

## JADWIGA MALINOWSKA

Class 2

Starościce

### My wartime experiences

It was in winter, before Christmas. Jancia went to school and I was sitting on a stool by the oven and straightening different pieces of glossy paper from last year and getting them ready for the Christmas tree. Then Jancia came back in tears and said that she had seen dad being taken away by German gendarmes with a great big dog. Jancia said that dad noticed her, looked at her, waved his hand and shouted: "farewell, Jancia!"

I can't write anymore because I feel bad for dad and I have to cry. Why did the teacher make me do this exercise when it makes me cry all the time?

Mum started to cry and I cried. My aunt told me not to cry because dad might come back. She took me and Jancia to her home and went with mum to find out where they had taken dad. Mum took some bread and a blanket because it was very cold and wanted to ask if she could give them to dad. Jancia and I waited for a long time for mum, but when she returned, she told us that they didn't let her give dad anything. The Germans were bad and they didn't accept anything from her. They said dad would be given everything he might need in prison. We asked why mum had been there for so long and she told us that she had been standing on the road when she saw them take dad somewhere in a car. She found out afterwards that the Gestapo had taken him to a prison in Dobromil.

We waited for dad to come back every day. Mum kept going and taking packages to him. Jancia and I stayed at home. When I went to bed in the evenings I sometimes cried because dad was cold in prison while I was going to a warm bed. I was the saddest at Christmas because I didn't have a Christmas tree and there was no Christmas Eve celebration.

After Christmas, they took dad to a second prison, to Przemyśl. Mum had to find out where he had been taken again. When she found him, she started to take packages again, and

I stayed at home because Jancia, my sister, was going to 4th grade. Even though I was small, – I was five years old – I cleaned the house and peeled potatoes.

From Przemyśl they took dad to Tarnów. Mum didn't go there very often because it was far away, and anyway, they soon transferred him to Auschwitz. We were very happy when the first letter from him arrived. Mum sent packages and I said my prayers every day for him to come back as quickly as possible. But he didn't come back. We were afraid to go to sleep sometimes because bands of Ukrainians were attacking Poles.

Mum fell ill and my aunt came to collect us. I cried terribly because she didn't want to take my toys or my dog Bobek or my cat Maciuś. She said that we were leaving everything because she wouldn't take it. When I really cried she let me take two black dolls, my elephants and some toys.

We went far away to my aunt's house and after a year I started to go to the 1st class. I wanted to learn to write so I could send a letter to dad, but I didn't write anything because they took him somewhere from Auschwitz and we don't know anything of what happened since then. Now I am in the 2nd grade. I want to graduate to the 3rd and I pray to God for my dad to come home. I have a friend Alinka whose dad was also in Auschwitz and didn't come back. We talk about whose dad will come home first. Soon it will be four years that he is gone.