

The Story of a Soldier

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CHAPTER 1

My life was as perfect as a German man's life could be. It was just me, my mother, and my newborn sister, Adeline. We lived in a small house. I was in charge of keeping mother and Adeline safe and healthy. My father had died when I was 6, and ever since I had played the role of my father. Working so we could afford food, protecting mother and Adeline from harm, preparing breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and chopping logs for the fire. Mother and Adeline depended on me. I was their sanctuary. But one day a man came who changed my life forever.

CHAPTER 2

His name was Adolf Hitler. He became the leader of Germany [my home] in 1933. A law was passed in June, 1935 that German men who turned 20 had to join a work service to help build roads or construct buildings for 6 months to prepare service in the army. I was turning 20 in a week. But I couldn't join the work service! Who would provide for mother and Adeline? No one, that's who! I couldn't join the service. I just couldn't. But in my heart, I knew that I had to.

"Adeline and I will be fine." Mother said to me. Although she looked as worried as a worm in a bird's mouth. Adeline was crying in mother's arms. I looked at them sadly knowing they *wouldn't* be alright. Who would provide for mother and Adeline? We had no other family, and no caring friends. They wouldn't survive. I couldn't help it. A tear trickled slowly down my cheek. "I'm sorry." I whispered in mother's ear.

CHAPTER 3

I was a strong, well-built man from doing chores to keep Mother, Adeline and I healthy. I worked hard and efficiently doing work Hitler assigned me to do. All the while, I worried about how mother and Adeline were getting along.

I was paving a road when Hitler walked over to me. "What's your name, boy?" he asked me. "Derrick." I mumbled. "If you're going to mumble, maybe you *shouldn't* be a soldier in the German army." He said. "You want me to be a soldier in the army?" I asked confused. "Yes. Yes I do." He said. "It would be an honor to fight for my country." I said.

Father had been a soldier in the army. Grandfather had been a soldier in the army. Great grandfather had been a soldier in the army- Well, you get the idea. It had been my dream, ever since father died in battle, to be a soldier. And now, I was! With the first paycheck I received, I was able to hire someone to take care of mother and Adeline.

CHAPTER 4

The first place we took over was Austria. Surprisingly, it was easy. All my fellow soldiers and I had to do was stand there and look threatening. Confident by the easy win, Hitler decided to take over Czechoslovakia. It was also easy. But when we moved in to attack Poland, Great Britain and France threatened to declare war on us. Guess what? Hitler ignored their warning. After we took over Poland, we had to focus on defeating Great Britain and France. Hitler was drunk with power now. We found ourselves fighting North Africa, Italy, France, and the Soviet Union. It was crazy. My chances of surviving this war were probably 0.01.

CHAPTER 5

In the midst of the fighting, one of my fellow soldiers asked me, "Have you heard what Hitler is doing to Jews?" "No." I told him. It was freezing cold. Bullets whistled past my ears. "He's sending them to concentration camps, killing them, torturing them. Glad I'm not a Jew!" he chuckled. "That's terrible" I exclaimed. "It is." He said sadly. "I wish there was something we could do, but there isn't." The soldier went back to fighting. His news shocked me so much, I nearly fainted with rage. It was bad enough that Hitler was taking over innocent countries and states, but killing people *just* because they were Jews! I had had *enough* of this nonsense! I would *not* be a soldier in Hitler's army. I *refused* to fight for this merciless, terrible, power-hungry man! I knew what I had to do.

CHAPTER 6

It was a risky plan. Some might call it brave. Others would call it ridiculous. I called it a mix of both. The plan was at night, I would put on my long black cloak that mother had sewn for me. Then I would sneak back to mother and Adeline and together, we would take a boat to America. A much better and safer place to live. I carried out my plan and everything went smoothly until I got home, where a terrible sight awaited me.

CHAPTER 7

Mother was lying in her bed coughing up a storm, and looking as pale as a ghost. I felt her forehead and she was burning up. I looked for Adeline, but she was nowhere to be seen. "Where is Adeline?" I asked her. In a pained, scratchy voice, mother said "Adeline has flown up to join the angels. She caught pneumonia and died shortly after." Adeline was

dead. It was my fault. I had gotten so proud when Hitler appointed me a soldier in the army that I hadn't stopped to think about it. I foolishly had become Hitler's puppet. "What happened to you?" I asked her. "I caught a fever." She said. I told her about my plan to escape to America. "No, Derrick. *You* escape to America. Create a new life. You have made me extremely proud. Now you must leave me, for I would never survive the long and perilous journey to America. Goodbye, Derrick." "No! Don't leave me!" I screamed. "I must. But I will always be with you in your heart." And then she closed her eyes and I knew she would never open them again.

CHAPTER 8

Mother was right when she said the journey to America would be perilous. After leaving mother with a heavy heart, I bought a ticket for a boat that would drop me off at Mexico. I had bought the ticket with all the money Mother had saved up in order for us to someday move to Brazil. Brazil had been where father was born before he had moved to Germany. In Mexico, with my remaining money, I planned to take another plane to America, but I didn't have enough money. I would have to travel on foot. To make things worse, I had seen a wanted poster with a picture of me on it. It said that I was a traitor and that if anyone brought Hitler my head, he would pay them a great amount of money. Hitler had found out. Many tried and failed to kill me. One man had shot me in the leg, though. I was badly hurt. I was starving. I couldn't continue the journey on my injured leg. I would join Adeline and Mother soon. Soon the struggle would be over. But I didn't die. I rested my body on a field, too weak to continue my journey, but too full of life to die. I was so close to America, yet so far. God had willed me to not give up. He had given me strength. I

wouldn't give up. I continued on until 3 months later, I arrived. I was in America. I was finally there.

CHAPTER 9

Now here I am, in America. I have a new life. A better life. I live with a beautiful wife and an intelligent and curious daughter named Adeline. Now, 10 years later, I tell Adeline the story of my life. The life of a soldier.