

Hungry for Your Love

It is cold, so bitter cold on this dark winter day in 1942. But it is no different from any other day in this Nazi concentration camp. I am almost dead, surviving from day to day, from hour to hour, ever since I was taken from my home and brought here with tens of thousands of other Jews. Will I still be alive tomorrow? Will I be taken to the gas chamber¹⁾ tonight?

Back and forth next to the barbed wire fence trying to keep my emaciated²⁾ body warm. I am hungry but I have been hungry for longer than I want to remember. I am always hungry. Edible³⁾ food seems like a dream. Each day, as more of us disappear, the hungry past seems like a mere dream, and I sink deeper and deeper into despair.

Suddenly, I notice a young girl walking past on the other side of the barbed wire. She stops and looks at me with sad eyes that seems to say that she understands, that she too cannot fathom⁴⁾ why I am here. I want to look away, oddly⁵⁾ ashamed for this stranger to see me like this, but I cannot tear my eyes from hers.

Then she reaches into her pocket, and pulls out a red apple. Oh, how long has it been since I have seen one. She looks cautiously to the left and to the right and then with smile of triumph quickly throws the apple over the fence. I run to pick it up, holding it in my trembling frozen fingers. In my world of death this apple is an expression of life, of love. I glance up in time to see the girl disappearing into the distance.

The next day I cannot help myself--I am drawn at the same time to that spot near the fence.

And again she comes. And again she brings me an apple flinging it over the fence with that same sweet smile.

This time I catch it and hold it up for her to see. Her eyes twinkle.

For seven months we meet like this. Sometimes we exchange a few words. Sometimes just an apple. One day I hear frightening news: we're being shipped to another camp.

The next day when I greet her my heart is breaking and I can barely speak as I say what must be said: "Don't bring me an apple tomorrow." I tell her. "I am being sent to another camp." Turning before I lose all my control I run away from the fence. I cannot bear to look back.

Months pass and the nightmare⁶⁾ continues. But the memory of this girl sustains⁷⁾ me through the terror, the pain, the hopelessness. Over and over in my mind, I see her face, her kind eyes, I hear her gentle words, I taste those apples.

And then one day just like that the nightmare is over. The war has ended. Those of us who are still alive are freed. I have lost everything that was precious to me including my family. But I still have the memory of this girl, a memory I carry in my heart and gives me the will to go on as I move to America to start a new life.

Years pass. It is 1957. I am living in New York City. A friend convinces me to go on a blind date with a lady of his. Reluctantly, I agree. But she is nice, this woman named Roma, and like me she is an immigrant so we have at least that in common.

“Where were you during the war?” Roma asks me gently in that delicate way immigrants ask one another questions about those years.

“I was in a concentration camp in Germany,” I reply.

Roma gets a faraway look in her eyes, as if she is remembering something painful yet sweet.

“What is it?” I ask.

“I am just thinking about something from my past, Herman,” Roma explains in a voice suddenly very soft. “You see, when I was a young girl I lived near a concentration camp. There was a boy there, a prisoner and for a long while I used to visit him every day. I remember I used to bring him apples. I would throw the apple over the fence and he would be so happy.”

Roma sighs heavily and continues, “It is hard to describe how we felt about each other--after all we were young and we only exchanged a few words when we could--but I can tell you there was much love there. I assume he was killed like so many others. But I cannot bear to think that, and so I try to remember him as he was for those months we were given together.”

With my heart pounding so loudly, I look directly at Roma and ask, “And did that boy say to you one day ‘Do not bring me an apple tomorrow. I am being sent to another camp’?”

“Why yes,” Roma responds her voice trembling.

“But Herman, how on earth could you possibly know that?”

I take her hands in mine and answer, “Because I was that young boy, Roma.”

For many moments, there is only silence. We can not take our eyes from each other, and as the veils of time lift, we recognize the soul behind the eyes, the dear friend we once love so much, whom we have never stopped loving, whom we have never stopped remembering.

Finally, I speak: “Look, Roma, I was separated from you once, and I don’t ever want to be separated from you again. Now I am free, and I want to be together with you forever. Dear will you marry me?”

I see the same twinkle in her eyes that I used to see as Roma says, “Yes I will marry you.”

Almost forty years have passed since that day when I found my Roma again. Destiny brought us together the first time during the war to show me a promise of hope, and now it had reunited us to fulfill that promise.

Valentine’s Day 1996. I bring Roma to the Oprah Winfrey Show to honor her on national television. I want to tell her in front of the millions of the people what I feel in my heart every day:

“Darling you feed me in the concentration camp when I was hungry. And I am still hungry, for something I will never get enough of: I am only hungry for your love.”

