
Norway has been invaded by Nazi Germany! Fourteen-year-old Espen and his friends are quickly swept up in the Resistance movement. Espen gets his start by delivering illegal newspapers that tell the truth about what is happening in Norway and elsewhere. He then graduates to the role of courier, delivering coded messages and supplies to others in the Resistance, and finally he becomes a spy, dodging the Gestapo along the way.

During the five years of the Nazi regime, Espen, his sister, and their parents live in fear of nighttime raids and arrests, have little food except the potatoes they grow themselves, and begin to question the loyalties of the people around them. Espen gains—and loses—friends, falls in love, and makes one small mistake that threatens to catch up with him as he sets out to escape on skis over the mountains to Sweden.

This thrilling novel from Newbery Honor winner Margi Preus is based on the real-life adventures of a Norwegian spy during World War II.



Shadow on the Mountain is a work of historical fiction. Apart from the actual people, events, and locales that figure into the narrative, all names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to current events or locales, or to living persons, is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Preus, Margi.

Shadow on the mountain ; a novel inspired by the true adventures of a wartime spy / by Margi Preus.

p. cm.

Summary: In Nazi-occupied Norway, fourteen-year-old Espen joins the resistance movement, graduating from deliverer of illegal newspapers to courier and spy.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN 978-1-4197-0424-6 (alk. paper)

1. World War, 1939–1945—Underground movements—Norway—Juvenile fiction. 2. Norway—History—German occupation, 1940–1945—Juvenile fiction. [1. World War, 1939–1945—Underground movements—Norway—Fiction. 2. Norway—History—German occupation, 1940–1945—Fiction.

3. Spies—Fiction.] I. Title.

PZ7.P92434Sh 2012

[Fic]—dc23

2012015623

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Illustration © 2012 Yuko Shimizu

Maps by Sara Corbett

Book design by Chad W. Beckerman and Sara Corbett

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ABRAMS
THE ART OF BOOKS SINCE 1949

115 West 18th Street

New York, NY 10011

www.abramsbooks.com

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About the Author

In loving memory of my parents, Chris and Dorothy Preus, with thanks for their stories

Shadows made the mountains dark, and you, you didn't find the way

—LINE FROM “SYNNØVE’S SONG,” LYRICS BY BJ. BJØRNSON

Approximations of the Pronunciation of Names and Words

Aksel	AK-SEL	
bestemor	BEST-EH-MOOR	GRANDMOTHER
draug	DROWG	WATER CREATURE
Espen	ES-PEN	
far	FAR	FATHER
fjord	FYORD	AN INLET OF THE SEA BETWEEN HIGH CLIFFS
gust	GOOST	
Haakon	HAWK-ON	
hei	HI	HELLO
hird	HEERD	NORWEGIAN NAZI STORM TROOPERS
Hjalmer	HYAL-MER	
huldre	HUL-DRA	TROLL HAG
Hvepsen	VEP-SEN	THE WASP
Ingrid	ING-GRID	
ja	YA	YES
Jens	YENS	
Jotunheimen	YO-TUN-HEIM-EN	LAND OF THE GIANTS
Kjell	SHELL	
krone/kroner	CRONE/CRO-NER	CROWN/CROWNS: NORWEGIAN MONEY
Leif	LIFE	
Lilleby	LIL-LE-BEE	
Mor	MOOR	MOTHER
nei	NIE	NO
nisselue	NISS-EH-LU-EH	RED STOCKING HAT
Ole	OH-LEH	
Per	PEAR	
Ragnarok	RAHG-NA-ROK	FINAL DESTRUCTION IN NORSE MYTHOLOGY
Solveig	SOL-VAY	
Tante Marie	TAHN-TEH MA-REE	AUNT MARIE
tusen takk	TOOS-EN TUCK	A THOUSAND THANKS
vær så god	VAIR SO GO	BE SO GOOD; HELP YOURSELF

Prologue

Just before dawn on April 9, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded Norway, a neutral and peace-loving country of only three million people. The Norwegians were completely unprepared for the onslaught of eight hundred aircraft, ten thousand advance troops, and almost the entire German navy. By noon the Wehrmacht had taken control of Oslo, two major airports, and the most important coastal cities. The Norwegians scrambled to organize a military response, and for a few desperate weeks, aided by a small force of Allied troops, they put up a valiant but ultimately futile fight.

