

1010

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I could see the old man's rage and sense of utter hopelessness. One of the older men looked at Pops and chortled.

[Roman] "Good little mouse," he said. The other two chuckled. The punk began working a hand down the top of the girl's shirt and fondled a breast. The girl was crying.

[Roman] "Maybe I'll pop her cherry on this table tonight?" the punk snorted. The girl didn't know the lingo, but she knew his intent. The other laughed. I stood up. Selena grabbed my hand.

"We do not get involved," Selena whispered intensely. "Those are the rules."

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"What?" I looked over my shoulder and down at her, smiling.

"I'm only going to ask him how good the soup is," I fibbed. No one at my table believed me. Selena let go, and off I went. The two older men had caught the conversation, yet lacking knowledge of English, didn't get the importance of the exchange. The punk was engrossed in defiling the young lady.

"Hey, I'm new to town," I greeted their table. "How is the soup?"

[Roman] "Is this asshole begging to get robbed, or what?" Older guy A said to the other two. They laughed. I was a joke to them.

"Why thank you," I smiled and nodded. I picked up the punk's soup.

Older guy A tried to stop me. Not only was he not all that fast, I can pulp a grapefruit with my fingers. By squeezing his palm, I had the meat of his thumb pressed tightly against the meat of his pinkie. He yelped, so I let him yank his hand back. I smelled the soup. I tilted the bowl back and had a taste. It was very good - well worth the cost. The two older guys were standing up.

This would have been the point when the punk should have dumped the girl and stood as well.

[Hungarian] "The soup and the girl, or just the soup?" I requested.

[Hungarian] "You have made a very bad mistake," Older guy A glared. [Roman] "We kill this one."

[Roman] "Cool Beans," I laughed. I overturned the bowel onto the punk's head. Not on the crown - planting it halfway toward the forehead meant the still warm soup splashed down into his eyes. In his shock and pain, the punk released the girl. I whipped her up and behind me. The punk and the girl were screaming.

Belatedly, the two older gypsies were reaching for their un-holstered pistols. Jacket pockets and the small of your back are not places you put a pistol if time is of the essence. I threw the bowel into OG B's face, then reached over the still screaming punk to punch OG A in the face. I had to release the girl who staggered back into the table behind us.

Dealing with the punk was the obvious next order of business, so I danced around him instead. Had I stayed in place to deal with the punk, I would have been vulnerable to OG B, who only had to shrug off the light bowel hitting his face. Nope; I grabbed hold of OG A and hurled him over the table into OG B. The cheap-ass table and the chair behind OG B all gave way.

The Punk obliged me by standing up, trying to clean his face with his right hand and going for his gun with the other (he was a lefty). I hooked his belt with my right, his jaw with my left and hefted him up in the air. I kept the maneuver going, lifting him up until his head was down and his thrashing feet were touching the ceiling then sent him crashing down on his two buddies.

I had no trouble drawing my Glock-22, cocking it and crouching down next to the human trash pile.

[Roman] "Do you know who I am?" I asked quietly. Slowly, I gathered their attention.

[Roman] "No, but you are a dead man," the punk seethed.

Nodding, I flipped out my neat little Amazon blade, scooped out his right eye then cut him down his cheek to his chin in one smooth slash. He started to scream. I punched him with my knife hand in the throat to curtail that annoyance.

[Roman] "So I'm asking you again: do you know who I am?"

[Roman] "N... no," Older Guy A muttered.

[Hungarian] "And that is how I like it. I don't know you, you don't know me, and we are going to part ways and never see each other again. If we do meet, I might be in a bad, fucking mood because you have just about dissipated all of my goodwill for the night," I informed him.

[Hungarian] "Agreed," OG A was somewhat confused and the pain was settling in.

[Hungarian] "Take your guns, your friend and leave," I directed. It was encouraging to see OG B sending me a cautious look before picking up his gun. As they were heading out the door,

[Hungarian] "I'm new to town. Can you direct me to any good clubs in the area?" I asked.

Blink. The punk was still gasping and wheezing. The other two were confused.

[Hungarian] "The Halo Bar, or the Liget Bar and Club," he answered.

