

Honorable Mention

Division I – Writing

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The Boots That Refused to Stop Marching

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The Boots That Refused to Stop Marching

I was once boots sitting in a shop, never knowing what a pair of boots could witness. Then I became Gerda's boots, old and falling apart, but that does not matter. What matters is that I held the memory of her family within me. A memory of a once peaceful, happy life. I was confused on the sunny day in June when she was told to put me on. Not knowing the impact I would have on her life. I was normally meant for skiing, but in this case I was used to keep her alive. I pushed her to keep going, I provided the warmth in the snow, the protection from the cruel winters. I concealed the images of her family, and the life she was forced to leave behind. We walked many miles together, my soles deteriorating, just as her soul. But she kept on marching, and overtime I became a symbol for strength she didn't know she had. Strength that shined when she had meager food and unsanitary living conditions. I saw roads for miles and the death of nearly 900 Jewish girls, but I kept Gerda marching. When she thought death was the only option, I reminded her each step we took was important. Reminded her that tomorrow will come, and it is a new day full of hope or freedom. I proved to her that although the SS guards wanted to take everything, they could not take her strength. They wanted her to quit marching, end her miserable life but I would not let her. I kept her going, helping her stand and keep marching, because I knew she would be free one day. When she was liberated, I knew my time was up. I had given a girl the hope to survive. And so now I am ash, gone, but my impact is forever.

Works Cited

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