



FROSTBLOOMS

(working title)

by Holly-Jane Rahlens

Author's Note

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, between 1945 and 1950, as many as 250,000 Jews lived in occupied Germany—often in close proximity to their former persecutors. They were survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, people who had survived in hiding, and refugees from Eastern Europe. All were waiting in Germany for visas to continue on to the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Palestine, and other countries.

The Allies called them “Displaced Persons,” or DPs—people without a home who had lost their homeland or no longer wished to return to it. They lived in more than 100 DP camps throughout Germany, often large, self-contained communities with their own schools, infirmaries, theaters, and synagogues.

Most of these Jewish DP camps were in the American occupation zone—in Bavaria, Hesse, and what is now Baden-Württemberg—but also in the American sector of Berlin, where *Frostblooms* is set.

The Düppel Center, administered by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), was located in Berlin's southwest, in Schlachtensee in the district of Zehlendorf. Although the DPs who lived there generally kept to themselves, encounters with Germans in everyday life were almost impossible to avoid. One such encounter may have unfolded much like the one described in the following pages.

Chapter One

Lotte

Thursday, February 20, 1947

I'm racing down the steps two at a time, laughing at the top of my lungs, Hans right on my heels, whooping like Tarzan swinging from tree to tree. The hallway reeks of stale sauerkraut, coal smoke, and mold—reason enough to get down quick. But I'm also putting as much distance as I can, as fast as I can, between me and Mutti.

Ugh. Mutti.

I skip over a damaged step, careful not to fall into the banister. Most of its spindles are gone, hacked off for firewood, leaving little to stop me from tumbling down, down, down.

Hans catches up to me on the second floor and shoves me against the Kunkels' door. I can hear their radio blaring. The power station must have just turned the electricity back on. I whip around and lunge at Hans's back. He falls forward, but catches himself, only to collide at the middle landing with old Herr Kunkel, who's leaving the hall toilet, buttoning up his trousers.

I dash past them and race for the bottom, all the way down, dodging two carriages parked beside the stairs on the ground floor. I shove open the door and burst into the narrow courtyard. The air is so cold, it feels like I've run straight into a wall of ice. By the time I cut through the front building and sprint past the mailboxes, Hans has caught up to me again. I

swing open the door to the street and leap outside, Hans right beside me.

We stumble to a halt at the curb, sides heaving, gasping for breath.

The February sky is as blue as cornflowers, the sun a bright yellow glare that makes me squint. Hans grabs hold of me with his mittened hands for one last moment of warmth. He squeezes me tight. I hug him back. We catch our breath, then turn right and race to the corner. We take another right and run all the way down to Goebenstraße, past the dairy, Molkerei Mendler, and the mooing cows out back, and then the bombed ruins where Hans twisted his ankle on New Year's Day playing in the debris.

It's exhilarating running like this. The brittle air burns my nose and it hurts inside my chest when I inhale, but it takes away the lingering sting of Mutti's anger, how she slapped my cheek in the kitchen so hard my eyes smarted. She was furious that I hadn't applied for the apprenticeship at the new kindergarten.

"I already told you!" I'd said to her just before that. "I don't want to take care of children. I just don't!"

"So you'd rather scrub toilets for the rest of your life? Or live off some man?"

"What men, Mutti? They're gone! All the boys I knew are gone! And for what?"

That's when she slapped me. "Don't you dare!" Her voice caught and I thought she might cry, but the moment passed. "He gave himself to the fatherland," she muttered, dry-eyed.

She meant Alfred, my brother. Barely sixteen, they sent him to defend the Tempelhof airfield. Red Army tanks mowed him down.

“Lotte!” says Hans, pulling me out of my thoughts. “Are you deaf?”

“Sorry. What?”

“I said, do you think Vati is coming back?” His eyes are fixed on the corner building across from us to the right. It’s missing its roof now, its windows are huge gaping holes, brick and mortar are piled high in messy heaps along the sidewalk. Vati had a plumbing business there, in Yard 1. Klempnerei Lemke.

Hans and I stare at Vati’s old building, the wind howling in our ears, creeping up inside our sleeves and down our necks and backs. The thermometer outside our kitchen window froze at -20 degrees while we slept the other night. The papers yesterday said we’ve had 29 days of continuous frost in Berlin. Today is Day 30.

Will I ever be warm again?

