

I woke to someone banging on the door. I got up quickly and ran to my dad's room. I whispered, "The feds are after me!"

"Go through the tunnel to the PUB," he whispered.

"But..." I started.

"Go!" he cut me off.

I ran for the basement. When I got to the basement, the front door was busted down just as I closed the basement door. I couldn't move lest they heard me. I heard Dad arguing with the men.

"He is not here!" Dad said.

"Check up stairs! That is where he will be!" the leader cried.

"Run, Beamon," my dad yelled.

After they went up, I ran down stairs.

"What was that?" one of the men asked.

"He is downstairs!" the leader yelled.

But I had already gone downstairs and through the hidden entrance into the tunnel. I heard the men run downstairs but I knew they would never find the entrance. I walked down the tunnel nervously. My older brother walked this tunnel.

My name is Bob Bemon Ovanesyan. My brother's name was Moben Jorge Ovanesyan. Mom's been dead for twelve years, but Dad still gets teary over it. Mom killed herself from depression when my brother went to the PUB. My brother didn't know 'till New Years. He had been coming up to celebrate having completed one year of the six that the government keeps them for and that really put a damper on the party. That year was the last we saw him though he left us notes every year. He sends us stuff in the mail now, since he is out in the world. I always get up early the day the package usually comes.

I began to see a light in the distance. I broke into a jog and then a run. As I dashed for the light I began to feel uneasy about what I would find.

'Course I slipped and fell when I stopped at the light. just switched to present tense Someone in the laughed but stopped as I stood up. We looked at

each other for a while. Finally one of them stepped up and asked, "What is your name?"

I replied saying, "Bob Bemon Ovanesyan, but my friends call me B-man."

There was a long pause before he asked what was obviously on everyone else's mind, "How is it out in the world?"

"They still have the mines," I replied.

"So no rebellion?" someone said in a depressed way.

"Yeah," I agreed.

"Come on, guys, we just got a new recruit in our fight against the government and information about the stress level. Come on, let's hear about the stress level. How long was the longest you were kept from the mines?" said the one who had stepped up first.

"Six days, and it happens every month now too," I answered.

"See!" he said. "Now Let's get him a bed."

I went to sleep in a relatively new bed that had been donated by a 6th year boy who had nowhere to put it now that he was moving out soon. I found out it is not unlikely for people to donate stuff from their parents that they could not keep. It is also not unlikely for people to get lice, I found out. People were pestering me for information as a 2nd year boy showed me around and told me what I was going to do. He tried to get rid of them but they kept coming back.

He showed me the kitchen, mess hall, showers, dormitory, rec. room, garden, and the well. He also showed me the sentry posts too. The boy's name was Gavin Goadert. He was nice and showed me his room. I remember thinking that I would visit it sometime.

I got my schedule later that day. 5:50 to 6 is time I am allowed to get dressed and cleaned up. 6 to 7 is breakfast, a gooey mess of oatmeal, at the mess hall. I then had Guard Duty from 7 to 10. Free time 'till 1, then lunch. Lunch is peanut butter 'n jelly sandwiches. Then 3 hours of guard duty, after which I have 2 hours of free time. Dinner, veggies and fruit, was at 6. At 9 was lights out.

It was 7:45 pm and I decided that I would go see Gavin. When I got to his room, he was talking to some girl.

“Hi Gavin,” I called.

“Hi, this is Nicole,” Gavin said.

“Hi, Gavin was the 1st year that I showed around when I was a 2nd year,” Nicole said.

“Hey, Gavin was the person that showed me around,” I said.

“Really, Gavin, why didn’t you tell me?” Nicole glared at Gavin.

“Well it was a really hectic day and you were talking about your problems and I didn’t want to interrupt you...” Gavin had stumbled with his words until interrupted by Nicole.

“INTERRUPT ME!” Nicole bursted out.

I kick in saying, “What he means is that I didn’t have much to say about up there and that it would only sadden you.”

