

The moan of the rain against my pained ears were the only thing that gave me solace as the ground came alive at my feet. Had it not been for this pain, my mind wouldn't be focused on what we were here to do. I was standing on Hell. We all were.

Thump. Thump. Thump.

The ground throbbed with each step, but I was unsure whether or not it was my nerves that made it feel this way. The noise was faint, but we could feel its heavy presence looming over us. It came in threes, it always did. It was a sign of the enemy baring his vicious fangs at us, clenching his fist and pounding his chest, awaiting anyone who would ever think about taking him on. The fear could be licked off of our icy lips. It was a given what we were going to do. The jitters of our teeth fought with the pitter patter of the rain, but were barely audible against the inertia of Mother Nature.

An array of trees towered before us throughout the march, only adding to my crippling sense of dread. I felt a bit of satisfaction crushing the wet grass beneath my feet. The ground underneath us was muddy and took tremendous effort to not slip with each step, but somehow we still managed to look organized. We formed line after line, side by side clad entirely of silver, in an almost picturesque scene as the night stars shone above us, guiding our way to the path of freedom. There was no need to worry. The victors had been decided from the start. The war was almost over. I repeated these thoughts again and again in my head, but still a fire burned deep in my stomach, and a feeling of pure adrenaline and anxiety was rushing through my veins. I was sweltering under my armor despite the chill of the rain.

It was impossible not to trip through the thickness of the underbrush. The roots of the trees were trying to entangle me, trying to ensnare me and make me fall face first into the shit of the mud. I decided to make a game with them. I wouldn't let the roots win, I wouldn't give them the satisfaction of knowing that they managed to humiliate another one of their innocent victims. People were tripping left and right against that trees' domain, but I wasn't. It was the only thing keeping me sane, really, playing this little game with them. I started to count the steps I took. One. Two. Three. Four....

I lost count when I heard the eruption of laughter, and looked up to see heads turning towards me.

"Nice tap dancing, Corporal Roger." One of the captains sneered. Shit. I was already screwing things up and we haven't even gotten to the battle yet. However, the General's glare towards the soldiers made the laughter die down as quickly as it came. A chill ran down my spine as I felt his eye target me. Nobody knew who the General was. He was someone sent directly from the higher ups and we were with him constantly, but he was incredibly private. In fact, none of my comrades had ever even seen him on the battlefield, yet from one look in his eye you could tell that this man had seen countless amounts of bloodshed. His expression was always incredibly passive, he had that a blank stare whenever he barked out orders, like he was an obedient bitch

that was there to voice the commands of his higher ups. According to the rumors, he could either be the best or worst man in the world. It really depended on whether or not you were on his side.

The underbrush cleared away as we walked, and the roots slowly dispersed as we found ourselves at a serene, quiet brook. A small incline overlooked that brook, and the soft earth was tucked in by that warm comforter of fresh green grass. It was isolated from the rest of the forest, almost suspiciously so, as it was surrounded by thick bushes and spiky thorns. It was like our own piece of Eden, with the guardian angels protecting us as we blazed our path to freedom.

“Take rest for a while.” The General ordered, sensing the atmosphere. “We’re gonna need it.”