

Our Last Memory

Sitting at the edge of the roof, overlooking the sector in which we live, my best friend and I watched as the evening shift returned from the wall. As the sun began to set, magic hour brought the colors of the neighborhood to life, yet the gunshots kept the children locked in their rooms. Gangs shouted at each other from afar, but no one questioned their intentions.

No one chose to live here; no one can escape once their lives brought them here. My best friend, living through the loss of a mother and the murder of his father, brought me a friendship built of strength, benevolence, and persistency.

“I wonder,” questioned Matt, “what would the world be like after the wall’s completed?” He believes that his destiny is completing the wall. Jobs here were sparse, but everyone looks up to the wall. This wall protects us from the deadlands, yet the wall keeps us from escaping ourselves.

I thought for a second. *How would the world accept being trapped in a city?* “I think we’d still be the same.”

Confused, Matt shifted to face me. “What do you mean? We’d definitely become something different. It’s just-,” he stopped short of his sentence.

“Are you worried that our home will disappear?”

We both look down as the lights turn on and people start crowding the streets. Unlike other sectors, we live during the night, we party throughout the night, and we bring life to this bleak society. Watching the kids pass the ball around, mothers tried controlling them from going too far. Dogs barked at each other but licked passerbys’ as they commuted to the local club. We love the world we live in, but it could be better. Our lives can always be better, but our backgrounds can’t carry us through the pearly gates of the inner city.

“Our homes won’t disappear,” I reassured him.

“But what if the police come back. They already see me as a suspect,” he choked out the last few words while tears streamed down his eyes. Watching the sun set and the stars rise, the world feels cold and dark. Our lives will never be the same.

I looked up at the sky. “We can’t tell them the truth. They won’t believe us.”

“Why? Why can’t they understand it was him.” Matt covered his face with his hands.

“Why do they want me dead?”

I don’t know. I want to be here for him. I want to hug him, reassure him that our lives will get better. These colors of the night will once again shine brightly against our eyes, but it’ll only be a matter of time before they find us on this roof. It’ll only be a matter of time before our worlds pulverize.

“I think this is the end for me.”

Scared, I grabbed his arm. “What do you mean?”

Matt’s mouth quivers as we both stare at each other. “I’m sorry,” he spoke softly. “I tried. I tried to balance things out, but no matter what, I’m always oppressed. You’re the only one who stayed by my side, and,” he looks down, “I’d like to say thank you.” Tears started streaming down my cheeks. “Thank you for not giving up on me.”

My grip loosened around his arm, and I watched him fall. Graceful and calm, his face seems serene against the wind, his arms flailing until he was nevermore. Dogs surrounded his body, yet not a single human soul cared about the bleeding body. My mouth held agape, catching the tears I no longer feel. My eyes fixated on him, wanting to forget this image. Our last talk, our last moments together, shared to the brink of death.

I’ll never forget you.