

# MAUS



A SURVIVOR'S TALE

art spiegelman



**M**aus is the story of Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and of his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his father's terrifying story, and History itself. Its form, the cartoon (the Nazis are cats, the Jews mice) succeeds perfectly in shocking us out of any lingering sense of familiarity with the events described, approaching, as it does, the unspeakable through the diminutive. It is, as the *New York Times Book Review* has commented, "a remarkable feat of documentary detail and novelistic vividness...an unfolding literary event."

Moving back and forth from Poland to Rego Park, New York, *Maus* tells two powerful stories: The first is Spiegelman's father's account of how he and his wife survived Hitler's Europe, a harrowing tale filled with countless brushes with death, improbable escapes, and the terror of confinement and betrayal. The second is the author's tortured relationship with his aging father as they try to lead a normal life of minor arguments and passing visits against a backdrop of history too large to pacify. At all levels, this is the ultimate survivor's tale—and that, too, of the children who somehow survive even the survivors.

*Maus* takes Spiegelman's parents to the gates of Auschwitz and him to the edge of despair (with a sequel to come). Put aside all your preconceptions. These cats and mice are not Tom and Jerry, but something quite different. This is a new kind of literature.

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"In its effect on the reader, on a par with Kafka."

—David Levine

# MAUS

A SURVIVOR'S TALE



*Barbara*  
*Julia*  
art spiegelman



PENGUIN BOOKS

**"The Jews are undoubtedly a race,  
but they are not human."**

**Adolf Hitler**



It was summer, I remember. I was ten or eleven...

LAST ONE TO THE SCHOOLYARD IS A ROTTEN EGG!

...I was roller-skating with Howie and Steve...



...til my skate came loose.

OW!



HEY! WAIT UP FELLAS!

ROTTEN EGG!  
HA HA!



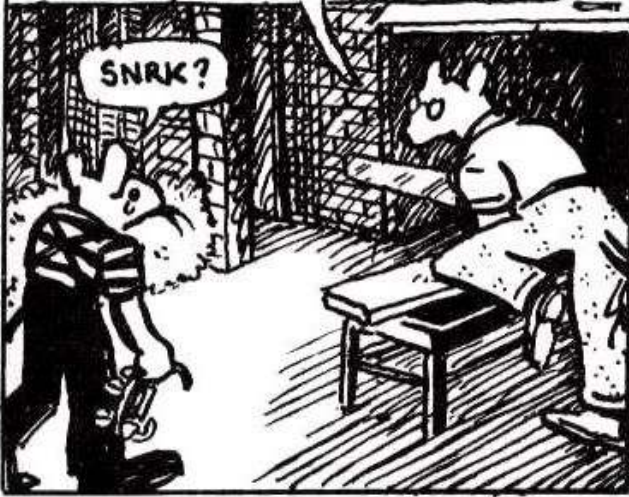
W-WAIT UP!



SNK, SNF

My father was in front, fixing something...

ARTIE! COME TO HOLD THIS A MINUTE WHILE I SAW.



SNRK?

WHY DO YOU CRY, ARTIE? HOLD BETTER ON THE WOOD.



I-I FELL, AND MY FRIENDS SKATED AWAY W-WITHOUT ME.

He stopped sawing.

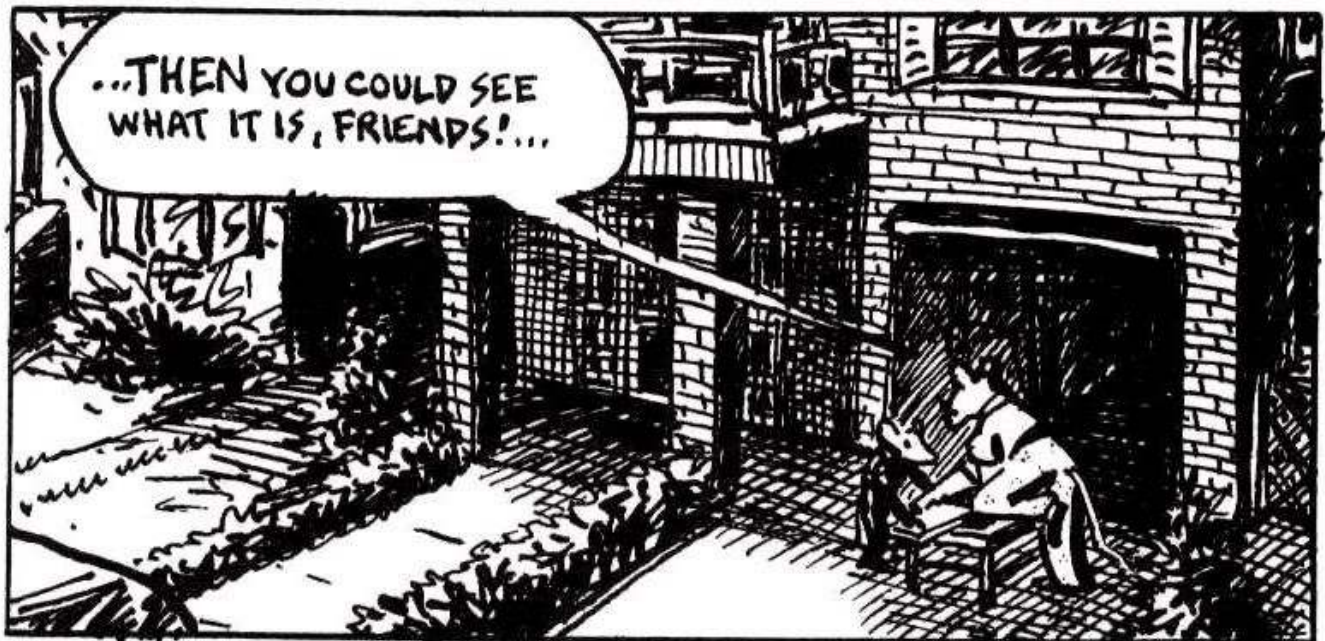
FRIENDS?  
YOUR FRIENDS?...



