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Dreams of an Enemy

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Dreams of an Enemy

William Pynn

“Zurückgreifen! Umgruppieren!”

A command from the Germans echoed through the clearing. The *Volksgrenadiers* stopped their attack and hastily retreated back into the snowy forest. They had taken heavy casualties in this engagement and didn't want to risk being wiped out. Carson fired a few more times before lowering his rifle and let out a relieved sigh. He had somehow avoided death yet again. Soon the gunfire and explosions quieted down, leaving only the cries and whimpers of wounded from both sides. They drifted through the frosted pine trees and were carried around by the cold winter winds. Carson sat down in his foxhole and tried to ignore the desperate yells of the wounded Germans.

He had taken the time to learn some of the language back in basic training. However as he listened to them call out for their mothers and friends to save them from certain death, he was beginning to think he had made a mistake. As some of the voices faded away, only one remained powerful enough to understand.

“Bitte... ich wollte schrifsteller warden,” one of them cried softly.

“He... wanted to be a writer...” Carson whispered to himself.

“Amerikaner!” the voice yelled.

Carson slowly peeked out of his foxhole and saw a German shakily holding out a notebook, his other hand covering his profusely bleeding wound.

“Bitte...” he cried, his voice echoing through the clearing.

Carson climbed out of his foxhole and cautiously walked over to the wounded German. Upon reaching him, Carson slowly kneeled down beside him. His face was pale and his eyes were just barely able to hang open. He weakly motioned for Carson to take his notebook.

“Take...” the German said.

With a wavering hand, Carson took the notebook as a small smile crept across the German's face. The notebook looked as if it had gone through every hardship known to man. Pages were falling out and the cover was dirty and shredded.

"Tell story..." The German pleaded, beginning to shake from the cold.

Carson nodded slowly. Using his remaining strength, the German smiled and placed his hand on Carson's knee. Moments later, the hand lifelessly fell into the snow, the German's eyes closing for the final time. Carson stood up with a heavy heart and walked back to his foxhole, the notebook he had been given lazily hanging down by his side.

Upon sitting back down in his foxhole, he quietly read the cover of the notebook.

"My life as a Soldier in the Wehrmacht... by Hansel Shultz... of the 212th *Infanterie* Division,"

Carson opened the notebook to the first page and continued reading.

"Whoever finds this, be them German, Russian, British or American, I want you to tell my story alongside yours."

Carson flipped through the notebook, only able to comprehend a few of Hansel's masterfully written stories and journal entries. For being seventeen, he had been quite skilled. As he browsed the pages enveloped in writing, two pictures fell into his lap. One picture was of Hansel and his squad. Each of them had confident yet humble grins on their faces. The names of each soldier were written above their heads, his closest friends circled and the ones who had been killed crossed out. There were also several soldiers who were both circled and crossed out. As he examined the second picture, a wave of guilt drowned him.

It was Hansel standing with his mother and baby sister. His mother, Greta, looked immensely proud of her son, hugging him with a gleeful smile. Meanwhile his baby sister, Erika, tugged at

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his uniform, intrigued at the design and colors. A tear rolled down
Carson's face as emotions swelled up inside of him.
They would never see Hansel again.