

Chapter 5

A dream come true

"Get up idiot! Or want to die here in this shit?!" A comrade shouted at Philes, who has witnessed such a thing, God forbids anyone may ever see, even in their worst nightmare.

He then started to realize, realized that he is now all alone. He wanted to cry, but the shock was too much. He got up, trembling, seeing the sight of his dear friend, with whom he studied in childhood, played together in the playground. The always smiling face was now that of a corpse, the eyes, especially, having no light in them.

Philes was a dead man walking, hollow from inside. None of his sense could even comprehend the disaster he faced.

The dull eyes then hovered over the battlefield. All he could see, all he could feel, is the dead. Who is the enemy, who is the friend, who is unknown, he couldn't distinguish. Though their uniform were different, the fate and their expression were the same. Some unfortunate didn't even have faces for expressions.

Philes picked up his rifle, and ran towards the enemy trenches, with, well, not eyes on his face, but pure, raw anger, and the bloodthirsty desire for revenge. He raised his gun, fired one shot towards the Germans' ammo thrash hold. It was followed by a huge explosion.

One bullet hit him in the shoulder, he still moved on. He grabbed the grenade from his waist, and took out the pin, throwing it with his full force.

"BOOM".

The enemy's machine gun was in rubble.

Philes collapsed, with blood pouring out of his shoulder, adding to the redness of the soil.

"Philes...Philes...wake up... PHILES!" a faint sound was heard by Philes in his unconsciousness. He slowly opened his eyes, only to see his other friend above him, with bandages and stitches, though incomplete.

He sat down, though struggling to maintain his posture. Around him were Allied reinforcements, nurses, doctors and other wounded, along... with the fallen.

"We survived, Philes, we did it" his friend exclaimed.

Now there was some space for relief. Philes couldn't hold now. He hugged his friend tightly, crying, with tears from his eyes, blood from his body, and regret from his mind.

"He- died.... Saving me! WHY!" he cried.

His friend patted on his back, before guiding him to the doctors.

He was promoted on field for his “bravery”.

“Honey... are you all right?” Mrs Philes asked, with concern.

Mr Philes came out of his nightmare, breathing heavily, with sweat all over his face.

“Ye-Oh. Sorry, I was just... thinking.” Mr Philes said, with the eyes of guilt.

He stood up, and went to bed, early, *TOO EARLY*.

He was looking at the ceiling, imagining what he could’ve done in that situation. He looked down, staring into nothingness. The nothingness reminded of his weakness, and vulnerability from that time. How he couldn’t help anyone, how he never had potential. He thought in his conflicting mind-

“Somebody else was to be taken, someone WITH potential, someone who wasn’t a coward like me, Someone...” He whispered to the walls.

It was now night time, but not for Mr Philes, or as it seemed. His eyes were still seeing the ceiling, as it was showing his past.

Then, out of nowhere, Emma’s situation came into his mind. He remembered her ambitious eyes when he asked her about her goal, the eyes, which was filled with nothing but hope, a hope which could change her eyes. He recalled her childhood, how she used to play with nothing but a stick as her gun, marching, crawling, running like a cute little soldier.

One moment particularly came flashing, when she came with his medal and photo of him and his comrades. The medal, which had a disturbing history behind, and the photo, with Mr Philes’s smiling face as an accepted soldier. He remembered her daughter’s attention and focus on that picture, her eyes thrilled with the uniform, and the desire to wear them was evident on Emma’s cute face.

That night, he made a decision.

The morning was pleasing. The hint of sunlight light up the living room. Emma came out, rubbing her eyes as she just woke up. Her eyes having the marks of tears, as it was obvious.

“Good morning angel!” Mrs Philes greeted the now-waken up Emma.

She went in the washroom, without greeting back, brushed her teeth, bathed, and then went in her room for changing clothes to wear uniform for school.

She couldn't forget what she heard yesterday. Her goal, her ambition, her desire, all in the poured out and dried up with her tears. Her face was dull, not by her skin though.

She sat on the dining table, waiting for her breakfast, though she didn't wish to eat.

"Oh Emma, take this, and give to Mr Jene as soon as you reach school" Mr Philes, out of thin atmosphere, told Emma, while giving her an envelope. Emma took it, with no interest to even ask what it is. She kept it in her bag, and just stood up and left for school, without even having her breakfast.

She reached her destination, though feeling more like a burden today.

She quietly enters her class, sits on her seat, and just stared out of the window, wondering about her life now.

"Hey Emma, morning!" Ryan greeted Emma, along with Rockis, which somehow knew what had happened yesterday.

"So, when are you joining the ar-" Rockis stopped Ryan, placing his hand on his shoulder. His face, detailed everything.

"Oh..." Ryan exclaimed, clenching his fist, and leaving Emma alone, as he knows giving her some lonely time would help her heal fast.

"Good morning students. How's everyone?" Mr Jene came in the class, adjusting his shirt and putting his folder down.

Emma took the envelope out, with empty eyes, and handed it to Mr Jene.

Mr Jene read the letter inside it. As he read it, his eyes widened.

"Bravo! Thanks to the Gods above! I knew it!" Mr Jene exclaimed happily, then laughing with relief

"What happened sir?" Emma asked, surprised Mr Jene laughing suddenly.

"You don't know Emma? Here, read it, it's from your father." Mr Jene handed the letter to Emma.

August 15, 1936

To the Principal of Cedar Grove School,

I, **Jonathan Philes**, father of **Emma Louise Philes**, give my full consent for her enlistment in the United States Army recruitment program. Though under age, Emma has my permission to proceed, and I request the school provide any records needed to support her application.

Emma has long shown strength, discipline, and devotion to duty. As her father, I trust she will serve her country with honour.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Philes

Emma read it. She can't believe it. Her dull, empty eyes light up again. Her withered expression seemed like to regain energy and beauty from reading the letter. The dead bird of her dream, started opening its wings.

"Don't you cry here; it will make the floor wet" Mr Jene jokingly said.

Rockis and Ryan saw her face. She was holding her tears of happiness, clenching on the letter. Pearl like tears still tripping down. Ryan and Rockis, gave a sigh of relief and happiness.

"I will go submit it to the management, till then, enjoy!" Mr Jene, taking the paper, and leaving the class.

The students were confused, many asking Ryan and Rockis. Rockis replied-

A bird has located her nest, now she only has to go there.

Ryan placed his hand on her shoulder, a hand congratulating of comfort and a promise to stay by her side, no matter what.

"Come one Emma, you have to suffer 2 years in school too." Rockis said.

She remained cheered up for the whole day, with the eyes of the eagle preying on her target, but here, it was a dream, which she spotted years ago. But a thought was still lingering in her mind.

The final bell of the school rang. Students started leaving, as so did Emma.

She reached home, and went directly to her mother.

"Mom, am I making father sad? Did he not say he didn't want me in the army?" Emma asked her mother.

"Oh sweetie. Your father wanted you to be an soldier. But you see, sometimes past experience become a nightmare instead of memories. Your father had the same situation. He was just concerned about you, as he has experienced something he wants that you don't see" Mrs. Philes replied, with a beautiful, convincing, and calm voice.

She hugged Emma. "Now, it's all on you. Remember, ***the more you are scared of your fear, that fear will scare you more.***"

Emma nodded her head, pledging to enrol in the army, and make not only her parents, but the whole nation proud. Telling the stereotypical world, that women can be AND WILL BE SOLDIERS.

But many "dark figures" waited for her in the journey. Some guiding her, some discouraging her, and some...some just waiting for her. She will be now start writing her fate, along with some "one" else.