[Hungarian] "Thank you," I gave him a polite wave, "and goodnight." I didn't further kick their asses and humiliate them because of the restaurant owner's family. I was about to be gone from their lives. They had to live here, so confusing the reason for my intervention had been necessary. Why had I let them leave with their guns? Two reasons - when they related this event to their confederates, the fact I had let them leave with their weapons would come up.

If I wasn't afraid of letting them leave with their weapons, what did that say about my combat lethality? They were going to come seeking vengeance. Nothing short of killing them and dumping their bodies in the Danube would have curtailed that, the moment I decided to get involved. I paid our bill in silence. None of them thanked me. They were scared.

I couldn't blame them. As Chaz had said, they lived in this low-intensity war zone every day.

"That was an interesting exhibition of futile compassion," Selena mocked me.

"Thank you," I responded chipperly "I'm glad to see my actions were not misconstrued."

"I agree with the mutt," Saku nodded. To clarify, she pointed at Selena, "Her."

"That goes double for you, Baby-cakes," I teased Saku then fled. Saku had been about to punch me so was somewhat unbalanced when she missed and her two contrabassoon gig-bags swung around on her back. You didn't think she was walking around without her bow and sword, did ya? Sakuniyas broke into a dead run, trying to catch me.

Selena, Delilah and Pamela had to race to keep up. After three blocks, I was proving my Olympian status by not being bitch-slap bait for my pursuers. I turned another corner and Fate proved she was all the bitch I needed. I ran into the girl, she began to administer a hip toss, I latched onto her arm only to realize it was a girl so I took the fall with her landing on top of me.

[Hungarian] "Fuck!" she snarled. She pulled away and I let her.

[Hungarian] "I apologize, I wasn't..." I got out before Saku ran up and kicked at me. I blocked the first blow with my thigh and the second with a left armed sweep.

[Hungarian] "Why are you attacking this man?" the new girl grumbled to Saku. "What has he done?" She was pissed with me, though questioning Saku.

[Hungarian] "She doesn't speak Hungarian," I clarified. [English] "Saku, she wants to know why you are kicking me."

"Tell her because you so richly deserve it," Sakuniyas seethed.

Pamela and Selena came up. Both appeared amused by my predicament.

"If she doesn't speak Hungarian, what is she doing in this part of the district after dark?" the stranger regarded Saku suspiciously. I scrambled to my feet. The stranger spoke heavily-accented English

"I apologize for running into you," I told her.

I noticed she had a handful of flyers she had been in the process of handing out when I collided with her. I helped her gather them up and took one for myself. On the paper were four pictures of young ladies. In Hungarian, Serbian, and Romanian it gave their names and a contact number for anyone who saw them.

We were in the midst of Sex Central and our altercation had garnered some unwanted attention. Several prostitutes were fidgeting over the encounter - I was hot and clearly had money - so a pimp migrated our way.

[Romanian] "Alkonyka, you were told to stay away and not to harass our customers," the moving wall of meat chided my new found 'not' friend.

[Romanian] "It really wasn't a problem," I intervened.

[Romanian] "Shut up," he barked at me.

[Romanian] "And I told you and your buddies - give me back my sister and I'll leave you alone," Alkonyka (aka Dusk in English) responded to the guy.

He was big ~ 1.9 meters and 130 kg, plus he knew a little Tae Kwon Do. She was no featherweight ~ 1.83 meters and 62 kg and was far better at Sambo than I was at boxing. What followed was a vicious little beat down where the Big Man ended up sobbing in the fetal position while she berated him.

She ended up rifling his pockets, taking out his phone and scrolling through it. She didn't find what she was looking for, cursed the pimp and attempted to put his phone into orbit. After that, Alkonyka picked up her flyers and stormed up the street. In the eternal sewage flow of the streets, three whores rushed over to help the guy once Alkonyka had left.

My unerring 'party girl' sense had delivered us close to the Liget. I wanted to go in, and since no one showed me in, we went. The two bouncers really didn't want to let me and my armory inside. I showed them my Irish diplomatic ID and let them in on a secret. The club's owner was seeking to open a 'sister' club in Dublin and I was here to check it out.

Me, my two bodyguards and my personal marching band (Saku and her cases) were let in. We had a wonderful fifteen minute time, in we went. Delilah and Pamela sat back and pointed out the various mobsters and gang cliques. Fate conjoined with my lie. One of the bar security types finally got around to telling the bar owner that his 'Irish partners' were at the bar.