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Category: Short Story

Wiesbaden

In the town of Wiesbaden on this particular day, unrest filled the streets. The townsmen, holding torches and waving banners of Adalyn, gathered outside the Abdeen Palace and demanded that long-time ruler Ivan face the music and meet the mob. If Ivan went outside and tried to talk to his people, they would not listen and throw him out of the town, possibly even executing him. His greed after the raid had caused all this, and he knew that his days were numbered. He swore that he would not be humiliated and robbed of his luxuries by the townsmen, so he waited it out.

The raid that happened a few weeks ago devastated the town. A group of outside invaders plundered the town for its food and riches and tried to conquer the area. It was only the townsman's resilience and their ultimate rejection and rebellion that drove out the invaders. During that time, the days and nights resembled this day. The townsmen were forcing Ivan out as they had done with the raiders.

Wiesbaden was a town with around 25,000 diversity of people to trade and interact with, most being farmers. It was not a wealthy area by any means, and the citizens did not have a lot of property, but everyone was able to live comfortably. But the one who was the most comfortable was Ivan. Ivan was a fat man who the citizens did not care about, except for his well-being. Although he was not incredibly well-liked, there was no real reason to oppose him because life was decent, even under his sometimes tricky taxes. The natural person who was appreciated was Herbert. He advised Ivan on multiple occasions.

A legend that was told in Wiesbaden was the Tale of Adalyn. In the story, Adalyn was someone, along with all the other citizens, mistreated by the government and was very poor. He took matters into his own hands by organizing a riot, overthrowing the government, and then killing the evil king responsible for all the hardships and publicly displaying his body. Nobody knew his real identity, but the title Adalyn was given to him because of this act. He was celebrated as the person who brought Wiesbaden out of the darkness.

The raid happened during winter. Wiesbaden wasn't a place where you could easily find snow,

but the people weren't on their guard. After the harvest season, they had ample food to last them through the year. The raid took a sizable portion of the food and damaged both the population and the town. Ivan, who was one of the richest in Wiesbaden, wanted to restore his wealth before the attack, so he rationed the available food more scarcely to keep the rest to himself. As a result, people could not recover quickly, and some even died due to starvation.

Among the mob was Herbert. He was one of Ivan's advisors, and although the two disagreed about many of the things and laws that happened, everyone knew that Herbert was probably the one who saved the townsmen from the worst of Ivan's greed. He was invited to be a part of the mob and make a change for the better.

The mob set up camp outside the Abdeen Palace after chants of rebellion. The next day, the mob found Ivan's body dead on the roof of the Abdeen Palace. Although the story of Adalyn was already hundreds of years old, Adalyn was deemed responsible for this event because there was no other explanation.

Immediately there was a massive celebration. The townsmen knew that their battles had brought them this far. Finally, they could have good, reliable leadership so that these violent nights would never repeat. Ivan was gone, and right now, everyone was equal because there was no one ruling over another. Although the ruling class brought out the raid's worst effects, the citizens knew that having a ruler was necessary to rebuild. Thus, Herbert was chosen to

become the new leader, with powers similar to that of a king.

Herbert made a speech in front of the crowd, and he became the next ruler of Wiesbaden. The first thing Herbert did promise to make sure that such a devastating series of events could never happen again. He promised that with time, Wiesbaden can quickly become what it was before, but even more significant because the citizens would not be held back by a greedy ruler.

The next day, he announced, "We should form a small military!" The response he got from the public was very mixed. He realized that his people's opinions on this issue were very diverse, so he announced next, "Discuss amongst yourself on why we should or should not form the military. Gather a debater from each side, and in a week, we shall decide which one we will go with!" This time, the cheers were louder than the boos. The second announcement was made in the heat of the moment. It was not one of Herbert's best ideas.

First, there were only two slots for the debaters and a handful of hopefuls. The struggle came from the fact that they wanted to choose someone representing each half of the argument. The work was painstakingly finished, and then the day came.

The first stepped up. "Wiesbaden needs this military, whichever size it is. Look how a raid devastated our town! We had to defend it with our own hands, and we lost! Wiesbaden may be a relatively peaceful town, but more security wouldn't hurt. All of us would benefit from the presence of the police."

The second argued, "That's all well and good, but this is a big change. We are not ready for this yet. Who's going to pay for it? I know preventing future raids is important, and we need a way to do that, but this is not the way to go here. Besides, Adalyn was only able to kill the bad kings because of the lack of a military."

"Adalyn doesn't need to kill our leader now!"