Some members of the government, including Vidkun Quisling, head of the Norwegian Nazi party, welcomed the Germans. Upon the invasion, Quisling quickly deposed the sitting government and declared himself prime minister.

In May, the Allied forces withdrew from Norway, and in early June, King Haakon and other members of the government left Norway for England and the Norwegian military disbanded. Nazi Germany was now occupying the country and was fully in control.

Or were they?

The occupying Germans had expected Norwegians to welcome them as their protectors against the Soviet Union. Fair-haired, blue-eyed, tall and fit, the Norwegians embodied the ideal of the Aryan race, which, according to Hitler, was destined to be the master race, and the Germans were unprepared for the hostility they encountered. An organized resistance formed almost immediately, including underground military groups (Milorg), civilian groups (Civorg), and intelligence units (XU), with a Coordinating Committee (KK) overseeing the common struggle. The movement was aided by a new British military branch called the SOE (Special Operatives Executive). But even ordinary Norwegians, young and old, found myriad ways of resisting. Despite an enormous military presence—one German soldier for every eight Norwegians—and in spite of the military's brutal methods, so effective was this resistance that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was inspired to say to the American people:

If there is anyone who still wonders why this war is being fought, let him look to Norway. If there is anyone who has any delusions that this war could have been averted, let him look to Norway; and if there is anyone who doubts the democratic will to win, again I say, let him look to Norway.

1940-1941

THE NORWEGIANS' INTELLIGENCE IS A LITTLE SLOW,
AND THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF FOREIGNERS; THEREFORE,
THE BENEVOLENT GERMAN MUST NOT LOSE HIS TEMPER BUT
TAKE MATTERS CALMLY . . . IT IS BETTER TO EXPLAIN
THINGS TO THEM IN A SIMPLE, MATTER-OF-FACT WAY
OR, STILL BETTER, TO ADOPT A PLAYFUL TONE.

—INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO GERMAN
SOLDIERS SERVING IN NORWAY

On the Road to the Fox Farm

Against the blue-black mountains, Espen's bicycle was just a tiny moving speck. Far below the road, the river pulsed and rushed, swollen with rain and snowmelt. The sun had long ago slipped away, leaving just a thin fringe of light glimmering along the ragged edge of the western mountains. *This is a dangerous time of day, his grandmother would have said, the time of day the trolls come out.*

Head down, straining forward over the handlebars, Espen felt his heart pump in rhythm with his legs. The muscles in his arms and legs burned, his heart beat furiously, and, ridiculously, his stomach was growling. He was always hungry. But how could he be hungry *now*?

"Cream cake," he said aloud, savoring the words as if eating them, feeling the sweet, silky "cream" melt on his tongue, then biting into the delicious sponginess of "cake." He shouldn't think about it, he scolded himself. He shouldn't think about anything but going faster.

A car drove up behind him and slowed. He pedaled harder, sweating under the rucksack on his back. *Why don't they pass?* he wondered. By the car's pattering he could tell it was not fitted with a wood-burning engine, which the Norwegians were required to drive. It burned petrol, so it had to be a German's.

Don't look over your shoulder, he told himself. If they want to stop you, they can stop you. Just don't think about it. Think about something else. But not cream cake.

He wondered what was happening at home. His father would still be at the train station, working his usual long hours. His mother would be worrying about them both, glancing out the window one last time before pulling the blackout curtains closed. His sister, Ingrid, would be up in her room, probably scribbling in her diary.

The car pulled up alongside Espen, and he glanced at it. He felt a rivulet of sweat run down his back. The car was full of German soldiers. The driver waved at him to stop, and Espen did, standing with one foot on the ground, the other resting on the pedal. Right away, his glasses fogged up. He took them off and cleaned the lenses with his shirt. Then he gave one last thought to his family, hoping that whatever happened next would not put their lives in jeopardy.

One of the soldiers got out of the car and held out his hand. "*Ausweiss, bitte,*" he said.

Espen dug in his pocket and handed the soldier his identity card. The soldier, Espen noticed, smelled clean. Like soap.

"Where are you going?" the soldier asked.

"To visit my uncle. He lives near Fossen."

"What is the purpose of your visit?"

"Just a visit," Espen said.

