

## The Revolutionary

It was on this cool, summer morning that a certain, middle-aged man pondered quietly to himself. After all, to be perched up in the skies for so long provided him with ample time to do so. The rooftop of what used to be his old apartment complex left the man with almost a bird's eye view of the city he'd spent his life growing up in. Regardless, he wasn't keen on letting himself be distracted by the sights for too long. He returned to this place for a reason.

It was strange to even think about how quickly things had spiralled to this point. Having worked most of his life at a steel mill, the man contented himself feeling as though he earned just enough to keep his family fed and more. While not the most exciting of professions, it was something he felt fine enough about doing. However, there came that point where the usual orders for structural beams and plates started to get replaced with shell casings and chassis for armored vehicles.

He didn't complain about his work though. It was a simple trade he was comfortable enough with practicing. Besides, turbulent times had befallen his country, and every able-bodied citizen was expected to serve in their own way. The grizzled worker considered himself fortunate enough already that his black lungs disqualified him from fighting on the frontline.

Though, it was only a matter of time before the frontline came to him anyhow.

Then came the rain. Day after day of shells, pounded from the heavy guns brought forth by the enemy. With them came the bombs, dropped by planes whose dots were nigh indistinguishable amidst the dazzling lights of a sky all but set ablaze with gunfire. Used to be that on a lucky day, if a faulty power sizzled out or the coal for the furnaces wasn't delivered on time, it'd mean that the workers got to have a day off. Much to the chagrin of their peers.

For all the times the factory floor got swept over by fire and shrapnel, they never got such a break.

He couldn't complain about his work though. It was a matter of life and death, not to mention he could get people hurt. The factory had to be kept running, the tanks had to keep rolling out into the warzone. Except, this was the warzone. None of them were used to the shelling. None of them were used to seeing coworkers they'd spend years working with being left strewn about the factory floor in pieces.

It's for the war. It's for the country. It's for victory.

At least, that's the rhetoric he had drilled into his head from whatever broadcasting towers still happened to work in this city. Sometimes it felt like a higher priority was placed on keeping those running than the water lines. Better that a man die with loyalty to the party than live another day and have the time to think. Maybe even doubt.

Well, everyone had plenty of time to do so after they managed to finish the war. In this worker's case, it was just after he learned that the family he worked so tirelessly to protect happened to have died a little over a year ago from a prolonged siege that left his wife and son trapped within their homes. Eventually, they starved, and this apparent footnote in the correspondence of the military apparatus never reached him until just recently ago.

So he thought to himself. What was it all really for? This war of eradication that taxed the common man of his livelihood, his loved ones, everything that they held dear? The ruling party would argue that it was a necessity. How everyone had a part to play in the defense of the homeland. The figureheads at the helm of it all are praised for their guidance throughout what was the most bloody chapter of the nation's history yet. The people are expected to lavish them, and outright attribute the credit of their victory to the party name. These were the memories that filled the steel worker's mind, as he loaded the final round into his scoped rifle and cranked back the bolt to chamber it in.

Respectfully, he disagreed.

Hence why he planned to go back home on this day. The day he knew that an official parade was to be scheduled for one of the cabinet members of the committee, to congratulate the role they had to play in maintaining the so-called spirits of the people throughout the events of the war. The head of the propaganda department.

It wouldn't be long now, but in the meantime he took pleasure in the little things. Like how he got to scrape up just enough to afford a good pack of cigs to go through as he lounged about on that empty rooftop. It felt nice, for a change. To spend what he worked for not on something he needed to live, but something to enjoy. There's just that one part of him that wishes he could have gotten to enjoy it a day longer, maybe a little more than that. Still, this had to take precedence, above all else. He wouldn't get to have this chance again.

When the clock tower bell rings from the needle reaching the twelfth hour, it'll be at that moment that the commissar will take to the stage. It'd be hard to mistake him given he was perhaps the only fattened man in the entire plaza, though all the medals on his coat and the bodyguards help too. They aren't the only ones who'll be part of his security detail though, no. The tired worker reckons that a number of sharpshooters would no doubt be posted across various vantage points in town, and that the building he sat upon would be one of the prime targets for them to monitor during the grand event. At most, he'll have about a couple seconds at most to pull off a shot before being spotted.

Provided one were to have no intention of getting away afterwards, it's a feasible enough scenario.

Things have felt very dark for him, for a long time. But on this day, the labourer steeled himself with the knowledge that he was not alone in the way he felt. He had no way to truly know this, but he knew. Now that the needle struck the twelfth hour and the ringing of the bells could be felt from the rooftop he sat on, he would prove it. He would trade his empty life as a final sacrifice to serve as the spark for something so much greater.

A government that only ever speaks on behalf of its people is one that is afraid of what their people have to say. Now, the steel worker speaks. Not with words, but with the round of his rifle.

One gunshot echoes across the city centre.