

God Wants Local Man Dead Local Man: 'Bring It.'

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This story was originally written by a man named Snails, who will live on in fame forever. The forum this was originally posted on replaces all swear words and obscenities with "fluffy". I did my best at replacing all instances of "fluffy" with appropriate swear words, but there are some places when it just doesn't sound right. Also, Snails is British, and I am American. So I replaced things such as "colour" with "color". Just deal with it.

- Dark Jirachi, March 2, 2008

God wants me dead. I pissed him off. Pissed him off good. I don't know what sent him over the edge. Maybe it was my off-color, sacreligious sense of humor. Maybe it was the bilby I drowned in a duffel bag. Whatever it was, one thing is clear - the great skyfairy wants hardcore vengeance, and he wants it now. Let's educate you on what's happened so far. If you don't want to read, I'll summarize it for you in the next two words.

Get lost.

Wednesday 4th

I wake up at 4:30am feeling like my kidneys hijacked bulldozers and went ape shit on my abdomen. I assume I am either really fucking hungry, or constipated to the max. I stumble to the kitchen, grab a peach, take a dump, and go back to bed. I feel slightly better.

I wake up again at 6:30. Something's definitely up. My kidneys; unsatisfied with the carnage caused by bulldozers; have commandeered tanks and started burning down the Reichstag that is my middle half. I am in serious pain. In my infinite wisdom, I decide to ignore it, still thinking I might just be hungry or constipated.

It's now 10:30. Screw university, I'm not going; not while my organs are having a civil war. I drive up to the medical center and take a seat. "There'll be a two hour wait - the doctors running late," she says. I'm in severe pain by now.

It's 11:30. Sitting up is getting unbearable. I ask to lie down on a bed somewhere, and the receptionist lady obliges. Angry geriatrics envy my special treatment. I feel powerful.

It's 12:00 or sometime, when bang. Holy mother fuck of shit. Raw, intense pain. Someone just Nagasaki'ed my bowel. A doctor comes in and watches me writhe in pain. He asks, "Are you ok?" I reply, "My stomach is on fire." He pushes on my abdomen, then my lower right abdomen. I nearly go catatonic and grip his hand. Wup-wow.

Maybe ten minutes later I'm in an ambulance with a morphine needle in my bum. Morphine is great. I remembered the old people's faces of disgust at my special treatment. It makes me smile. All is good in the world.

I rock up to hospital. A doctor comes and assesses me. He is not happy. He has a monobrow though, so I need not respect him. I get more drugs. I go to sleep.

I wake up and its night. Monobrow tells me they've called in the surgeon from dinner with her husband to do emergency surgery on my appendix, which has ruptured and caused peritonitis. 10% mortality rate in healthy patients. Good, I like a challenge.

I am prepped for surgery. Nurses wheel me into the operating theater late that night. Just before my bed enters the operating room, an attending stops me. She says they haven't done the pre-check on my details. She checks my wristband. It says Mrs. Finch, Jessica. "Mrs. Finch, Jessica" has no allergies. Lucky her. I on the other hand, am deathly allergic to penicillin.

Penicillin had been put on my treatment schedule. They take another ten minutes to correct things. My confidence is not great. My last words to the attending doctors are, "I'm glad someone knows what they're doing." I recognize a monobrow above one of the attending's masks. I smile. I don't even feel the anesthetic. I go to sleep.

Thursday 5th

I wake up early in the morning. It is around 5am. I feel sleepy as shit. Someone is standing above me. It takes me a few seconds to make sense of the face. It's an ex-girlfriend's mum wearing a nurse's uniform. Then it hits me.

She's going to smother me with a pillow...fuck

My eyes close again and I fall back asleep. I had survived. Boy was I on a roll.

It's 9am. The operating doctor comes to see me. She says she removed widespread infection covering my entire mid section with a particularly bad infection in parts of my abdomen and kidney. Apparently, my left kidney was displaced so as to be directly adjacent to the perforation where the infection originated. Smooth move God you cunning bastard. Luckily for me, my other kidney was having a picnic up north during the whole ordeal. You're fault for giving me two you sneaky son of a bitch.

12 hours from death she estimates. Groovy, I feel pretty good. "That's because you have morphine in your drip." Fantastic. Bring me some pie and I will be content.

The doctor leaves. I fall asleep.

It is mid afternoon. A nurse is changing my canular. A canular is the big tube in your arm that the drip connects to. I watch her take it off and replace it with a new canular. She then leaves. I turn away and fall asleep.

Whoops. She didn't put the valve on. Bad, bad girl.

You see, veins have valves. This stops blood from flowing backwards in your body. Essentially, the liquid in my drip stopped going in and blood started coming out.

