

**3rd Place: Chaya Littman**  
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**The Sole that Lies Within**

There is one thing that always bothered me.

Two pairs of shoes, produced in the same factory.

Two pairs of shoes, the same style, same color.

Two pairs of shoes, sent to two children – one in America, the other in Europe.

Europe is overtaken by brutality, the European, Jewish child survives along with one shoe of the pair.

The shoe is placed in a museum, guarded by security, the main attraction of the exhibit.

Why?

The shoe of the other child, same style, same color, is thrown away when outgrown.

Why?

Why are the belongings of Holocaust survivors considered more precious than any another?

There is no disputing the heroism of a survivor, but what is the appeal of the shoe? What has it done to benefit all of the attention bestowed upon it?

What is it that makes a lifeless item more important than the rest of its kind?

Two pairs of shoes, produced in the same factory.

Two pairs of shoes, the same style, same color.

Two pairs of shoes, sent to two children – one in America, the other in Europe.

Europe is overtaken by brutality, but life is never that simple – the child can not simply survive.

There is always a story.

The shoe remains, the constant reminder of a lost childhood and the massacre of millions of brethren.

And it is also reminiscent of bravery.

Of how good always triumphs.

Of a small pinprick of light brightening the future.

Of hope.

The shoe of another child, same style, same color, is worn to school, to parties, trotting along with its owner through everyday life.

And there lies the answer.

An item may not be what it was intended to be but what the owner makes of it, the emotions it represents.

An item, like a person, may not be what it was intended to be, rather its value may change through its experiences.

I think I've found my answer.