“Is he?” Hans asks. “Is he coming back?”

I shrug my shoulders. “I don’t know.”

“Do you think he’s still alive?”

I want to hug Hans and lie, tell him everything will be fine.

“Do you?” he presses me.

“I hope.”

“Fritz Opitz’s father came back,” he says, trying to convince himself of the impossible. “All the way from Texas. He was a prisoner too.”

“But Vati’s in the Soviet Union. In Siberia.”

“And?”

“They have it harder with the Russkis.”

“How so?”

We’ve been through this a thousand times. “You better go, darling. Or you’ll miss breakfast.” I give him a noogie on his head.

“Ow!”

He couldn’t have felt my knuckles through his thick wool hat, but he takes a swing at me anyway. I duck and he runs off. He’s a smart kid. He definitely does not want to miss the fourth grade’s free breakfast. He’s hungry. I am too, but I’m sixteen. I can eat whenever I choose—if I have food, that is.

I watch Hans cross Goebenstraße. When he gets to the other side, he has to weave his way around the heaps of rubble before turning back around. He waves. And I wave back. He’s such a good kid.

You see! Mutti would say. You’re a natural with children. They love you. And you them. You should—

No, Mutti! Stop it!

I shake away the thought of my mother and watch Hans disappear past the corner house on the left. His school is right behind it. Certain now that he can’t see me, I turn right and march off toward Potsdamer Straße. Normally I turn left to the S-Bahn that takes me to Schlachtensee, to the Jewish refugee barracks, Düppel Center, where Mutti and I work. I asked my supervisor to switch me to a later shift today, citing a doctor’s appointment. Mutti doesn’t know that I have something to do before work. And she won’t find out either. We rarely see each other in the barracks. She goes in later

than me and is usually in the babies' ward. I've never been assigned to clean there.

Ugh. Mutti.

Just the thought of her makes my blood boil! She doesn't care one bit what I think or want. "You and your dreams!" she scoffs. "They're too big for you. Your head's in the clouds, Lotte!"

But she's wrong. I'll show her. I'll show her that I know what I want and know how to get it too. I'll show her that making something beautiful out of all this ugliness is worth it—worth believing in.

I never should have let Mutti come with me to see Herr Ebberlein, our old tailor.

"*Nein, nein*," he'd said when we paid him a visit. "It's a very bad time for apprenticeships in fine tailoring and dressmaking. We're only mending, altering and reusing. There's no fabric for new clothes and no demand."

"But the salons have new clothes!" I protested. I'd been in two fashion salons on Kurfürstendamm, browsed their new garments. When I'd asked if they were hiring apprentices the saleswomen shook their heads haughtily and said, "Ask your neighborhood tailor."

"If you want," said Herr Ebberlein, "you can be an apprentice in a clothing factory."

Working at a sewing machine in a factory, one of fifty women sewing straight seams the whole day long, is the worst nightmare I can imagine.

"I don't want to be a seamstress in a factory," I'd said to Herr Ebberlein. "I want to learn how to design clothes."

Herr Ebberlein laughed. “Child,” he’d said, “you are very young.”

He was so bitter. And so negative. “The Allies left us with nothing,” he whined. “*Nein, nein*, Lottchen. You should learn something sensible. High fashion is ridiculous.”

It was exactly what Mutti wanted to hear.

“I told you,” she said triumphantly when we left.

At Potsdamer Straße I look behind me. A tram in my direction would be welcome, but none is in sight. I’ll be frozen solid by the time I get to Viktoria-Luise-Platz, even though I dressed warmly. I’m wearing so many layers I can barely move—my winter undershirt, thick wool stockings, the wool kilt, the yellow blouse I sewed from an old tablecloth, the green cardigan with the complicated cablework I knit for Vati, for his return. I wound my red mohair scarf around my neck, the wool cap covers my ears, I slipped into my old wool coat and my mittens. Still—my fingers are already numb.

I look down. My boots are a chocolate brown and lined with lamb’s wool. They’re stylish even though they’re ancient. Luckily, they keep my feet warm, but even if they didn’t I would still wear them. How could I say no to such beauty? I inherited them from Oma when she died last November. Mutti would have liked them, but they were too small for her. At least now, she reasoned, she didn’t have to go and buy me new winter boots.

