



# Hana's Suitcase

by  
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A TRUE STORY



# Tokyo, Japan, Winter 2000

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REALLY, IT'S A VERY ORDINARY-LOOKING SUITCASE. A little tattered around the edges, but in good condition.

It's brown. It's big. You could fit quite a lot in it — clothes for a long trip, maybe. Books, games, treasures, toys. But there is nothing inside it now.

Every day children come to a little museum in Tokyo, Japan, to see this suitcase. It sits in a glass cabinet. And through the glass you can see that there is writing on the suitcase. In white paint, across the front, there is a girl's name: Hana Brady. A date of birth: May 16, 1931. And one other word: *Waisenkind*. That's the German word for orphan.

The Japanese children know that the suitcase came from Auschwitz, a concentration camp where millions of people suffered and died during the Second World War (1939–1945). But who was Hana Brady? Where did she come from? Where was she traveling to? What did she pack? How did she become an orphan? What kind of girl was she, and what happened to her?

The children are full of questions. So is the director of the museum, a slender young woman with long black hair named Fumiko Ishioka.

Fumiko and the children gently take the suitcase out of the glass case and open it. They search the side pockets. Maybe Hana left something that would be a clue. Nothing. They look under the polka-dot lining. There are no hints there, either.

Fumiko promises the children to do everything she can to find out about the girl who owned the suitcase, to solve the mystery. And for the next year, she becomes a detective, scouring the world for clues to the story of Hana Brady.



*Hana's suitcase. Though she spelled her name with one "n," the German spelling has two, as on the suitcase.*





*The town of Nove Mesto and its surroundings.*



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In March of 2000, a suitcase arrived at a children's Holocaust education center in Tokyo, Japan. On the outside, in white paint, were these words: "Hana Brady" and "Waisenkind"—the German word for orphan.

Children who saw the suitcase on display were full of questions. Who was Hana Brady? What happened to her? They wanted Fumiko Ishioka, the center's curator, to find the answers.

In a suspenseful journey, Fumiko searches for clues across Europe and North America. The mystery of the suitcase takes her back through seventy years, to a young Hana and her family, whose happy life in a small Czech town was turned upside down by the invasion of the Nazis.

*"The account . . . is part history, part suspenseful mystery . . . with an incredible climactic revelation."—Booklist*

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