



AARON AND ELIZABETH

With the raids increasing in frequency, the population of Nardus's neighborhood was diminishing in size with startling regularity and consistency. He and Jacques, together with other members of the growing underground Resistance, were doing all they could to help people either get out or at the very least delay or diminish their perils.

Jacques played the greatest role within Nardus's close circles in the provision of false papers. These papers indicated that the person in question had been baptized and was no longer a practicing member of the Jewish faith. Jacques was able to get papers to Nardus's brother Meyer and his wife Roe, and his brother David and his wife Martha. He also had papers for himself and his wife, Nardus's sister Sofia, and one for Nardus himself.

While Jacques was trying to secure papers for his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Groen, and her fiancé Aaron Mozes, he had managed to acquire papers for Leendert and Marjan Groen. They refused to accept them, being that it required them to, at least in public, denounce their belief in Judaism and the Jewish way of life. With Elizabeth living at home with her parents, Jacques was hopeful that through Aaron Mozes, he might have a chance of saving his young sister-in-law.

Aaron's mental state never recovered after he was released from Amersfoort, making it back to where it had been a few years back; this made the acquisition of acceptable papers as well as his cooperation far more difficult. Elizabeth loved Aaron and would not leave his side, but she knew that the man she loved today was not the man she had fallen in

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love with a few years back. The time he had spent in Amersfoort had taken such a toll on his emotional and physical state, that even once Jacques acquired the correct papers, his safety would be far from guaranteed. His weakened condition put him in danger regardless of what paperwork he was carrying.

Despite all of this, Elizabeth's love for Aaron was unwavering. She would stay with him and hope that the world as it was unfolding before them would allow them some sort of life together. One thing she did know for certain: Whether she was with Aaron or not, neither she nor anyone else around her was safe. If the dangers existed anyway, she might as well bring some joy into their lives, no matter how short lived that joy would be.

On September 28, 1942, Elizabeth met with Aaron at his parents' to discuss their plans. After speaking with his parents, Elizabeth planned to talk with hers. Had these been normal times, Aaron would have been there with her, but it was getting later in the day and being outside past midday was becoming more and more of an unnecessary risk to take.

Feeling a comfort and happiness in her decision didn't take away the nervousness Elizabeth felt as she walked into the living room to sit and talk with her parents. She was a twenty-one-year-old woman, yet she was still their little girl, and living at home; whatever she would do in her life would, as a matter of respect, require her parents' knowledge and approval. Elizabeth knew what she wanted to do, and with Leendert and Marjan Groen being Jewish parents with old-fashioned values, she knew she required their blessing.

When she walked in, her father was sitting and reading, as her mother sat with a cup of hot tea.

"Papi and Mami," she said in a tired, yet determined voice, "I need to speak with you about something very important."

Seeing the seriousness in his daughter's eyes, Leendert answered immediately. "What is wrong, my child?"

"I want to marry Aaron," she said, getting straight to the point. Knowing that her parents already knew that the two had been planning to marry, Elizabeth continued without pause, making the point she really needed to make. "I, we, want to do it tomorrow. Every day more people are being taken away, to God knows where, and I may not ever get the chance to be Mrs. Aaron Mozes if I do not do this soon."

JEW FACE

Leendert looked over at his wife. She was not a woman to be expressive with her emotions and would, on most occasions, defer to Leendert to make the statements of affection toward their children. She was a loving and caring mother, but her personality was one that did not normally allow her to show emotion. Today would be one of those exceptions. She and Leendert looked at each other, communicating to each other an understanding of all that was going on and may continue to go on. Knowing that her husband felt just as she did, Marjan spoke for both of them as she said, "It will be our joy to see you marry Aaron. Both your father and I give you our blessing and look forward to tomorrow."

Leendert sat back smiling as he saw his daughter's eyes light up.

"I'll speak to the rabbi," he said. "We can do this early tomorrow morning. He will find the way to get this done, I am sure."

Elizabeth hugged them both, laughing and crying at the same time. She would be a bride in what was a very sad time. She left her parents in the living room and went to put together the best outfit she could find.

In the living room, without saying a word to each other, Leendert and Marjan looked into each other's eyes once again. Leendert saw the joy in his wife's eyes turn to sadness. She then looked away from him and dropped her head, praying to herself that her daughter and soon-to-be son-in-law would have an opportunity to enjoy their lives together.

As he had promised his daughter, Leendert Groen made all the necessary arrangements for his daughter's wedding the following morning. The ceremony was held in a shop, formerly owned by one of their friends and now being run by a former employee who was decent and sympathetic to the plight of the Jewish community. Everyone moved toward the back, where they would not be visible from the street. The ceremony met all the requirements of Jewish law, which included four men, each holding a corner of a prayer shawl over the heads of the bride and groom, creating the traditional "*Chupah*" or wedding canopy. The service was brief but joyful. As Aaron stepped on the glass cup, shattering it into pieces, signifying the last component of the ceremony, whatever family and friends that had been able to be present let out a roar of "*Mazal Tov!*" ("Congratulations").

Times being as they were, the opportunity to celebrate beyond this point just did not exist. Aaron and Elizabeth didn't care. They were now married and could at least hope to live their days together as a couple.

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With the Green Police patrolling the neighborhood, not only was it not safe for Jews to stay out on the street for a long time, it was also not advisable for them to congregate for any significant length of time. So when the family and wedding guests left the shop, they decided to do so in incremental fashion. Marjan and Leendert left first, followed by most of their family and many of Aaron's family. When they arrived home, just three blocks away, they heard what were now the familiar and ominous sounds of Nazi vehicles driving through the area. They heard the cars and trucks stopping and soldiers shouting; another raid had begun.

The feeling of helplessness on this day for Leendert and Marjan Groen was immeasurable. Their youngest daughter, their little girl, had just gotten married, not even an hour earlier, and now all they could do was wait. Wait and sit, and pray, that she and Aaron would be safe and that they would see them again.

Two hours later, Jacques Baruch walked through the doorway of Leendert and Marjan Groen's house. Leendert stood and approached him as Marjan looked on, not moving from her spot. The expression on Jacques's face told them the news they were so terrified to hear, but as of yet had not confirmed.

Jacques shook his head slowly from side to side, the anguish evident in his face.

Leendert opened his mouth and in saying the two names, formed the question all three in the room knew needed to be asked.

"Elizabeth and Aaron?" The names came off his lips, the dread evident in his tone.

Jacques put his head down, not able to look at his in-laws' faces, and just said, "They're gone."

There was no stopping in Westerbork for Aaron and Elizabeth Mozes. The trip to the death camp was direct and the newlyweds became two of the latest victims of the Nazi killing machine. They both perished in Auschwitz.

Aaron and Elizabeth Mozes

Married: Amsterdam, September 28, 1942

Picked up by the SS, September 28, 1942

Murdered: - September 30, 1942,- Auschwitz