□ by Herman and Roma Rosenblat

渴望得到你的爱

1942年黑暗冬季的一天，天气格外寒冷。但在纳粹集中营内这与别的日子并无什么差别。自从把我从家中带走并随着其他数以万计的犹太人被带到这儿以来，我已濒临死亡，只能活一天算一天，活一小时算一小时。明天我还会活着吗？今晚我会不会被带到毒气室去？

我沿着铁丝网来回走，想暖和一下我瘦弱的身体。我很饿，饿得太久了，我都不想去记有多长时间了。我总是很饿。可吃的食物就像个梦。每天随着我们中更多人的消失，这种饥饿也只不过是一场梦而已，我也一天天地深陷绝望之中。

突然，我看到一个小女孩从铁丝网那边走来。她停了下来并用忧伤的眼睛看着我，好像在说她理解我的感受，但也不明白我为什么会在这儿。我想把目光挪开，被一个陌生人这样打量，我感到特别害臊，但我的眼睛无法从她身上移开。

这时她把手伸进口袋，掏出一个红苹果。噢，我有多久没看到这样的苹果了！她非常谨慎地左右看看，然后带着胜利的微笑，一下子把它抛过铁栅栏。我跑过去把它捡起来，用我颤抖着的冻僵的手捧着它。在这充满死亡的世界中，这苹果无疑表达的是生和爱。我抬头瞥见那女孩在远处消失。

第二天，我无法控制自己，鬼使神差地在同一时间又来到靠近铁丝网的同一地点。

她真地又来了。她又一次给我带来了苹果，并且带着同样的甜蜜微笑把它抛过了铁丝网栅栏。

这次我接住了它，并且捧着让她看。她朝我眨眨眼。

接下来的7个月我们就这样相会。有时我们相互交谈几句。有时她只是给我送个苹果。一天，我听到了一个骇人的消息：我们将被押往另外一个集中营。

第二天，当我向她问候时我的心都要碎了，我勉强对她说了如下我必须说的话：“明天别再给我苹果了。”我告诉她，“我将被押往另外一个集中营。”在我完全失去控制前我转身从栅栏旁跑开了。我实在不忍心再回头看。

一晃过了数月，噩梦依然在持续。但对这小姑娘的回忆支撑着我度过了那恐怖、痛苦和失望的岁月。在我的脑海中，我一次又一次地看到她的面容，她那双善良的眼睛，听到她温柔的话语，品尝那些苹果。

噩梦终有终结的一天。战争结束了。我们这些幸存下来的人得到了自由。我已失去了包括我的家庭在内的所有珍贵的东西。但我仍然记着这位小姑娘，这记忆一直留在我的心底，并在我移居美国后依然激励着我好好地生活下去。

岁月流逝。转眼到了1957年。我住在纽约。我的一个朋友劝说我和他的一个女朋友进行初次约会。我勉强答应下来。她人还不错，叫罗玛，像我一样，她也是移民，因此至少在这一点上我们存在着共同点。

“战争期间你在哪儿？”罗玛用移民相互之间问及那段岁月所特有的体贴方式柔声细语地问道。

“我在德国的集中营里，”我答道。

罗玛陷入了遐想之中，好像回忆起了某件痛苦而又甜蜜的事情。

“你怎么了？”我问她。

“我只是在想我过去的一些事情，赫尔曼。”罗玛用一种突然变得轻柔的语气解释道。“你知道，我小的时候住在集中营附近。那儿有一个男孩，一个小囚犯，有很长一段时间我每天都去看他。我记得我常常给他带去苹果。我经常把苹果从铁丝网上扔过去，那时他是多么开心。”

罗玛重重地叹了一口气接着又说道：“很难描述当时我们对彼此的感觉——毕竟我们那时还很小，情况允许时我们也只是相互谈上几句——但我可以告诉你，这其中包含着很多爱。我猜他可能像许多其他人一样被杀掉了。但我实在不忍心这么想，所以我老想着我们在一起相

处的那几个月里他的样子。”

我的心猛地一下子剧烈地跳动起来。我凝视着她问，“是不是那男孩有一天对你说‘明天别给我带苹果了。我将被押往另外一个集中营。’？”

“哎，是啊，”罗玛以颤抖的嗓音应道。

“但是赫尔曼，你怎么会知道这事的？”

我握着她的手答道，“因为我就是那个小男孩，罗玛。”

接下来便是长时间的静默。随着时间面纱的揭开，我们再也未能把眼睛从对方身上挪开，我们认出了隐藏于眼光后的那颗心，我们曾是深深爱恋的朋友，我们从未停止过爱恋，我们从未停止思念对方。

最后，我说，“这样，罗玛，我与你分离过一次，但我再也不想与你分离了。如今我获得了自由，我希望永远与你呆在一起。亲爱的，嫁给我好吗？”

当罗玛说话时我又一次看到了过去曾在她眼睛中看到的那种闪亮，“好的，我嫁给你。”

自从我找到了我的罗玛至今已近40年。在战争年代命运首次使我们相聚在一起，同时给了我希望的诺言，而如今它又使我们团聚履行了这一诺言。

1996年的情人节。我带着罗玛去参加奥普拉·温弗里的节目，在这个全国性电视节目中我向她表示敬意。我想在数百万观众面前告诉她我心里一直想说的话：

“亲爱的，当我在集中营里非常饥饿时，是你给我送来了吃的。而如今我仍然很饥饿，我渴望得到那种我永远也不会满足的东西，那就是：我只渴望得到你的爱。”

NOTE 注释：

1. chamber [ˈtʃeɪmbə] n. 室，房间
2. emaciated [ɪˈmeɪʃɪeɪtɪd] adj. 瘦弱的，衰弱的
3. edible [ˈedɪbl] adj. 可食用的
4. fathom [ˈfæð(ə)m] vt. 推测；明白
5. oddly [ˈɒdli] adv. 奇怪地
6. nightmare [ˈnaɪtmɛə(r)] n. 梦魇，恶梦
7. sustain [səˈsteɪn] vt. 支撑