A good half-hour later a nurse walks in. She wakes me and runs out the room. I have a quick look around and glance my bed. It is soaked in blood. It's soaked through my clothes, through my sheets, through the mattress. Everything. My left arm is stained entirely on one side. I lift my arm and leave an arm print of white. The nurses come back. Goodbye consciousness. To sleep again I go.

That's as much as I'll type for now. Things to come include psycho nurses trying to kill me, falling down in the shower, a near car crash, a run in with a different ex girlfriend's mum's psycho new boyfriend, a run in with a bicyclist on meth and a bus crash.

I shit you not, all of this will be explained. God wants me dead. Read at your own risk. You have been warned.

Friday 6th

I wake up. I am not bleeding or dying. This makes me happy. I look out the window. I shrink back into my pillow. God's just getting warmed up.

The nurses bring me jelly and only jelly. It is all I can eat. Jelly begins to become the nutritional equivalent of abortion. It is the disastrous mess of what was once sweet, sweet glucose. I am taken off the morphine. This saddens me. I am given a different painkiller.

I have it in my hands and think to ask the nurse what it has in it.

"Penicillin."

Great. Why not arsenic? Maybe a dash of cyanide? Hey let's just fire an RPG point-blank into my cerebellum and call it a fucking day. I once again remind them I will die if I have penicillin.

"But it says you're not allergic."

Really? Shit me. And to think I've been misinformed all these years. I'm glad the people who had me undergoing surgery as a married woman of 40 odd years are on the ball with their clipboards. In that case just put the tablet in my drip. Maybe I'll have a stroke, and maybe you'll have a stroke of common fucking sense. Everybody wins.

It's nighttime. I have visitors. Visitors make me happy. A queer and weird nurse enters the room and tells me I need a heparin needle. It's a blood thinner which prevents deep vein thrombosis. Sounds good to me. She interjects in the conversation with a god-awful joke. I comment, "Sorry, that one went over my head." She is not impressed and gives us all a funny look. As she's leaving, I make a comment about her strangeness. Out of the blue she says, "I heard that," and just stares at me.

Then she left without incident.

No, as if that could happen. God's fucking aggro, remember? She turns off the light and closes the door and says, "fine". The whole room plunges into darkness. I'm serious. She left me in a hospital bed with my visitors in pitch-black darkness like you'd expect an eleven-year-old would.

"Weren't you meant to get a needle?" says my friend.

Oh yeah. Lookin' forward to that puppy now.

My friend's stumble around and find the light switch, muttering about this nurse. My friend's girlfriend trips on my drip on the way out.

"Sorry"

No problem. Not like it's connected to the vein in my arm or anything.

About ten minutes later the weird nurse comes back.

"Your friends are so nice. So very nice," she says. She speaks in this sweet sarcastic voice. I am actually pretty scared at this point. She's so obviously not right in the head I can't begin to understand how she holds employment at a hospital.

I roll over so she can put the needle in my thigh. These heparin needles are small needles. "Painless needles". They are actually, when done right. Haha, God, you played this next card well.

She fucking jabbed me with this thing and I jolted. She then pulled the needle out without injecting me and got up

close in my face. "Don't move next time, if you do, and if the needle breaks off in there, you'll need to go into surgery again to get it out. Would you want that?"

I kid you not. She said that. I probably should have made an official complaint. But what the shit was I going to do. I nodded as she fucking jabbed me again. I couldn't sleep on that side all night and it stung like a bitch for hours. I don't know whether she injected heparin into my blood or my fucking bone marrow, but it sure felt like the latter.

I didn't see her again. Thank god. I asked the doctor that night how many more days I'd need to stay in hospital.

"4 more days," she said sternly.

I looked out the window. God had me on the back foot - trapped in this hospital. But if I could hold out, if I could hang on till Tuesday, I'd be free from his grasp.

I couldn't have been more wrong. Darker days were on the horizon.

Sunday 8th

It's 3am. Someone is waking me. It is dark. I am afraid. It's psycho nurse. She touches my shoulder. I think I want to die.

"I thought I'd come check on you."

Oh sweet deal. I too wake others up at ridiculous times of the night to check on their state of mind. Maybe next time bring a fucking air horn. Entertain the whole ward. I tell her I'm fine and just want to sleep. She just looks at me. There's a screw loose in her brain, that's for sure. I close my eyes for sleep again.

"We've restricted your visitors so you can rest easier," she says.

You can't be serious. How can the hospital restrict who I can and can't see? I am still calm. I ask who it is restricted too.

"Hospital staff only."

No way. No fucking way. Psycho nurse smiles again and leaves. You sly son of a bitch God. In cutting off my supply line to the outside world the situation becomes painfully clear. My room has become Stalingrad. Shit is definitely going to hit the fan. There is going to be a domestic. It takes the anger a long time to fade. I fall asleep.

