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Ex-Austrian Lusitania Weibrecht hid out in France during WWII. Her name had been something else, but as a decoy her mother changed all family names to others more resolutely Teutonic. So they lived in a hotel in Villefranche-sur-Mer, answering the telephone as Madame Helga Weibrecht, being called on in class as Demoiselles Lusitania and Wilhelmina, and taking Baby Bismarck to the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. They chose German names, but claimed French nationality, formerly Alsations, and Madame Weibrecht said she didn't care who ran things as long as he ran them well. She said women didn't talk about politics and said no more. She believed that what one did was more important than what one said. So she groomed her girls to be silent, and to fight in the Resistance when they grew. They were grown as soon as they unpacked what remained of their things.

The Weibrechts-nées-Ginzburgs' distinguishing mark was their absent father. They arrived at the Hotel Bienvenue with no head of the family, only Bismarck as the tail. But two incidental facts kept them from detection.

First, Bismarck was colicky. So the phrases, 'oh Bismarck,' 'Bismarck, you poor lamb,' 'hush, sweet Bismarck,' built a wall around them, since the three female Weibrechts said it with such sincerity. Bismarck's given name, Moïse, never got onto a birth certificate. Nor, since Madame Weibrecht was long of vision, had he been circumcised.

Second, they gave the dead father an alias. He wasn't dead when he was renamed, but when the family came home one day to discover that he had disappeared, they knew what had happened. Later, Simon Wiesenthal helped them trace the where, and it turned out to be Auschwitz. But before they knew that, the man who had once been Avram Ginzburg became Franz Josef Weibrecht. This was more unsettling than the other aliases. Still, Helga-née-Miriam reasoned, 'Changing your address is even better than changing your name.'

So Lusitania grew up in a shore town, wearing shoes less frequently than in Vienna. Having sold everything to make the crossing, Helga kept them from emptying their savings by performing abortions for women whose husbands were at the front too long to be the fathers. She was paid for her silence as much as her skills. She was a chemist before marrying the man who did business so aggressively but courted her so gently, the man who brought her a different flower every shabbos for a year before taking her beyond the family sitting parlour.

Helga was discreetly lax about her daughters receiving flowers. Virtue, she concluded, when she returned to an empty house reeking prematurely of death, was something internal that necessity couldn't undo. If the girls spent weekends in bars trading feminine skills for information, it was no diminution of virtue. When a German officer brutally overhanded Wilhelmina in a

backroom, it was virtuous for Lusitania to sneak up behind him with a knife. And more virtuous still to slash his face beyond recognition and knock his teeth out with a hammer before weighing him down with bricks and tossing him off a secluded pier.

Bismarck's picture of life in France is one image, taken on the night before they left for New York. (Helga prohibited photographs for the duration of their exile.) It is June. The four encircle an outside café table. Bismarck is four, in blue serge that makes him squirm in the humidity. Wilhelmina is seventeen, though she looks sweet sixteen in a pink lawn dress, a ring of roses in her hair. Helga is thirty-nine, though she looks fifty. She wears a sensible lightweight grey suit and elegant but sensible shoes. Her age is a disguise. When she gets to America she will lose the years within a week. Lusitania is nineteen, and that is exactly how old she looks. She wears a blue-and-white striped sailor jersey, black trousers and a red beret, shiny black wingtips on her feet. Her lipstick matches her hat. She is smoking a Gauloise. Later Bismarck will remember nothing of this day except the trace of lipstick on his sister's cigarette. Lusitania's left ankle is resting across her right thigh. Her bright white socks are showing. Unlike her mother and sister, she wears no jewellery, but strapped to her left wrist is a watch that belonged to her father. She will never pass a day without it until Bismarck has his first child. Then she will give it to him to save for his daughter.

In the picture the boy is leaning out of his chair to catch a piece of bread that has just fallen off the table. His face is in that interim position between full-frontal and profile. He has the look of someone who is going somewhere. To his left Helga's face is in a crouch, one arm is poised to raise a wine glass. She seems to anticipate the sip, but actually she is preparing to become Miriam again, and it requires all her concentration. Left of her is Wilhelmina, who, like her sister, will never change her name again. The name given to each of them by their mother is a superimposed heart. The old heart is like a fish below the ice. Wilhelmina's face is open, pale with powder for only the second time in her life, though already it is a habit. She stares into the camera, euphoric that at last she's being documented in this way.

Last is Lusitania, her right elbow balanced on the back of her left hand. In her right hand she holds the Gauloise. She is fisherman brown, the hair on her arms golden. She is looking past the camera, looking past the moment for the first time in four years. Until today she has not thought what to do when she grows up, and she is already grown up. She decides the colour of her thoughts is azure, like the sea she looks at past the photographer, who clicks just as Lusitania says the word azure silently to herself.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Alexandra Keller.*