

“Seventeen!” Cillian screams in my face, “you killed seventeen veterans! Just... how? Even Boriss couldn’t- well, maybe he could. The guy’s a monster, but still. I hope you realize that you’ve pissed off a lot of people by takin’ so many out. Why did you even do such a crazy thing?”

I bite into a sandwich as I lay on my bed.

“Well,” I say around my bite of sandwich, “First off, this is a really good sandwich. Who’s the chef? Second,” I pause to chew, “I really didn’t think I’d fight more than two or three. You know, kick a bit of ass, and get everyone riled up enough to send in the bear.” I swallow and take an even bigger bite. “Really, I never expected this place was chocked so full of bloodthirsty murder-hobos. You’d think they’d get fed up and send in Ursus Major to chomp my ass like I asked, but no, they just kept coming.”

“Ursus? You mean Tibbers? Why the fuck do you want to fight Tibbers. The only person who’s ever beaten Tibbers is Boriss, and then, only barely.”

I stop chewing to raise an eyebrow at the sober Scot. I swallow my bite.

“Did you forget our little conversation yesterday?”

Cillian stares at me for a moment while the little gerbil in his head starts running on the wheel.

“Right. You’re a bloody loony. So, what? Killing Tibbers to make the test easier?”

“Yep.”

“Fuckin’ looney.”

I shrug, “Well, when the shit hits the fan, I’ll be the one with the weapons to blow the crap out of it.”

Cillian perks up. “Weapons? Like what, spears and swords?”

I give him a flat look over my sandwich.

“Cold weapons are for cold bodies. What I can’t gas, I’ll shoot, and what I can’t shoot, I’ll blow up.”

“Downside has no guns.” Cillian exclaims, “at least that’s what you told me.”

“Downside doesn’t, but I will.” I finish my last bite of sandwich, “just as soon as I make them. Shouldn’t be hard to slap together a zip-gun. And if you can make this hooch,” I reach over and

steal a bottle of the scotsman's rotgut, "then you've got everything I need to distill nitric acid." I take a swig and cough, "hell, this is already one sock away from a Molotov."

"Fucking nutter," he says and steals his bottle back. He takes a big swig and burps. "So when's your fight with Tibbers?"

"In three days. Apparently, there's some organizing to be done. There should be plenty of time to finish my preparations before then." I stare at my empty hand and miss my missing sandwich. "I'm going to need a lot of basic resources. I could easily cannibalize from the supplies I have available here, but that takes a bit of time and research."

"Then you're goin' to want to go to the silver district. The prisoners there do a lot of craftin. They don't have it anywhere as good as we do, but they do have a lot more than bronze and blacks." Cillian explains.

"Wait, can we move into different districts?"

"Only to a lower rank," he adds. "Golds can go into silver, which can go into bronze, which can go into blacks. You can't enter into a higher rank except if you're silver, then you can come to gold for work and earn passes."

"Right... work. What are the passes used for and how do you earn them?"

"They're used to buy stuff from outside. Better food, clothing, and district approved appliances. You earn 'em by doing menial shit like cooking or laundry. Better your prisoner rank, the better your jobs, the better your pay."

"Oh, cool. So I can use passes to get whatever supplies I want from outside? That makes things much easier. How long does it take?"

He shrugs, "Three to four months to get somethin in here. You have to pay upfront, though."

I grimace.

"Alright, nevermind. I can't wait that long." I hop out of bed. "I guess I'm heading to the silver district." I reach under my mattress and pick up the bag of passes.

"Shite! Are those all passes?"

I nod. "Yup, apparently I get paid for fighting, and I get paid even more for winning. With that and my cut from Boriss' bets, I'm somewhat rich. Well, prison rich. Anyways, I'ma head out and grab what I need. I'll see you in a bit."

He waves goodbye and I make my way out of the Gasthaus, down several streets, and finally enter the Silver District.

Where the gold district was spotlessly clean and relatively empty of people, the silver district is less clean and smothered in bodies and neon lights. Yes, the silver district glows with the vibrancy of a red light district mixed with a crafting bazaar. On one side, you have a hawker selling basic goods like kitchen utensils and socks, while on the other you have a neon lit smithy wherein a blacksmith smelts scrap metal in a makeshift crucible.