IF YOU LOCK THEM TOGETHER IN A ROOM WITH NO FOOD FOR A WEEK ....



...THEN YOU COULD SEE WHAT IT IS, FRIENDS!...



# MY FATHER BLEEDS HISTORY

( M I D - 1 9 3 0 s T O W I N T E R 1 9 4 4 )

## C O N T E N T S

- 9 one/the sheik  
25 two/the honeymoon  
41 three/prisoner of war  
71 four/the noose tightens  
95 five/mouse holes  
129 six/mouse trap



C H A P T E R O N E





I went out to see my father in Rego Park. I hadn't seen him in a long time- we weren't that close.





After dinner he took me into my old room...

COME-WE'LL TALK WHILE I PEDAL...



IT'S GOOD FOR MY HEART, THE PEDALING. BUT, TELL ME, HOW IS IT BY YOU? HOW IS GOING THE COMICS BUSINESS?

I STILL WANT TO DRAW THAT BOOK ABOUT YOU...



THE ONE I USED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.



ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN POLAND, AND THE WAR.



IT WOULD TAKE MANY BOOKS, MY LIFE, AND NO ONE WANTS ANYWAY TO HEAR SUCH STORIES.



I WANT TO HEAR IT. START WITH MOM... TELL ME HOW YOU MET.

BETTER YOU SHOULD SPEND YOUR TIME TO MAKE DRAWINGS WHAT WILL BRING YOU SOME MONEY...



BUT, IF YOU WANT, I CAN TELL YOU... I LIVED THEN IN CZESTOCHOWA, A SMALL CITY NOT FAR FROM THE BORDER OF GERMANY...



I WAS IN TEXTILES-BUYING AND SELLING-I DIDN'T MAKE MUCH, BUT ALWAYS I COULD MAKE A LIVING.

I WAS, AT THAT TIME, YOUNG, AND REALLY A NICE, HANDSOME BOY.



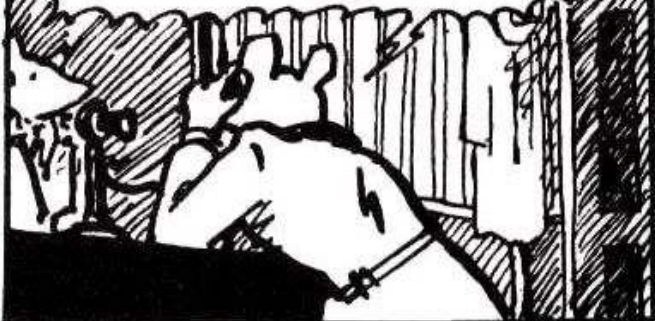
I HAD A LOT OF GIRLS WHAT I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT WOULD RUN AFTER ME.



HELLO, VLADEK? THIS IS YULEK...



A FRIEND OF MINE, LUCIA GREENBERG, WOULD LIKE TO BE INTRODUCED TO YOU.



EVENTUALLY, I TOOK LUCIA TO DANCE...



I HAVE A SMALL APARTMENT. MY PARENTS MOVED TO SOSNOWIEC



WHEREVER I WENT - I LOOKED AROUND - AND LUCIA GREENBERG WOULD BE ALSO THERE ...



BUT, POP... MOM'S NAME WAS ANNA ZYLBERBERG! ...



ALL THIS WAS BEFORE I MET ANJA - JUST LISTEN, YES?



WHY DON'T YOU EVER INVITE ME TO YOUR HOME? ... ARE YOU ASHAMED OF IT?



- SO FINALLY, I INVITED HER ...



