A narrative from the perspective of an Evacuee.

It was Sunday*. The day after my eleventh birthday. The year was 1939 and War against Hitler had begun. However, this wasn’t just any average Sunday. As I lay in my comfy bed dreaming about playing hopscotch in the cobbled streets, I remembered …this was evacuation day. Tears streamed down the sides of my pale cheeks, like a waterfall. Shutting my eyes, I tried to fall back into a deep slumber. No luck. I could hear Mother shouting up to me, “Are you awake yet Aubrey? Don’t forget to put on your best Sunday dress.”*

*“I don’t want to!” I cried, pulling the covers over my scrunched up face.*

*To tell you the truth, I was petrified of leaving Mother. You see, that week during a night raid, a bakery just a few streets away was bombed by V5 German bomber planes, which killed my Auntie. I kept contemplating; what if that happened to my Mother? What if I wasn’t there to protect her? Dad was about to be sent to war, so Mother would be all alone.*

*Reluctantly, I dragged myself out of bed, wondering whether I will ever get to sleep in it again. Looking solemnly out of the window, I was suddenly reminded of the danger we were in. Demolished and destroyed buildings lined the pavements. I turned to look at my little sister Rose, who was still sleeping like an angel. Far from what she was really like. Trouble ! That’s what my Dad used to say. It was then I realised I had to go, it was my duty to look after Rose and she was not safe here in the city.*

*A few hours later, we hurried to the train station. Rose wore her best Sunday dress, soft and silky pink, with a bow in the middle and I wore my navy blazer along with a cap. Small cardboard boxes containing our gas masks, hung from our shoulders and attached to our coats were large labels, which had our name, age and school written on. In our hands, we held a square brown suitcase, which carried our clothes and favourite toy.*

*Mother held our hands tight, as we stood amongst hundreds of other children, teachers and parents. I had never seen Mother so upset before, her crimson, red lips quivered and her body was shaking. Trying to look as brave as she could, she gave us both our last hug, kiss goodbye and whispered softly, “You are a brave boy Tom, look after your sister for me, I love you and I will see you very soon.”*

*“I promise.” I replied, as I hugged her tightly.*

*It all happened so quickly. Within minutes we were led onto the crowded train, by officials, in long black coats. Unexpectedly, the train doors slammed shut! Like a bolt of lightning, silence struck the train. Followed by the deafening screams and cries of terrified and nervous children. Although my stomach was churning like a wheel, I kept strong and didn’t shed a tear, as I didn’t want to frighten Rose, whose blue, shiny eyes glared at me. Staring out of the steamed up windows, I could see mothers hugging in floods of tears. My eyes darted around the platform, hoping to catch a final goodbye from Mother, but I failed to see her.*

*Soon, the train rumbled and puffed out the station. Steaming through luscious, lime green fields, where sheep and cows were peacefully grazing. Tremendous, tall trees swayed in the wind their branches waving goodbye, as we got deeper and deeper into the countryside. Clear, blue streams trickled down enormous hills, like the tears I wanted to cry. It was a long journey and soon Rose was fast asleep, her head gently resting on my shoulder. I already missed Mother incredibly. It was one of the hardest days of my life. Little did I know it was going to get harder.*