



Liesel's Story, Chapter 2

Then I flash forward to 1980. I was working then as a secretary to a professor at the university and his subject was social policy in the Scandinavian countries. He spoke Norwegian, Swedish and Danish and various Nordic languages and he was putting up this poster after new Year 1980 and I recognised it and I said "Oh I've been there, that's Bergen harbour". And John my boss said "Oh, did you have a good holiday?" and I said "No, I wasn't there on holiday I was on my way to England, December 1939". He then asked me if I'd had any contact with the family, to which I said I'd been trying for years but unfortunately I'd not been very successful. "What have you got, where have you got these addresses"? So I gave him 2 very very precious letters which I'd found after my mother died in '63. One was saying that I was arriving and another saying that I had arrived. Gave them to John and two weeks later he called me into his office and he said "Right, Mr and Mrs Alfsen now live in Oslo, he's 75, she's going to be 70, it's up to you, what are you going to do?" So I hurried into my office, I sat down and I wrote a letter. "Dear Mr and Mrs Alfsen, are you the people who looked after a little girl in December 1939, if so, I am that little girl". And I went on to tell them about my life, about my son getting married, having 2 daughters, and generally about myself. One week later I got a letter back from Finn Alfsen saying how wonderful it was to hear from me, that I'd been the topic of conversation for over 40 years and when was I coming? Anyway we continued having conversations and letters and things till the following year when my husband said "you should go, you should go, they're both in their 70s, if you don't connect you'll regret it". So I phoned up and I said, "would it be all right if I came for Easter?" Eileen, Mrs Alfsen said "no don't come at Easter because we're still in winter, come at Whitsuntide" which was May. With that I proceeded to book my flight and off I went. And I'm sitting on the plane going to Oslo and I'm thinking "what am I going to do for 4 days with these two old people who I've only met once when I was 4 years of age, what am I going to do with them?" However. The plane landed in Oslo, picked up my luggage, got into the arrival lounge and this lady who looked very similarly like Margaret Rutherford, typical English lady, grabbed me and said "Liesel, you've not changed a bit!" Well I just thought, well I must have been a horrible looking kid or I must have looked very old. Well anyway with that she bundled me into a taxi and we sat and we chatted and I said "Where's Finn?" and she said "Oh he's much too excited, he couldn't come". Anyway we went through the suburbs of Oslo and arrived to a forest really, beautiful area of Oslo, and we,

the taxi pulled up at this gorgeous house and this very tall man came out, paid the taxi driver, shuttled us into the house and promptly burst into tears. He was so overwhelmed to see me. Well I had the most marvellous three, four days with them, they wined me, they dined me, but obviously I had questions.