

Rachel Britt

318-470-0442

12th Grade

April Carberry

awcarberry@caddoschools.org

C.E. Byrd High School

After a long day of training at the local church, I return to my home in Bad Zwisshenahn to a startling find. As I walk down the street and approach the door to my home, I see a herd of men in familiar grey-green uniforms, signifying the Gestapo. I am immediately filled with panic but continue to my home and approach the men.

“Are you Karl Gorath?” asks the leading officer of the group in a voice that sends me into further fear.

Terrified and confused, I respond, “Yes, that would be me.” As the words leave my mouth, he simultaneously grabs me and pulls my hands behind my back.

“You are under arrest for violating paragraph 175 of the criminal code,” he says with a sternness that reflects the emotional deadness of his job.

As he arrests me for homosexuality, a wave a shame comes upon me and I cry out for my family who I expect to be inside unaware. However, the only person that walks outside is the man I love most. He stands there with no hesitation to my arrest and betrayal sets in and my confusion is gone. Out of fear of being jailed himself, my love has outed me for a crime we have both committed.

“Thanks for the tip,” the officer says to him as they lead me into a cramped car. From the window, my eyes fill with tears as I stare back at my lover and wonder what I have done to deserve incrimination.

When I arrive at a concentration camp near Hamburg, I instantly assume my fate is death as I am fully aware of the German cleanse that is well underway. Instead, I endure such humiliation that death seems a viable option. Branded with a pink triangle and nicknamed a “175er”, my crime is clear to prisoners convicted of the crime of race.

My medicinal skills redeem me when I am transferred to a prisoner hospital to be of use there.

While serving the bread rations, one of my many tasks, an officer approaches me.

“See that Pole over there,” he says and points to a patient in the corner of the room. As I nod, he suspiciously whispers, “he doesn’t need bread today, move onto the next patient.”

I realize what the officer asks me to do, but the Pole’s condition is deteriorating. Once the officer leaves the room, I rush over to his bedside and slip a role under his blanket. In that moment, I instantly regret my choice as the officer marches over to me and makes it clear my punishment: Auschwitz.

At Auschwitz, I exchange my pink triangle for a red one – the brand of a political prisoner. After being surrounded by overwhelming doubt for years, my American liberators finally arrive to my rescue.

Aware of the severe meaning of my red triangle, one soldier asks, “What was your offense?”

I respond, “My crime was not one of political nature but of kindness and love.”

Bibliography

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/karl-gorath?parent=en%2F4631.

HS 01