINK KRISTINA IS ALIVE?

WELL, LOOK FOR HER.

A SWEDISH WOMAN HELPED ME TO WRITE LETTERS TO POLAND AND GERMANY, BUT NO MATTER HOW HARD WE SEARCHED, WE COULDN'T FIND ANY SURVIVORS. ALL CLUES ENDED IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

ANXIETY LAY IN MY HEART LIKE A STONE. IT STAYED THERE, JUST LIKE THE NUMBER ON MY ARM.

I WILL NEVER BE HAPPY AGAIN.

IT WAS CHRISTMAS. I SAW MY FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE AND GOT A BIG PRESENT.

HERE YOU ARE, SOFIA.

A WONDERFUL, FRILLY DRESS FOR ME TO WEAR. IT WAS THEN I DECIDED TO LIVE!

RED SILK!

I MET JANKO. WE FELL IN LOVE.

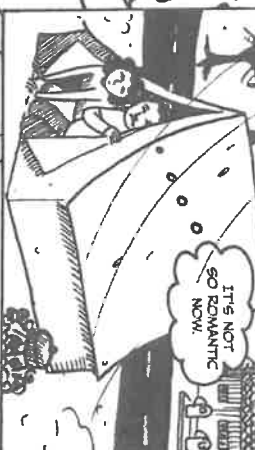
WE HAD NOWHERE TO LIVE SO WE LIVED IN A TENT UNTIL IT BEGAN TO SNOW.

GABRIEL PATTER, BRUNN

IT'S NOT SO ROMANTIC NOW.

SHE'S THE ONE I WANT TO MARRY!

WHAT A NICE BOY!



ONE DAY, SOMETHING UNUSUAL HAPPENED. TWO WOMEN CAME INTO CAFE.

ZHANES ROMANES?

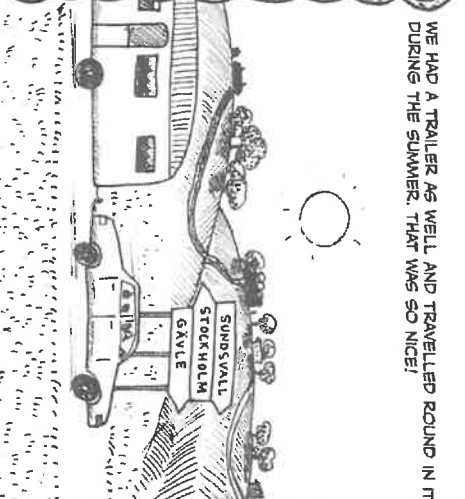
THEY SPEAK MY LANGUAGE!

# STOCKHOLM 1962.

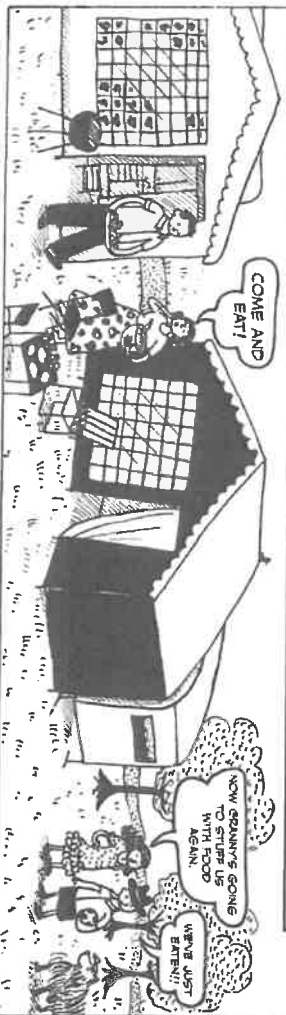
LATER WE GOT MARRIED AND GOT A FLAT.



WE HAD A TRAILER AS WELL AND TRAVELLED ROUND IN IT DURING THE SUMMER. THAT WAS SO NICE!



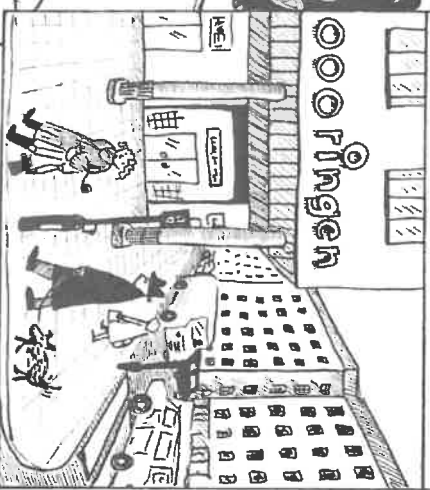
TO SEE THE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN GROWING UP AND PLAYING WAS THE BEST MEDICINE FOR ME.



SOMETIMES I TOLD FORTUNES AS MY MOTHER HAD TAUGHT ME. I COMFORTED PEOPLE AND GAVE THEM A BIT OF HOPE.



WHEN JANKO AND I GREW OLD, WE SOLD OUR TRAILER. WE WANTED TO LIVE IN THE TOWN TO BE NEARER TO THE SHOPS AND THE PHARMACY.



# STOCKHOLM 2005.

NOW I BELIEVE I'VE BEEN LUCKY. I WAS RESCUED. I HAVE A LOVELY FAMILY, A HUSBAND, CHILDREN AND BEST OF ALL, I HAVE GRANDCHILDREN.



BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR LITTLE SISTER?



DID YOU FIND HER?



HOW OLD WAS SHE WHEN SHE DISAPPEARED?

