

Dead Forest

Ned stumbled as we stepped off the train. Other families followed us, walking quietly into the Dead Forest.

We shambled through the lofty green trees. I carried flowers, Ned's tiny hand clutching my black skirt. When we reached the little sapling, moved here only yesterday, I laid the flowers at its base. A small memorial was all anyone got in war.

"Is Daddy coming back?" Ned whispered, somehow understanding the Forest's sorrow, though no boy his age should.

I took his hand in mine and shook my head numbly. Daddy wasn't coming back.