The soldier raised an eyebrow, so Espen continued. "My uncle's been ill, and my mother's worried about him. He doesn't have a telephone, so I said I would go check on him." Espen resisted the urge

go on with his story. *Keep it simple*, he remembered Mr. Henriksen telling him. *If they ask you questions, keep it simple. Don't rattle on.*

The soldier shone his flashlight in Espen's face. "Out so late?"

"I had soccer practice," Espen said. "We have a big match coming up. I got a late start."

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen," Espen said.

The soldier nodded at Espen's rucksack. "What's in there?" he asked in not-very-good Norwegian.

"Jam," Espen said.

The soldier extended his arm to take the rucksack.

Espen handed it over and tried not to watch the man's face as he opened it. Instead, he shifted his gaze to the car. He could see the bored faces of the soldiers and one who turned his head. But not far enough. Espen had seen who it was. Kjell.

They hadn't done much together lately, but it used to be that he and Kjell had spent every waking moment with each other. Just last April, after the Germans invaded, they had spent the next days with their ears pressed to the radio and their eyes on the roads, listening, watching, waiting. And spying.



The April day the German army reached their valley, Espen had followed Kjell along paths worn in the snow, leading up the hillside through the woods. All along the path rose columns of silent fir trees, their damp trunks reminding Espen of the woolen coats of the German soldiers. He half expected one to lunge out at them, bayonet flashing.

"Aren't you scared?" He panted a little, hurrying after Kjell.

"Nei!" Kjell said. "It's fun!" He turned around, grinning.

Kjell was never afraid of anything. He went toward danger, not away from it. That's what Espen's mother said, anyway, and why she told Espen that he had to "keep a level head" when they were together. She would have clobbered them both, Espen thought, if she knew what they were doing at that moment.

"I have to be back before dark," Espen said. "Mor decided that she is taking Ingrid and me to stay with relatives in the country, to get away from the fighting."

"Just this one last mission before you go, then, right?" Kjell said.

The trees had thinned as they reached a higher elevation, and the boys dashed from one to the next.

"This mission will be better than when you had us prowling around in the woods looking for the king," Kjell said. "That was a bust!"

"I swear, the whole royal family was hiding out around here somewhere," Espen said. "They're long gone by now. At least, I hope so."

"Shh!" Kjell held up his hand.

The dull roar of an airplane echoed against the mountainside.

"German fighter!" Kjell cried. "They strafe anything that moves! Run!"

But Espen felt as weak as if he were in a bad dream, as if his legs would not carry him.

Kjell grabbed his arm and dragged him under the cover of a cluster of birch trees.

The plane flew over and away, and the boys got up, brushed off the snow, and moved on, leaving the trees for the open, windswept hillside. Kjell flopped down, slithering snakelike on his belly, with Espen following him closely. They crept behind a large boulder where they could see but not be seen.

Kjell held a finger to his lips, and slowly, carefully, the two boys peeked over the rock.

In the darkening valley below, a procession of motorcycles, trucks, tanks, cars, horse-drawn wagons, marching soldiers, and soldiers on horseback snaked along the winding mountain road. The last rays of sunlight glanced off the barrels of the soldiers' guns, their polished leather boots, and even, it seemed, off the brass buttons on their long gray-green coats.

Espen's breath caught in his throat. Their sheer numbers and firepower made his stomach churn, but there was something more. Maybe it was a trick of light or the dusk, or maybe it was the fast hike up the mountainside that had made him dizzy, but for just a moment it looked to him as if the entire army was not coming from around a bend in the road but pouring endlessly out of a cleft in the earth. He thought of something his great-grandmother had told him: that sometimes, at dawn or at dusk, a crack opened up in the earth out of which the people of the underworld could climb and into which the people of the upper world—"our world," she had said—could slide.

He shivered.

"Cold?" Kjell asked.

"There sure are a lot of them, aren't there?" Espen said.

"They're like a well-oiled machine," Kjell said. "So precise. And so many! And no one can say the Wehrmacht isn't disciplined! Our so-called troops are nothing but a ragtag bunch of ill-trained misfits—no uniforms, old hunting rifles for weapons—"

"But lots of courage," Espen said.

"Maybe so. But still no match for them." Kjell nodded at the never-ending columns of soldiers below.

"If I had a rifle, I could pick off a couple right now," Espen said.

