

## "Invisible Heroes"

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They passed a law that stripped men of their humanity. They say there is a difference between a man who is German or Slovak and one who is a Jew. A German or a Slovak is considered a man, but a Jew is treated as a nobody. He sees, hears, and talks, but yet is also known as a troublemaker.

No one is revolting. No one is shouting. No one is allowed to shout. Only the human conscience resists inhuman commands. Yellow stars twinkle in the streets, silently crying for help. Will anyone heed their silent pleas? Will anyone listen to their own conscience?

Yellow stars twinkled on the streets but with the departing trains, they gradually disappeared, leaving the streets of Bardejov dimmed.

The remaining people, still holding onto their humanity, watched silently. Everyone read the same law, saw the same thing, and faced the same question: do they oppose what they read? Do they act against what they see? Although this question is uniform, everyone must answer it for themselves.

The streets of Bardejov remained calm as if they did not know that the most difficult battles were taking place there. Battles so quiet, that not a single gunshot was heard. Battles fought not by armies, but by individuals. Battles where no blood was shed, yet lives were still lost. The lives of those who were afraid to walk in the streets of Bardejov, simply because they wore a yellow star. But also, the lives of those who despite their fear, welcomed the endangered into their homes.

Everyone was struggling with their fears, with their ideas of what might happen, with their indecisiveness. Only those who defeated the injustice in their hearts could act against it. Those who did not lose their convictions, conscience, and humanity. Only those who opened their hearts managed to open their doors and offer aid. Only those who refused to accept the fate of those wearing the yellow stars could willingly embrace their destiny.

Not only were they living alongside those they were hiding, but they were also risking the safety of their family at the expense of their own lives.

In Bardejov, the doors of several houses were quietly opened to welcome those wearing the yellow stars. In those houses, everyone was equal, and inhuman laws did not apply, as love prevailed. Love that the Almighty placed in their hearts. Love that sacrifices itself and preserves the human face.

No one was allowed to know about it. No one was allowed to know those who were not afraid. Those who were not controlled by hatred. Those who were not defeated by injustice. No one was allowed to know that their neighbors were heroes. The invisible heroes who won the most decisive and difficult battle.

Many trains were leaving Bardejov and their dark wagons were illuminated only by the twinkling of the yellow stars. Few remained where their earthly homes once stood. Trains were leaving and arriving. They brought joyful and sad news. They carried away old memories and brought oblivion. Many rescuers and the rescued were also forgotten, especially those who were humble and did not seek glory. But the invisible heroes cannot remain unnoticed. Those who fought against injustice deserve to be called Righteous Among the Nations. Righteous among the indifferent. Righteous among those overwhelmed by fear and hatred. Their stories shine brighter than the yellow stars. They guide us along the path of the righteous and warn us against injustice.

Nowadays, the law serves as a safeguard against the recurrence of tragic events and emphasizes that a man is a human being. Man – Slovak, Jew, German, Roma... And yet some say that the law is wrong. They are trying to engrain in our hearts the outdated idea that some people are inferior. Man – Jew, Roma... Man – German, Slovak. They say that there is a difference.

Today, we face a similar question. Do we oppose what we read? Do we act against what we see? We all face the same question, but each of us must answer it for ourselves. Many have already won this battle. They have condemned past injustices and oppose those occurring today. Many have become invisible heroes.

But is it enough to be just an invisible hero? Today, we do not have to hide anyone, and we do not have to hide ourselves. We can fight injustice quite openly.

If we disagree with what we read, let us write. If we disagree with what we hear, let us speak. If we disagree with what we see, let us act.