

Honorable Mention
Fiction Writing, Division I
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The Bindings of Evil
Word Count: 989

The Bindings of Evil

I sat down at a table and began to eat my food. It wasn't the best or the biggest meal, but it kept me going for a day. As I reached down to grab my fork, I paused. I looked at my hands. They were barely wrinkled and they were somewhat calloused. They were not very old and neither was I. They were my hands. They had once been used to farm fields before the fields were destroyed. Afterward they chose the next path and became a *Sturmabteilungen*. Now they were hands that destroyed and took the Jews from their homes, destroyed instead of growing food. They were my hands. I had chosen my path, but now I wonder, *Should I hate the Nazis or myself?* I knew that what I was doing wasn't right, but I couldn't leave, if I did, I could not imagine the punishments.

Yet still, I remember a time before Hitler. Not when there was peace, but when there was hate. Even before Hitler, the Jews were hated and blamed. In the time of Lueger, the Jews were punished and blamed for the poor economy and they lost their jobs. They were treated like they were below the other humans, like they were a completely different race. There was no mistaking that the hatred of the Jews happened with Hitler, but in truth, it all started before him.

I was broken from my thoughts when an officer sent me door to door with another man. I did not know the man I was sent out with. We could have been neighbors or I could have sold him produce, I did not know. All I knew was that he went down the same path as me and became a SA soldier. I could only hope that he felt that evil that he had done as a soldier.

We went door to door. We did our orders, but the other soldier did most of the work. I may have walked around in the uniform of a *Sturmabteilungen*, but I didn't feel like one. I saw my evil, but there was no escaping it. As we went door to door, I saw the look in the other soldier's eyes. I didn't realize it before, but I could tell now that he enjoyed what he was doing. I

didn't. For the rest of the day, I had to watch him believe the lies and I had to watch him hate Hitler's enemies. My eyes now saw the evil. They were cursed and binded by hate so my vision was impaired by Hitler.

I was later ordered to help collect books from a library. They were thrown into a fire and burned. They hated having anything against them. I watched them morph the mind of a common citizen to see that it was normal, but I saw the evil and the hate. I watched as the teachers trained the children to be a Nazi, to believe the Nazis, but I couldn't do anything. Later, he enforced the Nuremberg Race Laws. He made the Jews less of themselves and took away their rights. I saw him hate them in every way he could and I had to enforce that hate. Every time I marched, each step I took made me feel evil. My legs ached and were weighed down by the evil. I could only move in the way Hitler wanted.

All of a sudden, it stopped. The 1936 Olympics made it stop. Hitler was nice, the hate was nearly non-existent. I watched the people and for once, I saw what I could do. I saw power that wasn't created by fear. I felt unburdened for a time, but it all came back. Hitler reinforced his laws and made them even worse than before. Right after the other countries left, we had to push the Jews harder, remove their rights and be much worse. I thought that there was an end in sight, but I was wrong.

The hate continued when we started to persecute other groups too. Anyone that didn't fit his ideas was outcast. The Jews were not the only ones that he hated. His hate spread to his followers, which meant that it spread to me. I was supposed to hate, but I couldn't. All I could do was watch it. I saw everyone around me slowly become what he wanted, but I wouldn't change fully, I still had my heart. My heart saw the evil, but it pushed it away. It was all that was left of me.

Suddenly, it happened, the hate broke loose. It was horrible. A French soldier was killed and the Nazis attacked. They started *Kristallnacht*. I was supposed to attack, so I had to go out

there, but I couldn't do anything. I watched the other soldiers raid the homes, break doors and shatter windows. Glass filled the streets and screams filled the air. It was horrid, inhumane, and so much more. It was everything that the Nazis planned to do, all in one night.

I was scared, I was afraid of what I was supposed to do. I decided that it was enough. Everything inside of me broke. All of the feelings I had, all of the doubts I had, came crashing down into me at once. All of me was no longer focused on living and doing what I was ordered, I was now focused on escaping my path. I ran away, one foot in front of the other. First a jog, then a run, and then a sprint. I ran past it all, leaving it all behind me. I left my past of hate and I left the violence behind. I ran away and my body was free. No longer weighed down, I ran fast, with clear vision, I could see, my mind saw peace, and my hands finally helped me on my own way. I was free.

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