"That would not be the smartest thing you've ever done."

"I suppose not."

"Look at that one there." Kjell pointed at an officer astride a spirited white horse.

Espen glanced at Kjell. His eyes were shining as he gazed at the horse prancing this way and that, its sides gleaming as if polished.

"Kjell," Espen said, "you know how the huldre can look like a beautiful maiden from the front, but in the back she has a long tail she keeps tucked into her skirt?"

"We're not troll hunting anymore, Espen," Kjell said.

"And how a water troll can transform himself into a beautiful jewel or even into a powerful white horse?" Espen continued.

"This isn't a game," Kjell said. "This is for real."

"I know!" Espen said. "I know. But, Kjell, once you climb onto that horse's back, you are in their power."

"What are you talking about?"

"It can take you away, and you can't do anything about it."



"You are wrong about the contents of your rucksack," the soldier said.

Espen was jolted back to the dark road, the idling car, and the soldier standing in front of him, holding his backpack. "What's that?" he asked.

"I said that you are wrong about what is in here."

"Oh?" Espen tried unsuccessfully to keep his voice from cracking.

"This," the German said, holding up a jar, "is jelly"—he smiled—"not jam."

“Ah,” Espen said, “I always get that wrong.”

“See?” the soldier shone his flashlight beam through the jar so the jelly glowed a jewel-like red. “See how clear it is? Jelly is clear—like this—and jam has in it the fruit pulp.” His Norwegian was terrible.

The soldier handed him back the rucksack, nodded politely, and went back to the car. As he moved past, Espen noticed the soap smell again. A moment later, the car pattered away. Espen could not help but smile. When the soldiers were well down the road, he thumbed his nose at the whole lot of them and let out a little howl of glee. “You were outfoxed!” he yelled at the distant taillights. Then he waited for a few moments until his legs stopped trembling before climbing back onto his bike.



The valley narrowed, and waterfalls plunged off the ever steeper mountainsides into the river below. Still fifteen kilometers to go. Darkness had descended; it seemed to sharpen the smell of fall, sharp and yeasty like something baking. Sour rye bread, maybe.

Espen tried to keep himself from thinking about what could go wrong and decided to think instead about the upcoming soccer match. For the first time in as long as anyone could remember, his team had a shot—a real shot—at the championship. He wondered if Kjell would show up for the game. He hadn’t been at practices for a long time now. If he came, Espen could ask him why he’d been in a cell with German soldiers.

The steep climb had made Espen overheat. He stopped and took off his windcheater, which he stuffed into his rucksack. Although he couldn’t see it, he could hear the roar of a distant waterfall and the wind high in the pine boughs. Behind those sounds was the deep and abiding silence of the mountains. The silence of secrets being kept. Plenty of secrets.

Like the one he carried with him right now: two sheets of folded paper, the outside of which read *Growing Potatoes in Your Garden*.

He climbed back onto his bike and resumed pedaling.



“Be careful how you carry it,” his teacher had said when he’d given the paper to him after all his classmates had left the room that afternoon. “Best to keep it well hidden. There may be German patrols out. Seems they’re looking for—”

Suddenly, he was speaking rather loudly, “... a good way to grow potatoes in your own garden.”

Espen looked up. One of his classmates had entered the room. She walked over to her desk and picked up a book, then waved at them and went back out.

“Don’t tell anyone what you’re doing,” Mr. Henriksen had said. “Not your sister, not your classmates—not even Kjell.”



So he hadn’t told anyone. Not his sister, not his classmates, not even his parents. And not Kjell. He hadn’t even seen Kjell. Not for days, at least.

When Espen and his sister had returned to Lilleby in June after their stay in the country, Kjell was ... different. It had been less than two months, but he had changed. But then, everything had changed. The Germans had taken over Norway, and nothing was the same as before.

Now there were so many secrets. Kjell must have a secret, too, Espen thought. Otherwise, why was he in that car?

The fox farm

Espen's tires crunched on the gravel of the driveway into the fox farm. He glanced around for the glint of eyes. Did the foxes just run around loose? He wasn't sure.

Two empty milk bottles on the front porch, Mr. Henriksen had said, was the sign that it was safe to go inside.

