

## Ukrainian Pain

By Blaine

I was playing with Iven in our room when all of a sudden, we heard a loud bang. It was the front door. I heard it splinter and it fell with an earth-shattering thud! A few seconds later we hear shouting in Russian, our mother shouting to hide. I knew this was serious. I grabbed Iven and hid in a cubby with a door. A few seconds go by, I can hear her pleading and crying. It was horrible. It sounded like she was being tortured. I heard a thud like she had been hit, then she fell silent. I knew my father was being calm; that's the type of man he was, calm and gentle. I put my hand over my brother's mouth as he was scared, and knowing Iven, he would start to cry and give us away. All I could hear was shouting and crying, pleading. I could hear my mother again but this time begging for her life. It was brutal, the screams were loud, louder than the bombs and gunshots we heard at night.

Then I heard it. Two guns shots one after another...

I hold Iven and start to cry, sobbing, trying desperately to stay quiet. It felt like a void was formed in me.

Thirty minutes passed during which Iven had fallen asleep. I opened the door. It was a relief to not be in that claustrophobic little room. The house was dead silent. Dead. Silent. It was eerie, I knew what just happened. I put Iven in his bed and packed our bags. I took all the money I could find even though I knew all the shops had been blown up or raided. I packed two clean outfits, one for me and one for Iven. And I filled four bottles up with water, trying my best to avoid the living room and the devastating sight that was my dead mother and father!

## CHAPTER 2

After I had packed everything that I needed, I crept into our room and picked Iven up, trying not to wake him. Sneaking down the stairs with my back towards the living room, I ran out the back door as best as I could considering my heavy backpack and Iven in my arms.

I knew what my plan was... I needed to save myself and Iven.

He woke up, which I was thankful for because my arm started to ache.

He asked me, "Igor, where are we going?"

I told him that we were going to a better place far away. I didn't know if he knew about our parents, however I wasn't prepared to tell him what had happened if he didn't know. That was for another time though, our priority was escaping Ukraine.

### CHAPTER 3

We had been hiding for two days moving from place to place, trying not to end up dead. At night we could hear the marching of the Russian soldiers and the screams of the innocent. Last night we even heard a bomb go off in the distance. The city was full of smoke and the rubble of the obliterated buildings and vehicles.

Iven thought this was all a game which made everything easier and finally we only had a little distance to go until we got to the docks. There was a rumour of a group of fishermen that will take you to England. This is where I intended to take us.

### DAY THREE

Running through the city with Iven I became so out of breath and my hunger did not help me to sustain the run for long... but we just had to get away. I could not bear sleeping on another hard dusty floor in some abandoned shop again!

Suddenly, I knew where to go – the woods! It was quiet and peaceful in there with plenty of foliage to keep us hidden until we could get to the docks. We had to get to the docks, no matter what!

I knew my way through these woods like the back of my hand, as I used to play in them up until the war. Heading north through bushes and dirt we found ourselves in a dilemma. There was

a vertical drop of about six feet! I knew this wasn't here before so it must have been a bomb that caused this.

Now I needed to know how to get down, but how? I thought about just jumping but I knew that wouldn't work. I remembered watching videos of people doing parkour so I tried. I put my hands on the ground then sat down and slid forward. It definitely looked bigger when I was up there. Now trying to get Iven down, I told him to do what I did. I put my arms as high as I could and caught him. This hurt a lot. I hadn't eaten in three days as I'd given Iven the only little amount of food we had and we ran out of water last night. My mouth was bone dry. I knew I needed a drink and there was a little stream not too far actually on the way to the docks. Praying that it was clean or even still there I went looking and there it was. It was small, it didn't look pretty but I was so thirsty I cupped my hands and drank some like an animal. It was dirty but so was everything. My hands were still wet so I brushed Iven's hair back. He must have been so tired, but he was strong. Not once did he complain. Now we needed to get to the docks.

### LIKE A CAT

As we had finally approached the docks, I saw three people: Ukrainians - I knew they could help me! As I got closer, I saw one Russian soldier looking around observantly. A hefty holster was slung around his waist, his bullish hand hovering over its contents. He looked a little too trigger happy for my liking, so I needed to be careful!

He turned his back, so I poked my head out of the undergrowth and sent signals to the Ukrainians. I had to be extra quiet! I don't think they could hear me. I threw a twig at their feet and finally I had their attention.

I mouthed, "Help me".

Then Iven started giggling, I covered his mouth with my hand. What felt like an hour went by even though I couldn't tell the time as my watch broke days ago but I could tell it was a long time. The Russian soldier was having a dispute with the Ukrainians but then he left. Now was

my chance to wave at them and they told me to run to them. So I did and they directed me and Iven into a place under the top floor of the boat. They told me that they would take me away to England and they gave me and Iven food and then we went on our way to a new life.

Me and my little brother finally safe...