YOU MUST HAVE ANOTHER GIRL-FRIEND WHO CLEANS FOR YOU - NO?



... I DIDN'T WANT TO BE MORE CLOSER WITH HER, BUT SHE REALLY WOULDN'T LET ME GO.



WAS SHE THE FIRST GIRL YOU -UH-

YES...WE WERE MORE INVOLVED, SO LIKE THE YOUTHS HERE TODAY

WE SAW EACH OTHER TOGETHER FOR MAYBE THREE OR FOUR YEARS.



LET'S GET ENGAGED, VLADEK.

IT'S LATE. I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.



NOT YET, PLEASE

COME ON - YOUR PARENTS WOULD WORRY.

HER FAMILY WAS NICE, BUT HAD NO MONEY, EVEN FOR A DOWRY.



COUSIN VLADEK!

WELL, EVERY HOLIDAY I WENT TO VISIT MY FAMILY... IT WAS MAYBE A JOURNEY OF 35 OR 40 MILES.



IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. LISTEN...

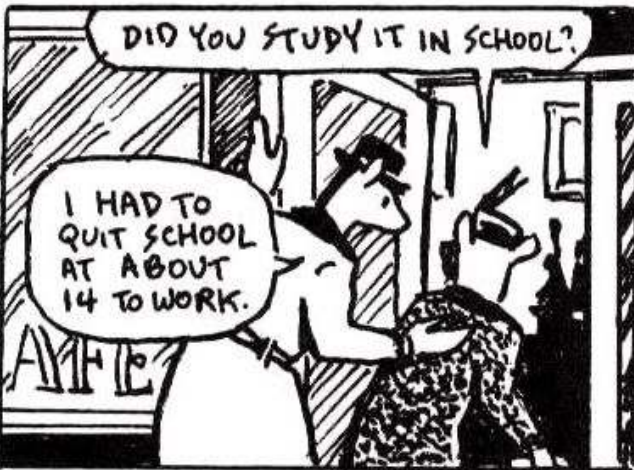


THERE'S A GIRL IN MY CLASS - I WANT YOU TO MEET US TOMORROW - HER NAME IS ANJA.



SHE'S INCREDIBLY CLEVER, FROM A RICH FAMILY... A VERY GOOD GIRL...

THE NEXT MORNING WE ALL MET TOGETHER. MY COUSIN AND ANJA SPOKE SOMETIMES IN ENGLISH.



AND THEN SHE STARTED WRITING TO ME SUCH BEAUTIFUL LETTERS—ALMOST NOBODY COULD WRITE POLISH LIKE SHE WROTE.



I VISITED A COUPLE TIMES TO HER. SHE SENT ME A PHOTO!!!



I BOUGHT A VERY NICE FRAME...



IT PASSED MAYBE A WEEK UNTIL LUCIA AGAIN CAME AND SAW THE PHOTO...



I'M GOING TO GET ENGAGED TO HER, LUCIA.

PSSH! AND LOOK AT WHAT A BEAUTY YOU PICKED.

LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING, LUCIA. IT ISN'T GOOD FOR EITHER OF US THAT YOU KEEP COMING UP HERE...

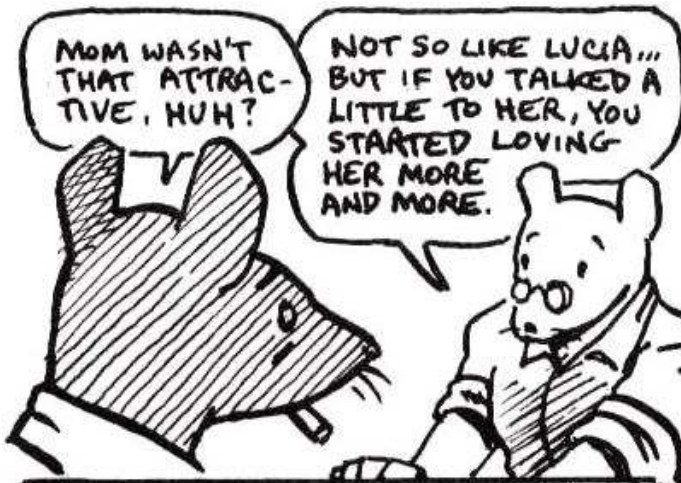


... WE HAVE TO PLAN FOR OUR FUTURES, AND

FORGET HER! LET ME MAKE YOU HAPPY!



IT WAS NOT SO EASY TO GET FREE FROM LUCIA.



ANJA'S PARENTS WERE ANXIOUS SHE SHOULD BE MARRIED. SHE WAS 24; I WAS THEN 30.