The house was filled with heaven: the fragrance of waffles cooking on a griddle. Espen's glasses steamed up immediately, and he took them off to clean them. When he put them back on, he saw first a head of red hair and then the rest of the small, round woman who had appeared from the kitchen door.

"Were you followed?" she asked.

Espen shook his head. "I was stopped, though," he said. "They searched my backpack."

"Really!" she said. "And ...?"

"There was nothing in it except, um, jelly."

"Good boy," she said. She brushed a wisp of hair away, then held out her hand. "Nice to meet you. Call me 'Tante Marie.'"

Espen shook her hand and said, "My name is—"

"Ssst!" she hissed. "Your code name?"

"I don't have one," he said.

"Well, we'll have to fix that!" she said.

A code name! Espen thought. His stomach buzzed a little with excitement.

"Now, then, give me what you brought," Tante Marie said.

Espen reached down and slid the folded papers from one of his long woolen stockings.

"Clever boy!" she said. "Now, come in."

Espen stepped into the kitchen, where he couldn't help but notice the steam rising from a waffle griddle.

"It's just about growing potatoes in your garden," Espen said, watching her face.

Tante Marie cocked an eyebrow, then smiled. "OK," she said, "you know it's more than that."

"Still," he said, "it's only news!"

Tante Marie sucked in her breath with an inward "Ja" as she perused the paper. "Did you ever think that 'only news' would get to be so precious?" She clucked her tongue as she read aloud the main points of the stories: "Reichskommissar Terboven has 'deposed' the king and the government and dissolved all political parties but the Nazi party ... Norwegian Nazi storm troopers attacked and beat up a teacher and his students at a school in Oslo ... In Trondheim, a student was beaten because he wouldn't put up a poster for the Nazis ... Let's see," she went on. "Our well-respected Dr. Scharffenberg addressed the university students recently. He said, 'Let the Nazis know that Norwegian youth will defend freedom and independence no matter the cost to us all.'"

Espen cleared his throat. "I would ... I could do something to help," he said.

Tante Marie's eyes flickered over him like small blue flames. "What do you propose?"

“Whatever is needed,” he replied. “I could do it. I’m quite fit. I can bicycle quite fast, if need be.”

Tante Marie pursed her lips and said, “Well ... sit down here.”

He sat at the table in front of a platter heaped with—

“Waffles!” Espen exclaimed. “I must be dreaming!” He glanced around but didn’t see anyone else.

“All for me?”

She laughed. “Have you been a good boy?”

“Hmm ...” Espen remembered that he had swiped the jelly from his mother’s pantry. “No, especially.”

She clucked her tongue but put a couple of waffles onto a plate and slid it toward him. “*Vær god,*” she said. “Help yourself.”

He marveled at the food for a moment. “Where did you get eggs?” he asked.

“I know some hens,” Tante Marie said.

“I have some jelly!” Espen took the jar out of his rucksack and snapped off the lid. He hadn’t realized it would come in so handy, and he was glad his uncle was not really expecting him.

He tried to be polite about the waffles but couldn’t help himself and took an enormous mouthful. They were so warm, sweet, and delicious, he thought he might cry.

“You know that every part we play in the underground, no matter how small it seems, is significant,” Tante Marie said.

“Yes, ma’am,” Espen said.

“And every part helps the rest. The Resistance has gotten quite organized now. There’s Milorg, the military branch, and Civorg, the civilian branch, which is responsible for newspapers and propaganda and there’s XU.”

“XU?” Espen asked.

“Intelligence,” she said.

“You mean, like, spying?”

“*Ja,*” she said. “Each part is important. No part can exist without the other.”

Espen stopped chewing for a moment. *Spying!* That’s what he would like to do. That would be exactly! “My friend and I have done quite a bit of spying already,” he said.

“Are you brave enough to continue delivering newspapers?” Tante Marie asked.

Espen snorted. “A few little pages like these? You don’t have to be so brave to do that!”

He felt the heat of her eyes on him. “These ‘little’ newspapers,” she said, “are illegal. They tell the truth about the Nazis. You are aware that anything that criticizes the Nazis is forbidden? Just to *read* a different point of view than their own—they can arrest you for that! Not to scare you or anything,” she added offhandedly. “Now, what do you say?”

Espen nodded. “I can do it.”

