

## Chapter 19\_Little Resi Noth ...

In the music room of Werner Noth's dwindling home, little Resi, a ten-year-old girl, sat with her dachshund on her lap, bundled in winter attire. While gazing out at the walled orchard, she prepared for the impending departure of the wagon train, symbolizing a harsh, cold reality devoid of warmth. Resi had removed her mittens to pet her dog, which, due to a wartime diet, was left hairless and immobile, appearing almost amphibious. Her affection for the dog contrasted sharply with her chilling acknowledgment of life's grim circumstances.

Resi had previously called the narrator an American spy, which had made him uneasy around her, but as he observed her now, she bore a striking resemblance to his deceased wife, Helga. The atmosphere shifted when Resi bluntly stated that it was time to kill her dog. The narrator, caught off guard, expressed his reluctance and shared that her father had asked him to do the deed. Resi's acceptance of the situation was unnerving; she was almost apathetic about the impending violence.

Their conversation highlighted a grim acceptance of fate amidst war's chaos. Resi anticipated her own death with a naive acceptance, suggesting a morbid belief that nothing truly hurt when one ceased to exist. With an unsettling pragmatism, she imparted that she had never truly liked the dog and it would be better off dead. Her impulsively admiring confession of love toward the narrator added an eerie weight to their dialogue, particularly given her fixation on a future that was uncertain at best.

After this disconcerting exchange, the narrator took the dog outside into the snow-covered orchard and prepared to shoot it with a small pistol. As he executed the act, Resi and others watched in silence, embodying a ritualistic response to a loss of life that had become disturbingly ordinary in wartime. An old soldier present showed an unnerving curiosity about the act, illustrating the desensitization brought by conflict. After shooting the dog—who died quietly—the narrator faced a grotesque reality, questioning whether burial was necessary to prevent predation on its remains. This chapter encapsulates themes of innocence lost, the brutalities of war, and the disconcerting acceptance of death in those left behind.