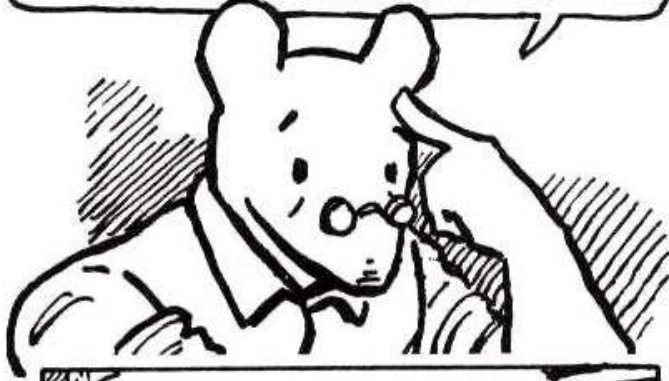
THE ZYLBERBERGS HAD A HOSIERY FACTORY—ONE OF THE BIGGEST IN POLAND... BUT WHEN I CAME IN TO THEIR HOUSE IT WAS SO LIKE A KING-CAME...



TO SEE WHAT A HOUSEKEEPER SHE WAS, I PEEKED INTO ANJA'S CLOSET.



ACH! HERE I FORGOT TO TELL SOMETHING FROM BEFORE I MOVED TO SOSNOWIEC BUT AFTER OUR ENGAGEMENT WAS MADE.



ONE EVENING THE BELL RANG ...



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I'M ON MY WAY OUT.

I-I'LL COME WITH YOU.



NO, YOU CAN'T COME WI-

PLEASE, VLADEK!

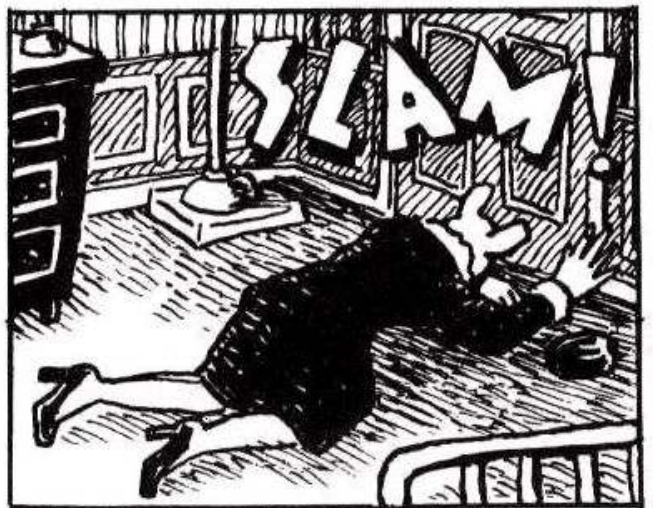


SHE FELL ON THE FLOOR AND HELD STRONG MY LEGS.



DON'T RUN AWAY!

I SAW NOW THAT I WENT TOO FAR WITH HER.



I RAN OUT TO MY FRIEND WHAT INTRODUCED US. HE WENT TO CALM HER DOWN AND TOOK HER HOME.

I DIDN'T HEAR MORE FROM LUCIA - BUT ALSO I STOPPED HEARING FROM ANJA ...



NO TELEPHONE CALLS, NO LETTERS, NOTHING! WHAT HAPPENED?



SHE SAYS SHE WON'T SPEAK TO YOU!



SHE GOT A LETTER FROM SOMEONE IN CZESTOCHOWA. MY GOD! IT SAYS THE WORST THINGS IN THE WORLD ABOUT YOU!



WELL, I CAN'T CONVINCE HER ON THE PHONE. I'LL COME DOWN BY TRAIN ON FRIDAY AFTER WORK.

IT WASN'T EVEN A HOLIDAY, BUT I WENT ANYWAY TO SOSNOWIEC.



SO, TELL ME, ANJA - WHAT HAVE I DONE THAT'S SO HORRIBLE?

YOU SHOULD KNOW - JUST READ THIS!





I DON'T EVEN WANT TO SEE IT. JUST TELL ME WHO WROTE IT. OR, BETTER YET, I'LL TELL YOU -



-LUCIA GREENBERG, RIGHT?  
IT'S JUST SIGNED "YOUR SECREAT FRIEND, L."



IT SAYS YOU HAVE A VERY BAD REPUTATION IN CZESTOCHOWA...



THAT YOU HAVE A LOT OF GIRLFRIENDS...



AND THAT YOU'RE MARRYING ME FOR MY MONEY!



ACH, ANJA - YOU SHOULD KNOW ME BETTER... ASK ANYONE IN CZESTOCHOWA ABOUT MY CHARACTER.



LUCIA'S AN OLD GIRLFRIEND WHO WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE. SHE MEANS NOTHING AT ALL TO ME.

AND AFTER MUCH TALKING, I CONVINCED HER.

SO I MOVED TO SOSNOWIEC AT THE END OF 1936; AND FEBRUARY 14, 1937, WE WERE MARRIED.