"I'm not saying that we should, but I'm just pointing it out!"

The two debated for a while, but most minds remained unchanged. Neither side conceded, so Herbert had to make an executive decision. Learning about how the town was split about this kind of issue made it more challenging. Some citizens did not support the proposal because of the sole issue of taxation.

Herbert spent the night thinking about which decision, and he ended up flipping a coin and forming the military. Indeed, this formed a set of problems that needed to be addressed, but he would meticulously think over and address them when the time came.

Herbert decided that his townsmen and imported mercenaries turned immigrants would be his way, of course. He called up Charlie and asked him to recruit mercenaries from the neighboring country of Chisinau. Most citizens of Wiesbaden did not want to be part of the military, so poor people from both sources made up the bulk.

Among the crowd of the mercenaries was Gavin. He took this opportunity to have a better life because Wiesbaden was a tight-knit community that was poor. He and his friends moved to Wiesbaden and joined the military. When Herbert hired Gavin, he noticed his adamant and passionate nature and made him the general.

Herbert realized that he had to pay his workers. Taxes in Wiesbaden were low during Herbert's rule because he only took what he needed to survive. He had to raise them a bit to be able to pay the military. The country was still recovering from the raid, so he especially did not want to do it. He considered asking them to do it voluntarily, then remembered that the soldiers only joined because they had no money.

Herbert announced, "I will sadly have to raise taxes by 10 percent for the army. The tax will immediately come into effect, but you may not do it if you are genuinely unable to pay." Herbert probably should not have added the last part because almost everyone did not pay the instructed tax. His soldiers went unpaid, and they were not unhappy. They complained, saying that Herbert worse off employed them and that they should've fended for themselves.

About two weeks have passed, and Herbert wasn't able to pay the soldiers. He wanted to make the taxes now mandatory to pay instead of voluntary, but he knew that this development would not be appreciated. However, this seemed like the only option. At least half of the town would understand because they were the ones who pushed for

it in the first place. There was also the issue of explaining this to his soldiers, who expected their remuneration.

Gavin moved to Wiesbaden and joined the military. His new life in the military consisted of training. They were expected to be a police force doubling as a means to put down invasions. He brought his trusted friends along because he did not trust the government.

"I'm sorry, but I can't pay you right now. I've made a mistake, and no one is paying their taxes. Depending on the situation, I might even have to slash your pay in half." Indeed, Gavin knew this even without Herbert's words. It was apparent to even an outsider that Wiesbaden was struggling. However, he could not help but feel like Herbert was oppressing him as well as everyone else.

Herbert then announced that he would be imposing taxes on everyone by 5%.

This action was controversial, and half of the town did not like this new development. They never wanted this military in the first place, and now their taxes were raised to pay for it. The quarellers, the term coined by the people who supported the military to create a name for those who disagreed, did not support Herbert due to this but did not consider him a threat like Ivan.

Or at least, this is what should have happened. The people were already dirt poor, and Herbert's new tax was a burden that could not yet be taken on. Because of Herbert's words, Gavin was angry. Gavin confronted Herbert and told him that he needed to find a solution that would make everyone happy and fast.

"I'm trying. I don't know what to do yet."

"First, you burden the townspeople with your taxes, and now you can't even pay for our services. Are you pocketing the money? Work out a solution."

Herbert went back to the Abdeen Palace and was silent for about a week because he tried to think of a solution that would help everyone. Gavin, only seeing the silence, determined something.

He decided that Herbert was not to be trusted and that he was a lousy leader. He loved the people in the town of Wiesbaden and wanted the best for them. He decided to bring the mercen-igrants together and the people who would support him, overthrow the administration and make himself the leader. This way, Wiesbaden would finally be rid of the incompetent leader and become prosperous under him.

Herbert eventually picked up Gavin and his threat to the country. Herbert was already hated by a sizable chunk of the population and his military and knew that if Gavin attempted a total takeover, he could succeed. He had no army, so it could not be forcibly shut down.

Herbert thought that Gavin's movement to overthrow him would be rejected by the people and vanish. This was his hope, but this did not seem to happen. Herbert noticed that the crowd of people outside the Abdeen Palace grew bigger and bigger every waking day. Herbert could not help but be reminded of Ivan going through something similar. Herbert knew too well that his habit of thinking thoroughly before choosing would never work here. This was a threat from his own people and something that needs to be addressed. Herbert looked out the window and Abdeen Palace he found shocked him. Gavin joined the crowd, bringing his mercen-igrant friends and a few of his own people. All heads turned to Gavin, and Herbert was breathlessly staring at Gavin, curious about what he was planning to do. He saw Gavin's lips move up and down, and his own people's frowns turning into a face of determination and actual anger directed at the Abdeen Palace.