The griddle steamed, and Tante Marie plucked a waffle out of it. She glanced at the newspaper again. “They’ve abolished the oath of silence of the clergy,” she said. “The Nazis can demand the names of church members who oppose the Occupation or the names of Jews who have converted to Christianity. And if the clergy refuses? Imprisonment! What do they want with that list, do you suppose? Why do they need to know who the anti-Nazis are? Who the Jews are?”

It wasn’t hard to get Tante Marie going, Espen thought. If she stayed distracted long enough, he could nab another waffle without her noticing.

“Those Nazis are like a troll with many heads.” Tante Marie whapped more batter onto the griddle. “And those heads need to be chopped off”—she slammed the lid down—“one at a time.”

“I assume you mean that as a ...” Espen tried to remember the word they had learned in literature

class. “Metaphor,” he said.

“Sometimes a metaphor is the truest thing there is,” Tante Marie said.

She continued talking, and Espen tried to listen, but he couldn’t think about anything except waffles and, when the ones on his plate were finished, more waffles.

“... but a clever boy,” she was saying, “can outwit them.”

Espen slid his hand across the table toward the platter. “I’m not clever at all,” he said. “You know the other boys say I’m so foolish, I forget to pull my head in before I shut the window.”

She turned and lightly slapped his hand with the back of her spatula.

“See?” he said. “I can’t even steal a waffle without you noticing.”

“Well, you can’t expect to outwit *me*,” she said. “But a troll is a different matter.”

He watched as she picked up the entire plate of waffles, placed it in a pail, and covered it with cloth. She was still talking. She had moved on to Norse mythology, and he tried to pay attention, but all he could think about was what the fate of all that deliciousness was going to be.

“... you know the one I’m talking about,” she was saying. “Not the Odin Swensen who works in the hardware store—I’m talking about Odin, the Norse god, the all-seeing god. But being all-seeing wasn’t good enough for him, was it? He also wanted to be all-wise. So he went to see Mimir, who was the keeper of the Well of Wisdom.”

Espen wished he’d been paying attention, so he’d know why she was talking about this.

Tante Marie continued with her story. “Odin said to Mimir, ‘I want to know what you know.’”

“And Mimir said, ‘OK, but it will cost you.’”

“‘Fine,’ Odin said. ‘What will it cost?’”

“‘Your left eye,’ said Mimir.

“Without hesitation, Odin plucked out his left eye and threw it into the well.

“‘Now, tell me how to be as all-wise as you are,’ Odin said.

“‘The answer,’ Mimir said, ‘*is to watch with both eyes!*’”

Tante Marie winked at Espen, then handed him the pail full of waffles. “Now, take this out to the barn.” She shooed him toward the door.

“You’re feeding these to the foxes?” he squeaked.

“It is possible to know too much,” Tante Marie said. “Didn’t I just tell you that?”

Espen walked to the barn slowly, wondering if Tante Marie was a little nutty. He didn’t remember her warning him about knowing too much. He wondered how many waffles he could eat before he got to the barn. And did foxes even eat waffles? Didn’t they eat mice and rabbits and things like that? Espen slipped his hand under the cloth and pulled out a still-warm waffle. Would the foxes pounce on him when he entered? What if they bit? And since when did foxes need a barn?

He took a bite of waffle and stepped cautiously into the darkness of the barn. It was so quiet, he stopped chewing. Then the silence was broken by the whisper-soft sound of rustling straw and a startling, raspy cough that sounded not at all like one a fox would make. He swallowed his bite of waffle, which felt as dry as a wad of cotton. Then he set the pail down and slipped out quickly, before his eyes had a chance to adjust to the dark.



Espen could coast home. It was all downhill. He wasn’t carrying anything incriminating, not even the jelly. He’d left it with Tante Marie in exchange for some eggs. *Mor* would be so pleased. He would have to make up a story about how he came by them and about what had happened to the jelly, which

she probably wouldn't believe anyway.

