



Felix silently closed the backdoor to his flat. Even though he knew they'd gone, he couldn't help but tiptoe as he moved. After a few hours of watching, he had seen the black-clad figures leave, melting into the night as quickly as they had come. But maybe they had left a little welcoming party to surprise him. The Corporation was sneaky like that.

He tried to ignore the chaos in his home, passing quickly through the living room and kitchen, stepping over books and papers strewn across the floor. He stopped occasionally and whispered, "Dad?" But each time there was no reply. Panic began to rise in Felix's chest and he found himself gasping for breath, struggling to fill his lungs. *Not Dad. He couldn't be gone. First Mum...and now...* He leant against a door and allowed his eyes to water with tears. He let out a strangled cry.

"No!" The sound of his pain filled the flat.

He stumbled into the bathroom and collapsed onto the edge of the bath. He focussed his mind on his breathing as he softly inhaled and then exhaled. Gradually he regained control; a fragile calm replacing the panic. Finally, he stooped and ran his fingers along the bath panel feeling for the hidden notch. With a swift twitch of his hand the panel opened. He thrust it onto the floor and reached inside the cavity. Relief flooded through him; Dad's seeds were safe!

Felix stood in the middle of the bathroom holding a large, red, metal box. How many times had he heard Dad declaring the need to defy the Corporation? Only the preservation of ancient seeds would ensure the survival of the Earth's biodiversity! Felix had half listened,

half understood, not really bothered; but now it *was* important. Now it was up to *him* to preserve his dad's work.

'Seeds of doom'; that was what the Resistance called Corporation seeds. Designed to be sterile, such seeds forced growers to buy new seed each year. The aim was simple: to make money for the Corporation. Felix knew the Resistance slogan well; it was graffitied on enough walls: 'No need for a Corporation seed that produces no seed'.

Felix yanked off the lid of the box. It was crammed with bundles of small envelopes, each one filled with thousands of 'illegal' seeds. The visit here meant that the Corporation was probably moving against all the Seed Guardians. What if all the seed collections had been seized? Felix perched on the side of the bath and closed his eyes, clutching the box tightly against his body.

"Dad..." he moaned.

He tipped the contents of the box into his old cadet rucksack. Dad had been so sad when Felix had enlisted with the school cadets. It'd been fun: camping trips, climbing and sailing. He had been the champion athlete in his squad. How ironic that the Corporation had trained him, and now he would use these skills to fight it, to help protect everything that grew on Earth.

Each envelope of seeds had an accompanying recording pod. Dad had spent years recording the stories and histories of all the seeds. One rolled onto the floor. Felix picked it up and placed it into a player, keen to hear the comforting voice of his father one more time. But as the pod began to play, Felix was overwhelmed with a sense of loss; he closed his eyes and began to whimper. His whole body rocked backwards and forwards as despair washed over him.

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It was the piercing wail of the curfew siren that woke Felix. He rolled onto his back and lay staring up into darkness, exhausted from grief. Immediately, his mind began to replay the events of the afternoon. Questions jostled for attention: where was Dad? Why had the Corporation targeted him? Had someone informed?

Felix forced aside the chaos in his head. "Focus," he muttered to himself. He pulled out his messenger device. No messages. It was unlike Clara not to have been in contact. With a start, he realised it was almost ten o'clock. The Bridge of Dreams meeting!

*'Want to go to the bridge?'* He zapped the message to Clara and waited.

No reply.

He thumped the floor with a frustrated punch. If he delayed leaving much longer, he'd never reach the bridge in time. He'd have to go alone. He rolled onto his stomach and crawled towards the back door, cradling his rucksack of seeds. He'd have to hurry.

Eight minutes later, the ornate, black metalwork of the Bridge of Dreams loomed out of the gloom. Its silhouette was stark and threatening against the darkening sky of pink clouds. Originally built to link together two riverside communities, the bridge was now commonly known as the Bridge of Nightmares. It had failed in its ambitions; one community had since fled and the other rarely strayed far from the Corporation zone.

He studied the criss-cross of metal bars that formed the bridge parapet; they didn't offer any where to hide. So far there was no sign of anyone. It was as if the strong wind had swept away any sense of existence by blowing every living being straight off the bridge.

Perhaps he'd come on a wild goose chase. Maybe the message meant another Monday; it was just an old, long-forgotten message, after all. Then he remembered the footprint. Someone had been at that cairn before them, and recently. The meeting *had* to be today.

He stepped onto the bridge, feeling the metal structure beneath him sway back and forth in the wind. A broken lamppost cast a dark shadow across his path. Felix crouched down in it, glad of somewhere to tuck himself away. He shrugged the rucksack of seeds from his back and rested it on his knees. In the distance, a clock chimed ten times.