

Honorable Mention

Division I – Writing

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A Bright White Light In The Deep Abyss

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A bright white light in the deep abyss

The Holocaust was a time that many people struggle to remember because of the extreme hatred, brutality, and violence that defined it. During this horrific period in history, millions of innocent people were persecuted and killed simply because of who they were. Families were torn apart, basic rights were stripped away, and normal daily life was surrounded by fear and uncertainty. For those living through it, the suffering often felt endless, as the war dragged on with no clear sign of when or if it would ever end.

The title “A Bright White Light in the Deep Abyss” symbolizes the hope that people managed to hold onto even during the overwhelming darkness surrounding them. Even when conditions were unbearable and survival seemed impossible, many people continued to show resilience. They found strength in small moments, in one another, and in the hope that their suffering would not last forever. This hope did not erase the horrors of the Holocaust, but it allowed people to endure them. Through resilience and determination, victims proved that even in one of the hardest and most painful periods in history, the human spirit was strong enough to face brutality and pain.

The Holocaust was designed to strip Jewish people of their rights, religion, and identities. Jewish citizens were forced to follow unfair laws that took away their freedoms and treated them as less than human. They were no longer allowed to practice their religion, own businesses, or live normal lives. Many were given numbers instead of names, which was meant to erase who they were as individuals. By taking away their rights and identities, the Nazi government attempted to remove any sense of hope or resilience. However, even while facing this cruelty, many Jewish people resisted by holding onto their beliefs, traditions, and memories. This showed that even though Jewish people’s identities were targeted, they could not be completely taken away.

Hope during the Holocaust did not mean being happy or feeling comfortable. Instead, it meant choosing to survive even when everything felt hopeless. People were treated cruelly, starved, and stripped of their dignity, which made it easy to lose the will to live. However, those who held onto hope found reasons to keep going, whether it was for their families, their faith, or the belief that the suffering would one day end. Some people lost hope and gave up, which often led to their deaths. This shows that hope was not just an emotion during the Holocaust, but a powerful act of resistance that helped people stay alive in the darkest of times. Hope became a quiet but powerful force that allowed people to endure when everything around them was meant to break them.

Resistance during the Holocaust was not always loud or violent; often, it appeared in small, everyday actions. Simple acts such as sharing food, comforting others, secretly practicing religion, or teaching children were forms of resistance. These actions showed that people refused to let the Nazis take away their humanity. By helping one another, victims pushed back against a system built on cruelty and isolation. Even though these acts seemed small, they carried great meaning. They proved that kindness and compassion could still exist, serving as a bright white light in the darkness meant to destroy them.

During the Holocaust, many Jewish people were forced to endure death marches, which resulted in the deaths of nearly one out of every four prisoners. These marches took place as Nazi forces evacuated camps, forcing prisoners to walk incredibly long distances in freezing weather with little to no food, water, or rest. Prisoners were already weak from starvation and harsh treatment, making the marches even more deadly. Anyone who could not keep up or collapsed from exhaustion was shot immediately. Those who were not killed by guards often died from the brutal environment. Even during these marches, many prisoners continued moving forward by relying on the small hope of survival or the support of those around them. The death marches showed the Nazis' complete disregard for human life, but they also revealed the strength and resilience of those who fought to stay alive despite unbearable conditions.

In conclusion, the Holocaust represents one of the darkest periods in human history, a deep abyss filled with suffering, loss, and cruelty. However, even in this overwhelming darkness, hope and resistance continued to stay strong. Through holding onto their individuality, showing kindness, and enduring unimaginable hardships such as the death marches, victims proved that their identities could not be completely destroyed. The bright white light of hope did not end the horrors of the Holocaust, but it helped people survive them. Remembering these acts of hope and resistance is important because they remind us that even in the darkest times, the human spirit has the strength to endure and stand against hardship.

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