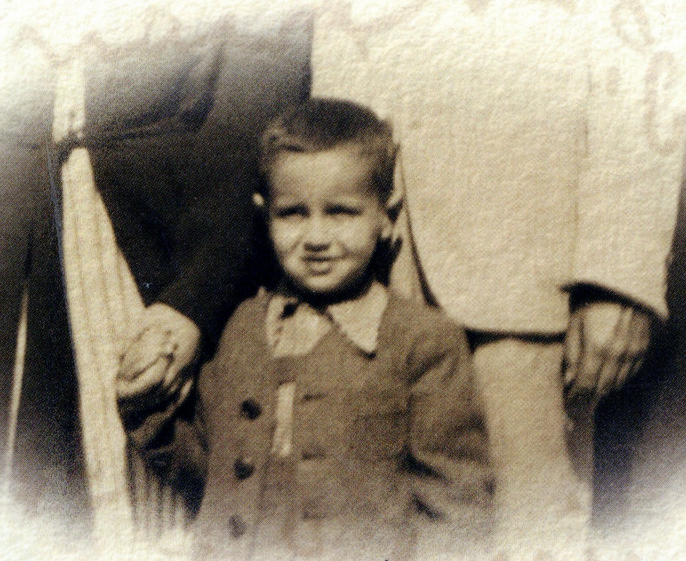


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G r o v e



A M E M O I R

S w i m m i n g

2
A c r o s s



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"After Passau, the train went at a good clip. I couldn't sleep. I was overwhelmed by the momentousness of what was happening to me. I was truly in the West...heading toward America. After all the years of pretending to believe things that I didn't, of acting a part, maybe I would never have to pretend again."

Set in the cruel years of Hungary's Nazi occupation and subsequent Communist regime, **SWIMMING ACROSS** is the stunning childhood memoir of one of the leading thinkers of our time, the legendary Intel chairman.

Swimming Across

The story of Andris Grof—later to become Andy Grove—begins in the 1930s, on the banks of the Danube. Here, in Budapest, young Andris lives a middle-class existence with his secular Jewish parents. But he and his family will be faced with a host of staggering obstacles. After Andris nearly loses his life to scarlet fever at the age of four, his family is forced to deal with the Nazi occupation of Hungary. Fleeing the Germans, Andris and his mother find refuge with a Christian family in the outskirts of Budapest and then hide in cellars from Russian bombs. After the nightmare of war ends, the family rebuilds its business and its life, only to face a new trial with a succession of repressive Communist governments.

In June 1956, the popular Hungarian uprising is put down at gunpoint. Soviet

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{ A M e m o i r }

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PUSTAKA PERDANA



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TO MY MOTHER,
WHO GAVE ME THE GIFT OF LIFE,
MORE THAN ONCE.



A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s

As head of a public company, I have been in the limelight for a good number of years. I have always viewed this exposure as one due to my professional work and have maintained a separation between my work life and my personal life and background. The former was fair game, I thought, the latter, not.

The first chink in this position, which turned out to be the first step toward this memoir, was the result of my meeting Josh Ramo. Josh was assigned to write my profile for *TIME* magazine's 1997 Man of the Year issue. He was keenly interested in my younger years, convinced that they had a major part in shaping who I became as an adult. At first, I resisted his efforts as I had all other such attempts before that. Josh prevailed, however. His genuine interest in my story and the trust he earned through the hours we spent together caused me to open up. My willingness to do so led to what I thought was an excellent profile—with that, the first olive was taken out of the bottle. So, thanks are due to Josh for starting the process.

In the years after the *TIME* article, the thought of telling my own story, in greater detail and in a book form, has recurred time and again. My wife, Eva, who over the years has heard me

talk about the events of my life before we met at age twenty-one encouraged me. She reminded me of my grandchildren, who may not get to hear these stories from me when they will be old enough to understand them. Her encouragement turned into her becoming a sounding board and an active participant in prompting my recollection of incidents and events; it continued in her becoming a critical editor of the evolving story.

