

## Abandoned

Rain hammered relentlessly at the soft turf around my tired aching body. Large murky droplets crashed onto my cut bloodied nose and stung the bleeding wounds. A dull granite sky enveloped the sky around me and menacing grey clouds gazed deep into my soul as I lay there in the mud. Three bolts of lightning zigzagged across the gloomy sky, illuminating the angry clouds with a purple tinge like the smoke brewing from a cauldron.

I stood up clumsily and wobbled on my legs in the sticky mud. It clung to me like glue; I tried to shake it off my legs by swinging it back and forth – useless. I stared forwards, left, backwards, right. There wasn't a blade of grass in sight. The pounding of boots had crushed the meadows and daisies deep beneath the surface. All that remained was the dark earthy squelching thick mud underneath. Leftover lead bullets were scattered around me reflecting the small shiny glimmers of hope that I had left. However, in the distance, a sea of red was growing. I trotted over to it. It wasn't blood; it was flowers. A new kind of flower. I hadn't seen this one before.

The red leaves of these flowers reflected in my dark black eyes; four blood red crimson leaves surrounding a black centre. I turned my head to get a clearer look. The rain dropping from them was like blood from a wounded soldier dripping onto the floor. A strong gust of wind slapped me across my long face and sent my mangled mane flapping – I hadn't had it combed since the war began. My partner would always help with that. I leant back in the sadness of the memory and screamed into the vast open air emptying my lungs.

Private Hughes and I had trained together. He was the first person I saw when I got off the lorry all those years ago. We had been through everything together. We rode into this bloody battle together at a brisk steady pace, taking down our foes with one flash of our blade. We were incredible. Like seasoned veterans, we were in control. Until, just as we were turning around to retreat, a loud explosion erupted beside us. Someone else had stepped on a landmine, the explosion forcing us apart, the ringing of the bomb grabbing tautly at my temples, piercing my ears and penetrating my mind and soul as I slowly passed out... Waking up clumsily on wobbly legs is all I can remember; that was five minutes ago.

BOOM!

The same noise from a nearby landmine echoed across the fields and sent a bolt of electricity from my brain to my hind legs. Before I knew it, I was running in the opposite direction. The mud curdled under my hooves and spat up after me like a boiling broth. Sprinting, I pushed my head through some tall heavy reeds and felt the edges cutting at my ears until I burst through on to a grain-like floor. Sand. Still running, I stopped as my feet splashed through the shallow ocean. Above me, huge explosions filled the sky like death. I looked down and looked my reflection.

Behind my long face and large teeth, under my mane and black eyes, above my hooves and four legs, was a mount with no rider. An animal without a purpose...