

They took the train out to some shit neighborhood where nobody would recognize them, or later identify them to the police, and Enoch had some horrendous new punk music blasting through his headphones and out into the train car the whole way. Landon's concentration was not disturbed, but he pitied the boy's ear drums. Enoch stood, gripping the bar above his head with a drug-fueled intensity, even though every seat in the train car was empty except for Landon's.

The train slowed and leaned as it turned west, rattling over patchy lots and dark six flats. Thousands of lights from the skyscrapers in the distance turned the night sky purple.

Enoch spit on the floor and yelled, "The money that it takes to wash the windows on one of those buildings could buy this whole neighborhood."

That was an exaggeration. Landon ignored him, running contingencies through his head. Enoch took a long pull from a chrome flask and offered it to Landon. Landon shook his head without looking up. Enoch's computer skills were incomparable, but he was a lost child in many ways. Enoch shrugged and took another drink as the train shuddered to a stop at their destination.

The platform smelled like piss and woodchips, and the night air was oppressive and damp. Enoch shifted his shoulders in his

leather jacket, unsticking the collar from his neck, and lit a cigarette. The train tracks ran directly over the tattoo parlor. The neon light from the tattoo parlor stained the blanket of pigeon shit at the bottom of the stairs from the platform orange.

Next to the tattoo parlor was a wood-paneled store front with a hanging Old Style sign reading "Zimne Pivo" and a handwritten sign on the door advertising that the place was "Air Conditioned." Landon handed Enoch a twenty and nodded to the bar.

A bell rang as Landon entered the empty tattoo parlor. The interior was faded, but clean. Landon looked over the objects arrayed on the counter behind the lone chair, and found the sanitation procedures sufficient. A bony bald man with a grey beard appeared from the back, his tank-top showing off full-color sleeves packed with mythical creatures and Catholic iconography.

"You want to look at the books?" The man asked, nodding to binders of art layed out on a card table.

"No need," Landon smiled, and the man gestured for him to sit.

Landon rolled up his left sleeve and showed the man the list of nine dates in Old English font on the inside of his

wrist.

"This the only art you got?" The tattoo artist asked.

"For now," Landon said.

"August 21, 1791?" The man read a line off Landon's wrist, scratching his beard.

"The slaves in Saint Domingue revolted, taking much of the Haitian island and visiting on their former masters many of the torments that the slaves had been subjected to for generations."

The man pursed his lips, mildly suspicious, then shrugged and asked, "October 31, 1517. What's that?"

Landon smiled at the irony, examining the elaborate golden cross tattooed on the man's throat. He replied, "That's the night when, according to legend, Martin Luther, despising the corrupt practices of Rome, nailed his Ninety-Five theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg. An apocryphal story, but consider it a metaphor... Within a year, Luther's teachings had been reproduced and distributed at a speed and over a range that was unknown previously in history, and peasants were rising up to begin a new world order."

Now the tattoo artist wore a distinct look of distaste.

"And what do you want me to draw?" The man asked, his voice chilly.

"August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011," Landon said flatly, looking the man in the eyes.

"Oh yeah? What's going to happen tomorrow?" The tattoo artist sneered a little.

"My good man," Landon smiled expansively, and lied, "tomorrow I'm getting married!"

The tattoos artist laughed a long, wheezing smoker's laugh, and clapped Landon on the shoulder. "You're a strange one, I'll give you that," he said.

Landon settled back into the chair to the familiar buzzing sound, and meditated. He wished that it was more painful, after all, this was a transformation. Soon it was over. Landon gave the man a fifty, and went back out into the sticky night, rubbing his bandaged wrist unconsciously.

Entering the bar, Landon nearly ran into the back of Enoch. The boy was poised in a slight crouch with his fists held out from his sides, brass knuckles gleaming on each hand. A tall blonde woman in heels and a flattering skirt stood, looking offended, near the pool table. Three angry young men, all well-muscled, two holding pool cues, one with a bloody face, stood in front of Enoch. Enoch looked back at the sound of the door opening, with a wild-eyed expression and a bloody chin. Five

empty shot glasses sat in a neat row on the bar. Behind the bar, a wrinkled man with a white buzz cut looked on with a jowly expression of displeasure.

Landon slapped Enoch on the back of the head, and spoke to the old man behind the bar, "Bardzo przepraszam pana, mój kolega jest lekko uciążąły umysłowo."

The old man raised a bushy eyebrow, and one of the young men laughed and unfriendly laugh. Landon took Enoch by the arm and pulled him to the door. The young men moved to follow, but the barkeep called them off with a toss of his head. Landon shoved Enoch out into the street and followed behind him. He kept shoving him up the stairs toward the train, and it wasn't until they'd jumped the turnstyle and were waiting on the platform that either of them spoke.

"You are truly a fuck up," Landon said.

Enoch took the flask out of his pocket, but Landon reached out and took it from him.

"Where'd you learn to speak Polack?" Enoch said, suddenly mopey.

"I picked it up in my travels," Landon answered.

"What'd you say to him?"

"I'm sorry, sir, my friend is a fucking retard."

The platform began to vibrate with the roar of an

approching train. Enoch screwed up his mouth, working his tongue back and forth, and then spit out a wad of blood with a tooth in it.

"Fuck!" Enoch yelled, putting his hands into the pockets of his coat and pulling them out wearing his brass knuckles again. He beat the shit out of a trash can while the train rumbled into the station. Landon boarded the train, which was empty once again. Enoch lifted the trash can over his head and hurled it off the platform, in the general direction of the bar, and slipped into the train car as the doors were closing.

Enoch sat across from Landon. He held the back of his hand up to his mouth and found that he was still bleeding prodigiously. He spit blood onto the floor and asked Landon, "You got anything for the pain?"

Landon took an engraved chrome cigarette case from his pocket, popped it open, and handed two pills over to Enoch. Enoch spit out more blood, and swallowed the pills. It was time for Enoch to start sleeping it off. Landon would need him tomorrow. It was a long ride back into the city. Enoch was asleep before the first stop.