



0. A MARTYR'S DEATH - Story Preface

1. SUICIDAL RESISTANCE

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This memorial, at Flossenbürg, is dedicated to the people who resisted Hitler and paid for their actions with their lives on April 9, 1945. Included in the list of names is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The memorial says: "In resistance against dictatorship and terror, they gave their lives for freedom, justice, and human dignity." At the top of the memorial is a reference to 2nd Timothy, Chapter 1, verse 7 which says (in the NIV translation): "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." Photo by Concordiadomi; online via Wikimedia Commons. License [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/). Click on the image for a better view.

Before he walked out of his concentration camp barracks for the last time, Dietrich Bonhoeffer whispered to a fellow prisoner: "This is the end. For me, the beginning of life."

Although he was right, Bonhoeffer was unaware that Nazi officials had discovered the diary of Admiral Canaris. Hitler himself ordered the annihilation of Canaris and his entire resistance group - a group which included Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

In spite of his firsthand experience with evil, Bonhoeffer went to the hanging tree with confidence, strengthened by the faith which kept him calm. In spite of the prospect of death, at the hands of evil men, he clung to the beliefs he articulated in his books. Beliefs like:

- Only God is the final arbiter of good and evil
- What we despise in others is never absent from ourselves
- Face death daily and learn the true miracle of life

As he stripped naked on April 9, 1945, Bonhoeffer knew his life on earth was over. He also knew that two other high-profile resisters would die that day: Admiral Canaris and his chief of staff, Hans Oster.

What Bonhoeffer did *not* know was important personal information:

- The Nazis had also targeted three members of his immediate family.
- His brother Klaus, and two brothers-in-law, were executed days later in different camps.

All had fallen within a Nazi net caused by Hitler's rage over his attempted assassination.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-MARTYR-S-DEATH-Agent-of-Grace)

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Admiral Canaris

Image online, courtesy the canaris.dk website.

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Hans Oster

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Bonhoeffer's Brother Klaus

Image online, courtesy the findagrave.com website.

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