

27 November, 2010

Night time in the city of Moscow was always a good time for people willing to try new and unique things. But for a man with a few nights of leave stored up due to what was being called an exemplary performance, the sky was the limit on what sort of activities he could find. It was a strange situation to him, finding himself so free for the first time in so long and yet really having no idea what to do for the evening. He knew the answer once. It would have come as a second nature, as quick as breathing. He had to pause and think about it for a moment, taking a long, slow breath that caused him to rub at his chest.

The night's ride in to the city was a calm one. Cool air rushed through his hair and whipped his hood around behind him, catching it on occasion to tug the zippered sweater to billow out like a parachute behind him. Eyes stared forward through his glasses as he sped down the freeway, rapidly approaching the city limits. Twisting and turning around the city blocks, he had decided to take advantage of the very central location of the corporate headquarters. Pulling down the ramp and watching as the gate lifted, he ducked down under it before it would have given a car full clearance.

Feeling the metal barrier on the bottom of the gate brush through his wind strewn hair, he straightened up and pulled forward into one of the parking spots open for the employees. With the hydraulic kickstand lowered, he climbed off the bike and pocketed the key before turning and dashing for the now lowering gate. With a quick tumble roll, he managed to get clear of it before it locked closed again with the soft, dull thunk of a well maintained system.

"Hah, is good Indy moment except have no hat."

Pulling the hood of his sweater up over his head in homage, he brushed at the hem of it and began to hike up the ramp, away from the underground parking with a whistle as he left the tower of his employment. Fingers fished through the pocket of his fatigues before curling around the thin, rubber coated wires of his ear bud headphones for the electric music player. Bringing them up and out, lining them carefully under his sweater to keep them from catching on anything else, he planted them in his ears and hit the play button and setting the world to his personal sound track.

Bobbing and swaying his head a bit to the europunk pop tune blaring directly into his brain, he turned down the street, keeping to the sidewalk as he let absolute random instinct guide his walk. With a breath of frosty air expelled, he reached up to adjust the reading glasses, pushing them higher on the bridge of his nose before his hands sank into the pockets of his undone zippered sweater to shield them from the cold Moscow night air. Stopping at an intersection, he looked up and around, spotting the buildings jutting up into the night sky, watching the first few flakes of a light snow starting to descend, looking for a place to belong.

Watching a few flakes fall to rest on a neon sign only to quickly burn out and evaporate away, he paused a moment to read the flickering red light. *Molotki*. He remembered hearing about the place from a few of the other security staff members before he'd been moved over into the Shock Troops. It seemed to be the liquor hole of choice for a few of them before it had earned a reputation as a rowdy place and started to attract the attention of U.S. soldiers on Embassy detail. Before that, it had been a decently seedy place to get a strong drink for a good price. Pulling a hand out of his sweater, he brushed a few errant snowflakes out of his goatee and started to cross the street, not bothering to check the dead streets once more for any sign of vehicular life.

It was behind an old bakery, built into the half basement that had probably been its storage depot at one point. The neon sign still flickered each time one of the night's flakes looking for a place to spend

the rest of their short lives winked out of existence, flashing blue light along the cement steps that lead down to the old rusted red iron door. As he pushed through it, the thing gave a heavy creak caused by age and ice built up in its hinges, but that didn't do anything to disrupt the heavy industrial music pounding through the speakers of the club. Considering the music here was louder than his was, he decided not to bother with the headphones, reaching down into his pocket to shut it off as he took it all in.

The boys at work had been right. The place was definitely seedy. As he moved to the bar, he pulled the ear buds free and started to coil them back up into his pocket, eyes moving back and forth, sliding up towards the counter between a few of the other patrons; some rather rowdy tourist types. Slipping through the crowds, Dmitri gave a quick raise of his hand with a boyish smile to flag down the bartender. The stocky gentleman came over and set his hands on the bar top. The two men didn't know each other, but a few people recognized Dmitri from the neighborhood and a few stories of reputation from the security staff at the corporate tower where he worked. "Dve vodka, drug!"

The look on his face was a friendly one, even though he was now being stared at sourly by the group he had cut through to get to the bar. From behind the bar, the man gave an upwards nod of his head before pulling two iced shot glasses out of a small glass cooler. With a turn, he grabbed the local favorite top shelf and filled both of the glasses while the young man laid out the cash. Taking a shot in each hand, he turned and spotted the group of men that were now blocking him in.

