

“My World”

Quinne Myers Grade 10

Our Lady of the Elms

Word count: 843

"The next generation has always been and will be better than the previous one. If it is not, then the world would not be moving forward"

-Kapil Dev

Łódź Poland 1941:

“I don’t care that it’s late; go and find them!”

“Yes... yes sir,” I hear from the other line.

“We need all Jews out of my city!” I scream into the phone.

“Yes, yes Mr. Mayor.”

I slam the telephone down with a groan. You’d think a man of reasonable intelligence would succeed in rounding up a couple of pathetic Jews, but it seems I have to do everything myself. I sit behind the desk of my home office, as I think this. Bookshelves cover the walls with biographies of great leaders I hope to live up to one day, filled with crisp cream pages of every war won, or life lost. I can almost see my autobiography sitting on the shelf next to these books titled, “The Life of Werner Ventzki.” I look up and see that my window has become a mirror as darkness fell. My job has been all consuming as of late. I owe my sudden increase of wealth to the appointment of the Nazi party. They trusted me to govern this city and assist the Jewish infestation that has contaminated our streets; I like to think I have succeeded. I stare into the dark of my window and feel as if all the sound has been sucked out, until I hear a familiar shrill scream from down the hall.

I bolt up from behind my desk and urgently hasten down to Zofia, my five-year-old daughter’s room. As I near the door, I hear her distressed sobs, and I would do anything to stop her crying. I open the door to see her, a ball under her covers, shaking profusely.

“It was terrible Papa,” she bounces up as she sees me.

“It was that dream again; it’s the same every time. It’s dark, when I’m grabbed by tall men with whistles and metal sticks that boom over all the noise. They push me into a long hall filled with equally tall people. We are all dressed in stripes, and it’s cold, and I am so scared daddy. I want to go home, but I cannot. Then all of a sudden it gets very loud. I hear a SLAM as

a thick door closes me in and everyone begins to yell. I get smashed in between grown people and the air feels hot and heavy. Then the screaming lowers and I take a breath in and it burns. I cough to try and get it out. I heave as I pull my jaw open with my hand, trying to let any air in. It feels like someone lit my throat on fire, and then it spreads to my eyes, and my skin and I...I keep sucking in breath but nothing is coming. Then it goes silent, and dark.”

She melts into my arms, and I sigh as I consume her weight.

“Sweetheart, nothing like that will ever happen to you,” I say, running my fingers through her hair. “I will never let that happen to you.”

“Where are their parents?” she asks.

“Whose parents?”

“The people in the room with me. I mean, some of them are grown ups, but there are children too. Who’s protecting them?” She looks up at me with her big brown eyes and I feel a strange pang of guilt through me. I’m not sure why.

“Well darling, those children don’t need protection, they...”

“Why don’t they need to be protected?” she interjects.

“Well, because they’re bad. I know something like that would never happen to a good child, like you,” I try to explain.

“What did they do that was so bad?”

“Well, nothing,” I say. “They are just bad children, but they can’t really help it.”

“What if I’m like them?” she cries. “What if I’m secretly bad?”

“Zofie, you aren’t, you’re perfect.”

“But what if I’m n...”

“You’re not, alright? Come here,” I say as I open my arms and invite her in for a hug.

She walks into my arms and I squeeze her close.

“Papa?” she asks.

“Yes?”

“I don’t want to die.”

“Zofie, don’t say things like that. You won’t; you are going to live a long, happy life.”

“But...” she starts tearing up again. “I don’t want to live in a world where terrible things like that happen, even to bad people.”

“Hopefully when you are a grown up, everything with these bad people will be over.”

“What am I going to be like, as a grown up?” she asks.

“You are going to be just as wonderful, and kind, and smart as you are, even more so than you are now. I just know you are going to do wonderful things, my wonderful girl, you will set the world on fire.”

“No,” she says as she stands to look me in the eyes. “There won’t be any fire. In my world no one will burn.”

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