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Grade: 12 - Senior

Age: 17

I am a high school student who's only worked in haunted houses, scaring people to make money. I've won a few small awards for my acting, just two "Actor of the Night" papers. I've also been recognized for my writing in school from my freshman year to my senior year.

Loving in Indiana all my life and never hearing of Eva Kor is shocking. I mentally fight myself just to get through my days, but it's the people I'm with that make it matter, and writing this essay due to such an incredible woman feels so freeing. But now that I know about her and have heard her story, I wish to be more like her, perhaps even starting with this-

Forgiveness Can Come and Go

Forgiveness is such an odd thing. Why would Eva forgive the ones who hurt her most? How could she do that? I could personally never do that. Eva and I both know the countryside. Her family had been farmers, while mine were rednecks. Eva Kor had been brought down by so many different obstacles in her lifetime. While I feel like mine are so much smaller. Hearing her story of her surviving that horrible doctor and his horrible experiments, is really awe-inspiring.

She managed to go back to the site of her trauma and face it herself. She went down the isles she had gone down as a frightened child. She saw all the artifacts left there. All the still horrifying items and buildings left in time. And yet, she forgave it. She forgave her abusers, the ones who took her and her sister as children. The ones who history spits on for being too terrible to the Jewish population. All because of their religion.

I had been bullied all my life, some even took place in my own home. And while I don't think I could ever fully forgive my own abusers. Hearing her forgive the people who hurt and scarred her the most- it makes me think to myself. Can I truly forgive them? All those people who were terrible to me? I personally don't think I can.

But I will always deeply respect Eva forever for her ability to forgive. I've visited the site of my trauma, and I still cannot fully forgive them. I still have my doubts and borders up. But Eva Kor was able to let her borders and doubts fall. She let herself open her heart. Eva forgave those terrible people and wore a smile on her face every time she revisited the site.

I can have a smile on my face while in the presence of my own demons, but I can not forgive them. At least not yet.

I want to ask her how she did it. How she truly, and I mean *truly* forgave them. I want to learn to forgive like her. I want to learn how to love life like her.

Eva Kor was an amazing woman. With amazing dreams, goals, and accomplishments. I wish I'd gotten to hear her speak in person. To hear how she forgives. And maybe I could learn how to forgive the ones who hurt me. But, sadly, it's too late for me to hear her and to learn truly from her. But I can accept that, I can *forgive* that.

Because forgiveness comes and goes. Some people can forgive others. And some, like me, can't. And that's okay. Eva Kor was a woman who could forgive even the worst people. And I respect her deeply for that, because I'm not. And that's okay. Because I know she would tell me that it's okay. And she would tell you that too. If you can forgive or not. That woman sure had a place for you.

And that to me, is the best quality in any person.