I cross Potsdamer Straße and continue west past the Sportpalast. I haven’t been there since they cleared out all the

rubble, but I remember going before the war. Vati took me to see the famous Norwegian ice skater Sonja Henie. Her costume was made of thousands of glittery sequins! The skirt's hem was trimmed with soft, white fur, probably ermine. When she twirled, the skirt flared out and looked like white waves dancing around her. It was magical.

I trudge on.

Some fifteen minutes later, at Martin-Luther-Straße, I see a bus across the street going south. If I took it, in a few stops I'd be in our old neighborhood. I haven't been there for a while. Maybe I can—

Kerplunk-plunk-plunk. A coal truck lumbers past me, but then screeches to a halt to let a man with crutches by. When it starts off again, five briquettes tumble off. Without a moment's hesitation I dart into the street to grab them away. But I'm not the only one. Two men to my right have seen the briquettes too. I swoop up the two closest to me, drop them into my backpack and cross to the other side of the street while the two men are still arguing over the rest.

My backpack is much heavier now with the two briquettes. But two briquettes mean a few glorious hours of heat. Mutti will be thrilled. She might even forgive me for displeasing her—that is, *if* she finds out where I'm going now.

Ugh. Mutti.

I tighten my scarf around my neck and march on.

Surely there must be a place somewhere in this city where beautiful clothes still mean something.

Chapter Two

Estera

Thursday, February 20, 1947

I open my eyes.

Oh. It's morning.

So I *did* fall asleep after all.

I turn to the window. Someone has already pulled up the shade. I see a clear, cloudless sky. The bright blue hurts my eyes.

I turn away from the window.

Froy Diamant, on the cot to my right, snores in her sleep. Snoring is at least better than weeping or wailing. We alternate throughout the night. Ten women in one room, taking turns snoring, moaning, weeping, wailing and shrieking, all of us conversing in our dreams with our dead, all of us fleeing a host of enemies, our hearts screaming in panic, all of us pleading with our captors, spare me, please.

A sudden, explosive snort bursts from Froy Diamant, startling me—and her, too, for her eyes fling open. She lifts her head and sees me.

Froy Diamant, I say, *Ir hot in shlof geshnorkht*.

She sits up in bed and replies in Yiddish: Me, snore? In my sleep? Don't be ridiculous, Froy!n Rabinowicz!

I don't argue with her. I owe Froy Diamant respect. She is much older than me, thirty-eight. And she has

been in the camps. Sometimes she speaks of a husband. And a child. I listen with all my heart but never pry.

To my left, Julya Czarny's bed is empty—as it always is. She sleeps on the floor, stretched out on top of two army blankets, which are empty now too. She says she cannot sleep on the cot. For years in Nazi labor camps she slept on the hard wood of the bunks with little more than straw to cushion her. The mattresses here are too soft, she says.

Julya recently turned twenty, so she's the next-to-youngest in our dormitory after me, sixteen. Children younger than me sleep with their parents in family rooms or if they're orphans they are in the children's section. I am an orphan, but they have put me with the adults.

Shura Lackenbachová, on the other side of the room, is the second-oldest in our dorm. She's thirty-four and from a small town near Prague. She was deathly ill when she first came, but now she has rosy cheeks. She is going to marry Meier Brod who she met here in the camp in early January. I know Meier. He is a pharmacist from Stryj which is south of Lviv where Mama and I were living after we fled Kraków. We met him when the Soviets rounded us up, put us on trains and deported us deep into the country's interior. We ended up in Uzbekistan where Mama was assigned work.

Uzbekistan, Lviv, Stryj, Kraków, Prague. So many foreign names. It can make you dizzy. Sometimes I lie in bed and try to remember exactly where I was and in which order.

First we were in Berlin. It is where I was born and grew up. Then the Polish-Jews were expelled to Poland when I was eight, in October 1938. For many days Papa, Mama, my younger sister Lea and I were imprisoned in a no man's land between Germany and Poland. I remember most vividly the sight of our bonfires, orange flames against the black night sky. We were thirsty and had little to eat. Lea, once alive with laughter, was now quiet and solemn. Finally, we were allowed to travel to Kraków where we had family. We were happy in Kraków. Lea bloomed. But then Germany invaded Poland and the Nazis came marching in. We lost Papa in Kraków.

We escaped the Nazis by fleeing to Soviet-controlled Lviv, where Mama, Lea and I were safe. Mama found work as a laundress in a nunnery that had been partially shut down by the Soviets. She was friendly with some of the nuns who were still living there and helped them with their shopping and doing odd jobs.

