

# Boy in the striped pyjamas

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Bruno's diary Year 1943, age 9 years old as I was born on the 15th april 1934. Day one of strange happenings: Today I came home from school and maria was in my bedroom going through MY things - Even my secret things. She is just a servant but I tried to be polite when I asked what she thought she was doing. Maria never takes all my private things out, she puts things away like she's supposed too. I asked mother why maria is packing my things but she won't answer me properly. She just keeps saying we are all going away because of father's job. She said I'll have to say goodbye to my friends, my best long life friends.

I don't want to say goodbye to my friends because of father's job. I know he's important but why can't father go by himself and come back later? It's not fair. I still have lots of plans with my friends that I need to do. I wonder if grandma and grandfather are coming on this holiday too? We can't really leave them behind...though I don't mind if Gretel stays - shes hopeless. Gretel can look after the house so we can come back to it if this new one isn't as good. I wonder if the other house has a big bannister like this one that I can slide down? I hope so because it's my favourite thing to do.

Day two of strange happenings: We are at the new house and it's horrible! It only has three floors, not five like the other one and there are no other children around to play with. I don't like this place but mother won't take me back home, she says this is where we live now but I don't want to live here. Gretel doesn't like it either, or maria, so it definitely is a horrible place to live. I'll just have to tell father what a mistake he's made and then we can all go back home to berlin. Even the people here are scary and boring, like that man that came out of fathers room today.

I don't think I like him...he's too serious. Maria says to steer clear of him anyway. Day three of the horrible place: I scared Gretel today when I showed her the weird children outside my window. She is three years older than me and quite scary, so scaring her isn't an easy thing to do. I don't know why she has come with us anyway, all she does is cause trouble. That's what mother and father say anyway. At least her friends can't come round anymore. She has horrible friends that call me six when I'm actually nine! She still has her dolls though.

I bet they spy on me when I'm in her room, so I don't go in there much. Gretel said father said we are going to stay here for the foreseeable future, whatever that means. Gretel thinks it's about 3 weeks, so at least it isn't a month I suppose. She doesn't like this place either though so maybe we will move back sooner. Day four of the horrible place: The people outside my window are still there. Gretel thinks that we are in the countryside and that they must be farmers. I don't think they are farmers though because there are no animals and the ground is all brown and dirty.

It doesn't look like a nice place anyway, there are soldiers shouting at people and for some reason everyone is wearing pyjamas. I wish Gretel knew who they were and would tell me. She's the brightest girl in her class apparently. I found them though, so they are my people, not hers. I am a high and mighty king in my bedroom and they are my minions that Gretel can't have. I shall have to ask father what they are doing there and why they don't have baths. I'll know more than Gretel then, even though she's older. Day five:

Father came to the house today. We had to leave earlier than father on the train. There were a lot of other people coming this way on the train too...but

they were all on one big train squashed together. I don't know why they didn't just come on the same train as us because we had lots of empty seats they could have used. I was very brave today and asked father when we were going home because it's horrible here. I thought father would get very angry because I'm not supposed to go into his office or waste his time saying hello or asking silly questions.

Father said we have to do things we don't like though because other people know what's best for us. He said we have to accept the situation we find ourselves in and then everything will become easier...or something like that. I still don't like it here though and it will never be home. I don't know why father can't see that he's made a mistake. I even told him to apologise to the fury and then we can go back to berlin. Father is a very respectable man but I still think he is wrong. Why doesn't he just listen to us instead of his job? Extract from chapter 12, pages 128 - 129 ...we had to move to a different part of Cracow, where the soldiers built a big wall and my mother and father and my brother and I all had to live in one room...' There was one small window in it but I didn't like to look out of it because then I would see the wall and I hated the wall because our real home was on the other side of it. And this part of town was the bad part because it was always noisy and it was impossible to sleep...' Then one day the soldiers all came with huge trucks... And everyone was told to leave the houses. Lots of people didn't want to and they hid wherever they could find a place but in the end I think they caught everyone.

And the trucks took us to a train and the train... The train was horrible... There were too many of us in the carriages for one thing. And there was no

air to breathe. And it smelled awful. ' Shmuel's exposition provides necessary background information that allows the reader to identify with the character. In this particular extract, the author conjures a lot of imagery to convey emotion and mood, which is implemented through structural and lingual techniques. Ellipses are used repeatedly throughout the extract, creating a pause, which causes the reader to consider and empathise with the characters ordeal.

It also contributes to the rhythm of the paragraph, setting a slow and deliberate pace, evoking heightened emotions of fear and apprehension. The simplistic language, combined with alliteration delivers a childlike and innocent approach, which draws sympathy from the reader in relation to the child's traumatic experience. For example, the ' soldiers built a big wall' contrasts against shmuel and hisfamilyliving in a small room, emphasising how small and vulnerable they are. The use of repetition such as the train is effective in this extract, as it creates a sense of urgency and distress, helping to set a despondent atmosphere.

This atmosphere is intensified with short sentences and a hyperbole toward the end of the paragraph (There was no air to breathe) for a dramatic impact. The boy in the striped pyjamas is a fable based on theholocaust. The protagonist of the story, Bruno, comes home from school one day to find his belongings packed and told to say goodbye to his friends due to his dads promotion. Mourning his old home Bruno sets out exploring areas he shouldn't – his naivety and inquisitive innocence, lead him to the outskirts of a concentration camp, where he befriends a boy just like himself, albeit religious boundaries.

It is this friendship between two young boys that leads to a cruel twist of fate. The hamartia of Bruno, in this case his innocence, leads to his downfall. It is somewhat ironic, that the innocence and accepting nature of a child is essentially a weakness that leads to a cruel fate, whilst those that deserve misfortune are without tragedy. It also conveys a moral, classifying this book as a fable. In relation, Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare share the same themes as the boy in the striped pyjamas.

Innocent characters lose their lives unnecessarily because of events that are out of their control, caused by prejudice and discrimination. Another similar feature between the two novels is that Shakespeare uses dynasties/houses to create differences and segregation between parties. In correspondence, the author of the boy in the striped pyjamas, uses clothes to create differences and symbolise their status in society. For example, the striped pyjamas indicates inferiority, weakness and suffering of the Jews, whilst the uniforms of the soldiers uphold authority, cruelty and dominance.

As opposed to Shakespeare, what makes this book so despairing and emotive is the reality of it. It is not a romantic, fictional play based on lust and fate – it is representative of real events where horrific tragedy's took thousands of innocent lives for reasons due to nothing but social status, discrimination and prejudice. It can be argued, that such events would not have occurred in reality; firstly, historical records show that more than 6000 soldiers were present in the Auschwitz camp, making it unlikely that a child could escape their notice to sit at the edge of a camp and talk to an outsider.

Secondly, most women and children were gassed upon their arrival, leaving the men to work. Another point raised, is that most credible 9 year olds have

a lot more common sense in reality than is portrayed in this fable. Boyne's story depends on the overwhelming naivety of his character, who is completely oblivious to the war despite his father working for Hitler. In conclusion, for a short fable aimed at children, I believe it to be a powerfully emotive tale that strikes key points. The innocence and reality of the events that took place in the book make it that much more touching, horrific and powerful.