The Weed

By: Jordon Lowe

Standing outside the government buildings, the harsh winds test the tree’s resolve. It is a bitter and miserable day; the hail covers the street with thousands of white bullets. The pellets smack and bite at my head and they won’t give up, they won’t recede. I stand strong against them no matter the pain. The tower behind me holds a large clock. Every tick of the hand pulsates through my veins. My heart is thumping. The clock’s face is looming at me. I look around myself and there are hundreds of heavily armed police officers, their guns awaiting command. I wonder if they can hear my heart beating. “The city is in a chaotic state,” the news said the other day, “as terrorists are roaming the streets.” The government can’t guess what will happen next and a law has just been passed suspending our civil rights. We must fight for them. We are in a state of martial law because we are trying to free our country from injustice. Is it “terrorism” when it benefits the human race? I look up at the clock again. It’s quarter to noon, and it chimes its song. A member of the council walks down the long path past our peaceful protest with body-guards leeching-into him. As small of a group as we are, we still seem to have the power to make the weak leaders of our country fear. How cowardly is our government that they must surround us with guns? That they must destroy homes, kill the innocent, and use cruel torture to show the world that they are in control.

A young man, who is part of my demonstration, yells something and throws an egg at the councilor. I flinch as a gun is fired and he collapses instantly. I scream out but somebody holds me back. There’s nothing I can do. I’ve been preparing myself for months for this, and I must accept the deaths of my comrades. We are fighting for a cause; we are setting the people of this country free. All around me, many are outraged. Civilians on the street start yelling and come nearer. They support what we are doing. We are giving them a voice, and a chance at a better life. But this protest has become nasty. I hear more gunshots, but I can no longer pay attention. I turn my back to the riot that has exploded and I can only see the clock. Ten, nine, eight, seven…I feel faint. My vision is going…I’m fading in and out of consciousness. Three, two, one...The clock chimes. Twelve tolls of the bell. There is an explosion, fiery and hot and loud, and then black.

I wake up shivering, and doused in sweat. Mixing with the frigid sweat my tears stream uncontrollably, and run down my face. I try to sit up, but the pain is too overwhelming. My body is bruised and my cuts are untreated; I must have been thrown down during the explosion. I look down and see cold concrete. I know exactly where I am, but not how long I’ve been there. I see more and more concrete as I scan the room; the walls, the floor and the roof all the same uniform grey. The only light comes from a tiny window in the door sealed by bars, casting bright slivers into my barren cell. I hear keys clanging together and the door opens, drenching me with light.

“Come with me,” the guard says as he grabs me and we head toward the door. I do not fight it. I know there are consequences for actions. He leads me to another dark room and I sit down. A man sits opposite to me.

“We know you’re the leader of the rebels. You’re finished. You think you deserve to live after a stunt like that? Demolishing the parliaments? You’re a worthless terrorist. You have been condemned to the death penalty and you will face a firing squad tomorrow afternoon.” Before I could even reply, I was back in the cell, surrounded by the concrete but nourished by what little light struggled to appear through the window. I didn’t need to say anything anyway. I got off lucky. Those that talk must talk for days, until the council men get whatever information they need. I won’t have to be tortured like many others. I will go peacefully and happily tomorrow, and my death will be the biggest statement I make. My death will be different. The news will sweep the nation and change will come.

However, sleep did not come easily last night. Death is a scarier thing to face than I ever imagined it would be. The waiting is truly unbearable. I desperately searched my cell for something, anything that could possibly end my life. But that would not be right. What would that prove? We would lose our fight undoubtedly.

A guard opens the door and wrenches me up from my seat, leading me down a hallway and outside into the warmth and life giving light of the sun. He leads me to a courtyard surrounded by stone walls. They are bare and dull, except for a small weed topped with a yellow bloom, bending in the breeze right ahead of me. I hear noise outside; it is the slight murmuring of people in the back ground. The noise grows louder as the guard leads me to the wall. I hear the voice of my friend, his voice choked with anguish, but still his impassioned speech carries over the whole crowd. I hear shouting and displeasure as masses of people from all around the city join to protest my death.

As far as I know, I’ve killed the once almighty leader of this country. When I “disappeared” months ago, the government claimed I was “kidnapped” by the terrorists, another excuse to levy a terrible curfew on the people, make our homes prisons, and add more and more guards on the street.

Yet, in reality, I left my father’s mansion of my own free will. I cut my gleaming tresses, and stopped painting my face. It’s amazing how little attention I got as small man, slight featured compared to when I was a women of high society. I abandoned my position and its high social status to join the movement that I know is right. I am their leader now, and they will take my idea and free themselves. The guard ties me up against this wall. I am completely restrained but I won’t fight it. I see the gun, its right in front of me. I’m looking straight into the barrel and my chest heaves--- but, suddenly--- something catches my eye. It’s the weed, its yellow petals shifting in the breeze, waving me goodbye. My breathing slows at the sight; I can hear the despairing yet passionate voice, readying the crowd for the secret that will save us all. For I am the head councilor’s daughter…once his prize and now his downfall. Among the crowd, ready to be bellowed from the rooftops and blared from the megaphones, my fellow protesters disperse themselves amongst the city, ready to reveal the fatal truth. With the bullet’s crack, I know all will be well. I can see the weed breaking through the once formidable gray wall. The yelling of the guard brings me back into reality. “Ready…aim…fire.”

The weed has been pulled, but the seeds have been spread.