

The Crossroads of Change

It was time for a change.

Was that not the reason why Lena was here in the first place? She pulled anxiously on the corner of the thin scarf in a desperate attempt to shield her face from the harsh winter wind. Lena, though she would always deny it when her peers asked, was terrified. She had been terrified when she first joined the rebellion and that same crippling fear refused to leave even as she sat on the rooftop, prepared for what she hoped would be the last stand. Originally, Lena wanted to serve the rebel forces as a medic or cook, but she was granted what was arguably one of the most important roles instead.

Lena was twelve when she had realized the severity of her situation. The dictators were tearing her nation apart. She couldn't even remember the last time she had a hearty meal, let alone taken a bath or had clean clothes. Every day, dozens of people were dying in the streets. No one -man, woman, or child- was spared from the crippling horrors of life under these overlords. It was hard to believe that Lena had the power to change all of this in a matter of seconds.

And it all relied on a cold metal box digging into her chest.

Lena could feel her heart pounding against her rib cage. What if her partner had been captured, or even worse, failed in his mission? Lena felt selfish for valuing the mission above the life of her comrade, but everyone knew the risks that would come with joining the fight against such a powerful empire. Besides, if her partner had failed, what good could she do to help him when she was so far away? Lena shook her head, desperate to push the negative thoughts out of her mind and instead focus on the impending task at hand.

A bright light flashed in the corner of her eye and Lena's head snapped in its direction.

One flash, two flashes, three flashes, She counted. *It's time.* Shakily, she pulled the rectangular remote from her pocket. Lena clung to the metallic rectangular device with a vice-like grip. The red button in the centre of the silver brick seemed to haunt her. The setting of the sun cast an ominous glare against the red plastic.

Lena pushed an offending lock of hair out of her eyes and took one last glance at the colossal tower. Inside, the leaders of her corrupt government would be sitting down to another conference about how to further improve their own lives while completely ignoring the devastation of the country's citizens. She could see them now; they would be dressed in their fine clothes, eating more than enough food to feed Lena's entire village for years, and downing wine by the barrel.

Lena scoffed.

She hoped they'd *choke* on it.

Yet, even if she did do it, what would happen next? There was no way to guarantee that a new dictator-run government wouldn't simply pick up where the old government left off. Besides, those selfish monsters still had loved ones. They were sons, fathers, brothers, and, most importantly, they were human. Even though they were involved in the destruction, did they really deserve the cruel fate the rebellion had outlined for them? Was this plan nothing more than pointless violence?

The button felt cool to her touch and she gingerly ran a finger along the surface.

Lena despised, no, hated, the nation's leaders; she really did. Yet, Lena was nothing more than the daughter of a factory worker and a seamstress. She didn't descend from anything special. What could she possibly know about politics?

Lena wondered what her parents would say if they could see her holding the lives of so many people in the palm of her hands. She could picture their disapproving looks. Her hands began to shake, her grasp on the control loosening.

But then she remembered the carnage left in the wake of the corruption. She remembered being frozen as the soldier shot her father. She remembered the morning her mother didn't wake up. She remembered wanting revenge.

Lena furrowed her eyebrows in discontent.

She *still* wanted revenge.

She had made up her mind.

Lena took a deep breath, squeezed her eyes shut, and applied pressure to the red sphere.

And the building exploded in flames.