"Ah. Is road block, yeah? Looking to push customs enforcement on local head of meat? Am very laughing! But look, do not want to show you is silly to interrupt Russian and his vodka. Take very seriously." Nodding with a friendly but serious look on his face, he subtly looked over the four men in front of him.

They were fairly well toned, most likely soldiers from the look of things; each of them wearing blue jeans that looked like they should have been baggy but weren't, tops that probably should have been loose on them, and haircuts that looked to be done with several passes with clippers exclusively. On top of it all, they looked annoyed. The broken accent of his English was not amusing them, and they were not moving. The one towards the middle with the thickest neck spoke up. "Look, prick, you jumped right in front of us, and—"

"Was line? Thought was bar. Did not see sign saying 'please form line like for bread.' Should have looked..." Turning his attention away from the men, the redheaded Russian glanced up and behind him, as if to search for the sign he'd mentioned that he knew did not in fact exist. While his attention had been turned, his arms still up holding the shot glasses, one of the four decided to smack the bottom of his left hand, causing the vodka to splash up and out of the glass, all over Dmitri's wrist and hand. The four of them began to chuckle like a pack of schoolyard bullies, but he did not seem to notice. "...is no. Do not see sign." Turning back to face them again, he looked at the four of the grinning like clever monkeys. With a slow raise of one brow, he stood there for a moment in silence. "And why is grinning like eat shit?"

"I spilled your drink, 'Comrade', whatcha gonna do about it?"

"Is tovarishch. Toh. Var. Eeshch. Tovarishch. Not comrade. Is always wonder such simple thing is always wrong in American movie. And drink is not spill. Drink is—" Looking to his hands as he spoke, he blinked, spotting his now empty shot glass. "Ohhh, left hand. Yeah, is constant problem. Still, will make deal, yeah? Will drink right hand vodka, and you will replace left hand vodka, and all five have good day. Is good deal? Yeah, is good deal."

With that, the surrounded Russian shot the drink in his right hand while the American men laughed and started tossing ideas and insults back and forth. Of course, by this point most of the bar was

now watching the confrontation that—as of yet—had remained mild by the standards of all observing it. The bravado of the Russian had raised a little amusement among the four friends, but they weren't backing down just yet. As their row of jokes and pathetic threads died down, the ringleader held his hands out as if to tell the men to cease what they had already stopped.

“Look, you little asswipe—”

“Am bigger than him, does that make him littlest wipe of ass?” This was said as he pointed to one of the four with his left hand. The target of his insult quickly flushed in the face, narrowing his eyes and shouting out.

“Go eat a bag of dicks!”

“I decline. Am not fan of eat bags, let alone filling bags with male genitalia.”

“Your momma's a bag of dicks.”

“Mother is in Saint Gergorii Mausolium...” The Russian's eyes narrowed just a slight tick. “And was wonderful woman.”

“Yeah, she was wonderful alright. When I was porkin' her.”

This drew a series of light hisses from the nearby crowd, as if someone had just taken a very ugly hit. It was a sympathetic kind of hiss, but it did not seem geared towards the Russian. It seemed much more the type provided when someone did not realize what they had done. There was a slight beat in the conversation before Dmitri responded.

“Look, am off for next few days and would be real problem if got in fight. Is also not a fair one. What say I call steven evens, we replace drink, and move on with evening, yeah? Is still good deal!”

“Damn fuckin' straight it's an uneven fight. There's four of us.”

“Yeah, is probably good idea if are more of you.”

Practically blinded with rage at his bravado, the ringleader took a step back, his face red. With open eyes, he clenched his fists tightly, causing the thick and likely steroid enhanced biceps to bulge a bit more, flashing the veins of a body builder at the edge of his sleeve. “Marines! Oorah!”

With the rallying cry, the three men standing in front of him returned the shout, as did six more men standing quickly from various locations in the bar. With his brow arched once more, he glanced around quickly, watching the fight turn from a four on one to a ten on one. Patrons at the bar had cleared away to the sides of the establishment, and even the few at the tables nearby had gathered their drinks and moved towards the walls as well. His lips curled into a slow smirk as he looked back to the ringleader of the original four.

“Eh, is closer to fair fight now.”