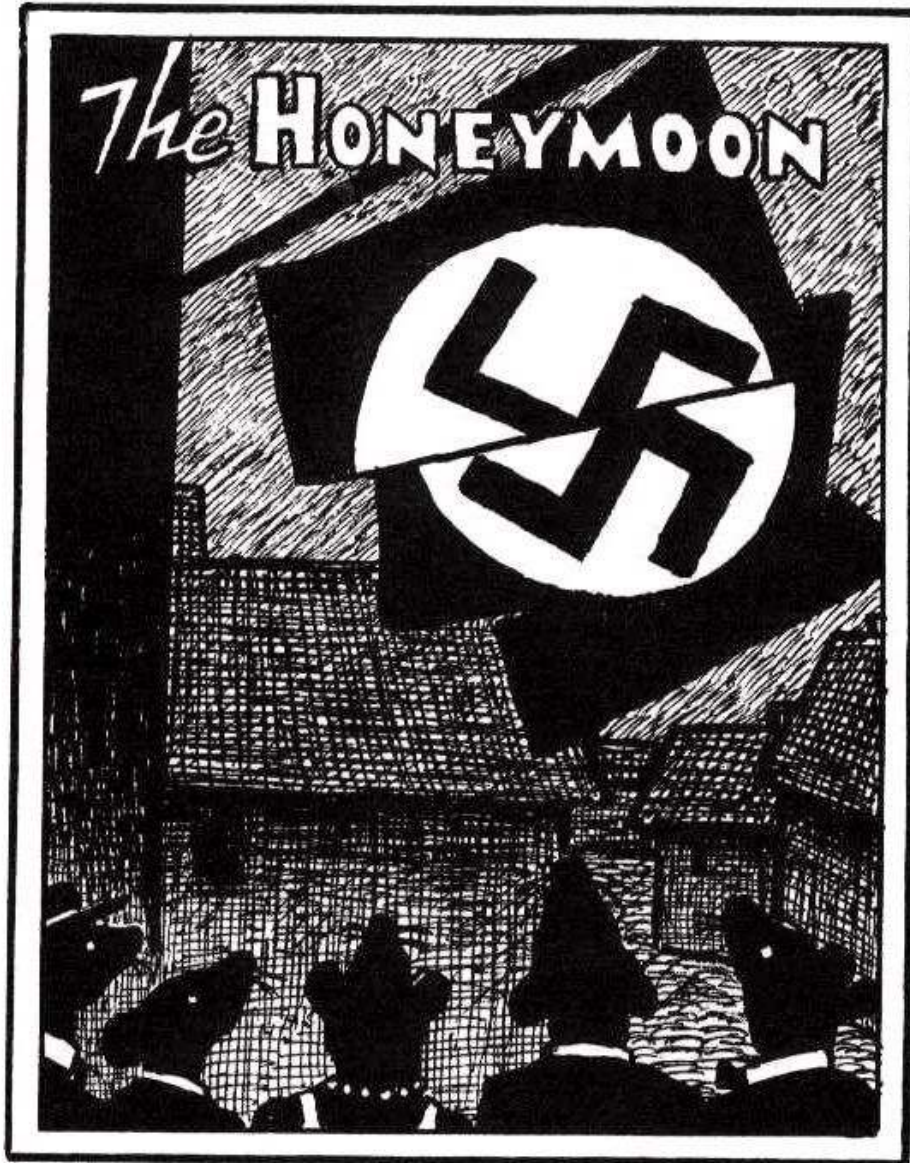
AND NOW SOME VODKA TO TOAST THE YOUNG COUPLE.



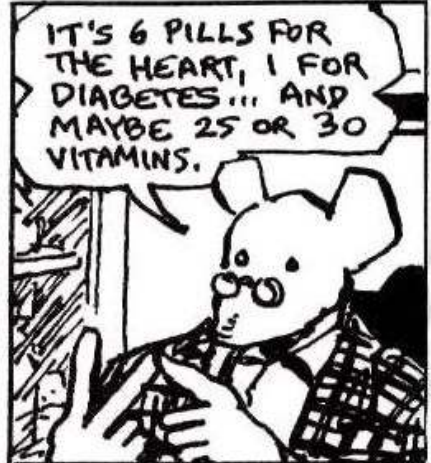
I MOVED INTO ONE OF FATHER-IN-LAW'S TWO APARTMENTS. HE OWNED BOTH, AND HE GAVE TO ME PART OWNERSHIP AND A VERY BEAUTIFUL GOLD WATCH FOR A WEDDING GIFT.



C H A P T E R   T W O



For the next few months I went back to visit my father quite regularly, to hear his story.





EVEN AFTER THE MARRIAGE, WHEN THIS FELLOW CAME TO SOSNOWIEC, ANJA ALWAYS RAN TO SEE HIM.