I wake in the early afternoon. A nurse is standing over me. She holds in her pudgy hands 3 jelly cups. She is not happy. She has more chins than fingers, so I need not respect her.

"I found these in the cupboard."

I tell her I put them there. With my hands. All by myself.

"Why didn't you eat them?"

I tell her I don't like the jelly. I tell her I would rather eat my infected appendix than the nutritional effluent they call jelly. I tell her I would rather poison a beaver, shit down its neck, and lash it with the infected bowel tissue they took from my cold unconscious body, than eat the aborted Downs syndrome substance they call jelly.

This was an unwise move.

She leaves and returns with the head of the ward.

"The nurse tells me you're being uncooperative. This is the second complaint we've had."

It doesn't take much imagination to figure out who made the first complaint. The Duchess of fucked-up-something-fierce herself. But God should know better than to fuck with me in the afternoon. I can fight back in the afternoon.

"Stop trying to send me to the morgue and maybe I'll play dice with the pirate ship you call a hospital."

This was the second unwise move I made. Boy did I feel big for about .2 seconds.

"We've taken away your visitation rights. Eat what's given to you or there will be consequences."

I try to roll over to show them the massive bruises psycho nurse gave me two nights prior, but they are already gone. The jelly cups sit on the lunch tray like wobbly green demons. I take out the permanent marker I found in the bedside drawer. On one cup I write "Return to sender", and on another I write, "Auschwitz is the other way, silly". I am hilarious. I can see the medical world falling to its feet laughing. Sadly, the health care system went Nazi-Germany on comedy's ass and destroyed laughter in the Clown Holocaust of 1945.

Good times.

It is night, I must've fallen asleep. The jelly cups are gone. So is my permanent marker. In fact, most of my stuff is gone. All that's left is my mobile phone. I pick it up. I am happy. I have survived. I have only two more nights before freedom. Two more nights before I can drive the hell outta here.

Or maybe not.

I have a single message. It's from my sister.

"Hey I cant visit you bcos its restricted. I forgot to tell you this before, but when i was following the ambulance I pranged your car on a concrete pole in the carpark. It's in the smash repairers. I will pay too fix it. Sorry. Please don't be mad."

A nurse walks in. It's heparin needle time. She holds a jelly cup in one hand.

I am in medical Stalingrad, and a cold winter lies ahead.

God is pissed off. Royally pissed off.

And he's coming across the Volga.

Monday 9th

I wake up. It is morning. My priorities are in order.

Contact doctor.

Get soup.

Survive.

Psycho nurse walks in with the ward head and the lunch lady. They are the three medical musketeers. Angry, angry musketeers.

"We phoned the doctor."

Fantastic. Progress towards a goal that won't put me six feet under. That's a first. I ask about the soup.

"We told her about your behavior."

I ponder this for a moment. I try hard to think of an answer that would most benefit my situation, and maybe even improve my relations with the nurses.

Instead, I ask about the soup. There is me, and there is soup. Nothing else matters. I want this made clear.

"Yes, you're allowed to have soup."

I smile. I am happy. I have waited so long for this day. A food with smell. A food with warmth. A food with personality. I consider making sweet love to the soup. I drop this consideration immediately.

"But you'll have to compliment your diet with jel-"

Her words mean nothing. The soup rests on my lap. It steams away. I close my eyes. To taste it is thrilling. Absolutely mind-blowing. I moan the sensation softly. I hum and shuffle and exhale. It is orgasmic.

I open my eyes. The musketeers are still watching me. Not awkward. Not awkward at all. I figure I may as well be polite. I hold the spoon up to psycho nurse.

"Want some?"

I smile. She is unimpressed. I know she's jealous. Harpies love soup.

"I'll be your care-taker for tonight."

The head nurse chimes in to finish psycho nurses' sentence. Nurses aren't capable of individual thought. They rely on a chattering hub of ineptitude and disinformation to make decisions. Natural Selection turns a blind eye. God has them on his dirty pay roll.

"Until then, behave and don't leave your ward. Your visitors are still restricted. We've stored your stuff in another room until you are ready to leave."

Wait, where's my phone.

"We've placed it with your other things."

Oh no you don't you dirty scoundrel. My phone is my personal property. Get fucked.

"You can collect it tomorrow."

I protest. I threaten to call King Louis. I threaten to call D'Artagnan. But I get nowhere. The musketeers walk out together. As one, they are vulnerable. As three, they fear nothing. I finish my soup. I will need the strength. Medical Stalingrad is in dire straits. Every line of communication has been cut. Higher nurse echelons have me surrounded. Sporadic food drops will not sustain me.

One more night. One more.