When Lea came down with typhus in March 1941 Mama was anxious about the looming quarantine. The nuns secretly took Lea into their care.

Mama was so grateful, and little Lea, not yet seven, so brave, hugging her beloved teddy bear when Mama brought her to the convent.

Sadly, it was this act of kindness that was our downfall.

One night, when Lea was on her way toward recovery but still under the care of the nuns, a Soviet deportation commando knocked without warning on our door and arrested Mama and me with other Polish

refugees in our building. The Soviets were planning on transporting us to work colonies deep into the bowels of the Soviet Union. It was of no interest to the officials that my little sister was sick and in care elsewhere. They shrugged their shoulders and checked our names off a list and forced us into a freight train under gunpoint.

And then we were gone.

It was unbearable.

We were wracked with guilt.

There was never a day when we didn't weep for Lea. Not one single day. Ever.

The Soviets brought us to a transit camp where the adults were assigned to colonies and labor brigades. We changed trains often. Now there were windows so we had daylight. I remember the endless steppe, flat grasslands all the way to the horizon.

And then we were in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It was crowded, dusty, tense. We were safe from the Nazis, but we were without Papa and his strength, without Lea and her laughter.

Uzbekistan saved our lives. That is, Mama's life and mine. I don't like to dwell on what happened to Papa in Kraków. But I do dwell on Lea. I think of her every day, how she loved everything beautiful, flowers and rainbows, new snow and the pastry counter at Café Kranzler.

When we were in Uzbekistan we sent letters to the nunnery asking of news of Lea, but we never heard back. It was as if Lea had never existed. But I want to believe

that she is alive. Somewhere. And I will find her. Or she me.

If Lea were here, with me, in Berlin, in this DP camp filled with displaced persons, brimming over with Jews who have no homeland, no roots, survivors, refugees, waiting in the land of their persecutors to leave, waiting to start a new life elsewhere, waiting to find news of their loved ones, so yes, if she were here, Lea, in my dormitory, *she* would be the youngest of us.

She would be twelve. I can almost see her. She'd be wearing her thick, long, brown braids. Her face would be faintly freckled. And she'd be hugging Liesl, her teddy, to her breast.

Liesl was originally mine. Papa's secretary, Liesl Stadlbauer, gave it to me on my first birthday. I adored Liesl Stadlbauer and named my beloved teddy after her. Mama even embroidered her name in red on the soft felt sole of the teddy's right paw.

By the time Lea inherited the toy, when she was one, in 1935, its golden mohair had faded a bit to a soft honey color, but its black glass eyes still shone bright and her right paw still let everyone know exactly who she was: Liesl.

So I lived in three countries before I was ten. In Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, and now I am in Germany again. Soon I will emigrate to country number four: the United States. I am going crazy with foreign words, unfamiliar names and exotic lands. Some people say it makes me interesting. Mr. Sternfeld, the director

of the camp says, You're a woman of the world, young lady. Bernie Sternfeld is kind, but I don't feel interesting at all. I think all that traveling just makes me feel like I don't belong anywhere. I tell him, I have nowhere to call home, and he says, You'll put down roots in Chicago. Chicago will be your home. And then I say, I will find a real home when I find my sister Lea. He just nods and asks me to tell him about Uzbekistan. But I don't want to.

I suspect that Bernie Sternfeld thinks Lea is gone. But I believe she is alive. I must believe it. I promised Mama. I promised Mama on her death bed that I would find Lea. It was her last wish. And it is my only wish.

Maybe today. Maybe today there will be news. Today there are new lists, we have been told, with many new names that—

My thoughts are interrupted when the door to our dormitory swings opens and Julya walks in. Wake up, you sleepyheads! There's no line at the showers!, she announces and drops her soap and towel on her cot. The sweet scent of American soap, *Ivory*, trails in with her. I received a bar of *Ivory*, too. It was in a hygiene kit that we received with our last relief package. It fit right into a space between a can of pear halves and a glass jar with kosher chicken. I also got pencils and a notebook. Shura, Julya and Froy Diamant received instant coffee and powdered milk. It says on everything *Not to Be Sold Or Exchanged*, but of course we sell and exchange everything we don't need ourselves. Everyone does. On the black market.