I DIDN'T KNOW, OF COURSE, THAT HE WAS COMMUNIST. I ALWAYS KEPT FAR AWAY FROM COMMUNIST PEOPLE.



A LITTLE AFTER WE WERE MARRIED I CAME HOME FROM A SELLING TRIP...



HEY VLADEK-THEY JUST ARRESTED THE SEAMSTRESS THAT LIVES DOWN YOUR HALL!...

SHE HAD SOME SECRET COMMUNIST DOCUMENTS!



AND WHEN I WENT UPSTAIRS...

THE POLICE JUST ARRES-HUH? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

THE POLICE WERE HERE!

LOOKING FOR ANJA!



SHE JUST TOLD US...

THAT BOY FROM WARSAW BRINGS COMMUNIST MESSAGES.



SHE TRANSLATES THEM INTO GERMAN AND PASSES THEM ON!

ANJA WAS INVOLVED IN CONSPIRACIONS!



A LITTLE BEFORE THE POLICE CAME, SHE GOT FROM FRIENDS A TELEPHONE CALL...



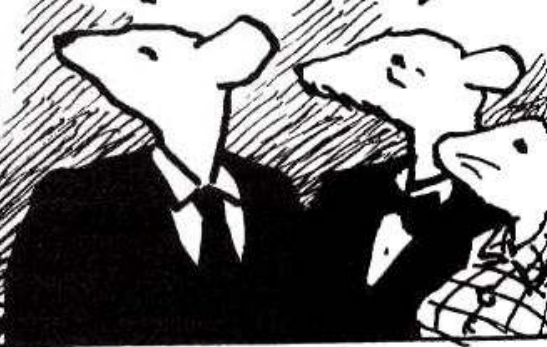


BY OCTOBER 1937, THE FACTORY WAS GOING, AND IT WAS BORN MY FIRST SON, RICHIEU.



HE'S A BIG BABY- OVER 3 KILOS.

MY GOD- ANJA ONLY WEIGHS 39!



OF COURSE, YOU NEVER KNEW HIM. HE DIDNT COME OUT FROM THE WAR.



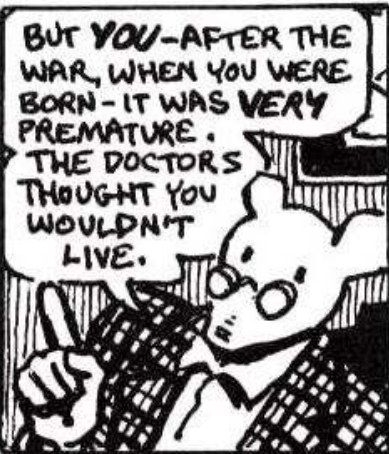
YES, I KNOW...

BUT WAIT- IF YOU WERE MARRIED IN FEBRVARY, AND RICHIEU WAS BORN IN OCTOBER, WAS HE PREMATURE?



YES, A LITTLE...

BUT YOU-AFTER THE WAR, WHEN YOU WERE BORN- IT WAS VERY PREMATURE. THE DOCTORS THOUGHT YOU WOULDN'T LIVE.



I FOUND A SPECIALIST WHAT SAVED YOU... HE HAD TO BREAK YOUR ARM TO TAKE YOU OUT FROM ANJA'S BELLY!



AND WHEN YOU WERE A TINY BABY YOUR ARM ALWAYS JUMPED UP, LIKE SO!



WE JOKED AND CALLED YOU "HEIL HITLER!"

ALWAYS WE PUSHED YOUR ARM DOWN, AND YOU WOULD

OOPS!



LOOK NOW WHAT YOU MADE ME DO!

ME? OKAY, I'LL RE-COUNT THEM LATER.



NO! YOU DON'T KNOW COUNTING PILLS. I'LL DO IT AFTER... I'M AN EXPERT FOR THIS.



SO... ANJA STAYED WITH THE FAMILY AND I WENT TO LIVE IN BIELSKO FOR MY FACTORY BUSINESS AND TO FIND FOR US AN APARTMENT...

BUT SOON IT CAME FROM SOSNOWIEC A TELEPHONE ...



WHAT'S WRONG, DARLING?

SOB  
IT DOESN'T MATTER... NOTHING MATTERS.



I DON'T KNOW! I HAVE A GOOD FAMILY... A FINE SON... I SHOULD BE HAPPY...



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT'S THE MATTER?



GIVING BIRTH WAS TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN. SHE'S ALWAYS HYSTERICAL OR DEPRESSED... A BREAKDOWN!

