

Title (up to 20 words) - To Hang the Pirates

Strapline (up to 40 words) - Only the good die young...

Copy (between 900 and 1000 words) -

Edelweiss

The electricity in the crowd seemed to buzz loudly in my ear. The roar of protests trapped in the minds of the people gathered deafened me. No one said a word: they didn't have too. Their words could do nothing anyway. Silence.

So I stared into his eyes instead. Deep green like the sea and he offered me some crumpled copy of a smile. I forced the waves of the ocean in me not to break across my eyes and wash over my cheeks. He was my whole world. But I had to hold his gaze. I had to distract him from the rope around his neck.

Today a great injustice is to be witnessed. We all held a small white flower clasped in their hand because they knew the teenagers stood above us and couldn't see them as the government pretended they were: criminals. Instead we knew them better. I knew them better. Or I thought I did, back when I thought I knew myself. Back when we were going to change the world.

And as I watched, my whole world burned.

The pirates

“Karla! Eliyahu!”

Our eyes lock and through the green sea, I watch the cogs of his mind try to fathom the apparent urgency of the situation. I wonder the same.

“Karla! Eliyahu!” Again the cry comes at the door, biting at my soul, clawing at my heart, this time pursued by three rampant bangs on the door. Spurred on by terror, I jump off Eliyahu’s lap and career out of the room. Eliyahu is close behind. Dread carrying me down the stairs whilst the pit in my stomach burrows to the ground.

I yank open the door just as Hermann reaches to rap again, his face contorted in a soundless wail as he focuses his eyes on me.

Breathlessness evident in his speech, “They took Levi.” He breathed, whilst clutching at his lungs. His usual blank canvas was twisted with regret unsure how to portray emotion, “There was a raid at Engelhardt, and they took him. He’s gone.” Grief crashed over my head and flooded throughout my body. Levi wasn’t dead, but he might as well be. We would never see him again; these days no one ever come back.

But he wasn’t dead. Yet.

Eliyahu went limp beside me and I curled my arm around him, drawing him close to me for support. My other hand draws circles on his wrist with my thumb. Levi was his oldest friend – they had hidden together and been there for each other when they had no one else. I want to tell him he has me now, that we would be together for always, but these are promises that you can’t be certain shall be kept. Not during a war.

Instead we followed Hermann to city hall.

Usually we would have convened at Engelhardt: that's where we always went in the evenings, so we could dance to jazz and blues. From there we would paint graffiti on walls, fight the brainwashed youth that stood for the government's ideals, hide the supposed criminals of our society in our basements or supply them with food.

I remember Eliyahu spray painting "birds born in cages think freedom is a crime" on the very wall we now stood in front of.

Johannes, Emil, Siegfried and Hugo stood waiting for us. At once Emil hands me a brick. His jaw is set and there is a steel glint in his eye. I realise then that they are all carrying bricks too. Eliyahu immediately goes to the bag filled with cans of paint and graffiti his slogan in red on the side of the government building. I think of where my parents are tonight and why they are there and what they believe in and anger boils in me. I throw my brick towards the window in front of me. My aim is true.

Before

My parents were out at some government party for men like my father – men I intrinsically despised. They had left me behind, which, at seventeen, suited me fine. I had insisted to them that I didn't mind being alone – though I wasn't actually going to be alone.

Like clockwork Eliyahu fell through my open window and I threw my head back laughing even though nervousness filled my stomach with nausea.

"What did you want to tell me then?" He inquired, pulling me down to the ground and onto his lap. I wrap one of my arms around his neck as a familiar scent greets me. My other hand still wrapped in his, whilst tracing the tattoo on his wrist.

I take a deep breath; unsure what his reaction will be, “I’m with child” I whisper softly into his ear. He draws back to stare intently into my eyes and then kisses me passionately, our mouths meshing together, fitting like pieces of a puzzle. Until we are interrupted by a pounding at the door.

November 10th

The loud thudding of my memory continued, and sure enough loud footfalls were getting nearer. I recognised the man hurtling at us – the gestapo chief himself. Once he was in our midst though, all hell broke loose.

We were left staring at the body of the man who took so much from us, each of us had blood on our hands but no one seemed to recall how. It was a blur. But there were sirens coming closer and Eliyahu’s hands wrapped around my stomach, our baby – each of the six points of the star on his wrist gazing up at me.

“Run.”

After

Whilst my whole world burns, tears roll silently down my delicate cheeks as I watch my heart get hung amongst the scaffolds of the cologne town square. The arteries snap so it is no longer beating. Numb.

I wrap my arms around my stomach cradling all that is left in my life. One day I will tell her stories of her father. She will listen in awe.