Estera!, did you hear me?, Julya calls out. The showers are free!

Yes. We must be quick. No lines at the showers is a rare gift in the morning.

I throw off my blankets and understand at once why there are no lines outside the washroom. My sleepiness made me forget how freezing it is. It's too cold to shower!

I did not survive the Churban to die now of pneumonia, I say to myself and think of Mama. She always made sure that on our trip through the Soviet Union back to Europe I was warm. We did not survive the Churban to die now of pneumonia, she'd say to me. I will never forget that.

I want to go back under the covers, but then remember that Lea is waiting for me, somewhere. I will never find her if I stay in bed the whole day.

I dress quickly, shivering like the starving wolves that used to come down from the Uzbek steppes when the winters got too long.

When I am dressed I howl like a wolf. And Froy Diamant laughs.

Froy Diamant treats me to a cup of Nescafé to warm me up. We drink it in a room off the house kitchen sitting next to the pot-belly stove where some other women from our floor have congregated. The stove is only lukewarm, but better than nothing. Everyone is talking about the new lists, but even more about the cold. It is the coldest winter in memory the Berlin newspapers

say. The city's destruction, the failed harvest, and the fuel shortages make it worse. Outside the window I can see people walking briskly, all bundled up and bent against the wind. The heating in the camp is not adequate, but we are thankful that most of the rooms have at least some source of heat, even if improvised. And we usually have electricity too. Mr. Sternfeld says that he is doing everything possible to keep the barracks warm. The camp is in Berlin's American sector and he says that the Americans see it as their responsibility to care for us, to feed us and keep us warm. I wish he'd go and tell that to Moishe Tennenberg. In his old life Moishe Tennenberg owned a men's shop in Vilnius. Now he works in the camp's clothing depository. I keep on reminding him that I need warm winter boots, size 42. Mine are falling apart. Your feet, Froyln Rabinowicz, he says to me with a snicker, are like a man's. And I say, It's not my fault. They came this way—big and without a built-in radiator.

Froy Diamant who works in the depository mending the donations from all the Jewish charities promised to go through today's shipment and set aside two pairs of boots in my size to choose from.

In the middle of coffee I open the Hershey bar I saved from last week. We are eager to see the new lists, but we always have time for something sweet. I give Froy Diamant three squares and I take the other three. I savor the sweetness, letting the chocolate melt slowly in my mouth and mix with the coffee. Froy Diamant says to me, When you go to Chicago you can buy a chocolate bar every day. I shrug, because I'm not in such a big hurry to

get to Chicago. I want to find Lea first. But I don't tell Froy Diamant this. She has been waiting a long time to get her visa to Canada and would not understand my hesitance.

Froy Diamant and I make our way with Julya across the camp to the administration office. It's only seven minutes away, but my toes and fingers are frozen when I get there.

Word has spread quickly that the tracing service lists have been updated. They now have new information from concentration camp files and records from the displaced persons' camps not only in Germany, but in Austria and Italy too.

Inside, we walk to the end of the hallway and then a few steps up the staircase to get to the end of the line. Such a long line! But maybe it will go faster than it looks. There are three camp employees looking through the lists.

After a few minutes the line moves. I take a couple of steps down. I shift my weight from one foot to the other, willing my fingers and toes to thaw.

The air inside the main office building is not warm, but it is not cold either. It smells of the damp wool coats everyone is wearing and the sharp odor of the coal they use here to heat. I also pick up the chemical, fruity scent of the ink from the mimeograph machines. It reminds me of school, here in Berlin, in the third grade, just before we were expelled from Germany. I remember loving the damp aroma of the duplicates that came from

the mimeograph. Sometimes our teacher would let me turn the crank that transferred the ink onto the paper, making a copy of the stencil.

We move another few steps forward and we're not on the stairs any more.

Today might be the day I find Lea. Who knows? Maybe she just recently turned up in Bavaria, in the Föhrenwald camp outside Munich. Or perhaps a foster family in Ukraine finally registered her with the authorities. Or maybe a list of Auschwitz's dead has been brought up to date. I do not like to think of that, but even that would bring closure. That's a word that Bernie Sternfeld uses a lot. Closure. But there's something about that word that I don't like.

I stand patiently in line, reminding myself not to hope too much. Hope keeps us going, but when we lose it, it hurts as much as hunger does. But still, when I think of Lea, so small and serious, her hair in braids, clutching her teddy bear Liesl as she said goodbye to me, when I think of her as I remember her, full of laughter and life, I want so much for her to be alive.

