1

Christmas 1957

It is night, and the fields near the village are white with snow. The village is quiet, but not everybody is sleeping. Eyes are watching the roads and the fields near the village, because this is Czechoslovakia and the year is 1957. Across the fields, only half a kilometre away, is the Austrian border, but the people of Czechoslovakia are not free to go to Austria. The border guards watch day and night – and they carry guns.

In a house in the village a man and a woman are talking. The woman holds a six-month-old baby boy in her arms. She is excited, but she is afraid, too.



The border guards watch day and night.

'Tell me again,' she says. 'Did he get to Austria all right last night?'

'Yes, he did,' the man says. 'Nobody saw him, nobody heard him. But last night was easy because the sky was dark. Tonight it's more difficult – look at that moon!'

'But it's Christmas night,' the woman says, 'and the guards are

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drinking in the guardhouse, yes?'

'That's true,' says the man, 'but sometimes they come out and drive up and down the road for a time. So you must be careful, and you must run fast – very fast.' He looks at his watch. 'It's time to go.'

The woman puts on a white coat and a white hat. The baby wears a white coat too, and the woman carries him on her back.

'Good,' the man says. 'White is best when there's snow. Nobody can see you. Now, are you ready? Let's go.'

They leave the house and walk quickly out of the village. After a time they stop and the man says, very quietly:

'OK. Do you see those trees? Turn right there and go fifty metres. When you come to the road, go across it quickly and run down the hill through the trees. Then you come to the river. Turn left and go 500 metres. The trees finish there and you can walk through the river easily. Across two more fields, and you're in Austria. Our friends are waiting for you in the second field. Go now. Goodbye – and good luck!'

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She does not see the black car under the trees.

The woman begins to run. The baby on her back is sleeping, but now he opens his eyes and begins to cry. The woman is afraid and runs more slowly, but the baby's crying is loud in the night. At the trees the woman turns right and soon she is at the road. She does not see the black car under the trees, but the men in the car see her.

Suddenly there is a noise in the night – the noise of guns. Then it is quiet again.

The woman's body lies in the snow on the road. Now the only sound is the crying of the baby.

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Read Chapter 1. Write the mistakes and then correct them.

It is midday. This is Czechoslovakia and the year is 1967. Across the fields is the German border. In a house, a man and a woman are talking. The woman holds a baby girl in her arms. She puts on a black coat and a black hat. They leave the house and walk slowly out of the village. The man says goodbye and the woman begins to run. The baby opens his eyes and is very quiet. At the trees, the woman turns left and soon she is at the river. She sees a black car but the men in the car do not see her.

Line	Mistake	Correction
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