

I remember:

Poland, 1939.

I remember it all. The pain. The terror. The tears. It was all taken from me, like sand falling through your hand. I remember the laughter, the joy, and all my treasured memories, erased. My beloved mother's laughter shall never be heard again, all because of them.

It was a Thursday when it all occurred. My mother, my sister and I were enjoying a golden, autumn day, as any family would, playing on the field outside our home. The sun spread its joy on us, and we immediately seized it. I was chasing my mother and sister as we all laughed jubilantly, our joy filling the air. We all fell to the floor laughing as we held each-others' hands. Suddenly, my mother sat up, as if she had been pricked.

"Ma, what is the matter?" I asked blankly.

"It is nothing dear, do not worry Aleksander." Although calm, I could see fear in her eyes. As we lay down, we began to hear the distant, but all too soon, confrontational voices of men. The peace and tranquility of my home was shattered as the sound of gunfire plagued the air. Tall, burly men destroyed our fence and they ran forward, guns poised. My sister screamed and fled, but was to be brought down by a shower of bullets...

"MARA!!!" I stumbled towards my sister's fallen body, tears flooding my eyes. Her face, as pale as a ghost. I rested her head in my lap, stroking her golden hair. Her eyes flickered for a moment, then rolled back to reveal only white. I gently closed her eyelids and wept. My mother's scream rang out in the air as she resisted the strong grip of the soldiers. I remember: she fought like a lion even when all was lost. A hail of bullets and explosions put her screaming to an abrupt halt.

"Ma, no..." I stumbled towards her, avoiding all the monstrous men. My heart ached as I fell to my knees by my mother's body. That memory haunts me still. I could have done something. A red pool surrounded her body as I spotted numerous holes, all because of *them*. A feeling of rage mixed with pain filled me as I sheepishly got to my knees, tears still flowing. It was as if I didn't want to live anymore. A life without her - a life worthless. They took everything. My family, my home. All my golden moments now slowly crumbled away...

It all went as quickly as it came, the gunfire - the tears. As I slowly arose, I felt a cold, hard barrel press against my neck, accompanied by a formidable stare. At first I struggled and squirmed, but was then put to a halt after a punishing back-hand to my face. A trickle of blood slowly rolled down my cheek where the brutal man struck. All was quiet, then, a click and heavy breathing. Then, a bang. Another life - mine-taken.