The Thorn and The Rose

“No, please no, I beg of you, don’t leave me, please” said the man, drowning in tears, soaked in blood as he held his dying wife in his hands.

“why? Why? Why?” he continued to yell as he watched the light slowly fade away from her eyes.

John Stuart, was not a man anyone would have called special in any way, he was not the smartest or even the funniest amongst his friends, but one thing no one could accuse him of, was him being suicidal, but every man has a breaking point.

As he stood there watching his wife die, his eyes began to turn red. Red as the thick pool of blood that now surrounded him, as red as the roses she used to grow in their backyard.

John thought about how she used to look every morning when he woke up and saw her through the bedroom window tending to her roses. She’d always wear overalls and scarf over her head, John used to joke that she looked like a wife from the 30s. How he wished to see that sight again.

There is always a moment that defines us. Are we the ones who stay oblivious to the corruption in the world around us, or are we the ones forgotten, fighting for the world from the shadows. Do we crumble under pressure, or do grow stronger. That moment for John was this day.

As his wife took her final breath, John got up slowly. He began to walk away. John looked around and saw nothing but empty roads and abandoned buldings on all directions, . Not a single living soul. At least not anymore.

He didn’t know what to do, but he knew, he didn’t want to live in a world, where his wife was no longer welcome. As John began to walk through the puddle of blood, he heard a very distinctive crack. He had just stepped on a shard of glass. John slowly bent over a picked it up. Grabbed to broken shard by its edges as his hands began to bleed, closed his eyes, and turned around to see the dead corpse that was once his beloved, a final time. He turned the shard around held it close to his chest, with a sharp edge pointing directly towards him. He was certain this was the only move he had left. At this moment he did not fear dying, but rather feared living through it. What if stabbing himself doesn’t kill him, how could one stab their heart, when its lying on the flood beside them dead? He thought. Just as John began to stab himself, he heard a loud shrieking cry from a few meters away. He quickly ran to investigate.

He followed the cry to narrow alleyway wedged in-between two brick buildings. He looked down to the floor to find a cut rose guarding the path. The stem of the rose was cut diagonally with small cuts made every inch; it reminded him of what his wife used to say to him. Every morning as John made breakfast his wife would walk inside with a basket full of roses and begin to cut them diagonally, and then she would proceed to measure the stem of the rose, make small cuts ever inch just as the rose in front of him. John remembered getting frustrated by this compulsion of hers. Regretting how annoyed he used to get. He began to wonder, perhaps if he was a better husband, then maybe she would have never ran away, and perhaps, she wouldn’t be dead today.

John continued to walk inside the alleyway, where the echoes of the cry made it impossible to locate. John looked around almost aimlessly until he stopped to find a small piece of cookie on the floor next to a pile of garbage bags. Every time Joh got upset or frustrated, his wife would bake him cookies. They were his favorites thing to eat, “I never believed in heaven, until I tried one of these,” he would say each time she made them.

He grabbed the cookie on the ground, he knew it was dirty perhaps even filthy, but he had a hard time tossing it away. He placed the cookie inside his pockets and began to search the pile of garbage bags it was near. There he found a wicker basket covered to the brim with towels, he slowly picked it up to find a baby buried underneath those towels, crying.

John was lost and confused to find a child amidst piles of garbage, but more confused by the letter that was placed beside the child’s head. He picked up the letter and began to read it, not much was written on it except the words ‘John – meet our daughter – Julia’.

John knew that at this moment, he could not allow himself to crumble, but he had to grow stronger, tougher to protect his newborn child, for his last memory of Julia, the only woman he ever loved.

He took the baby back with him to his car, placed her in passengers seat of his car, a blue Volvo, and began to drive back home. As John drove towards his house, he heard the sound of loud sirens encompassing the area. He grew cautious and continued to drive slowly past his house, a somewhat large house, yellow walls, a white picket fence and a decaying front yard that has clearly gone unattended for eight months. As he got close to his house, he noticed the front door has been knocked down and yard had been ripped into. He left the baby in the car, kept it running, and windows down. He ran inside and found most of his destroyed, the small table near the front door was cut in half, and the telephone was broken in two. John assumed it was robbers although curiously enough nothing appeared to be missing, except a recent picture of him and Julia, which they took during their vacation to the countryside about a week before she ran away.

John looked around the house some more too make certain the robbers were not still there, and went outside to grab his baby girl. Just as he took his first step outside the house, he heard people talking from behind, he quickly crawled around to the back of his house where he saw two people, one a man wearing a police uniform and another, a women in a black suit talking.

“She’s not here” said the man

“Just got a report, she’s dead, eliminated”

“What?”

“Julia Stuart is no longer a threat”

“And the child?”

“Also dead”

“What about her husband”

“He doesn’t even know who she was; I don’t think we have to worry about him”

John could not believe his ears, he quickly ran back inside his house, cleaned himself up, and changed his shirt, and ran outside to his car.

He did not stop to think or question, he had heard enough, the government was the reason for his whole life crumbling to the ground. It was time they paid for what they had done. Some thorns need to be destroyed.

That my dear friends is how the rebellion became what it is today. As for the girl. Well you all have met her before; in fact there isn’t a man women or child that doesn’t know who she is. Commander Rose, the leader and chief of the united world rebellion.