I wake up. It is nighttime. Just before eight o'clock. It is silent. I can hear the nurses scurrying about. Perhaps they are searching for cheese. One of them asks another nurse if she's done the heparin rounds.

"Doing them now."

It is the chirpy, sinister voice of psycho nurse.

"67 should enjoy it."

They both laugh. I think nothing of it. I am oblivious. You devilish bastard God. My complacency is to your advantage. I leave my defense ill prepared. Precious time is lost.

I glance at the sign above the door.

67.

Oh no. No fucking way. Not this fucking shit again. I remember the last heparin needle this psycho bitch gave me. I remember her getting up close and personal - blood-tipped needle in hand. I shift into overdrive. I weigh up my options. I am scared. I am afraid. Shit's about to hit the fan, and I'm still in my fucking pajamas.

Then, sitting up, I eye something poking out from behind the adjacent room curtain.

Jackpot.

But I didn't think I'd go that far.

Then again, God goes as far as he fucking wants.

My room is dark. The light is off. I see light emanating from the hallway. It is foreign territory beyond the darkness, but there is no time for caution. My needle is already one minute overdue. Slowly, I edge toward the door. I glance around the corners. My eyes sting. A nurse walks with her back towards me to the West. To the East, a family heads to a set of elevators. The elevators will be closely guarded. To the North lies an empty hallway. My decision is made for me.

I gun it.

I have never commandeered a wheelchair before, but by fuck did I haul ass. If there was a Nascar for cripples I'd have taken pole position. I get past one room. Then another. And another. I am getting tired. Half my energy goes to keeping the stupid thing straight. The other half goes to keeping the thing moving. I realize it is fucking hard to use a wheelchair for the first time. My arms are aching already. I'm running on soup from 8 hours ago. I come to the next room.

Patient Lounge.

Holy shit I've hit Switzerland - neutral territory. I wheel myself in there. I bang myself on the door on the way in. Two men; one in a wheelchair himself; look at me as I roll into the corner. I've bought myself some time.

But not enough.

I hear psycho nurse's voice. She is not happy. She has only killed 2 patients today.

"67 isn't in his bed."

Another nurse has the answer.

"Check the patient lounge."

Fuck. I am royally screwed. The only exit is the entry, and there is no time to escape. I shift into over-over drive. I don't fully understand the implications of my brain's over-over drive. It is a risk I must take.

I roll to the table in the middle of the room and grab a magazine. It is a Woman's Day. Excellent. There is hope. My arms are burning. I make a final push toward the door, just as psycho nurse - needle in hand - comes around the corner. She stands in the doorway. Her shadow fills the room.

Enter shit. Enter fan. Commence'th the shitten'ing.

I throw the Woman's Day at her feet.

"YOU SHALL NOT PASS."

I stare into psycho nurses' black eyes. Katie Holmes glares at psycho nurse from the floor. I am touched by her gesture. Holmes is a hero. Her sacrifice will not go unheralded. The man in the wheelchair is frightened at the unfolding events. I want to take his hand. I want to tell him he is safe. But I cannot leave my post. The patient lounge is at stake. Someone must defend these people, and that someone is me.

A second of time passes.

Psycho nurse is pissed off. Beyond pissed off. Her face turns red. The head nurse appears behind her. I grip the handles of the wheelchair. I am getting scared. Beads of sweat pool on my brow. Miss Holmes looks to me for help. I see fear and uncertainty in her eyes.

Too much shit. Too small a fan.

I wake up. It is around midnight. My thigh hurts from the heparin needle psycho bitch gave me. I am now being closely monitored by the nurses who check me every half-hour. They have been instructed not to let me leave my room. The head nurse stood next to the bed as I ate my jelly dinner. She made certain I ate it, and then removed the tray.

My spirit is close to breaking.

I look out the window.

"Tomorrow, God."

Light from a passing streetcar strafes the room. Shadows move across my face.

"Tomorrow, the fight comes to you."

Tuesday 10th - VH Day

I wake up. It is early morning. Tuesday 10th. It has been one week since my incarceration. One week since the outbreak of war between God and I. Each day has been longer than the day preceding. The great skyfairy has been cunning. He has played his hand in direct assaults and convenient accidents; nutritional and psychological warfare;

and foiled my attempt to break out via Switzerland.

Worst of all, he killed Katie Holmes.

Fucking bastard.

I am nervous. There is no doubt that today God will present his most challenging situation yet; but I am hungry, I am tired, and I am afraid. The nurses' continual checking has disturbed my sleep. My soup privileges have been revoked. My possessions have been repossessed. My only celebrity friend has been slaughtered by a psychotic wilderbeast. Her compatriots have become equally obsessed with my destruction. I have only one solution. It is sly. It is cunning. It is hot.

