**The Price of Utopia**

**By Austin Baker**

The door blows open. Two people wearing the ragged semblance of a uniform favored by the resistance run into the room, guns raised. I look up from my book and take off my glasses. “I have been expecting you,” I say, the one on the left looks like she is about to shout something at me. I continue, cutting her off before she does, “Here we are in this world I have created. Everything is kept orderly. The people do their jobs. We have all that we need. It is perfection.”

The man on the right takes a step forward, “this isn’t perfection, it's tyranny, oppression.”

I rub my eyes, I am so tired. I have devoted my life to the betterment of humanity. They are short sighted fools, “the world goes round. People do not fight one another... your group excluded,” A hint of accusation colors my voice, “because of me, there is no war, or conflict other than the efforts of determined rabble rousers. People who fight for regression to the dark times that came before are... given an education in the horrors of the past. People are freed from the tyranny and fear that comes from the ability to make the wrong decision. Yet there are those who persist.” I look pointedly at the two figures.

A breath sighs from my lungs, “Before, people starved. They fought over the scraps of a society that didn't care. Now people have food, it is produced and distributed with perfect efficiency. No one's efforts are wasted, people have time to work and live a fulfilling life. This world is safe.”

“This world is enslaved,” the soldier on the left says.

I chuckle, “Do you know what is most surprising to me.” The man on the right looks like he is about to say something. I put up my hand in a gesture for silence. His mouth snaps shut. Even with my executioners, I have authority. “The most surprising thing about people is their ability to ignore the future. Right now, we work to make tomorrow even better…. People are freed from fear and poverty, in this world all are the same.”

The man cuts me off, “Not you”

“Do you want my job, do you want control,” I pause for a moment to reconsider, “No, he does,” I say tapping my ear. Both resistance fighters reach up to touch the communication devices nestled in their own ears. I continue, “this is my lives work, a true utopia, why can't anyone else see it? Why don't you see it? Why do you fight it?”

“We fight for freedom,” they both say. I recognize the words of a man I once knew, an old friend, someone with the same purpose, but altogether too much faith in people. maybe he was right, I am so very tired. My purpose has chewed me up. There is now so little left of me and it is spread so thin....

“I know why you're here,” I say, “even if you don't”

The woman raises her weapon, “You are under arrest….” She cocks her head as if listening to something.

“He knows, I am dangerous…. Do it.”

In the shattered doorway, there is a heated discussion of which I can only see half.

I let out a long sigh, soon I will be able to rest, “Do it.”

The two killers now bear stony cold expressions. A muzzle flashes.