



*'The heat is unbearable, and my uniform sticks to my skin, damp with sweat and dirt. Every step I take, dust rises and fills my mouth, making it dry and bitter. My boots feel heavier with each mile, as if the weight of this war is pressing down on me. The air smells of smoke, gunpowder, and blood. I know that smell too well now. It stays on my clothes, on my skin, even in my dreams. The battle is behind us, but in my head, I can still hear the gunfire, the shouting, the screams. It never really goes away.*

*I glance at the men walking beside me. Their faces are covered in dirt, their eyes are hollow from exhaustion, but they keep moving. So do I. We don't talk much. There's nothing to say. A small nod, a quick look—that's all we need. It means, 'I'm still here. You're still here.' And that's enough for now.*

*The war has taken so much from us. Friends we laughed with yesterday are gone today. I still see their faces when I close my eyes. Some had pictures of their wives, their children, tucked into their pockets. Now those pictures are left behind, just like them. Towns are destroyed, homes turned to rubble. It feels like the world is falling apart. And yet, we keep marching. Not because we want to, but because we have to. For each other. For the ones who didn't make it. For the people waiting for us back home, praying we will return. For the hope—no matter how small—that one day, this will all end.*

*So I grip my rifle tight, holding onto it like it's the only thing keeping me steady. My body aches, my heart is heavy, but I am still here. And as long as I am, I will keep walking. I will keep fighting. Because that's all I can do."*

*Elisabeth G*