~~He should have been able to relax, but he was trembling so much that his teeth were chattering, and not because he was cold. He was excited. He stopped and switched off his bike light. The moon had emerged from behind the jagged ridge; it was as bright and all-seeing as Odin's single eye, and it lit up the mountains, making them seem as big and fierce as frost giants.~~

What was going on in those mountains tonight? Espen wondered. He knew there were men and even boys hiding there. They had evaded capture or had escaped from Nazi prisons or were working for the Resistance from mountain huts. In the next valley over perhaps there was another boy, riding his bicycle along another lonely road. Up in the mountains a girl might be skiing a snowy trail. In the big city, boys walked down cobbled streets, delivering newspapers, many of them. On bicycles or skiing on foot, in row-boats, stopping by lonely farms, town houses, apartment buildings, and in sleepy fishing villages—all over Norway people were planning and plotting and doing. Now he was one of them. He had joined the Resistance. Soon, Tante Marie had said, he would have an assignment. And he had a code name: Odin.

The Commandant's Underwear

The house was dark. Espen slipped off his pack and his jacket quietly. He carried the eggs into the kitchen and made a little nest for them out of his wool scarf. His mother would find the offering first thing in the morning; he hoped it would make her smile.

Upstairs, all was dark, except a sliver of light from under Ingrid's door.

He quietly turned the knob and opened the door—and was greeted by a flying pillow. Espen caught it just as it was about to slam into his face.

“Hey!” he said. He shoved his glasses up on his nose and noticed Ingrid sliding something under the covers. “Now that you’ve turned ten, *Mor* lets you stay up to the wee hours?”

Ingrid held a finger to her lips. “What are you doing up so late?” he asked. “Nothing,” she said. “Writing.”

“I don’t know what you’re writing in that diary of yours,” he said, “but be careful what you say. They’re searching houses now, too, you know.”

Her smile left her. “I know.”

“And anything criticizing the Nazis is punishable, you know. *Seriously* punishable.”

“I know.”

He hadn’t meant to scold her, and now she was frowning. But he had an idea. He slipped the pillowcase off the pillow, folded the pillow over his head and slid the case back over it. “My pillow hat,” he proclaimed. “Do you like it?”

She laughed. “You are very talented at looking goofy.” Then she added, more seriously, “Where have you been? I had to make up a story to tell *Mor* about where you were. I told her you went to a party after soccer practice.”

“Thanks for that,” he said. “Let’s see ... where have I been ... ? I’ve been out on a very dangerous mission.” He nodded his head, which made his pillow hat wobble.

Ingrid rolled her eyes. “I’ll bet,” she said.

“Yes,” Espen sighed, leaning up against the door frame as he imagined a sophisticated spy might say. “I, along with a few of my comrades, who shall remain unnamed, sneaked, under cover of darkness, into Gestapo headquarters.”

“Oh, really?” Ingrid raised an eyebrow.

“Yes, indeed,” Espen said, trying to look both nonchalant and serious at the same time. “Right under the noses of the guards, who were fast asleep and snoring so loudly, you could probably hear me from here.” He held up a finger, and Ingrid cocked her head, listening.

Sure enough, a loud, rumbling snore could be heard through the walls.

“That’s *Far*,” Ingrid said. Their father always snored.

“Oh. Perhaps you’re right,” Espen said. “It’s hard to hear with this thing on my head.”

“So, what were you doing there?” Ingrid asked. “At Gestapo headquarters.”

“I was ... stealing the commandant’s underwear!”

“Is that so?” Ingrid said. “Let’s see them.”

“I don’t have them—”

“I didn’t think so.”

“—because they’re hoisted on the flagpole in front of the post office!”

Ingrid let out a guffaw.

“It wasn’t so easy a mission as I let on,” Espen said.

“Oh?”

“Because the guards woke up just after I’d grabbed the underdrawers. And ...” Espen crept close to her bed, his arms out and his fingers wiggling. “... I had to tickle them into submission!”

“Oh, no, you don’t!” She pulled the pillow off his head and whacked him with it.

Still, he managed to get in some serious tickling.

The sonorous tones of their father’s voice could be heard through the wall.

“Shh! Shh!” Espen said. He got hold of one kicking leg and tickled the bottom of her bare foot. “Quiet! Look what you’ve done. You woke *Far*.”

“Stop it! Stop it!” Ingrid screamed.

“Espen, stop tickling Ingrid.” Their father’s voice was loud and clear.

“Ha-ha. Caught red-handed!” Ingrid laughed.

Espen let up, handed back her diary, which had fallen to the floor, and put his fingers to his lips. “Now look what you’ve done!” he said. “You woke up the whole household.”

He went to the door, then turned back. “Say,” he said, “did you hear that Pastor Tronstad was asked if he would bury a German?”