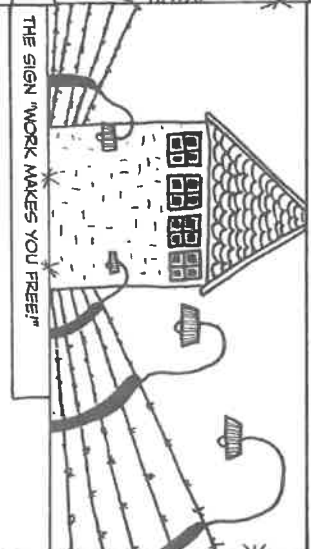
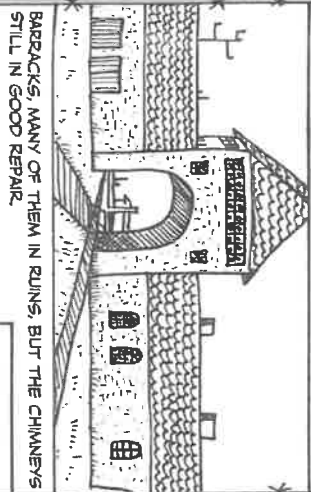


NO. I WENT BACK TO AUSCHWITZ TO LOOK FOR CLUES.

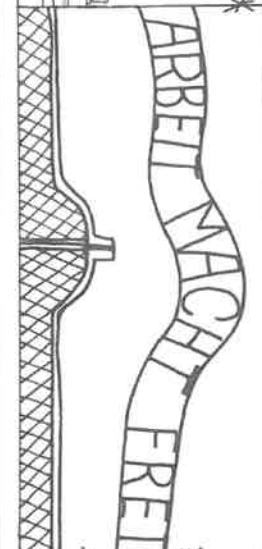
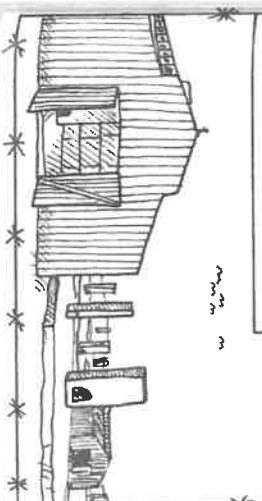


IT WAS JUST AS I REMEMBERED IT. RAILWAY TRACKS.

BARBED WIRE, WATCHTOWERS, SEARCHLIGHTS.



BARRACKS, MANY OF THEM IN RUINS, BUT THE CHIMNEYS STILL IN GOOD REPAIR.



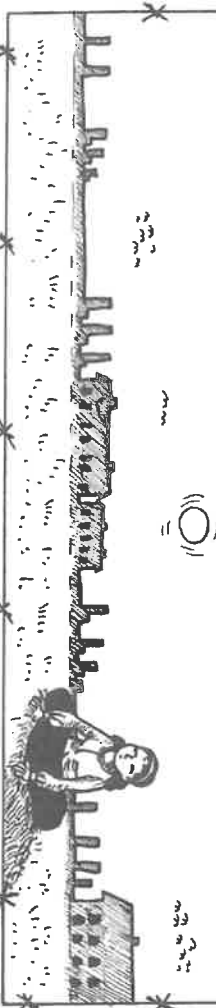
WE WENT INTO ONE OF THE BRICK HOUSES. IT HAD BEEN TURNED INTO A MUSEUM.



I SAW A CHILD'S SMALL RED SHOE. JUST LIKE THE ONE THAT KRISTINA USED TO WEAR.



THEN I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE MORE. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY. THE SUN WAS SHINING. I HAD NEVER SAT ON SUCH LOVELY GREEN GRASS, BUT I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF THINKING, 'THIS GRASS HAS GROWN FROM THE ASHES OF KRISTINA AND THE OTHERS.'

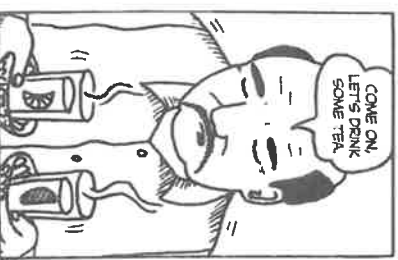


NOW MY STORY IS OVER AND MY THROAT IS DRY. HELP ME TO THE KITCHEN.



BUT WHY DID THEY DO THAT?

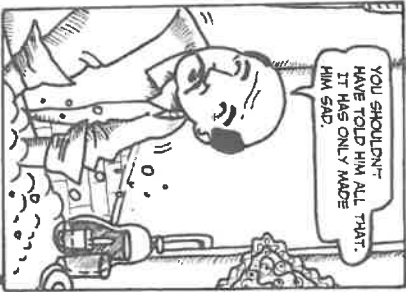
DARLING BOY, THAT IS THE HARDEST QUESTION OF ALL. I CANNOT ANSWER IT.



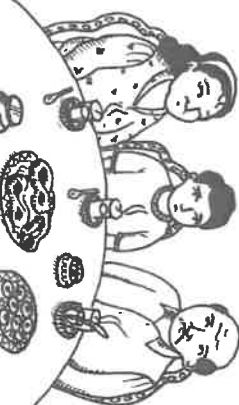
COME ON. LET'S DRINK SOME TEA.



CAN'T YOU THINK ABOUT SOMETHING NICER?

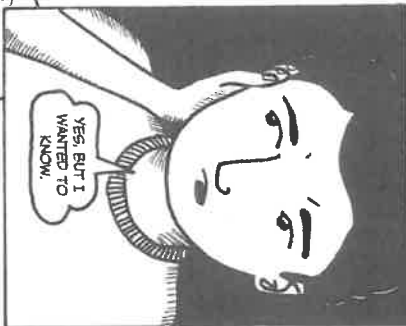


YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOLD HIM ALL THAT. IT HAS ONLY MADE HIM SAD.



WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT, MY LITTLE ONE?

ABOUT THE SHOE.



YES, BUT I WANTED TO KNOW.