I'll take a shower.

A shower is the ultimate problem solver. Rheem, unknown to many, was a genius among men. It is the facilitator of all solutions in life. I will take one, I will think, and I will prevail.

With great effort, I walk hunched over to the enclosed bathroom. I open the door and shut it behind me. I take a seat, grab the shower hose, and commence showering.

It feels degrading to have to shower sitting down, but boy is it comfy. Too bad the water is heat, pressure and time limited. They could've just given me a bucket. Then again, the hospital knows better than to give me a bucket.

I could do awful, awful things with a bucket.

The shower shuts off and I get up. I am refreshed. I am happy. So far, the morning has run smoothly and without incident. Sadly, I have not yet learned the lessons of my complacency. God plays his hand. He pulls blackjack.

Fuck.

Stepping out of the shower I slip on the plastic lid of a jelly cup - the contents of which I fed to the toilet some days ago. I fall back, grab at the curtains, and land on my back. My shoulders take the brunt. My head taps the tiles lightly. The bulldozers in my kidneys go on a joyride. A morphine burrito would go down so well right about now. I lie on my back. I will wait for the pain to subside. I will carry on with my normal duties. The nurses will be none the wiser. I cannot; will not; give them a reason to prolong my stay. My sanity, and my life, depends on it.

A few seconds pass. I notice an orange glow from the shower corner of the ceiling. It has never shined before.

Once again I am oblivious. Once again I lose precious seconds. Once again the septic system is poised to assault my fan.

It all comes together. The light is connected to a long string reaching all the way to the ground. Above the light is a plaque.

"Pull for assistance."

There are only two nurses now assigned to my room - psycho bitch and the captain.

And one of them is coming. Now.

I assess the situation. I am lying immobile on the floor. I am cold. I am wet. I am naked. There is a jelly cup lid on my heel.

God has played his hand, so I play mine: I pull a 3 of diamonds and an expired discount voucher for Civic Video.

I am so fucked.

Then it happens. An angry bang on the door. It is psycho nurse. The hospital bouncer. She is not pleased. She has not yet consumed her morning meal of baby.

"What do you want?" she snaps.

Wow. Such hospitality. Where'd they find this gem of a worker. The abattoir? I think fast. I tell her I'm just getting dried. I reach for the towel and rub it through my hair to mimic the sound. This was a mistake.

My head hits the tiles and I grunt in pain. Psycho bitch realizes something's up. For all she knows, I could be training a Golden Retriever to don a balaclava and attack the medical staff. I wouldn't put it past her.

"Do you want me to come in?"

Do you want a mastectomy?

"I'm going to come in."

The fuck you are. There's only one option. I outstretch my foot and jam it up against the door. Psycho nurse pushes hard. I will hold. I must hold. If they find I am injured, they will hold me longer for observation. If they find I have hit my head, they will hold me overnight.

This can not happen.

"What's going on. I can't open the door."

Over-drive time. I tell her my drip stand is up against the door.

"YOU'RE DRIP STAND ISN'T BLOCKING THE DOOR. IN FACT, I CAN SEE IT FROM HERE. IT'S NEXT TO THE BED."

Damn. The psycho nurse is smarter than I thought. Her vision isn't based on movement at all. Last time I trust Jurassic Park to help me escape from a hospital bathroom naked.

"Open the door."

I tell her I can't. I continue making noise with my towel. I plead she will go away.

"Why not."

I have three words for her. Drip. Door. Jammed.

"WE JUST WENT THROUGH THIS."

I slip into over-over drive for the second time in two days. The result is instantly regrettable. I will never understand the thought processes involved. I have doubts as to whether any thinking took place at all.

I sing to the tune of Banana Boat. Loudly. Many seconds elapse. I am cold. I am shivering. I am paining. I am lying naked on the bathroom tiles of a concentration camp hospital with a towel around my head.

And I am singing.

"I'M GETTING THE HEAD NURSE."

Finally, she leaves. Here is my opportunity. The pain has subsided just enough for action. I struggle back onto my feet. I throw a singlet on and a pair of pants. I fling open the door and throw the towel behind me. I cripple-jog to my bed. I lift myself onto it. I pull the covers up to my chest. My heart is beating. My pulse is racing. My escape hinges on this action.

Seconds later, psycho nurse arrives with the head of the ward. They check the bathroom first. They find water, soaked pajamas, and a twisted towel. They do not find the drip or patient 67.

The head nurse exits the bathroom and spots me. She marches towards the bed. She is in a controlled rage. Her pupils are dilated. Her cheeks are flush. Her very being quakes with fury.

I am not a smart man. I am still in over-over drive. A smart man does not stay in over-over drive. I am half-smiling. My voice is feeble.

