

You might think that lying on the freezing cement floor, somewhere in Dachau prison camp, would be enough to make anybody a little depressed, especially as all they'd left me to wear was a cotton night-shirt several sizes too small.

But happiness – they do say – is relative, and compared to the hours of torture they'd just put me through – and, no, I do not wish to go into details – this was indeed something of an improvement. So far, I've managed to tell them nothing. And it occurred to me right at the beginning, all those ... oh, I think ten months ago now, when I was betrayed and the torturing began ... that as long as I could hold on to what they needed to know, they would keep me alive.

They also say – whoever 'they' are they're very wise – that when *in extremis*, your life flashes before you.

And I *have* been thinking so much about the happy times – it does help – especially my wonderfully happy childhood in Paris.

My father was a *Sufi Preacher* and musician, and one day his teacher told him that it was time '*to leave India and take your music and message of peace to the world*'. Touring America, he met and married my mother, Ora Baker, and while they were touring Russia I was born: just by the Kremlin!

Our house in Paris had a name, *House of Blessing*, and it was true. A house full of fun, full of love. Throughout the summer nights we four – I had a sister and two brothers – would lean out of my bedroom window and try to count the stars – silly – and watch Paris go by. On a clear night we could see both the Eiffel Tower *and* the Sacré Coeur.

My full name is *Noor-un-nisa-Inayat Khan*. Which means *Light of Womanhood*. At home they called me Babuli – which I don't think means anything at all.

When I was 13, Father called us all together. He'd been ill for some time, by now he was so thin, and very weak; he said, *'I am going back to the motherland.'* I think we all knew what this meant. When the news came, Mother went upstairs, and a few moments later re-appeared wearing the western clothes she had put aside the day she married, and informed us that from this day on, *'we must only look to the future, my dears'*.

I was admitted to the École Normale to study music - how proud my father would have been! I had some short stories published in *Le Figaro*, a book in England – I was on my way to becoming a professional writer!

And then France declared war on Germany.

Sufis believe in non-violence, but I knew I had to do something. But what? It was my brother Vilayat who decided: *'We must go to England before the Germans get here, and join the war effort!'* He joined the RAF, and I the WAAFs. I was ordered to meet a Mr. Selwyn Jepson. He was very direct: *'We wish to send you to occupied France. You will be our eyes and ears within the French Resistance. You will have no protection, no uniform, if caught you will be shot. We assume you'll accept.'*

I was flown to an airfield near Paris, and handed over to my controller, Henri Garry. *'You will work in Paris. Your local knowledge will be invaluable. You are our only radio operator, all the others have been ... taken. I imagine they told you that.'*

*'No - they didn't mention it.'*

For three months I sent information back to London. As I'd been trained, I kept transmissions short, always radioed from different locations, constantly changed my appearance – even dying my hair!

Suddenly, London offered me a passage home. *'Your situation is now very dangerous.'* But I refused – I was still the only radio operator, I had to stay! And then I was taken. Of course it was terrible, but what made it worse was that they told me I'd been betrayed by *Renée Garry*, my controller's sister. For 100,000 francs. *'Oh ja, to us you are very important,'* the Germans said. So began the ten months of being beaten, kicked, starved, and ... other things. But they are keeping me ALIVE!!

And now I can hear the footsteps – they're coming for me again. More questioning. But he just stands over me and says, very gently, *'Please kneel.'* And then he stands behind me, where I can't see him, and I hear the click of his pistol. But surely not – not when I still have all this infor-----

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