

Love, Erika

Tia Hancock (2023)

The face of my watch told me I had nineteen minutes left. I had to sit down—the floorboards were too expensive to leave my tread marks on, and if I kept pacing, I was sure my legs would give way. My head spun, I was running out of time. Now was my only chance to make up for what I had done to the world, to my family and myself. If I missed this opportunity, I would surely go insane from guilt. But if I did save the world and my sanity, I would almost indefinitely die.

I knew of only one way to decide on my course of action, go back to when it all started. I pulled a book from my bottom drawer. My old journal.

I read a letter from eleven years earlier:

*3<sup>rd</sup> March 1934*

*Dear Margrit,*

*Today something happened. I wish I could send you this letter, but you are off helping the government. If you were here, I would tell you how Mutter goes on all day about the Führer, but I know she is just worried for you, and I have better news anyway.*

*Today my teacher asked me a question in science. It was really hard and I didn't know the answer, but somehow I did, because my teacher's voice was in my head, telling me the answer.*

*I don't know how it works, but maybe I could work in the government like you, Mutter says I'm too young to help the Führer with his plans and that she can't lose another daughter. But I don't understand because you are not lost. The Führer says the people that are helping him have purpose and meaning in life which is all anyone could wish for. So how could you be lost?*

*I hope you can come home soon.*

*Love, Erika*

I still wished I could've sent that letter to my sister. I missed her so much—maybe it would have given me peace of mind that she was okay, maybe then I wouldn't have ruined her plans.

*12<sup>th</sup> April 1934*

*Dear Margrit,*

*Tomorrow the Führer is coming to our school, he says they have discovered something great and are looking for child prodigies. My ability to read minds has got to be great enough for me to join him. I just know that he has great plans for someone like me, and I won't have to stay at home with Mutter, and her constant complaining. She just doesn't see the opportunity.*

*I hope to see you soon.*

*Love, Erika*

Oh, what a fool I had been. If I had only sent those letters to my sister, she could have warned me.

*27<sup>th</sup> June 1934*

*Dear Margrit,*

*Hopefully, this is the last letter I write to you. Next week I leave home to go and train, then I will officially become one of you. The Führer was very pleased when he discovered I had your ability, and he said that he needed another one of me. He wanted to get me out of school early, but Mutter said I had to finish my last line of examinations. She didn't want me to go in the first place but settled after talking to the Führer. He must be a great man if he can convince stubborn Mutter.*

*See you soon.*

*Love, Erika*

Now I see that my Mutter had no choice. She was terrified for me. They say your elders know best. They were right.

*10<sup>th</sup> August 1934*

*Dear Margrit,*

*I got back today and regret not bringing this journal. I thought I would see you there, but I understand now that you are busy. I didn't realise how important your work was until I got there. I am here for a few days, then I will be permanently placed with the government. I don't know what we're working on, but I hope I can be with you.*

*Mutter has been very quiet lately. She must be missing Vater. I don't think she knows the great cause he is working in. I wish I could tell her, make her happy again. But I am under strict orders not to say anything. The Führer said the more people who know, the more fear that will be spread.*

*I will bring this journal in case I don't see you.*

*Love, Erika*

This was the start of the war in Germany and Mutter was all alone. Everyone I knew was suffering but I was selfish. I thought I knew best.

*23<sup>rd</sup> October 1934*

*Dear Margrit,*

*This is not what I expected at all. It was only eighteen months since I last saw you, but you are different. I know it has been hard for you. The war has just begun and you haven't seen Mutter in so long.*

*I haven't been on my first mission, but I know it will be soon with everything that the Führer is planning for Germany. I can't wait to be a part of it. I just wish you were as excited as I am.*

*See you when you get back from your mission.*

*Love, Erika*

I didn't realise what had unfolded in those eighteen months. You knew what the Führer was planning better than anyone. I had forgotten we shared the same ability.

*29<sup>th</sup> January 1935*

*Dear Margrit,*

*My first mission was a success. I know you probably don't care considering how you've been acting lately. It's like you've forgotten what this is all about. If you would just listen to me, you might remember that we're heroes. This bomb we're helping make is going to save our country.*

*I know you don't mean what you said about the Führer. He knows what's best for our country. I don't want you to miss out on all the fame and glory once we win the war. Please don't go.*

*Love, Erika*

I see clearly now that she was right—she couldn't help the Führer anymore, knowing the real plans.

*13<sup>th</sup> February 1935*

*Dear Margrit,*

*Tomorrow. That's when you plan on running away. You asked me to join you. I cannot, I have finally found my life's purpose.*

*These last two weeks I have come to see who you truly are, a traitor. You have a great ability to help our country win the war but you choose to side with the enemy. I am secretly hoping*

*that you will not go through with your plan because, after all, you are my sister, but should you do it I will alert the Führer. I am not sure what will happen after that but I'm sure the Führer will be just in punishing you.*

*Love, Erika*

They were not just punishing her, in fact, they killed her. And it was all because of me. I was brainwashed and oblivious to the operation that was running beneath my nose. It is as much the Führer's fault that I am here, reading these letters, as it is my own.

I picked up the final letter.

*21<sup>st</sup> May 1935*

*Dear Margrit,*

*That night came and went, and I haven't seen you since. The Führer told me to forget your existence, that you were not my sister any longer, but an enemy that would only stop us from purifying the race. And I have tried, I have busied myself with finding out how this bomb is made, but I just can't. This is not me forgiving your betrayal, it is only that I hope you are okay. I could never forgive myself if you were not.*

*I just wish I could have convinced you that this is the path to victory and success.*

*Love, Erika*

I had fourteen minutes left, then the bomb would be launched and the lives of many would be obliterated. For so long I have felt guilty because, although you betrayed our country, I have grown to see why. I have read the minds of captured scientists and tortured lost soldiers, all for the sake of developing this bomb. All along I thought this would save our country, but I was wrong—this bomb will ruin lives and guarantee a horrible fate for Germany.

I turned the page in the journal, grabbed a pen and started writing.

*2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945*

*Dear Margrit,*

*Your life holds my greatest regret, and now I know how to fix it. When I learned that you had died, I knew deep down what we were doing. But I was not in my right mind. I was fed lies.*

*Now I realise my mistake and I am sorry.*

*As of now, I have ten minutes left until my creation destroys the world. I have already ruined my family and now I must stop this bomb before my mistake ruins thousands of other families.*

*See you soon.*

*Love, Erika*