Ingrid shook her head.

“He’s a little hard of hearing, you know, and he said, ‘What? A German? Sure, I’d be glad to bury *all* of them.’” Espen went out, laughing. He tiptoed to his room and flopped down onto his bed with all his clothes on. There were so many things to think about, but he was so tired. He thought for a moment about the big game coming up, and then, just before he dropped off to sleep, he wondered what Ingrid was writing in her diary. He hoped, for all their sakes, that it wasn’t anything that could get her in trouble.

Ingrid's Diary

Joke: *What's the difference between the Nazis and a bucket of manure? Answer: The bucket, Ingrid wrote in her diary. She would remember to tell Espen that one next time.*

Everybody thought the Germans would be gone by now. But they're not. Why did they invade us? We were a peaceful country, minding our own business. And when will they ever leave?

Ingrid fumed, thinking about how the Germans walked into and out of the town's banks and shops and cafés as if they owned them, or stomped into peoples' homes and took things that didn't belong to them: blankets and food and even soap! The only soap their family had was a few slivers that *Mor* had hidden behind some books in the bookcase.

They act like they own the whole country! And they eat up the food that should be ours.

Just thinking about it made Ingrid's stomach complain. Dinner had been a thin stew of rutabaga and turnips and just the tiniest bit of pork.

They are as fat as pigs, she wrote. Every time I see them, I want to kick them in the shins. I can't, so I kick them with my pen! Ha!

School was back in session now, after having been closed from the invasion, on April 9, through August. Ingrid had hoped that things would feel normal again once classes resumed. But even school things were different. Some teachers who'd joined the fighting had been killed or captured during the intense battles in the weeks following the invasion. Even some of the older boys were gone.

Ingrid chewed her pen for a moment. Then there was Espen. It was nice that he'd come in to talk to her tonight, but she knew he had made up a story because he'd had to tell her something.

Now everybody has a secret, she wrote in her diary. Maybe it's a secret stash of chocolate, an illegal newspaper, or a diary. Espen has a secret, too.

What was it that had kept him out so late at night? she wondered. And why wouldn't he tell her? They'd never kept secrets from each other before.

Whatever his secret was, she intended to find out.

Waiting for the ferry

On the day of the big soccer match with the Tyssedal Tigers, Espen joined some of his teammates as they waited for the ferry that would take them down the fjord to Tyssedal. Stein, Per, and the twins Leif and Ole, sat on a low stone wall, eating ice cream out of little paper cups. They stared at the street where columns of German soldiers marched in formation, something they did often. Frequently, like today, the soldiers were accompanied by a brass band.

“Ice cream!” Espen said, when he joined them. “Where’d you get that?”

The boys pointed their little wooden spoons at the small group of officers milling about across the street.

“You accepted ice cream from them?”

“‘Accepted’?” Ole said. “No! We nipped these when their backs were turned. Go over there. Maybe you can swipe some, too.”

Espen looked at the off-duty officers clustered outside the café. They were talking with some young women. “*Nei*,” he said. “I’d rather starve.”

The boys sat in sullen silence for a while, watching the soldiers march in lockstep, swinging their legs high into the air in front of them.

“Why do they march like that?” Leif asked.

“Maybe they can’t bend their knees!” his brother said.

“Maybe they haven’t got any?” Espen said. “Just wooden sticks for legs?”

“I know what they haven’t got any of,” Per said.

They all laughed.

“Hey, don’t laugh,” Leif warned.

“They can shoot you for that,” Ole added.

“Did you see the latest poster?” Leif said. “It says, ‘Every civilian caught with weapon in hand will be SHOT ... Anyone destroying constructions serving the traffic and military blah-blah-blah will be SHOT ... Anyone using weapons contrary to international law will be SHOT.’”

“*Ja*, I saw that,” Espen said. “On the bottom of the poster someone had written, ‘Anyone who has not already been shot will be SHOT.’”

They laughed, and Espen did, too, sort of, but it made him feel sick. All these soldiers everywhere, always with guns, their metal helmets, the tramping of their boots—walking in and out of the stores up and down the streets ...

“Kjell!” he heard one of the boys call out, and he turned around to see Kjell striding toward them.

“Kjell!” Espen said. “Great! Move over, you louts.”

Everyone shoved over so Kjell could sit down.

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