



### **Trude Silman Chapter 3**

Most of the stuff I just don't remember about leaving home. Whether my parents kept it as a dark secret, but obviously mother must have packed me cases, and all I remember is a taxi drew up outside our flat and my aunt Gitta, who is the youngest sister of my mother, was there with her daughter Vera my cousin who is 4 or 5 years younger than I am and I was basically bundled into the car. I have no recollection of saying goodbye, kissing, crying, anything, it is completely eradicated. And the next thing I'm aware of is we're in Vienna in the train station where we catch the train which was supposed to take us to Flushing and from Flushing we would go across to Harwich. Well we got on the train, there was no problem and the journey should have taken about 36 hours. In the event it took 4 days because every time we got to a border, particularly the latter part when we were near Holland, the Germans would take us off a train and put us back again and one other memory is being in Cologne station at midnight, pitch dark and I think there was only my aunt, my cousin and myself in this waiting room so what had happened to all the other people I don't know, but we were extremely lucky because the following morning another train came and we got on this train and this train by some miracle on this train we were able to get into Holland. So with all these extra things it must have been 3 days by now that we'd been travelling. It must have been a tremendous stress for my aunt having these two young kids and we had I think 7 pieces of luggage between the 3 of us so it must have been quite a responsibility.

Then from Holland we actually go to Flushing, we get on a boat, we go to Harwich where again we arrive always at midnight, it's always at midnight, it's always dark, it's always horrid and in those trains you had luggage vans, all the luggage was stored in the van and the guard looked after it so when you got off the train the guard would supposedly either hand you the stuff or just throw it on the platform. And here we are, midnight at Liverpool Street station, my aunt has this large duffel bag full of shoes which gets thrown out of the luggage van and the thing just bursts open and all the shoes descend upon the platform. So that was my arrival in the UK.

My aunt was coming out on a domestic permit. There were very very large restrictions under what ways people could become immigrants into the UK and

basically the only way you could come out would be as a domestic servant, gardener or chauffeur, and you had to prove that you would not be a financial burden on the United Kingdom. So she was coming to a household in Knightsbridge and they had agreed for my cousin to travel with her so she goes as a domestic into service. But the first 2 or 3 nights we actually spent at a boarding house in Hampstead Heath when she then goes to her job and I again cannot remember but somehow by magic I arrive in Wallsend on Tyne with another family called Dr and Mrs Gill who had agreed to take me and look after me for the period till my parents could reclaim me, so to speak.

I'd never stayed in a boarding house and my aunt, cousin and I shared this quite large room and I had a bedside table and much to my, well I don't know whether it was surprise or consternation, a little mouse kept on coming in there and I'd never ever seen a mouse before in my life. I can't remember whether I was scared or whether I wasn't but the mouse was there so that was quite a little experience. I suppose it was quite common to have had mice in boarding-houses in those days.