Herbert frantically dashed outside of the Abdeen Palace. This development was sudden, and Herbert had no idea what to do. Gavin was encouraging the people to join the coup against Gavin, and it was working. Gavin could no longer be ignored. He was a danger to Wiesbaden and threatened the government.

After the townsmen saw Herbert coming out of the Abdeen Palace to face the crowd, their attention was drawn. Herbert led the people to the meeting place. He knew that this moment would be crucial. It was his chance to turn public opinion against Gavin and regain the people's trust. During this short walk, "What do I do or say? Gavin is obviously going to denounce me. This is what he always wanted: a stage to speak. I can't just dismiss him; I need to

counter him completely," Herbert shuddered.

They arrived, and Herbert began to speak, "Everyone, I know that my ideas have not always worked, and you had to suffer as a result. You probably hate me, and I am really sorry for any anguish that I may have caused. However, you can't hand off power to Gavin. Power has changed hands twice already in the month, and Wiesbaden is truly not equipped for the third time. I promise I will do better. For instance, I will-

"Stop talking. You've already shown your true colors." Gavin's voice cut him off. "How will we know that you will do better? He has failed everyone, even me. I worked hard to serve him, and he has not done so much as to pay me for serving in the military. I believe in justice, and removing Herbert is the way to go about it. I know first-hand about leading, as I was the leader of the military."

"I will shoulder-

"Be quiet!" Now it was the crowd that was yelling at Herbert. He could not get a single word. Herbert now honestly noticed how mad the crowd actually was at him. He feared that what he absolutely did not want to do was inevitable. What really crushed him was that the public thought of him as equal to Ivan when in reality, he tried to tell them that he would shoulder the burdens that he may have caused.

Defeated, Herbert conceded his power over to Gavin. He knew that this was the only way to stop Wiesbaden from having a total civil war, and although he was heartbroken about it, he doubted his own ability to govern. He thought that life under the rule of Gavin would be better than life under Herbert.

At least, this is what everyone thought at first. Gavin raised a military that doubled as a police force. His mercenary friends returned to their old jobs and were given permission to seize criminals' property as compensation for their long-overdue wages. The small but resilient force was given first priority in this Wiesbaden, including its costs.

The people's life was drastically changed as well. Because Gavin knew that he seized power due to him turning public opinion against Herbert, he aimed to make sure that this would not happen to him. Herbert failed due to the entire population not wholly approving every activity he was transparent in. All notion of Wiesbaden being prosperous has disappeared, crushed under the dictatorship-like rule of Gavin. The citizens obviously did not approve of these developments, so Wiesbaden seemed to worsen with each iteration.

Herbert was also heartbroken about this sad state of things. He lamented that he could not be a better leader that could pull Wiesbaden from poverty and become prosperous like his promise. Public opinion of him shifted from mostly negative to now apathetic. No one cared anymore about his affairs because they had to worry about themselves. He thought about the story of Adalyn and how he saved his people from mistreatment. This seemed nothing more like a fairy tale to him, but he drew inspiration from it.

There was a knock on his door, and upon answering it, Herbert was told that he would be evicted from the town tomorrow, with Gavin personally escorting him out as a show to the townsmen. Herbert had one day to make a final impact on Wiesbaden. He may be an average person with a criminal's status under Gavin's administration, but he thought of one way this might work, although it wouldn't be pretty, to say the least. He also knew that if he went through with his plan, he would never return.

The day came for his eviction. Before leaving with Gavin's guards, he picked up a small rock and hid it in his pocket. Herbert, along with the rest of the people, listened to Gavin giving a speech describing Wiesbaden's supposed victory. Herbert was sentenced to be tied up and kicked down on Wiesbaden's outskirts, left for dead, and forbidden to return. When Gavin approached him to tie him up himself, he pulled the rock from his pocket and hurled it at Gavin, which caused his head to bleed. Both the crowds and the military were stunned; Herbert escaped. The set-up was completed, and now the results were to be seen. Herbert knew that he would never be allowed to return to Wiesbaden.

Herbert received news of Gavin bleeding out and dying, with Wiesbaden in disarray, trying to create a new form of government that would disallow such controversial and drastic measures from ever happening. Herbert knew that this was the last positive change that he would ever contribute. Or at least, this was what he had hoped. It was now up to the people.