Once I had a first draft of the manuscript, Norm Pearlstine took on a key role. Norm and I have known each other professionally for twenty years or so, but when he agreed to edit my book, the relationship took on a different form. He immersed himself in my story and spotted the places where I was still holding back, perhaps because some memories were still painful. Norm systematically analyzed my manuscript for these spots and drew me out further than I was prepared to go at first. His efforts led to a more complete and more genuine story.

Last but not least, I am grateful to Catherine Fredman who, after having helped me with *Only the Paranoid Survive*, a book on business strategy, readily shifted gears stylistically, adapting to the requirements of telling the personal story of a boy. She maintained her keen editorial instincts but also undertook to question me in detail about settings, scenes, and emotions. Cathy's pursuit of the fine detail caused me to dig into my memories far more than I thought I could.

I am very fortunate to have people like these four take a deep interest in my first twenty years. Without them this book wouldn't have taken shape.

C o n t e n t s

<i>Prologue</i>		1
<i>One</i>	My Third Birthday	5
<i>Two</i>	Scarlet Fever	13
<i>Three</i>	The War Arrives	23
<i>Four</i>	Life Gets Strange	35
<i>Five</i>	Christmas in Kobanya	51
<i>Six</i>	After the War	65
<i>Seven</i>	Gymnasium	91
<i>Eight</i>	Dob Street School	111
<i>Nine</i>	Madach Gymnasium	133
<i>Ten</i>	Fourth Year	165
<i>Eleven</i>	University—First Year	189
<i>Twelve</i>	Revolution	211
<i>Thirteen</i>	Crossing the Border	225
<i>Fourteen</i>	Aboard Ship	247
<i>Fifteen</i>	New York City	259
<i>Epilogue</i>		287



SWIMMING ACROSS





Prologue

I was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1936. By the time I was twenty, I had lived through a Hungarian Fascist dictatorship, German military occupation, the Nazis' "Final Solution," the siege of Budapest by the Soviet Red Army, a period of chaotic democracy in the years immediately after the war, a variety of repressive Communist regimes, and a popular uprising that was put down at gunpoint.

This is the story of that time and what happened to my family and me.

Before I tell my story, it may be helpful to provide some historical context. When I was born, Hungary was governed by the right-wing dictatorship of Admiral Miklos Horthy. Horthy's government was aligned with Nazi Germany, but it was more independent than Nazi Germany's other allies. This may have had something to do with the fact that Hungary was situated between the countries under Germany's influence and the Soviet Union.

During the early years of World War II, Hungary maintained a policy of armed neutrality. However, when Hitler's Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, Hungary abandoned that policy and declared war against the Allies. For

all intents and purposes, this meant declaring war against the Soviet Union on the side of Nazi Germany.

By 1943, the Soviet army had the Germans and their Hungarian allies in retreat, and the front began to work its way through Hungary from its eastern borders toward the capital, Budapest. The Germans were concerned that Horthy might try to negotiate a separate peace with the advancing Russians. To preempt that possibility, they occupied Hungary in March 1944 and, in October, installed an extreme Fascist government under the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross Party.

While the Horthy regime had discriminated against Hungarian Jews, the severity of the discrimination and persecution skyrocketed with the arrival of the Germans. Gestapo official Adolf Eichmann, who oversaw the implementation of the Nazis' Final Solution throughout the rest of Europe, took personal charge of the deportation and extermination of Hungarian Jews. The extermination process started in the countryside and the cities outside of Budapest; within four months, virtually all Hungarian Jews living outside of Budapest had been deported. The great majority of them were killed in concentration camps.

Before the process could be extended to Budapest, the rapidly deteriorating military situation—the Soviet forces were advancing on Budapest, and the Western Allies had successfully landed in Normandy and Italy—forced a halt to the deportations. Consequently, the majority of Jews in Budapest survived. Nevertheless, before the war, there were over six hundred fifty thousand Jews living in Hungary; after the war, some one hundred fifty thousand remained.

