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In that moment, Anja was scared, and she didn't need to show emotion for the others to understand. She and so many others like her were crammed into small, dark boxcars, where light was only able to creep through a few rusty peep-holes. They left from that dreaded camp, Bergen-Belsen, all sent there because of one thing they had in common: they were Jewish. And the Nazis - *those heartless monsters*, Anja thought - hated them all.

The train had been moving moments ago. Where it was heading, no one knew. Anja believed they were being transferred to another camp. Whether it would be better, she didn't know. She had been there for two grueling, painful years that had killed her sister. She believed herself prepared for what might come next.

So when the train stopped, she and the others froze in fear. Her friend Ilya looked terrified, her eyes widening with fear. It was the most emotion Anja ever saw her friend emit. She was most likely thinking the same things.

Have we arrived? What now? Is this it? Is it my turn to die?

Then the boxcar's large metal door opened up, revealing the daylight in a bright flash. As for the soldier that opened said door.... Anja stared at him, for he looked only 19, but something transfixed her: a white star on the young man's green helmet. She heard from the guards that those with the white star were...

"O-oh my...," he uttered, an expression of pure horror flooded his face as he quickly turned to his left. "Colonel! I found them! This is it!"

Two Years Later. Manhattan, NY, 1947:

Anja had somehow made it. She survived. Ilya's uncle made it to the states before the war, so she went with Ilya to live in New York City.

The two were now on one of NY's many subways, heading home. The underground train was both similar and different to the train back then.

So it came as a surprise that an eerily familiar man happened sit next to her.

It was the same soldier. The one who opened the door to her new-found freedom. Here he was, her hero, left wide-eyed and shocked at their surprise reunion.

"...H-hi there," he said, holding out his left hand, "I'm...I'm Nathan."

"I'm Anja," she said, taking his hand, "it's good to meet the man who showed me freedom again."

"Freedom, huh," he said, "I'd say that role goes more to the Colonel, but if that's how you see it, that's fine by me."

"You were the first American soldier that I ever saw," Anja told him, "I heard that you were fighting to free other prisoners. Others like me."

"Well, when you put it like that..." Nathan shrugged.

The two sat there in silence for a moment, before Nathan spoke up again.

"I would like to get to know you better," he told her.

"Of course," Anja said, a smile on her face, "I'd love to do the same."

Bibliography:

<https://abcnews.go.com/WN/PersonOfWeek/holocaust-survivors-reunite-american-liberators-wwii/story?id=8675883>