

Bounce

He was dead, markedly so, based on the large amounts of blood oozing out of his thick mane. The door to the outhouse was wide open, the hinges creaking menacingly in the evening quiet. In his hand was a gun; he had at least reached for it. His thin Russian face was locked in surprise, his pants all the way down to his feet where a cheap pair of Russian boots twitched. A dank, ugly smell rose up, the fierce combination of human feces and brains splattered on the walls. He looked like he had been there for hours.

“Jesus Christ what did you do!”

Roberto, a thin smile on his sweaty lips, patted Donald’s tiny shoulder.

The Russian had appeared exactly twenty-seven hours earlier, a thin, rattling man with a vicious hacking cough that

threatened to shake the thin man apart. His skin was dreary and white, and spotted all over the place with moles that looked like dabbed bits of chocolate with hairs growing out of them. The nose was broken, seemingly more than once, for it formed a miniature geometry lesson on his face.

He had passed Roberto and moved into the bar where Donald “The Duck” Impressio was sitting, watching the soccer game. The Russian then ordered drink upon drink, way beyond his tolerance. Once past his limit, he quickly picked eye-fights with anyone who would cross lashes.

“It’s my birthday, I can do whatever the hell I want,” he said when Roberto had, very lightly, suggested that maybe it was time for him to back off the drinks.

Twenty-seven hours later he was dead with a bullet through his head.

“Just not his lucky day,” Roberto said, walking out.

The Russian soccer team had been playing Jamaica. The Duck felt no irreverence in cheering for Jamaica, though his friends would have thought him a smaller man than he already was, even though he was shorter than five foot five. The Duck felt that cheering for good sport didn’t necessarily need to involve loyalty. It was the athletic skill, the haste of foot, that carried the day. The Russian felt otherwise, and, quite drunk and not realizing that his home team was down by several goals, the Russian wagered a huge amount of money against Donald that Russia would win.

Donald agreed.

The thick accent and lack of otherwise identifying information later led to the Russian’s nickname: The Russian. Once so dubbed by Bengal the Bartender, the Russian became incoherent beyond words, until, about the time that the game ended and the television reached its quiet static norm, Russia had lost quite badly.

Outside, with Roberto’s help, Donald had removed the agreed upon sum of money, along with the money owed for the alcohol, from the Russian’s wallet. The Russian had stirred mildly,

but Roberto dragged him to the side of the road, where the Russian later urinated in his pants before he had woken up.

Roberto had thought the Russian a little sketchy, and had done his sincere duty in giving the Russian a full pat-down. Having found nothing more dangerous than a badly skewed wielding of the English language, the giant Roberto had allowed the Russian to enter The Bengal Tiger bar, where Barkeep Bengal later admitted that the Russian was, no matter what, good for business. Not specifically for the alcohol he had purchased, but that strange notoriety that his killing brought to the bar.

Bengal had originally feared that the killing would murder his own business. Instead, fascinated lowlifes were swept to the bar like iron filings to a magnet. And once there, like the filings, they wouldn't leave, which was fine by Bengal, as long as they paid. They paid. They also went to the bathroom, which, due to the age of the Bengal Tiger, was located in an old-fashioned outhouse adjacent to the parking lot.

"Bitch!" the Russian cried, barely able to stay in his position, which was on the floor flailing his arms. His drink lay on the bar, half finished. A few cubes lay melted from the Russian's hot, alcoholic breath.

Bengal, therefore, thought that the Russian realized his loss. He did not realize that "Bitch!" had not referred to the game, or The Duck, but the Russian's American girlfriend, who had dumped him, depriving him of the possibility of citizenship. This didn't cross Bengal's mind, for immigration was not a political subject that crossed his mind often.

The bouncer at Bengal's, a huge solid carving named Roberto, was actually a very sweet guy who played golf on the weekends and needed Viagra for his aging body to overcome the memory of patting down too many drunk bikers. He was easily a match for them fist for fist, and removing the Russian had not been a

problem, especially considering that the man had been too unconscious to resist.

"Man I love my job," Roberto muttered, only half sarcastic, as he dumped the Russian at the side of the road. He watched his breathe make smoky curls in the freezing air. Donald took money from the Russian's wallet.

"I'll just take the bet money now."

Roberto just shrugged and returned to his post.

Approximately twenty-three hours later, there was a gunshot in the outhouse of the Bengal Tiger. The Russian, naïve as to the horrors of the contents of the outhouse, went to relieve his malnourished bowels. Death relieved his bowels for him, for soon after his death, his muscles relaxed and a gushing was heard, to match the slow drip of blood from his head.

He had, indeed, reached for his gun, pulling it first on the big dumb bouncer outside. Once he had moved past him, he, in a fit of rage (he had gotten drunk elsewhere first) moved on Donald, who was watching TV harmlessly. The Duck cringed at the site of firepower in the Russian's hand, and had immediately handed back the Russian's money. The Russian, in any case, needed the money. He couldn't afford to lose it to some dumb American asshole in a bar. He was no longer valid or legal. He had to run. He was afraid. Then his bowels had tugged, and, with a quick muttering of vengeance, he ran outside.

Just as he had carefully cleaned off the repulsive seat, there had been a knock at the outhouse's door.

"Hang on!" he said, sitting down.

The Russian reached for the gun at his side and took it up, but before he could even aim the door was ripped open by strong hands and, before he knew it, he was quite dead. Afterwards, there was only the sound of his bowels emptying satisfyingly.

"Jesus Christ what did you do!"

Donald stared at the dead body in horror, the sheer amount of blood startling him. Also creepy was the horribly fluid sound that

accompanied the Russian's death. He looked up at Roberto, who only shrugged.

"He was armed man," Roberto said, his huge body shifting and walking past the shocked Donald, patting his shoulder.

Donald dropped his gun. The tip of the weapon was still hot, and steamed just a bit in the cold air. The smell was overpowering.