We are standing in the hallway now.

People are chatting softly all around me, in Yiddish, Polish, Hungarian. Up front, at the long desk, I hear English words. When I stand on my toes I can see the clerks flipping through their lists.

I have a scrap of paper in my pocket where I have written down Lea's names for the clerks. The clerks who work for the United Nations usually only speak English, maybe some German, very little Polish and only rarely Yiddish or Hebrew. It is easier for them to look up names

when they see them written in block letters on paper in front of them.

Finally, it's my turn. Froy Diamant squeezes my hand, and I step forward.

I slide the scrap of paper toward the clerk, a middle-aged woman who is smiling in a friendly manner. She greets me, looks at my scrap of paper, and begins turning pages. The soft, steady, merciless sound of paper skimming paper is oddly deafening. First she looks under Rabinowicz, Lea, and then under Lea, Rabinowicz. The people who make the lists see hundreds and hundreds of names every day. Sometimes they make mistakes in alphabetization or in spelling. Sometimes a first name becomes a last name.

The clerk looks up and shakes her head. She has found nothing.

She looks down at the second name on my paper and begins her search for Danuta Nowak. The nuns would naturally be taking a risk sheltering a Jewish child, so we gave Lea a false identity with a certificate of baptism. Maybe Lea only remembers this name and forgot her real name. And there is always the chance that the Polish nuns gave her an entirely different Polish name that I don't know.

I wait, air trapped in my throat. But then the clerk looks up and shakes her head. My hope vanishes like breath on a winter morning. I turn away, afraid I may cry, when the clerk stops me and asks for my name. There is the chance that someone is looking for *you*, she says kindly. Your name may be registered with the authorities.

Yes, of course. I have forgotten. Lea may be looking for me.

Estera Rabinowicz, I say. She looks down, squints at a list, her finger moving down one row, and another, when suddenly she lets out a soft gasp. Her head jerks up. Yes, she says, someone is looking for you.

I have never heard those words before. *Someone is looking for you.* Tears spill out of my eyes from nowhere. Someone is looking for me? I say, my voice thin.

Out of the corner of my eye I see Froy Diamant turn to me, her mouth open in surprise.

The clerk is flipping feverishly through papers.

Lea is alive! She is looking for me. I have found her!

Yes, says the woman. Here it is! Dina Graubach. A Dina Graubach is looking for you.

I am standing, but everything inside me collapses.

The woman is looking at me, waiting for me to say something. But I can't speak, so she does.

Dina Graubach recently arrived at the DP camp Zeilsheim, outside Frankfurt am Main, the clerk says, leaning toward me. You must know her. She says you are family.

Dina Graubach? I think. I do not know this name. It must be a mistake.

My knees are buckling under me. I reach out for something to hold on to and grip the table in front of me. I have the sudden urge to flip it over in one clean movement, right on top of the stupid clerk's lap with all her stupid lists and stupid directories.

But something holds me back. It is Froy Diamant. She has grabbed my arm. Froyln Rabinowicz, she says,

who is this Dina Graubach? And I think: Yes, who is this person?

Dina Graubach? I hear myself say aloud.

It is just a name, but maybe saying it aloud helps, because now, yes now, the fog in my head lifts and the name seems familiar.

Kraków, I say. She was in Kraków.

Late 1938. Mama had family in Kraków – her *bubbe*, my great grandmother Ida, and many cousins, among them Zofia, and Zofia had a daughter, Dina. She was older than me by ten years, and soon to be married to Berek. Berek was a Graubach. Dina Graubach. I had forgotten all about her.

In late 1945, when Mama and I were repatriated into Poland, we asked about Zofia. We were informed that Mama's cousin Zofia had died in Plaszów, the forced labor camp outside Kraków. Mama, I think, must have forgotten to ask about Zofia's daughter, Dina. There were so many names, so many people, friends and relatives, to ask about. It was easy to forget someone.

But Dina remembered *me*.

For the second time today tears spill out of my eyes.

I am so happy Dina is alive. These are tears of joy.

But they are also tears of sorrow, because it is not Lea who has found me. Or me her. Lea is still missing. For a moment I thought she was here. Alive. *Someone is looking for you*. But now she is gone again.

Will I ever find her?