

2015 CREATIVE ARTS STUDENT CONTEST

LIBERATION: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED 70 YEARS LATER?

Middle School Writing – Second Place

“70 Years Later” By Faith Shamley

PROPERTY OF GEORGIA COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

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I sat in my old rocking chair, the one that creaked so loud even my neighbors could hear. I began to reminisce on my life 70 years ago. Outgoing, courageous, loving, joyful, kind; I remembered when I was that 12 year old little girl, but in an instant, my happiness was snatched away from me. I was never that same little girl ever again...

I remember the first encounter I had with a Nazi soldier. I was walking to the local market to fetch some flour for my mother. As I turned the corner that a Nazi soldier was patrolling, I couldn't help but notice the heinous grimace that he gave me. My mother once told me to stay away from people like that because they only bring trouble. I never walked that path to the market ever again.

From the less than pleasant encounter that I had with the Nazi soldier, I knew that when one of them came knocking on our door late at night, no good would come out of it. I remembered the loud pounding on the door at precisely 3:14 am – it practically woke up the entire neighborhood. *Bang, bang, bang...* “Nazi soldiers here. Open the door immediately.” *Bang, bang, bang.*

My little sister, Emma and I peered around the corner and watched as our parents opened the door. I could see my mother and father trying to hide the fear in their faces. The fear in my parents' eyes scared me half to death, but I tried to stay strong for Emma.

“You and your family must come with us at once”, the soldier commanded with his stern demeanor. “One of your distant cousins is having a family emergency and they requested your presence. Because they are not mobile, we have agreed to transport you to their home. We will bring you back to your house within the week, safe and sound with no problem.”

Mother and father looked at each other with confused faces. I knew they weren't sure about the situation, but orders are orders. There's no way to rebel against authorities. “Very well”, my father said with a sigh. “Just let me tell my kids the news and we will leave with you in just a minute.”

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Father kept his word and in a matter of 3 minutes, we were all on our way to go see our distant cousin. About 20 minutes into the ride, Father began asking the Nazi soldier questions that were racing through all of our heads.

"How long will this trip take?" asked Father.

"Ehh, about two days", he replied abruptly. "Don't worry. I will get you there safe and sound."

Mother looked very uneasy. That is why it wasn't a surprise when we were all awoken by her late at night while the Nazi soldier was sleeping.

"Your father and I have discussed this situation deeply, and we have come to realize that this is all a hoax. There is no way we have a distant cousin because we come from a lineage of being an only child. Your father's parents were both the only child, and so were mine. None of what the soldier was telling us adds up. Therefore, we want you and Emma to flee. You will escape at once tonight. Run back home and stay with Mrs. Mason. She will take care of you and your sister.

"NO!" I screamed. "What will happen to you and father?! How long will it be before we ever see you again?"

"Shhh, quiet Merium. We don't want to wake the soldier", Father told me. "I promise that your mother and I will return back to you as soon as possible. Now you must leave before the soldier awakens."

Reluctantly, Emma and I got up. We told our parents that we loved them and hugged them goodbye. Little did I know that that was the last time we would see them ever again.

Seventy years later, I still wonder why they made a promise they weren't sure they could keep. Seventy years later, I still wonder why they didn't come back with us. Seventy years later, I still miss them more than words can describe and long to see them just one more time. Even though I experienced all of this hardship through the years, I have learned so much along the way.

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Seventy years later, I have learned that you must cherish the time you have with your loved ones because you never know when you will see them ever again. Seventy years later, I have learned that when saying goodbye, always tell that person that you love them. For it may be your last chance to say those words. Seventy years later, I have learned that people in the world do evil things, but the only way to overcome that is by working together. Now, I share my story with others so they will always remember what happened 70 years ago.

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