

### **Escape from Poland by Julia Y8**

Hello, my name is Luna and I am 21 years old. I was born in 1924, November 18<sup>th</sup>. I live in my home country Poland. I have four siblings: Layla who is 15, Ava who is 17, Noah who is 13, and Leo who is 11. I am the oldest sibling, and I am their legal guardian since my parents passed away a few years ago in a car accident. A few days ago, I had to make one of the hardest decisions of my life. I had to leave my home country as me and my siblings were no longer safe. I was scared but I had to leave because of religious violence.

My journey started in 1945, September 14<sup>th</sup>. I took my siblings and the most important resources. The only problem was where to go and how would I get there. I thought about it a lot, but I could not think from the stress. One of my younger siblings Noah suggested a great idea to travel to the UK. I thought the safest way to travel to the UK was by boat and I remembered that we had an old boat that belonged to my father. The boat wasn't the best, it wasn't fancy, but it was stable and a good size. But before we even started the journey, I had to take a quick walk to the shop. We needed a map since the internet wouldn't work at sea. As I was walking, I heard loud screams and a gun shot.

I was terrified.

I couldn't get any words out.

I couldn't move either, but I felt a small, cold hand grab me by my hand and pull me towards the shop. It was the small figure of a girl. As she took me behind the counter, I realised it was my sister Ava with a map in her left hand. As she spoke, she said she found the map in our shed and that it isn't safe out here, so we needed to get back home.

When we got home, we used all our strength to pull the boat out of the shed and push it into the water. One by one we jumped in the boat and set off. As we were getting further away from the land it got dark and people with flashlights walked around looking out for people.

It was the Nazis.

Me and my siblings ducked down as a flashlight was flashing on us. Luckily, we didn't get caught so we swam past, continuing our journey. I put my siblings in warm blankets, hoping they would fall asleep, resting peacefully.

I stayed up making sure we were going the right way. Everything was going well until disaster struck. Massive waves came, flipping our boat over, tossing us all into the cold sea and nearly drowning us. I tried swimming up to the surface, but the large waves were like a brick wall pushing me down. Desperately, I fought against the need to breathe, my legs and arms were willing me to the surface, my lungs on fire!

As I got to the surface, the cold, freezing waves were hitting me against the face, barely letting me breathe. I tried to yell for my siblings, but the water forced itself in my mouth, burning me inside and drowning me as the waves pulled me down.

Down.

Down.

I needed help but no-one was coming! My mind was starting to fog – darkness engulfing me. Can I fight this?

God was with me; I saw the shadow of the up-turned vessel just above me. Maybe, just maybe, there was an airlock. With renewed vigour, I realised I was no longer falling but rising. Without warning, I felt my head burst through the surface and my lungs were suddenly filled with air!

The sound of horrifying screams came from behind me but there was no sign of a human being, just an empty sea. I looked around desperately, questioning myself if it was real or just in my mind. How would I ever find land now? And where were my siblings? It felt as though all hope was lost.