

PROMPT: Use narrative techniques to recall an event in which you witnessed (first-hand) what you would identify an injustice. Be sure to include the full arc of the story, including the lasting impact this injustice has had on both witnesses and victims.

Injustice In the Town

I rubbed my eyes in an effort to keep them open. I stared at my watch and waited for my eyes to adjust. Noon. It was a Saturday morning and I had just watched television for four straight hours. The constant reruns of 90s sitcoms I had never even heard of told me that it wouldn't be long before I was bored with tears. I knew that after a while I would sluggishly laze off of the couch cushions and realize that I was wasting my free time. And when my dad came home, I could sense that my idle activities would soon be over.

"You always complain that you have no time to do anything," my dad proclaimed mockingly, "and then when you have time you choose to do this".

I groaned and lifted myself up in concession. The front door creaked open shiftlessly as if to imitate my own behavior, and the light was blinding. It was one of those days that wasn't all that humid but was ridiculously hot nonetheless.

I stumbled back to the shed with my head hunched over. The place was so infested with cobwebs that it looked as if no one had ventured back there in a decade. The chain on my bike rattled loosely as I hauled the old thing out and exited the garage. *Clank chink, clank*, as the wheels went round and round the various gears jingled aloud in a repetitive fashion as I rolled to my friend's abode just down the street from my old elementary school.

My bike gave away another *clank* as I came to a halt outside of his home. "Jack!" he hollered as if I didn't already see him. "Hey, how's it going?" "Pretty good," he responded cheerfully.

“You want to go play some basketball?” I inquired while shrugging my shoulders. The ongoing activity seemed the only plausible pastime on this uneventful occasion.

“No, we’re going down town”, he dictated, “I want some pizza”.

I clenched my teeth and began to plan a rebuttal for his demand, but the pinch of anger I possessed wasn’t nearly as strong as the fact that I was simply not in the mood, and I held my tongue. He glanced at me briefly before boarding his own bike.

University Avenue was bright and lively, just as always. It had a certain air to it, like a city without the filth, or a small town with an abundance of hustle and bustle. I was very glad to live in Palo Alto.

“How many slices are you getting?” I asked to make conversation. “Just one, I’m not all that hungry”. “I’m pretty hungry, could you buy me one?” I questioned even though I already knew the answer. “No, fatty,” he joked.

All of a sudden, the smile disappeared on his face. He turned his head to the right, straight towards the bakery. I curiously looked as well.

There was a man on the corner, dressed in ragged clothes with a five o'clock shadow. To his left, there was another, holding a sign in bright red letters that I was unable to make out.

First, there was something about Jesus, I couldn’t really hear, but my friend possessed an offended look. Then, I heard a phrase shouted that ended with the words “...control america”.

Then there was a different person speaking, my friend. He quietly uttered a few words to me, I think one of them was a swear word.

Then there was another phrase that I could make out clear as day: “The holocaust never happened.”

My friend began walking towards the man. I wasn't religious, and neither was my friend, but we both knew that this man yelling these obscenities at those passing by on the street was wrong.

Why isn't anyone doing anything?

"Hey, jerk!" my friend cried out to the man. "Shut up!"

My spine shivered and my stomach twisted and turned. The man didn't turn around, probably didn't hear, I looked away and close my eyes shut tight.

"Dude, stop," hoarsely whispered to my friend. I really wasn't in the mood for a quarrel with these guys.

"No, shut up, Jack," my friend insisted. "This guy's a jerk!"

My cheeks burned bright red. My mind wrestled with the possibilities, it was tempted by the desire to exit the scene. For a split second as I looked up, I noticed that those two guys were looking right at my friend and I. Our eyes met. I was sure my friend was going to say something, but then he didn't. He turned around and trudged away, and I followed.

A frown was permanently glued to my face for the remainder of the day and there was a wrinkle stuck beneath my lower eyelids. The same thought circled round and round. *Why couldn't I stand up to them as well?*

Aside from the constant *clank, chink, clank*, silence filled the air on the way home.