

Honorable Mention

Division I – Writing

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Revere Middle School

Written to My Dearest

Word Count 676

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To my dearest Anastasia,

I write in haste, with the desperate hope that you receive this letter. I pray that we, along with Mother (G-d bless her), and Father, make it out of this war alive.

I once heard somewhere that it is better to have your hopes shattered than have no hopes at all, which very well conveys how I feel right now. I have not received any mail from neither you nor Mother. For all I know, both of you could have already been sent to Auschwitz and killed. I do pray that is not the case, but G-d only knows. I will try not to think of the possibility of your death. I have no idea where they took you when they removed you from the ghetto. We were told that you were being sent to a camp that made soldiers' uniforms. My prayer is that wherever you are, you are safe.

By the time this reaches you, I will already have been deported to Germany for forced labor. Every man between 18 and 35, as long as he is capable, must work. It has already been difficult enough—food is meager (and quite terrible, if I am being frank), and I would do anything for a home-cooked meal at the moment, maybe some of Mother's homemade latkes smothered with cream. However, I will be grateful to have any food in my belly to begin with. I do not know what my fate will be, but I do know that we all must remain strong. The Nazis might take my good food and my good clothes, but they cannot take my faith.

The men I have been traveling with are from all over. They come from all walks of life: fabricators, doctors, jewelers, and professors. They all share their stories of how they were removed from their homes and placed in the ghettos. Each man's story is nearly identical, yet all unique in their own special way. One man told us about his life before the Nuremberg Laws. He was imprisoned by the Germans and placed in a work camp. When he was released, he was given only a few days to get out of Germany. He refused, ran, hid from the Germans, and now is on his way to a new camp. He said that he would not give up on the Fatherland. He believed that the Germans would not abandon their brothers who fought alongside them in the Great War, even if they are Jews.

I hold on to that hope as well. I pray that the people we played with, went to school with, and lived among realize what is actually happening and stand up for what is right. I do not understand how people who bought bread from Father's bakery could stop just because someone tells them to. These are the same people who walked with us to school, the same ones we played with in the streets and went fishing with at the pond in the park. Surely they will be among the ones who will help put an end to all of this.

One thing that I do believe is that we can and will be able to survive because G-d watches over us. As those of us in this truck are transported to the nearest train station, we remain vigilant and say Techanun, asking G-d for mercy. We know that He watches over us. He knows our destiny, and we know that just like He set the Jews free from the Egyptians, He will set us free from our captors here in Germany. So we pray. We pray for peace, strength, and faith.

Anastasia, hold on to what we learned from the Torah. I know that if you keep your faith that our loving G-d will bring us back together again. Know that G-d is with us, holding us safe so that His chosen people can once again be free. You are my dear sister, and you are always in my thoughts and prayers.

Yours truly,

Felix

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