# The Messenger

My walk to work was something I did not look forward to. Everyday, I would walk the crime-ridden streets, hoping I was not the next victim of the terrorist-run government. I stepped out of my apartment complex, wishing I had the money to buy a gas mask. The air had a rusty hue to it, and graffiti ran along the rundown buildings. Even though the atmosphere still had a dangerous feel to it, I felt a twinge of something else, something new. I felt as though someone, or something had lightened up the desolate place that I called home. I walked along the grimy sidewalk, hoping to see something out of the ordinary. A few gunshots jolted me awake. *Nonsense*, I thought, *nothing will happen today that I haven’t seen before, nothing ever has for as long as I can remember*. I desperately hoped I was wrong. A gray figure loomed on the horizon, and I tried to run for cover. The local cartels were not known for their mercy.

“Stop!” he cried out with alarming authority. His command rang out in my ears, and I obeyed. He came up to me with calm confidence, like he had nothing to fear. “I need help,” he said. He was clean, nothing I had ever seen before.

“What is it?” I replied.

“This city is in danger.”

“What?”

“I don’t believe I need to repeat myself.”

“I’m late for work, and if you want me to understand you, repeat,” I said impatiently. He sighed, and spoke again.

“I have come to warn you and your townsfolk about a coming danger. You are the first person I have seen today, so I thought I would start with you.”

“And, hypothetically, if I believed you, how would I stop the ‘coming danger’?”

“Oh, that’s simple. Your city is terribly corrupt and extremely immoral and it needs to change into… something better. That's where you come in.”

“That doesn’t sound very easy, and you don’t seem to have any plan.”

“Listen,” he said with terrifying sternness. “I am just the messenger. I am trying to save you and your disgusting city from being burned to the ground,”

“I have to get to work.” I walked off.

“I hope you know what you're going to do!” he yelled after me. I couldn't help but feel that I had to do something, and I never stopped thinking about my whole day. Several of my co-workers had mentioned run-ins with our local “messenger”. *This guy really wants his message across!* I thought to myself. After work and after thinking about the warning I had received, I couldn't help but look for the stranger. After hours of searching, I found him sleeping in an alley. I woke him and asked him some questions after we found a more appropriate place to talk. We sat down and I began.

“So, what will this destruction look like?” I inquired.

“Fire from the sky raining down on everything, and everyone, followed by being swallowed by the earth,” he replied with his usual peaceful speech.

“Have other cities been burned?”

“Absolutely. I haven’t seen any ash and smoke in this city, but it will be here soon. If you have trouble believing me, surely ash everywhere will give you some proof.”

“Perhaps.”

He didn’t want to stay at my house, but decided that he should move on to another city to warn them. I needed to do something, but I still didn’t have enough proof. I decided I would wait and watch for ash and smoking, hoping it wouldn’t come.

I sat up in bed, awakened by the screams and screeching sirens of the public. I looked outside and ash was raining down so heavily there was a black cloud looming over the city. I stepped outside and smoke on top of the atrocious pollution burned my lungs. I joined the confused swarm of people, like an infested bee hive. I ran everything through my head one last time before deciding I needed to go to the highest authority. Although terrorists and gangs ran our city, major decisions still were up to a board to decide. I got in a vehicle and went straight to the board members plaza. I burst through the doors in the middle of a meeting. Security was not a priority in this town. “I have vital information regarding the future of our city,” I said with as much compelling authority as I could muster. I then proceeded to relay everything the messenger had told me, then told them we had to turn our city around. The board just stared at me with uninterest. “This is not on our agenda,” the Chairman said.

“You and your agenda won’t be here in a week if you don’t change,” I replied. “Regardless, we will not do as you ask.”

“Then I will find someone who will.”

“You will NOT speak of this to anyone!”

“I will and I won’t stop until I die, or this city does,”

“Very well, since we have no guards, I will escort you to the prison immediately,”

A cruel smile spread on his face as wide eyed terror spread on mine. He dragged me with his powerful arms, threw me into a cell, and locked it, throwing away the key. I sighed and knew I was never getting out of this cell. *At least it won’t be very long,* I thought. I looked out of the barred window. A billboard was being constructed for a local politician, and it read:

“You Can Count On Us, We’re Always the Same!”

The slogan was followed by a list of fine print no one could read. The truth was we wouldn’t change in time. A spine-rattling earthquake shook my cell violently. A large crack spread between my feet and started growing rapidly, and just like that, the impending doom of the someday the messenger spoke of was upon us.