In January 1945, after street-to-street and house-to-house fighting, the Soviet army pushed the Germans out of Budapest and, by April, out of the rest of Hungary as well. Instead of a German occupation army, there was now a Soviet occupation army.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, despite the pres-

SWIMMING ACROSS

ence of the Soviet occupying forces, Hungary enjoyed a multi-party democracy. However, the Communist Party gained more and more influence and finally consolidated its position in 1948. Thereafter, Hungary became an unquestioned satellite of the Soviet Union.

The Hungarian Communist Party was divided into two major branches: the native Hungarian Communist branch, which had remained in Hungary even after the Communist Party in Hungary was outlawed by the Horthy regime; and the Muscovite branch, whose members had escaped to the Soviet Union and had now returned with the Russian troops. Matyas Rakosi was the preeminent leader of the Muscovite branch. Although both branches belonged to the same political party, there was a degree of distrust between them that grew as they jockeyed for positions of authority in the Communist regime.

By 1949, this jockeying for position broke into the open with the arrest and public trial of native Hungarian Communists by the Muscovites. The persecution intensified during the last few years of the life of the leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, with purges, arrests, imprisonment, and deportation affecting the lives of broader and broader circles of people.

Stalin died in March 1953, and a gradual relaxation of totalitarian controls took place. Over the next few years, this process accelerated until it culminated in a rebellion against the Communist government—the Hungarian revolution of October 1956.

The revolt lasted for thirteen days and was then put down by Soviet armed forces. Many young people were killed; countless others were interned. Some two hundred thousand Hungarians escaped to the West.

I was one of them.

*Right: My father
and my mother,
around the
time I was born.*

*Below: My
uncle Jozsi.*



Above: That is me as a baby.

Below: My parents and me.



*Above: The house where we lived, on
Kiraly Street (above the trolley bus).*



Chapter One

MY THIRD BIRTHDAY

THE SEARCHLIGHTS were like white lines being drawn on the cloudy evening sky. They moved back and forth, crossing, uncrossing, and crisscrossing again. People around me had their faces turned up to the sky, their eyes anxiously following the motion of the white lines. My mother said that they were practicing looking for planes.

I paid no attention to them. I was taking my new car out for its first drive.

My car was a tiny version of a real sports car. I could sit in it and drive it around by pushing up and down on foot pedals and steering with a real steering wheel. It looked exactly like my uncle Jozsi's sports car, except that his was white and mine was red. Red was a lot more fun.

Jozsi and I had taken our sports cars to a promenade on the banks of the Danube River. I drove my car up and down, weaving between the legs of the people out for a stroll. It seemed more crowded than usual. Jozsi kept encouraging me to go faster and faster, then ran after me to keep me from bumping into people. Sometimes he succeeded. Sometimes he didn't.

But people didn't seem to mind. They barely paid any attention to me. They were mesmerized by those white lines in the sky.

My parents had come along, too. We often walked along the promenade on summer evenings. It was a popular thing to do in Budapest. Summer was over, but it was a warm evening, so I wasn't surprised that we were celebrating my birthday by the Danube. I was now three. It was September 2, 1939.

My parents had moved to Budapest the year before. My father, George Grof, whom everyone called by his nickname, Gyurka, was a partner in a medium-size dairy business that he owned jointly with several friends. They bought raw milk from the farmers in the area, processed the milk into cottage cheese, yogurt, and especially butter (they were particularly proud of the quality of their butter), and sold the dairy products to stores in Budapest. My father was a pragmatic, down-to-earth businessman, energetic and quick. He knew how life worked.

My father had dropped out of school at age eleven. My mother, Maria, had finished gymnasium, the Hungarian equivalent of a college preparatory academy. It was an unusual accomplishment for a woman at that time and even more unusual for a Jewish woman. Her heart had been set on becoming a concert pianist, but because she was a Jew she was not admitted to the music academy. Instead, she went to work in her parents' small grocery store. That's how she met my father.

The dairy business was located in Bacsalmás, a small town about one hundred miles south of Budapest, near the Yugoslav border. My father often traveled to Budapest to call on customers, the butter, milk, and cottage cheese distributors.

One day, my father called on my mother's parents' store to peddle his dairy products. He introduced himself to my mother. When they were done with their business, they stood in the doorway and talked until it was time for my mother to close up shop. Then they went for a walk through the streets of Budapest and talked and talked and talked some more.