“I like you. You just saved his head and got yourself a friend,” Nicole said. “You are going to go far.”

“Thanks,” I replied as she walked off.

“Wow, you got the best reception that I have ever seen,” Gavin said. “What brought you here?”

“I was wondering if I could just follow you and make some friends along the way,” I said.

Gavin burst out laughing. “You don’t just make friends,” He said.

“Well I will start with you then,” I replied defiantly.

“Okay then,” He retorted.

“That means that I am going to follow you around,” I said to him.

“Fine then,” He replied weakly.

So that is what I did and I got a lot of “friends” doing that. Mainly they just wanted to know about “up there” (up there is there way of saying aboveground) is doing. But I learned a lot about them. They all talk hopefully about the rebellion they say is to come. They are also afraid about the possibility of being

found. The drills for if we were found are practiced more frequently when a new person comes is what I heard. Also heard I should report to the "Leader" too.

I went to go find the Leader. Gavin hadn't showed that room to me so I relied on people I found. They sent me to this dark corridor that when I got to the end the door was open, with no one in it. So I decided to wait, and wait I did. It seemed like hours before I heard someone coming down the hall. And guess who it is? Gavin. To report that I had arrived. He seemed to wait a couple of seconds and walk through the WALL next to the door. I waited till him and some other person walked out to walk in. I figure that the other person was the Leader so that it was safe to walk in. I walk in ... and ... there's tons of cool stuff. Computers, TVs, iPhones, and FOOD. Then I heard someone coming down the corridor. I look for a place to hide but there is nowhere to hide.

"There's nowhere to hide," a voice says behind me.

"What?" I replied.

"I'm the Leader and what are you doing in my room?" the Leader says.

"Uh, the people said to come and see you," I said.

"I see, well, GET OUT!!!!!" He yelled.

I practically ran out of there. Out there I saw Gavin. He yells at me too.

"STUPID, THE LEADER GETS YOU, NOT YOU GO TO HIM!!!" Gavin screamed.

"Sorr..." I start.

He cuts me off and yells some more, "NO, NOT SORRY!"

"FINE!" I yell. I walked away. He yelled after me, telling me to come back. I just kept on walking and he finally stopped yelling. I went to bed sad.

I woke up late some days later and missed breakfast and thus started my first ever starvation day. It seemed like forever before lunch and then at the mess hall I was told that they were out of food and that they were sending some person to tell some rich supporters and we would have food tomorrow. Several people had stashed food and they started to dig into that. I was left alone in my bunk so I decided to go to the rec. room before going on watch duty.

The rec. room had a foosball table so I got in on a tournament that was starting up with some team. We were halfway through the tournament when a watcher came sprinting down. We all got ready to run. He yelled something I could not hear but everyone was really happy. I asked the guy next to me what he said.

“A supporter is coming with food!” he yells.

So we decided to meet the supporter. We marched up to the entrance the watcher had come from. We waited some time and then a lone figure came walking down. A lot of the people groaned like they knew who was coming. I asked one of the people who had groaned why they had. He said it was the Leader’s mom and she never gives anything to anyone but the Leader.

People start to leave and I leave with them. If that was true there would be no food for me today. All I could feel was anger that the “Leader” got food and we didn’t. The Leader came to the rec. room right after his mom left.

“Mmmm, this ham sandwich is delicious,” he pronounces. “Did you get any? No? That’s too bad. This is really good.”

It was too much. I started to run at him.

I was grabbed before I could throw a punch.

“Oh the newbie is angry is he?” The Leader says laughing.

The people that are holding me whisper that I can’t fight him yet. Finally I calm down. The Leader walks off laughing and I wish I could go and punch him but I can’t ... yet. Over the next few days I gathered my thoughts. I couldn’t attack him out right. I would need friends. Over the next month I spent all my time I could in the rec. room making friends. Then I told them of my plan and asked them to tell their friends.

“I am going to set up a Speech Day and give a vote to take the Leader down,” I told them.

