

The Last Word

by Martin Bourne

He rubbed hard at the scar across his forehead, creasing his brow and creasing his mind. That scar ran through him like a ring in a tree. It was as if he had always had it. He let out an involuntary growl.

“Dimitri, stop that. Nothing can be done, we must go,” said his wife Melina.

Dimitri rose from his chair and started to pace the room.

“No, no, we must fight, I must fight. I will not run like a frightened dog before my former comrades.”

“But I am frightened. I am the dog who wishes to escape to safety. It is foolish to stay and defend our home, our land and die. What purpose will it serve for us to be shot or blown up by these murderous invaders. What will have been gained, I ask you?”

“That we did it, that is what will be gained. Our pride in standing up to the aggressor. What is the alternative. They will simply walk in unhindered. Taking our homes, our property, murdering those that stand in their way, or who have spoken out. That cannot be right. I must resist them, you must see.”

“But you are an old man now, what can you do?”

“I served, don’t forget that. I served alongside the Russians in Afghanistan. I didn’t want to, but I was in the army, I had no choice. This scar shows the sacrifice I made, and for what. To invade a country because we, or at least the Russians did not like the way they were running things. We had no place being there, and they fought, those Afghans. They defended their homeland without exception and eventually they succeeded. What do I say now, now that I am in the same situation as those Afghans. I know what I say, I say I must fight, even if my efforts amount to as little as a wasp sting in their side.”

“And what will your wasp sting amount to when a missile lands on your head, what then?”

“My spirit will rise up and continue the fight, and the spirits of all the fallen will bind together in an unstoppable force to repel the enemy. Go, go with our children and grandchildren, go to safety and return when we have been victorious. I will service my old army weapons. Go, that is my last word on the subject.”

“No Dimitri, I will stay and fight with you, my husband. That is my last word.”