SWIMMING ACROSS

They were different, but their differences complemented each other. My mother was cultured without being snobbish. My father was smart and energetic, with a quick sense of humor. My mother tended to be shy and reserved with strangers, but somehow she was not at all like that with my father. His energy and inquisitiveness brought out the best in her. They liked each other a lot.

The fact that my father was also Jewish helped further their relationship. It gave them a common background and a common understanding. Neither of my parents was religious. They didn't attend synagogue, and although most of their friends were Jewish, they didn't consider themselves to be part of the Jewish community. Aside from the religious affiliation that identified them on official documents, there was nothing to differentiate them from other Hungarians.

When they met, my mother was twenty-five and my father was twenty-seven, an age at which a man was expected to have found a way to make a living good enough to support a family. They married a year later and moved to Bacsalmás. It was 1932.

My mother hated Bacsalmás. She was a city girl, well educated, a would-be concert pianist, used to going to concerts and the theater. All of a sudden, she found herself in a small town out in the provinces. Not only was she living in a house with dirt floors and an outhouse, but she had to share the house with some of my father's relatives and partners. My mother was the newcomer and the outsider. She was a loner and very uncomfortable with communal living. She couldn't wait to get out of there, but she would not have a chance to do so for a while.

Shortly before I was born, my parents temporarily moved to Budapest so that my mother could give birth in a good hospital. My mother would have liked to stay, but she returned to Bacsalmás with my father and me.

She finally got her wish in 1938, when I was two years old.

My father decided to set up a branch of the dairy in Budapest to service his growing number of city customers. We moved into an apartment on Kiraly Street, a few blocks from the dairy.

Budapest is a city of two parts, separated by the Danube. The Buda side was hilly and dotted with old churches and castles and ramparts and rich homes. Pest was the commercial side, with the apartment houses spreading out from the city center. The natural setting, with its combination of the hills and the river, was beautiful and the stylish apartment houses and wide avenues lined with trees made for a pleasant environment.

Kiraly Street was a busy thoroughfare connecting the central Ring Road on the Pest side to the big City Park farther out. A streetcar line ran down the middle, making the street even busier. It wasn't particularly noisy, but something interesting was always going on.

There was a Jewish quarter in Budapest. It was located about a mile or so from where we lived. It was a strange, foreign area, where the men wore black hats and dark coats and long side curls and smelled odd. We were Jewish, too, but they were part of a different world.

Our world was a typical middle-class neighborhood. Ours was a nice street but nothing fancy. Our apartment house, too, was like many others: a ground floor with shops facing the street, topped with two stories of apartments surrounding a central courtyard. A small one-story building in the courtyard housed a photo studio. An older couple who lived in one of the ground-floor apartments in the back of the courtyard provided basic caretaker services. The man doubled as a shoemaker as well as superintendent of the building, while his wife, a kindly old lady, picked up packages for tenants, let in tradesmen, and performed other ordinary chores.

In our building, most of the apartments faced inward, their doors and windows opening onto the courtyard. A narrow bal-

SWIMMING ACROSS

cony, maybe three or four feet wide with a wrought-iron railing, ran around the courtyard to connect the apartments on each floor. There was a communal toilet near the back of the balcony on each floor. This was for the inside apartments, which did not have their own toilets. A stairway connected the floors at each end of the balcony. In front, the stairway was wide and respectable. The back stairway was narrow and dark.

The apartments that faced the street were the better apartments. They were bigger and had their own bathrooms. Our apartment was one story up from the ground floor. Two rooms faced the street, the Big Room and the Little Room. Both were equally deep, but the Big Room had two windows while the Little Room had just one. The windows were tall and narrow and opened in the center, like doors; the sill was waist-high, so you wouldn't fall out. During the summer, the windows were always open. You could look out at the apartment buildings across the street and watch the traffic and the streetcars and the people coming and going on Kiraly Street. Even when the windows were closed during the winter, the rooms were bright and airy.