“But he will kill you if you tell him that,” They told me.

“Not if I bring people with me,” I replied. “Who will come with me.”?

They all shifted around a little and then went off to ask their friends to come with them. I waited for them to come back in the rec. room. Then I saw

Gavin and Nicole. I hadn't talked to either of them since the leader incident. They walked over to me. Nicole ushered Gavin forward. Gavin cleared his throat.

"I am sorry I yelled at you. I was hoping to give the Leader a good impression of you so you could get some of the benefits of being cool with him, like more food or an electronic device," Gavin apologized.

"That's okay," I replied.

"What were all those people we saw doing?" Nicole asked.

"Well, er, uh, we were uh going to go set up a Speech Day," I stuttered out.

"You're going to do what," Nicole and Gavin said together.

"We are going to set up a Speech Day," I said again.

"That's cool," Nicole said.

"Yeah that's cool," Gavin said.

"Great! Want to come with me?" I said happily.

Gavin looked at Nicole. "Sure," Nicole said.

By then my friends were trickling back into the rec. room. I counted them and there were at least a hundred people there, maybe more.

"So are you guys coming?" I asked my friends.

"Yes we are," They shouted back.

"Then, Let's start walking," I shouted.

So we walked towards the Leader's room. I felt like MLK was said to feel in school. Feeling like what I was doing is right but scared to do it for what could be the consequences. I continued to walk through just like MLK did. I could feel the tension in the air as we walked in silence. No one person wanted to be here. We finally got to the end of the tunnel.

"Leader! Come out!" I yelled.

"What is ... oh, what do you want?" Leader said.

"I wish to set up a Speech Day," I replied.

The Leader laughed. "You want to set up a Speech Day. Sure. It can be tomorrow at lunch," he said.

“Okay,” I replied.

I stayed up that night waiting for Leader to walk in and kill me. I practiced my speech while I waited. He never came.

The morning passed uneventfully. I stayed in my bunk practicing my speech. I went out only for guard duty and breakfast. I waited for the announcement of the Speech. Finally when I went out for lunch the announcement came.

“Please remain in the mess hall after you are done eating,” the Leader yelled out to everyone. They murmured their acknowledgement.

Everyone had finished their lunch and was now waiting for what I had to say.

“For months Leader has been in charge and we are in no better state. But what of the state of the Leader? He has grown to have much. He eats until he is full and whatever is leftover we can have. Does he go out on guard duty? No, he plays on his electronic devices.

Even when he goes hungry his mother brings him food. It seems to me that while we have degraded, he has only been elevated. Should not the captain go down with his ship? Could we not all be elevated if he shared his resources? We may not be elevated to where he is but we would still be better off than before.

Now I ask you, does that seem fair? Because it does not seem fair to me. I believe we should have elections. That seems fair to me. And we should have a vote on whether to keep the ‘Leader’ here or not.” I pronounced. “Let us vote. Should we keep the Leader in place?”

“No!” the crowd screamed.

“Should we keep him in the Pub?” I ask.

“No!” the crowd screamed again.

“Should we have elections?” I asked.

“Yes!” the crowd screamed.

“Well then, Leader, or should I say, Mark, now that you are out of power, you shall leave at 7 am.” I declared.

“You all shall regret throwing me out. For I will call the feds done here even if it causes me to go to war, as long as you are there too.” he warned.

“We are not throwing you out. We are sending you to the Far Reaches, near your mom. Also, we will give you food. The same amount as everyone else,” I declared. “Go pack your stuff. Whatever you do not bring with you is ours for the taking. With one exception. We will help you bring the bed.”

Mark stammered about this not being fair as his friends dragged him to his bunk. The crowd erupted in happiness. We all agreed that tomorrow would be a day of celebration. With that we went to sleep.

The next day was one of happiness. We were free of the corrupt leader and it seemed as if a democratic system was being set up. This also gave us hope for the world above. If we could do it maybe they could too.