

Honorable Mention

Division I – Writing

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*Fractures in the Fog*

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## Fractures in the Fog

1933

A whisper of fog clings to the platform, blurring the sea of faces beneath.

Flags, the color of blood, whip wildly in the mist, their black swastikas glaring menacingly above the crowd. Out of the haze, he emerges, a phantom-like figure of power. Ambling his way up to the echoing microphone, he begins to speak.

Words rise from the fog- a barrage of promises, accusations, and prejudice. Hitler spins a tale of blame. He paints a picture of the past, a once- glorious Germany now lost to an unseen enemy. An enemy driven by “devil power” who “plunged the country into misery.” An enemy of “racial tuberculosis” deemed “inferior to, and worse, utterly dangerous to society.” He offers them a scapegoat, a target, a solution to their despair- and they listen. The crowd sways in the fog until it swallows them whole. Now, when they look at the Jews the image is distorted. Now, when they look at the Jews they see an alien, a parasite, a villain that must be eradicated.

1935

The terrible fog grows thicker, blurring German from Jew. Then, laws, like harsh steel bars, are installed; regulations set by the Nazi regime for the “protection of German blood, honor, and safety.” The Nuremberg Laws made “rigid definitions of who was Jew” suffocating the people until even those without faith were considered “racial aliens.” Eventually, Jewish civil liberties are overwhelmingly stripped. They were denied basic rights to marry, work, and be anything but a “subject of the state.” The cloud of prejudice turned tangible, visible, real. This legal fog embedded antisemitism into the minds of the German public, transforming morality into a matter of racial purity rather than humanity. It was “a social death for the Jews.”

1940

The fog deepened to an impenetrable murk, a thundercloud on the mind. The people, like unthinking ghosts, stumble over the cobblestones of propaganda, prejudice, and panic. Everywhere they look, the enemy appears. Smog shadows the streets. It distorts the face of the shopkeeper, the old nanny, the crippled boy down the street, and even the neurodivergent infant next door until they are all seen as something else- until they were all “polluters of a superior peoples” and “dangers to mankind itself.” So, a treatment was prescribed, a cure for those “unworthy of life”: a cure of death.

In 5 short years over 10,000 physically or mentally impaired children would perish to the cold precision of a needle. The fog darkens as more and more doctors join the “mercy killing program.” It darkens as more and more parents give their children to the people they trust- as they give their children to murderers in disguise. The people, with their eyes half shut, walk gladly towards a raging fire, believing it to be the Sun.

1942

Yet, against the growing shadow, a spark ignites. A resistance group with true sight. They see through the fear, the facades, the dehumanization- and, instead of joining the crowd, they vow to “never be silent.” The White Rose casts seeds of truth through their leaflets. Finally, “they bring Nazi mistreatments, killings, and genocides to light.” “We are your guilty conscience” they say, and the people begin to question what they once obeyed. But the merciless fog is now too heavy, too powerful- and the people are its blind followers. The White Rose is betrayed and persecuted for seeing the lies as they were. They are criminals for their unwavering morality and humanity. Nevertheless, they leave behind a light, a light the fog can never swallow.

While today the fog of the past remains an echo of what it once was, the darkness that came with it still lingers on the edges of our modern world. It is of the utmost importance that we do not follow the chains of propaganda or prejudice so blindly once again as to surrender our own humanity. Our moral principles must never be clouded by hatred or fear- and we must never remain silent in the face of oppression, for it is the greatest danger. Then, and only then, will the fog ever fully be lifted.

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