My mother's parents lived in the Little Room, and my parents and I lived in the Big Room. It served as my parents' bedroom, my bedroom, and our living room. There was a sofa bed in one corner, where my parents slept, with my crib nearby. There was also a polished wood dining table and chairs and some other furniture. The hardwood floor was covered with Persian carpets and area rugs.

A door opened from the Big Room to the hallway, a long, dark passage that led to the staircase. You could get to our bathroom from this hallway and also from the Little Room. The bathroom had a sink, a bathtub with a wood-burning stove used to heat the water for baths, and a toilet. Just before you got to the stairs, the hallway opened on one side into the kitchen and on the other side to a very small room, where our maid, a

heavysset woman named Gizi, lived. Gizi cooked, cleaned the house, did the shopping, and looked after me. She eventually married a man who went only by his surname, Sinko. After they got married, Gizi and Sinko both squeezed into that little room. Sinko worked elsewhere, but when he was home, he would carve wood sticks for me and take me to the park. In her spare time, Gizi would sit down and read me the crime stories in the newspaper. I was completely fascinated.

We had frequent visitors to the apartment. Almost no one had a telephone, so instead of people calling up, they would drop in. People would come by, unannounced, and sit and talk for hours. As they were saying good-bye, they would stand in the doorway and talk for what seemed like hours more. My mother's younger brother, my uncle Jozsi, was around a lot. He was strong, muscular, and balding, and he was a lot of fun. I have no idea what he did, although judging from comments that the rest of the family sometimes made, it couldn't have been very much. But that didn't seem to matter. There was always a warm and joyful feeling about Jozsi.

That wasn't the case with my mother's second brother, Miklos. Miklos and Jozsi were twins but were very different in appearance and personality. While Jozsi was friendly and fun, Miklos was surly and seemed to carry a dark cloud around him. People didn't like him; their voices changed tone when they talked about him. Miklos didn't get along with anyone in the family, including my grandmother, his own mother. Once he was so nasty to her that my father intervened and the two of them started shouting at each other. I was afraid that they would come to blows. I had never seen my father that way before. After that, we didn't see much of Miklos.

My father was a sociable guy, and many of our visitors were his friends and business associates. Jani was one of my father's best friends and a partner in the dairy. He was from Bacsalmás,

SWIMMING ACROSS

and his parents still lived there. He had his own apartment in Budapest, but he camped out in our apartment all the time.

Jani had been an officer in the Hungarian army, which impressed me. Tall and ramrod straight, he was a snappy dresser and something of a dandy, which also impressed me. He had a loud voice and a loud laugh and exuded self-confidence and energy. Jani was different in another way. He wasn't Jewish.

Another friend of both my father and Jani went by his last name only: Romacz. Romacz was as skinny as a stick, and his face was all wrinkled, like a raisin. I liked him a lot because he always talked to me as if we were equals. He, too, was from Bacsalmas and was involved in the dairy business; he managed the Budapest branch. He wasn't Jewish, either.

My father's friends knew my mother from when they all lived in Bacsalmas. If my father wasn't home, they would hang around anyway. She would serve them something to drink, smoke with them, and talk. None of the men was married, so they would recount stories of their latest romances, confide in her, and ask her advice. She was a kind of sister to them. They were like uncles to me.

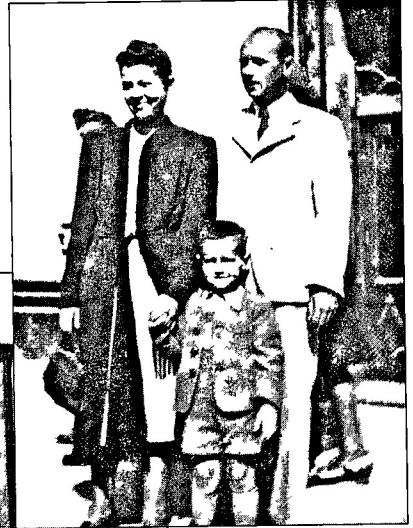
Religious identity played no part in my world then. Some of our visitors were Jews, others were not. Those who were not Jewish seemed no different from us. While many Jewish people had German names, like Fleischer, Schwartz, or Klein, our name was no different from non-Jewish names. The word *grof* is Hungarian for "count." Family legend has it that an ancestor was the estate manager for a Hungarian count and somehow people started to refer to him by association as "the Count." In more recent times, some Jews changed their names to Hungarian-sounding surnames. Our family already had one.

