*One Night of The War*

20:00. Another day

Another mundane day. Another day of the same, tedious routine. The same routine I have been living for almost half a century whilst others recently have been fighting for our Brittania. The haunting routine that crushed me as if crippling me; gnawing steadily at my fragile innards, one… by…one. And I’m down to my last one. My heart steadily beat the final beats unknowingly; the end drawing near… freedom slowly slipping from my grasp; my only wish is to feel like a soldier one more time. In world war one I fought like a hero, now in my disabled old age, I can not fight again for my country.

 Mine was the barren county, once full of life and now void of any zest; impertinent, scattered, savage crows only make nest here. I trudged down the stairs from the garret holding a forlorn man, and hobbled melancholically out in the usual manner into the frosty fire that chill the bones and crack the jaws. A dim porch received me with sombreness and here outside, I faced the fresh air. A newspaper lain in the morning, cried of war: of lost and brave sons; of countries dodging bullets of war and peace and of ducking grenades of terror and fear. Alas, my life continues the same.

 I collected the newspaper in my usual yet hurried manner, sniffing it to make sure no one had touched it as my nose slivered on the glacial paper; distrust swept over me. I gave a feeble sigh at the eccentricity that had recently constrained me, like a Boa Constrictor. Sanity mocked me, crushing me as I seemed to spiral into a senile world. Flakes of snow started to swirl around until a solitary flake rested upon my nose. Finally, shivers struck me as the weather escalated into a blizzard. Spindrift cascaded upon me. The garden, full of multitudinous depths of weeds and withered roses, a bottomless pit, welcomed me. Windows were an abyss, blocking all light.

 Two crystal black gargoyles on either side of the door glinted menacingly; their eyes squeezing my helpless figure. They stared. They always stared. I fell back into the hewed, decrepit, dilapidated bricks enclosing the emptiness inside, trapping it whilst the bright, knowing stars in the clear sky pityingly eyed me as I retreated into the desolate house.

 As usual, I got ready to go to bed; had my hot tea, took the very same steps, to lie down. My eyes slowly, circumspectly, searched around my room. A rotund clock on the barren desk had been staring at me; the red digits flashing in a countdown. The lambent clock struck the usual chord; the elongated hand, advanced, circulating round about. A picture on the wall, reminded me of my younger days: of strength, speed and usefulness. It was suspended by a single string hung over a nail like a noose hanging an innocent man. Nostrils widened and my eyelids gradually drooped.

 *Suddenly,* I jolted upwards. A small rock came hurtling through the window, smashed into it then softly rolled across the floor. A luminous glow emitted outwards from the spherical object, engrossing me; the countenance was a sparkling vermilion like blood seeping from a soldier’s wound; only it was dotted with numerous diminutive craters. I stared bewildered wondering what else I could do.

 Another shatter!

Another moon fell into the room, a clone of the original. They were in similitude with obsidian rocks, just exposed, after resting at the heart of a volcano for countless years. I drew the curtains, the soft velvet caressing my fingers, and viewed the carnage outside. A paroxysm of terror hailed upon the houses deteriorating, scourging and incinerating. Flames were ascending; a firestorm was blazing across the country. Winds fuelled the fierce fires. Ameliorated Stuka struck the streets in a fierce onslaught. Wailing sirens sounded as powerful planes stampeded at every house. At every man. Piloting the planes, German Nazis rode the winds like a charging troop of cavalry. The planes wailed their battle cries as they thundered in attack. The deafening gunfire pierced the hearts, screaming into the ears of people! Their gargantuan, thunderous propellers roared like lions dominating the savannah! Suddenly, a Stuka stooped low overhead. I ducked as I saw the heavy metalwork, painted in lushes of green; its metallic underside suddenly opening. A cylindrical object fell from the skies towards my neighbour’s house and gave a single knock on a rooftop piece. A blazing inferno of yellow, red and orange flames erupted upwards; a conflagration ascending. Bombs blasted! Splinters the size of metal shards struck, catapulting everywhere as if the bombs were not enough to kill. Carnage and chaos, inimitable, followed the planes, snapping at the heels of helpless runners like ravenous wolves devouring a feeble deer. Infernos swept all houses except mine. Impetuous planes struck at the innocent leaving no spares in their phlegmatic eyes and hearts. The iridescent and opalescent variegated fires struck as wave after wave of burning lights sped, slicing through the clear *night sky. Icy flames ascended, enveloping the paralysed stars in their formidable grasp.*

 I tried to rush outside, through the fractured garden doors, as fear constricted me like a python, crushing the ribs and then the heart as I inhaled my futile breaths when suddenly the pungent smell of smouldering ash seeped into my nostrils, overwhelming my senses. Impenetrable opaque smoke shrouded me. Choking, futile coughs hacked out of me*,* as my lungs were suffocating in flames*.* Anguish engulfed me; my eyes closed although tears dripped as smoke steamed. I clung forwards as the blazing grass seared my bare feet whilst I tried to flee from the smoke encircling me- like a pride of panting lions on me. Blazing branches burned my prostrate body, struck with years. Defeat forced me to my knees. I arched forwards, my fragile back incapable of supporting my decrepit body. I turned upwards, crying to the stars; I knew that my life was just history now. A ‘star’ fell. It fell towards me. My hands reached out.

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 Silence. My eyes fluctuated. Wavy images descended upon me. The flames towered above all; slowly rising and falling empowering all in their midst. A pile of rubble crashed on top of me. Concrete slabs like mountains, sunk deep into my legs as jagged edges drew a torrent of blood. My face immersed in red spray as I lay on my back, wanting a deathly freedom. I saw my femur horrendously sticking out, piercing my fragile, wrinkled skin and groaned in anguish.

 A stray cat lay nearby me on its side. He heaved and panted, sucking in gasps of air, desperate to live. The deep gash on his underbelly exposed the pink, delicate, bloody flesh. In another sudden collapse, buildings crashed and I heard my ribs snapping. Agony cascaded like the falling bricks.

 A groan escaped from the misty smoke. Silence. I looked to my other side. The silhouettes of feeble figures running aimlessly in the smoke appeared. Mosquitos buzzed around me, feasting like a hoard of hyenas upon my fresh blood. I felt their sharp pricks into my skin. Helplessly I laid there as the boulder continued to dig at my ribs. I looked around, the compressed area of the battlefield in which every square foot contained some corpse. It became an open cemetery with the dead embedded in the rubble.

 I turned my head back to the cat, now feebly trying to walk with his front paw curled into his stomach. He collapsed after his third step. Defeat forcing him back to his side. The fuming smell of smoke and ash swarmed up my nostrils like a pack of piranhas. Another ‘star’ was coming. This was locked on me. I saw the picture; the picture of younger days. The glass- cracked and splintered… like me. The picture- half burnt. 30 years have perished since. The star became so bright- all sight was lost... My last hopes of being a soldier again disappeared.

War hushed me. War struck me. War killed me.