

Bruno sighed but he knew that his friend was right, and he took off the boots and his socks and left them beside the pile of clothes on the ground. At first it felt horrible putting his bare feet into so much mud; they sank down to his **(page 206)** ankles and every time he lifted a foot it felt worse. But then he started to rather enjoy it.

Shmuel reached down and lifted the base of the fence, but it only lifted to a certain height and Bruno had no choice but to roll under it, getting his striped pyjamas completely covered in mud as he did so. He laughed when he looked down at himself. He had never been so filthy in all his life and it felt wonderful.

Shmuel smiled too and the two boys stood awkwardly together for a moment, unaccustomed to being on the same side of the fence.

Bruno had an urge to give Shmuel a hug, just to let him know how much he liked him and how much he'd enjoyed talking to him over the last year.

Shmuel had an urge to give Bruno a hug too, just to thank him for all his many kindnesses, and his gifts of food, and the fact that he was going to help him find Papa.

Neither of them did hug each other though, and instead they began the walk away from the fence and towards the camp, a walk that Shmuel had done almost every day for a year now, when he had escaped the eyes of the soldiers and managed to get to that one part of Out-With that didn't seem to be guarded all the time, a place where he had been lucky enough to meet a friend

like Bruno.

(page 207) It didn't take long to get where they were going. Bruno opened his eyes in wonder at the things he saw. In his imagination he had thought that all the huts were full of happy families, some of whom sat outside on rocking chairs in the evening and told stories about how things were so much better when they were children and they'd had respect for their elders, not like the children nowadays. He thought that all the boys and girls who lived here would be in different groups, playing tennis or football, skipping and drawing out squares for hopscotch on the ground.

He had thought that there would be a shop in the centre, and maybe a small cafe like the ones he had known in Berlin; he had wondered whether there would be a fruit and vegetable stall.

As it turned out, all the things that he thought might be there - weren't.

There were no grown-ups sitting on rocking chairs on their porches.

And the children weren't playing games in groups.

And not only was there not a fruit and vegetable stall, but there wasn't a cafe either like there had been back in Berlin.

Instead there were crowds of people sitting together in groups, staring at the ground, looking **horribly** sad; they all had one thing in **(page 208)** common: they were all terribly skinny and their eyes were sunken and they all had shaved heads, which Bruno thought must have meant there had been an outbreak of lice here too.