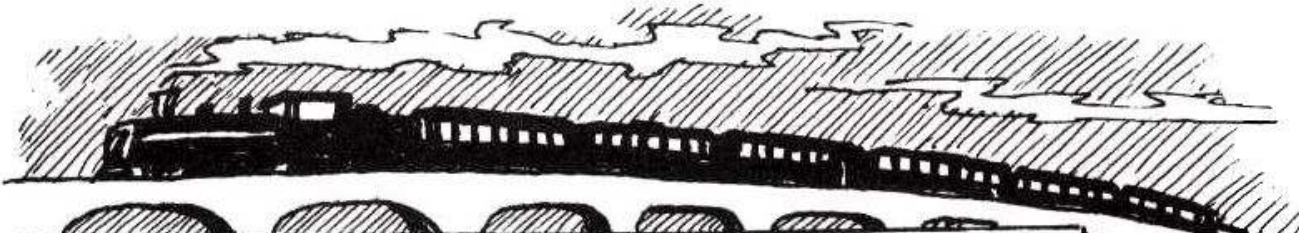


... BUT SOMEBODY MUST GO WITH HER... SOMEONE SHE TRUSTS.



... CAN STAY HERE WITH A GOVERNESS.

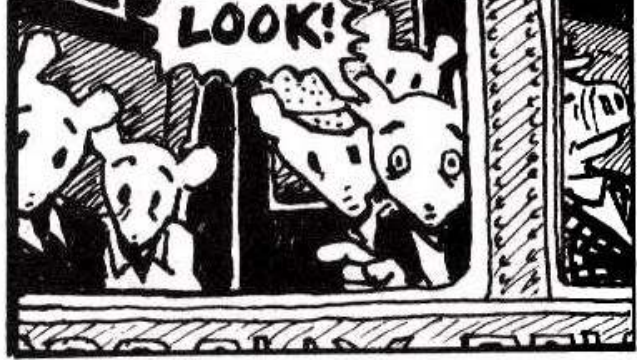
SOB



RIGHT AWAY, WE WENT. THE SANITARIUM WAS INSIDE CZECHOSLOVAKIA, ONE OF THE MOST EXPENSIVE AND BEAUTIFUL IN THE WORLD.

I REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE ALMOST ARRIVED, WE PASSED A SMALL TOWN.

EVERYBODY-EVERY JEW FROM THE TRAIN-GOT VERY EXCITED AND FRIGHTENED.



IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF 1938-BEFORE THE WAR-HANGING HIGH IN THE CENTER OF TOWN, IT WAS A NAZI FLAG..

HERE WAS THE FIRST TIME I SAW, WITH MY OWN EYES, THE SWASTIKA.



ONE FELLOW TOLD US OF HIS COUSIN WHAT WAS LIVING IN GERMANY...



THE SANITARIUM WAS FAR AWAY FROM EVERYTHING—SO PEACEFUL, SO QUIET.

LOOK AT HOW BEAUTIFUL THESE GARDENS ARE, ANJA.

UH HUH

PEOPLE CAME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WITH DIFFERENT SICKNESSES. IT WAS EVEN SHOPS HERE... A THEATER... REALLY BEAUTIFUL...

OUR ROOM IS LIKE A LUXURY HOTEL—LOOK AT THIS VIEW.

UH HUH

EACH MORNING NURSES WOULD VISIT TO ANJA.

AND EACH FEW DAYS I TALKED TO THE BIG SPECIALIST AT THE CLINIC.

WELL, WHAT DID THE DOCTOR SAY??

HE TOLD ME YOU'RE DOING FINE... FINE...

JUST RELAX.

I UNDERSTOOD MUCH OF SUCH SICKNESSES, SO I HELPED ALWAYS TO CALM HER DOWN.

LOOK—WE GOT A LETTER FROM HOME TODAY.

WITH A PHOTO OF RICHIEU—LET ME SEE.

HE'S A HANDSOME BOY... JUST LIKE HIS FATHER, YES?

YES.

IN THE EVENINGS  
WE WENT EITHER TO  
THE THEATER OR TO  
DANCE IN THE CAFE.

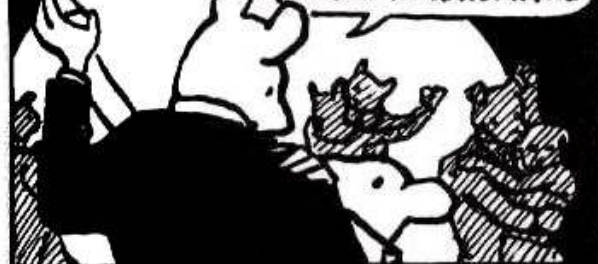


DID I TELL YOU THE TRAGEDY ABOUT THE PILLOW  
MY FAMILY LOST AT THE START OF THE 1914 WAR?

I WAS SEVEN... WE  
LIVED TOO CLOSE  
TO THE BORDER...  
IT WASN'T SAFE...

I TOLD HER MANY JOKES AND STORIES TO  
KEEP HER BUSY...

...SO WE TOOK WHAT  
WE COULD ON A WAGON PULLED BY FOUR  
HORSES AND WENT TO MY GRANDFATHER'S  
HOME IN RADOMSKO.



