

and there are riots.”

“These men will help the police build their barricades. They will keep the rabble under control.” The woman said this with some bitterness. Then she sighed and appeared wistful. “We will miss him.”

She met his eyes briefly before turning to leave, dragging the boy behind her.

Branco watched them go. Then he heard the groan of an engine and turned to see a large open truck with high sides, a cattle truck, which pulled into the clearing behind the market. Adjusting the collar of his jacket to hide his face, he clutched the gun and strode into the midst of the waiting men. A brash young cadet wearing a beret and fatigues herded them into the back of the truck, which lumbered into motion before they had settled themselves into their seats. He sat at the end of the row and avoided looking at the others. The conversation was boisterous and full of expletives. They spoke with sympathy of the president, and one boasted of what he would do with the journalist who had caused all the trouble with his articles.

“Crack his neck,” he said and made a twisting motion with his immense hands.

The others laughed.

Branco stared at the floor and fought a sensation worse than any dread he had imagined.