I was born Andras Grof, but everyone called me by the more familiar form, Andris.



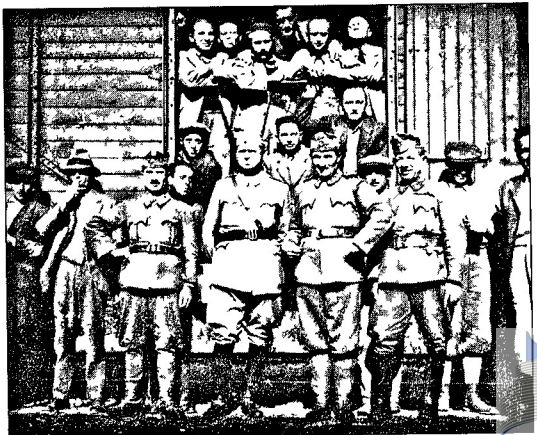
Left: That's me, at age 3.

Below: My parents and me, at age 4.



Above: I had to stay in bed for several months while I was recovering from scarlet fever. My head is bandaged because of my ear operation.

Right: My father (top row, second from right) is leaving for the front. He is with other members of his labor unit and some army guards.



Chapter Two

SCARLET FEVER

I DON'T REMEMBER becoming sick, and I don't remember being taken to the hospital. I don't remember anything about my illness until one day when I was four years old and found myself lying on my back, looking out of the window of a strange room. I looked upward and saw a leaden sky. My first thought was, I must be dead and in my grave, and that gray thing that I'm looking at must be the earth filled with the people who are still alive. This thought didn't exactly depress me, but I was a little sad that I might not see those people up there again. Then I looked away and became aware of my surroundings and realized that I was alive, too.

I noticed that I couldn't move either my head or my arms. There was a big bandage running around my forehead and my ears and covering the top of my head, like a turban. The turban was heavy, which made it very difficult for me to turn my head. My arms were by my sides, with tubes coming out of the inside of my elbows and running up into some contraption that was hanging on a wooden coat stand. This was the only object that

was familiar to me. That coat stand was just like one we had at home. But I could not have been home because everything else looked different.

After a while, some men and women in white coats came into the room. Most of them were strangers, but one of them was my doctor, Dr. Rothbart. I was happy to see him. I loved Dr. Rothbart. You couldn't help but love him. He had a friendly, roundish face with a pockmark in the middle of his forehead. He once told me that he scratched himself there when he was a kid and that's why he had that pockmark. It always fascinated me that Dr. Rothbart was once a kid, too.

He told me I had had scarlet fever but that I was now recovering. I couldn't hear him very well. I thought it must have been the turban over my ears. He sat down on my bed, took my wrist in his hand, and counted my pulse. I watched him. His lips moved silently as he counted. I thought that was funny.

I saw a lot of Dr. Rothbart in the days and weeks after that. After some time, he helped me sit up in bed and I could actually look out the window and see something other than the sky. There was a courtyard with some bushes and trees in it. He took the tubes out of my arms; that hurt, but not as much as when they changed the bandage on my head. When it was time to change the bandage, I always begged him, "Please don't hurt me." He always promised that he wouldn't, but he always did.

One nice summer day, the nurses put me in a chair with wheels and wheeled me outside into the courtyard. I sat there in the sunshine and realized that I hadn't been outside for a long time. I was looking around, seeing people come and go on the paths between the bushes, and at one point I noticed a pair of feet in blue-and-white women's shoes under one of the bushes in the garden. I was sure they were my mother's. I called

SWIMMING ACROSS

out for her: “Mama, Mama!” The shoes moved away. I called out again and the nurses came running. They told me that I should calm down, it wasn’t good for me to get excited. Then they wheeled me back to my room. I couldn’t calm down. I kept twisting my head, calling out for my mother: “Mama, come here! Mama, come here!”