To my surprise, the local denizens immediately noticed me..

“Is that him?”

“That has to be him.”

“What is he doing here?”

“Is he here to trade?”

“Is that the guy who slaughtered all the fighters?”

“Damn, I’d love to be bent over by him.”

“He doesn't seem that capable.”

“Do you think he’d give me an autograph?”

I continue walking deeper and deeper into the silver district. As I do, the quality of workmanship and density of stores increase exponentially, to the point that it is becoming rather overwhelming.

At least until a certain someone crosses my path.

“Comrade Quasi!” Boriss yells with the full might of his lungs. “You visit, yes?”

I turn towards the grinning Russian as he exits a restaurant. Looking at his foot, I note the silver bracelet circling it.

“Huh, I didn’t realize you’re silver.”

“Da,” he taps his chest, “I am former soviet super spy.”

I raise an eyebrow, “You’re a soviet spy?”

“Former,” he corrects. “I was spy till two-thousand eight. Very secret KGB special independent operative.” he explains confidently.

“Um,” I frown, “The soviet union collapsed in nineteen ninety-two.”

He snorts at me, “Bah, is all planned. They collapse to make America lower guard.”

I stare at the grinning Russian for far too long than is comfortable, and then I change the subject.

“Well, I’ve come here to buy some resources. I don’t suppose you can give me directions.”

Boriss chuckles, “Comrade Quasi, I will do better.” he raises a fist, “I will take you to resources, is only right to help comrade, yes?”

“Right.” I say with hesitancy. “Well, I’m going to need several things. First, I’m going to need glass bottles.”

He nods.

“Second, I’ll need some gasoline and styrofoam cups.”

He nods a lot slower.

“Third, I’ll need rags, sugar, paper towels, and any product that has a high concentration of benzene.”

He doesn’t nod.

“And, uh, potassium chlorate if it’s available.”

Boriss frowns down at me with a look of disappointment.

“Why napalm? Why not simple molotov? Is easier, yes?”

*Huh. He’s actually not just all brawn.*

“One of the problems with normal molotovs made with alcohol is that they don’t last or stick as long. Considering what I’m probably going to need to deal with, I doubt a bit of alcohol is will be potent enough.”

He stares at me for a long moment.

Then nods.

“Comrade Quasi, you look like man who expects, how you say, dung to hit fan? Yes? You expect big problem.” He places a hand on my shoulder. “Then big problem needs big Russian solution.” he grins. “Let us go make big pipe bombs. Is easy, follow.”

He lifts his hand from my shoulder and starts walking away, leaving me both confused and flabbergasted.

After a moment, I rush next to him and follow on the side. He leads me deeper into the silver district. Eventually, we arrive to a shop called “Marrens Cleaning Supplies.”

When we enter, my nose is hit with the smells of hundreds of chemicals that probably should not be inhaled for too long.

A skinny twig of a man rushes from his counter.

“Welcome to Marrenes Cleaning Sup- oh, Boriss. What are you here for? Did your toilet get stuck again? I’ve got more acid to clean it out!”

Boriss waves his hand. “No, no, strong Russian dung not break toilet again.” he points at me, “Comrade Quasi needs chemicals. You have, yes?”

When Marren looks at me, his eyes widen. “You’re the new guy. The one that killed all those veterans yesterday! Holy... wow. You took them out like they were children.”

“Yes,” Boriss nods, “Like strong Russian mom.”

“Right,” Marren says, unsure how to respond. He turns to me. “Well, I’ve got chemicals for all of your needs? What can I get for you?”

I glance again around the store, finding a lot of rather interesting containers. There are jars labeled asbestos, ammonia, lead, and even mercury.

“I don’t suppose you have any potassium chlorate?”

The man frowns.

He walks to the entrance of the store and closes the door.

“I don’t have such dangerous chemicals.”

He moves and closes the shutters on a window.

“It would be extremely illegal to have such a dangerous substance.”

He retreats to the corner of the room. He grabs a large shelf and pulls it out of the way to reveal a hidden hole filled with various vials.

“But, I do have some vials filled with unknown substances.”

He grabs an unlabeled vial filled with a white powder.

“So,” he raises the vial up, “want some?”