

The Long Day

Peter thought this a most unsatisfactory answer. But he could see no good in asking further. If his father knew anything, clearly he wasn't going to tell.

Some of the men of Riswyk had already left town. Nanson, the sail maker, had gone and Michael Berg's father and many more. Mr. Anders, the schoolmaster, too. With him away, that day had been a holiday as would be the morrow and every other day. But what was the good of a holiday like that? No one wanted to play. They tried all the games they knew but no one seemed to enjoy any of them. Peter called a meeting of the Defense Club. The air-raid drill wasn't very exciting. For although they could blow a warning whistle, they had no one to give them the "All Clear" signal when to come out.

Helga and some of the girls thought it would be fun to play at being Red Cross nurses. But when they picked Bunny for the first air-raid victim, he kicked and screamed so they had to let him go, even though his legs were supposed to be shot away.

But the long day dragged through somehow and now it was night. But what a different night, different from any Peter had ever lived through. He didn't know but what he would rather have was a toothache.

After supper his father seemed to be waiting for some message. It never came. He kept taking his watch out to see the time although there were clocks everywhere you could look. His train did not go until midnight and the sleigh to take him to the station would not come for hours yet.

Peter peeped out of the window, careful that no light showed outside. There was nothing but darkness. There wasn't even a sound in this terrifying void.