

Jeannie Vanasco

The Dictator Declares War

He closes his eyes and spins his globe. His finger lands on water. He spins again.

More water.

The Enemy is in the ocean, he warns his citizens.

His military ships fire torpedoes at nothing. Nothing fires back.

The nation must fight something, his advisors tell him.

So the dictator spins his globe until his finger lands on his land.

The Enemy is in our midst, he warns his citizens.

He sends lawyers to his generals. The lawyers advise who can and cannot be killed.

Innocent civilians can be killed, provided sections 1, 4, 19, 23, 423 (see clauses 194, 3, 17, 348, 421, respectively).

Peaceful protestors can be killed, provided sections 2, 9, and 41 (see clauses 5, 2, and 9, respectively).

Birds can be killed, provided section 132, clause 956.

The legal documents grow as big as tanks.

Extinct birds fly underground.