
Alexander's Story

The old man sitting in the chair near the window, looked out over the lush Northumberland countryside. But what he saw was much different from reality.

He saw army tanks progressing over the crest of the hill, he saw planes landing on the rough concrete courtyard beneath him.

His white, unbrushed hair with a tinge of silver shone with the afternoon sun. He had bright, blue, boyish eyes which looked out over the imaginary scene that he had remembered from his days at war. He reached up with his scarred hand with a dressing on it covering the skin cancer treatment (caused by his exposure to sun in North Africa) to touch his expressionless face. His skin was rough and unshaven. He had dirty glasses, with a broken hinge repaired by masking tape. He shaped to get up. His rounded shoulders and poking chin leaned forward, both hands with a juddering tremor reached back painfully for the arms of the chair. With a shuffling walk and posture bent over his dirty metal zimmer frame he made his way slowly to the toilet.

He wore a striped shirt, dirty from food stains covered by a V necked, no sleeved pullover dark with dirt and bobbed from overwashing. His urine smelling trousers, dirty slippers and socks with the cuff slit prevent them hurting his swollen ankles, finished off his hospital outfit.

He did not know how but he landed in a crumpled heap upon the floor. One of the patients raised the alarm and as had happened many times before, the nurses helped him to his feet.