THE END OF RAKAN'S WAR

KEVIN CULLEN

We were standing on a duly set up in the middle of the crowd. Larry Roman and me. It had been a long time since we last spoke. The world had changed, and we were just two oddballs, with this odd sense of how and appreciation, if not agreement.

Rakam Hassan was short and pudgy, with a killer laugh when he talked. Larry Roman, now, the boy I grew up with. He was taller, more slender, and had a more serious demeanor. We were old friends, and now, we were old enemies.

The American soldiersissidlay on the ground, surrounded by the hectic life of Baghdad. The city was in ruins, and it was a testament to the destruction of war.

Larry Roman nodded his head. "We need to go," he said. "It's now or never."

We started walking, and as we did, we could see the chaos unfolding around us.

The end of Rakam's war. A war that had defined our lives for so long. But now, it was over. It was time to move on.