"I don't suppose you like Jurassic Park?"

Nice.

It is late morning. My belongings have been returned. The doctor has visited me. I inform her that my stay has been uneventful. She laughs. I exit my room on my feet. I head East to the elevators. On my way, I pass by Switzerland. The man in the wheelchair stretches his arm out, begging me to take him. But I cannot. I leave him to his fate. It pains my heart. It truly does. He was here when I arrived. He is still here as I am leaving. I promise to myself that one day I will liberate the captives here. I will be the hero facing the darkness and heralding the dawn. Until then, I must survive. God is still pissed. And I know it. Boy do I know it.

I exit the elevator. Ground floor. Sunlight streams in through the double glass doors. I am smiling. I am warm. I am happy.

I sign out at reception. I am free. Free from heparin needles, psycho nurse, jelly, the pirate ship captain, and seated showers. A cloud passes over and softens the sunlight.

I am not free yet. God is not accustomed to failure. His vengeance will be swift. Today is VH day. Victory-in-Hospital day. But the war is not over. It is in its closing stages, but there are still more hands to play.

Then, a friendly voice. The voice of someone not trying to kill me. It is harmonious.

"Over here!"

It is my friend. He has come to pick me up. I walk over to him. He dangles car keys from his hand. I ask him if I can drive.

"Oh man, hahah, far out man, shit no, no fucking way."

He turns around and walks out the door, still laughing. It was worth a try.

I approach the doors and take my first step outside. Storm clouds loom on the horizon.

The words form in my mind. I know he can hear them.

"If you want me."

A boom of thunder resonates in the distance.

“Come fucking take me.”

Wednesday 11th - VH Day +1

I wake up. I am in my bed. My bed. It is the morning after VH day. I have escaped medical Stalingrad as the Wermacht surrendered next door in a blaze of morphine-induced fury. Tens of thousands have laid down their arms and crossed over to the other side; abandoning me to my fate.

Fuck the Wermacht. I will fight on alone.

I look out the window. I am not smiling. God's offensive - brilliantly planned, yet poorly executed - has been repulsed by a unit of his own creation. The unit has successfully withdrawn from behind enemy lines; across rivers of heparin-fueled flames and miles of antibiotic jungle; to safe territory. It is time to think. Time to consolidate. Time for action.

It is time for the counter-offensive.

It is time to realize the paradox of an antibiotic jungle.

I assess the situation. It is grim. Bleak. Jelly remains in worldwide circulation. New hospitals are under construction all over the globe. In Switzerland, clowns lie dying in the streets. Cripples everywhere rally to avenge the slaughter of Miss Holmes. A confused and PMS-suffering Woman's Day launches an offensive into New Idea. Five celebrities become fat in the subsequent gossip dead-zone. Two more are wed. The world is outraged. Tensions reach boiling point. A shit the size of which the world has never seen is about to hit a fan no larger than a toaster. Worst of all, I somehow caught the flu.

This is what happens.

This is what happens when you piss off God.

Compounding the dire situation is one simple, harrowing fact: God is immortal, I am not. In the absence of a work-around for this I am royally fucked. I could be a martyr. I could sacrifice myself to appease God and set things right. But suicide is a sin. I would go to Hell. I have been to Hell. It is not peachy. Not peachy in the slightest. I would prefer to prolong my stay on Earth. I will survive.

I rise to shower. I will pray to Rheem. I will need his strength. While undergoing this steamy meditation, God's progression becomes clear.

God created the Earth, and man, in 7 days. I had spent 7 days fighting against man and his creations. And man, unto God's order, is governed by the 10 Commandments.

Creation and the Ten Commandments. God is a big fan of symbolism. This will be no exception. His offensive hasn't stalled at all. It has quietened. Time to think. Time to consolidate. Time for action. On the tenth day, Saturday 14th, it's go-go time for God's retribution against me. No fan is big enough for the shit about to come. With a thousand years, and a trillion men, no fan could be made big enough. There is only one solution.

I must dismantle the shit itself.

From the inside.

This leaves me with 3 days. If God is going to rest today, than so will I. I am exhausted. I am receiving soup, but I am still weak. My midsection still pains. I am restricted to light activity only. Fuck that, I have a war to win. Does inter-ethereal war count as light activity? For America perhaps, but for me, no chance.

It is lunchtime. I have had soup. I am happy. I am content. I decide to go for a walk. Walking is important after staying in hospital because the lungs become congested from disuse. While I might not be on speaking terms with my bastard child kidneys, I happen to enjoy a mutual friendship with my lungs. Therefore, I will protect them. I will walk.

I walk in the nature reserve often and without incident. Today however, I would encounter God's auxiliary units, from which I would learn one thing.