SOMEONE RODE PAST US AND TOLD  
US THAT WE'D DROPPED A PILLOW  
A FEW MILES BACK.  
A GUY TRAVELING TO  
AMSTOW PICKED IT UP.



IMAGINE - MY FATHER NEVER  
RODE A HORSE BEFORE... BUT  
HE UNKITCHED ONE FROM THE  
WAGON AND RODE TOWARD AMSTOW.



WE WAITED AND WAITED... MOTHER  
STARTED CRYING: "SURELY HE FELL  
AND GOT KILLED!" SHE HAD BEGGED  
HIM TO "LET THE PILLOW GO AND  
TAKE ALL OUR TROUBLES WITH IT!"



THE HORSE WAS BONY AND DIDN'T HAVE  
A SADDLE... FINALLY, LATE THAT NIGHT,  
FATHER RODE BACK WITH THE PILLOW  
...UNDER HIS BLOODY TUCHUS...



SO, FATHER GOT HIS PILLOW BACK  
...BUT HE COULDN'T SIT  
DOWN FOR THE REST OF  
THE WAR!



I LOVE  
YOU, VLADEK.

AND SHE WAS SO LAUGHING AND SO HAPPY,  
SO HAPPY, THAT SHE APPROACHED EACH  
TIME AND KISSED ME, SO HAPPY SHE WAS.

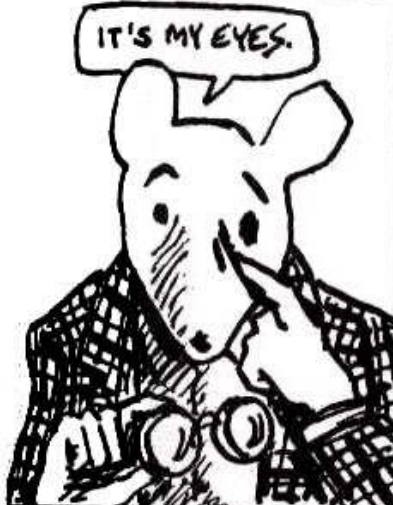


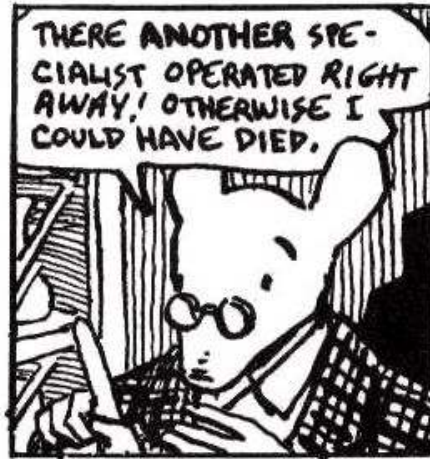


IN A COUPLE MONTHS WE WERE WELL-OFF— QUITE WELL-OFF... A WORKING FACTORY, A 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT, A POLISH GOVERN- ESS, AND EVEN A MAID.







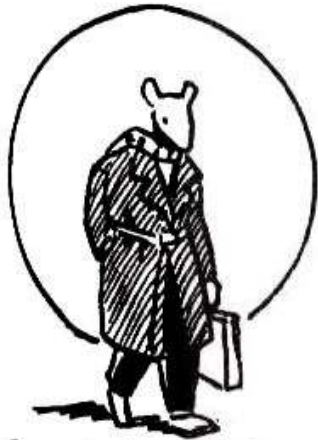


WELL, IT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY, YES? I'M TIRED AND I MUST COUNT STILL MY PILLS.



C H A P T E R   T H R E E





I visited my father more often in order to get more information about his past..



HAVE SOME MORE GREEN BEANS, ARTIE.

YES, LOOK - YOU DON'T EAT ANYTHING!

NO THANKS, I'VE HAD ENOUGH.



SO FINISH AT LEAST WHAT'S ON YOUR PLATE!

OKAY... OKAY.



Y'KNOW, MALA, WHEN I WAS LITTLE, IF I DIDN'T EAT EVERYTHING MOM SERVED, POP AND I WOULD ARGUE TIL I RAN TO MY ROOM CRYING ...

YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ARGUE WITH YOUR FATHER.



...MOM WOULD OFFER TO COOK SOMETHING I LIKED BETTER, BUT POP JUST WANTED TO LEAVE THE LEFT-OVER FOOD AROUND UNTIL I ATE IT.



SOMETIMES HE'D EVEN SAVE IT TO SERVE AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL I'D EAT IT OR STARVE.

YES! SO IT HAS TO BE. ALWAYS YOU MUST EAT ALL WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE.

ACCH, VLADEK.



1939? YES...WE WERE GIVEN ARMY TRAININGS FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN, BY THE START OF SEPTEMBER WE WERE ON THE FRONTIER.