The next day my mother visited me in my room. I reached out to her, but the weight of the turban kept me from turning to her, so she held my hand and stroked the back of it. She told me it was indeed she who had been standing behind the bush. The nurses thought that seeing my mother would get me all worked up and that would be bad for my heart, so she had been told to keep out of my sight.

After that, she came to visit every day. She brought me a copy of *The Jungle Book*, by Kipling. She sat by my bed and read me story after story, then read the stories that I liked over and over until I could almost recite them along with her. She also taught me how to tell time. First, she used a big wall clock to explain it. One day, she brought me a little wristwatch. A real wristwatch! Its brand was Marvin, and that became its name. I endlessly practiced telling the time and showing off my new-found knowledge to the doctors and nurses.

There was a blond nurse with big blue eyes whom I particularly liked. She was lively and paid a lot of attention to me. I felt warm every time she came into my room. My uncle Jozsi also liked her a lot. After he met her in my room, he came to visit very often, but he seemed to spend more time with her than with me.

One day, two of my nurses came to my room in great excitement. “Andris, you’re going home today,” one of them said. I was ecstatic. Then they continued, “But before you go, we have to clean you up.” That part was not fun. First, they put me in a

bathtub and scrubbed me from head to toe, except for my turban, with a soap that stung and a hard brush. Then they took me out of that bathtub and dried me, moved me to another bathroom, and let me take a real bath, all along admonishing me to keep the turban from getting wet. At last they dressed me in my own pajamas and took me to a room where my mother and father were waiting.

They greeted me with great excitement. I looked at their hands; they were empty. I asked them, "Aren't you supposed to have flowers for a sick kid?" My father turned around, ran out, and came back in a few minutes with a bouquet of white lilies. I took the flowers. They smelled good. Then my father picked me up and carried me to the exit with a whole retinue of nurses trailing behind.

We got into a taxi to go home. The taxi was boxy, with a glass window separating the passengers from the driver, and it had a leathery smell. I loved taxis, and the ride home was too short for my taste.

When I got home, a present was waiting for me. It was a little toy car track. You put the car on the top of the track and it would zoom down, twist around, and jump over a break in the track to the other side. My father showed me how it worked and kept playing with it until I complained, "Isn't that mine, Gyurka?" (I had called my father by his nickname ever since I learned how to speak. Nobody ever corrected me, so he became and remained Gyurka to me.)

After that, my mother put me to bed. As she explained to me, my heart had been damaged during my illness and it had to heal. I also found out that the scarlet fever had led to an infection in my ears and that my ears had had to be operated on. The bones behind my ears had been chiseled away. I shuddered

SWIMMING ACROSS

at that description. To make matters worse, during surgery a blood clot started to travel toward my heart, but the surgeons noticed this and interrupted the operation. They cut a vein in my neck and got rid of the clot before it could do any harm. All in all, I was told, I had spent six weeks in the hospital. Now I would have to stay in bed for nine months. I didn't know how long nine months were going to be, but I was so happy to be at home with my family and in familiar surroundings that I didn't care.

My bed at home was a large crib in the Big Room. In short order, it was equipped with a board that ran from one side to another. If I sat up, the board served as a table. My food was placed on it, but more important, so were my toys.

Because I liked *The Jungle Book* so much, my parents gave me little animal figures—tigers, wolves, giraffes, and a wonderful lion that I called Lion *bacsi*. Children were expected to call adults *bacsi*, or “uncle,” and *neni*, or “aunt,” as a sign of respect. Lion *bacsi* was clearly a figure of great respect. I played with my animals for hours on end. I also had a set of very realistic, modern toy soldiers. I played with them, too, but I liked the animals better. From time to time, I had to endure the torture of my bandage being changed, but otherwise I was comfortable and feeling increasingly frisky.

During my long confinement in bed, I discovered an activity that made the time go faster. I started playing with myself. I found that it felt good and my mind always roamed when I did that. Little fantasy scenes ran in my mind, usually involving my blond nurse.

My mother caught me in the middle of one of my reveries one day and asked me rather harshly what I was doing. I was startled but told her, “I was telling myself stories.”



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