God still wants local man dead.

I am ten, maybe fifteen minutes into the walk. I'm walking through the big nature reserve near my house. It's pleasant, but the reserve has somewhat of a bad reputation. Today though, I am just happy to enjoy the quiet of nature and the sunshine. The track narrows to a small rock crossing over the remnants of an eroded creek. One person crosses at a time.

I walk down to the creek. A kid, maybe 17, maybe 18, sits on a BMX in the center of the crossing. He has acne everywhere and a shit haircut. I was once told bogans love rust, but inner-city bogans are of a different variety. They like chrome. Anything chrome is the bomb. The shinier, the better. They are Chrome Bogans.

This BMX was shiny. I figured it was stolen. Chrome Bogans can't afford bikes. That bogans have adapted to ride them is a marvel of evolution unto itself.

"What the fuck do you want."

Yeah, this is going to be pleasant. I tell him to step aside. I add ", kid" to the end of it.

Chrome Bogans don't like to be belittled. They are the Adam and Eve of psycho nurse - all traits inherited.

"Fuck you dickhead."

Chrome Bogan looks at my tee shirt. He's looking for an add-on to his own insult. He's doing a shit job. My shirt reads "O-week," as in university O-week.

"O-week. What fucking gay shit is that."

I would kill him if I could. Shame I can't. My next move defies logic, and is not one I would take again. I have reason to believe my kidneys had already boarded flights to Fiji at the time of the incident. My brain most likely had detached from my spinal cord; dug a foxhole, and bunkered down. Wherever the fuck the three of them were, they weren't with me at the time. I speak flatly.

"Fucked if I know. But the O reminds me of the face cunts like you make when you're sucki-"

I never did get to finish that sentence. Shame. 'Twas snappy.

I get king-hit in the back of the head, off-center by someone I didn't realize was behind me. I go straight to the ground like a dead weight. Chrome Bogan dismounts and kicks me in the upper back. Fucking hurts. Agony. White

flecks are filling my vision. I don't want to pass out. I feel rustling in my jeans pocket.

A few minutes later my vision is fixed and I get up. My head fucking pains. My back is OK though. I'm just glad they didn't kick me in the stomach. One-way trip back to Stalingrad that would've been.

My wallet is lying about ten meters away. My cards are strewn in the trees and shrubs around it. The fifty bucks worth of notes that were in there is gone. Luckily, my car keys and my phone were in my other pocket, which was pushed against the ground and covered when I fell. I call my mate.

He gets there in five minutes and helps me back to the car. I ask him if I can drive. Guess.

He takes me to the police station and I give a statement. I decline the offer of medical help. Fuck God, be a little more cunning would you.

It is night. I am in bed. My bed. It is the night after VH day, and I continue to survive.

"I'm coming for you God."

I look out the window. Dark clouds diffuse the moonlight. A lone star shines in solitary defiance.

"Big time."

Note: the "king hit" had little force to it, and the kick I barely felt, which is why I'm so light hearted about it. In fact, I told the entire story to the police and they laughed along with me. All in good jest.

Thursday 12th - VH Day +2

I wake up. It is mid-morning. Today marks the second day of my flight from medical Stalingrad. Including today, this leaves 3 days until Saturday - the day God's war-machine shifts into overdrive and Blitzkrieg's my sorry ass. I cannot repel this offensive. This had been made clear. I have a Chrome Bogan inflicted bruise on my back to prove it. If I am to have any hope of defeating God, I must strike on the 13th; before the curtain rises. There will be no encore. No repeat performance if I fail. I have showered profusely. Rheem has shown me the way. The fallen have given me the will. Everything hinges on tomorrow's action.

Christmas comes early kids. Crank the fucking milk and cookies. We've got a war to win.

But first, I must navigate the labyrinth of God's bureaucratic bitch. The ultimate institution for crippling men's minds through unnecessary documentation, duplication, and red tape.

Welcome to University. Prepare to be cluster-fucked.

I dress myself. It takes me ten minutes. My mid-section, upper-back, and head are having a house party at my expense. Attrition is taking its toll. I must make it through today unharmed. My capacity for injury has been reached, and then some.

I board a bus. An hour later, I board a second bus. A ten minute walk after that, and I am standing outside the student office at university. It is lunchtime. The short walk has nearly killed me. My mid-section is paining something fierce. I am glad the queue is short. I am desperate to get home.

"Next," says the man.

I am disturbed. The guy serving me has bags the size of grapes under his eyes. They seem unstable. They quiver

with his speech. I pray they do not explode.

"Hi, I spent a week in hospital and missed some tutorials. I want to apply for special consideration."

I am smiling. I am perky. I am the Girl Scout on your front porch offering cookies for money. I am your biscuit prostitute. I hope our transaction is savory.

