

Honorable Mention  
Fiction Writing, Division I  
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*Flowers*  
Word Count: 999

**Spark:**

They came-

At first like a spark

Small, but with greater threat

Angry. Blazing. Against Jews.

We were below them

A subcategory, blamed for problems in the world.

I knew it was coming

But I still felt shocked.

When our freedoms were ripped away one by one

Like dentists pulling teeth.

Like wisps of a cloud fleeing from a gust of wind.

Our jobs were taken away leaving us with no way to support ourselves.

My papa came home one day,

His head hung low. His eyes sad

A worn paper clenched tightly in his hand,

*"Fired,"* he said.

After Papa lost his job we struggled to find food. We were always hungry.

It was a reminder of the Nazi power...but it was just the beginning

The beginning of a fire. A loud, raging fire

Everything starts with a spark...A spark of hate

We were there enemies

Just because we weren't blond, tall, and blue eyed.

*Sizzle:*

The Nazi anger grew to a sizzle.

Sparks spread. They caught all around

Involving more innocent souls

The Nazis were full of hatred. In their eyes, we deserved to die.

Our media was taken over and filled with propaganda

Preaching Hitler and his ideas

We didn't know what was right

In Nazi eyes, we deserved the worst form of life

We couldn't vote. We couldn't participate in anything. We were singled out.

I remember one night:

The Nazis pounded on our door. They forced it open. They ran in.

Eyes blazing with anger

They took our books and possessions. They were burned out in the street.

Years of childhood knowledge. Years of memories.

The feeling of sunshine on my back.

The sound of laughter.

The warmth of a hug.

The happiness of being safe and sound.

The care-freeness of a childhood.

Charred and burned to ashes.

And so the brutality grew

Like a fire

**Flame:**

The flame of hate grew further.  
It was becoming violent, raging, unstoppable  
It had gone too long without being extinguished  
In their eyes, we deserved to be punished.  
Their hatred only grew. They enjoyed it  
We were hurt, killed, and ripped away from our families  
Papa was one of the first  
They shoved him in a cart and he was wheeled away  
We cried for days  
I never saw him again.  
After that, our churches were burned  
Our systems boycotted  
Our stores were robbed  
Our beliefs didn't matter  
We were labeled so that we couldn't live a normal life  
We were forced to run, but there was nowhere to go  
We were turned away by people who we thought cared  
Like slaves  
*No-* like animals

**Fire:**

The flames joined. They combined. The fire grew  
It engulfed everything.  
The Nazis grew used to the way they were treating us

The hateful, violent way

It seemed to be what we deserved-

It wasn't

Children were orphaned. Jews were mass murdered. Almost no one made it out.

We were deported. *Lied to.*

We were told everything would be fine, but instead we were:

*Separated, tortured, beaten, killed*

They grabbed me and pulled me away.

I was taken from my family. The only people I had left

I was brought to a ghetto

It was small and dirty

I was hungry, scared, alone

No one cared for me there. Everyone else was in the same situation

There was never enough food

No education

We had a curfew

If we wanted to do something, it had to be done in secret

Like rats in a wall

All because the Nazis had let their hatred progress

It had been going on for too long

Violence seemed like the only option to them

And we were forced to pay the price

**Burned:**

People tried to help.

It made a difference.

But not enough

The loathing had already turned into cruelty to the worst degree.

People were still dying. People from both sides

We were losing hope

It had burned out...left charred on the ground

Would the nightmare ever end?

Would the hatred and violence become a reality?

Would we ever resurface?

We did

*Eventually.*

I was able to return home, but my hope didn't return

My home was completely empty. Looted. Ransacked.

They had taken everything.

All that I had left of my family,

All that I had left of my past life,

They were now truly gone

Like wisps of dreams slipping away as you struggle to grasp them.

**Ashes:**

After a fire burns everything, it eventually fizzles out.

You feel lucky to have survived. Lucky that the damage wasn't worse...

But then you see...

You see the ashes of everything you treasured,

You see the damage,

And you wonder, how you will ever recover

From the horrible, hateful, violent fire.

As I looked at the ashes of the war and I realized  
I was a different person. An experience like mine will do that to you.  
I didn't think I would ever recover  
The effects of the war still hung over us all.  
There was still not enough food  
But worse, I was still scarred.  
My bruises and bumps would fade  
But the effect on my mind never would

**Growth:**

After a fire, there is devastation  
Yet the burned area, provides an opportunity for plants to grow  
Life slowly becomes better than it was before  
All the dead, broken parts are erased, providing a chance to improve  
Just the same, the war ended  
It seemed like we would never come out of this dark place  
But we did  
Like plants after a fire, we emerged  
Better than before. More educated  
We knew to never let hatred progress to violence again  
Likes plants after a fire, we continued to thrive  
We remembered the horrors and pain  
We could still feel the searing heat of the fire...  
But we grew  
Teaching generations of the horror of the holocaust  
Teaching them lessons to prevent the spark from catching again

We were damaged, but slowly rebuilding

To form a forest, of new and beautiful

*Flowers*



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