Bagman does not smile back. God has forewarned the University of my coming. They have prepared themselves well.

"Go make photocopies."

This seems unnecessary. I ask him why. In retrospect, I should've told him the vineyard on his face was ready for harvest. A lot of future pain could have been avoided. I may even have scored some wine.

"You need to make a photocopy for each course."

Ok. Fair enough. I'll pay that. I ask him if he wants all of the photocopies.

"You take them to each faculty in person, and bring one to me."

The faculties are located huge distances apart, but I will respect procedure. An incident is the last thing I need.

I walk to the library. It's a huge effort to walk without grimacing. My kidneys are dive-bombing off the roof into the pool that is my bowel. Everything is getting wet. Everything is getting sore.

I photocopy the medical document I need four times. The cost is \$1.20 per sheet. I make the trek back to the student office. I wait in the queue. Once again, I confront Bagman.

I hand him the photocopies. He takes the original, and leaves the photocopies on the counter. I tell him I'll go hand the copies into the relevant faculty offices.

Bagman plays his hand.

"First year subjects don't accept special consideration for missed tutorials. You just get counted as not having attended."

He smiles. Deadset smirks. He is overflowing with self-importance.

I ask him why he had me make photocopies. I want to know why I just spent twenty minutes tearing the shit out of my insides to waste my money

"Not my problem," he says.

Absolute fuck. I decide I need to break even with Bagman. Two seconds of silence passes. I speak.

"Are they seedless."

Bagman is confused.

"What?" he says.

"The grapes."

"What grapes?"

"Red wine or white."

"What? What are you talking about?"

"Vintage? I'm thinking vintage."

"What is it?"

I make a V with my right hand and hold it in front of my face. I smile.

Flip goes the Bagman.

I start walking away. The queue behind me is laughing. Bagman stands up and presses his face against the plastic divider screen. He starts yelling. Loudly. His eye-bags are fluttering. I can't laugh. It hurts to laugh. But I am happy. It is time to go home.

It is late afternoon and the sun is ready to set when I catch my first bus. I then wait in line for my second bus, which arrives ten minutes late. I am first in line. Yay for me.

I pay for my ticket and choose the seat behind the driver, on the right hand side of the bus. I do not want to stumble around trying to get off and risk injuring myself. God will not score his prey that easily.

The bus fills up. A man comes and sits next to me. He has a monobrow and more chins than fingers though, so I need not... not... respect him? I flashback to the nurse and doctor I met in hospital. Bizarre bastard offspring? You decide. I begin to wonder if his eyebrow could act as a sun visor. I drop this line of thought immediately.

The doors close and our bus driver - a pleasant Oriental man - begins to move off. That's when I notice it.

That's when I notice another bus coming in particularly close on my side. It has no blinker on. I think nothing of it.

Welcome to the public transport system - God's elite cadre of assassins.

Our bus driver slams on the brakes and shouts out. The other bus, as we are moving to leave, cuts us off and heads into the bus shelter lane. The front-left of the other bus slams into the front-right of our bus. The side-view mirror is sheered right off. The impact is halfway between the drivers seat and my seat. The glass window to my right shatters inwards. The bus lurches and bumps the bus shelter itself, snapping off a part of its Perspex roof. I am already buckled over from the sudden braking when the bus hits. I am pushed sideways into the enormous parachute of a man next to me. My bag, resting on my lap before the crash, is first pushed hard into my abdomen, and then flung into the aisle. The other bus continues on for another thirty meters before stopping. Our bus driver is swearing. He gets up and asks if we are all OK. Everyone nods. People are excited more so than angry. Bus crashes are the new black.

We all exit the bus. I feel fine. I don't feel any pain at all. I walk away from the crowd of bus goers. The city sidewalk is incredibly busy. It is filled with people. Another bus rolls up. The people from my bus begin to line up. I wait until the last one has boarded before I approach. A man from the bus company stops me at the entrance. He is not pleased.

"Ticket."

I love bus service. Probably more than this man loves drowning kittens. I fumble around in my pocket for the

ticket. Two seconds pass. Five, ten seconds pass.

I've lost my ticket.

I'm not too worried at this point. Surely, this man is not stupid enough to deny me entry. I explain that I was on the bus that just crashed. I describe the driver. I tell him the passengers on the bus could vouch for me too. I was truly surprised by his response.

"Either pay for a ticket, or walk."

Inside my head, a thousand tiny fans are disposing of a thousand tiny shits. I cannot believe what has just been said to me. Do they want me to pay for the fucking window that broke as well? I struggle to quell my rage, but I am not waiting an hour for another bus. I am going home. If that means paying for another ticket, then so be it.

I open my wallet. I know I have \$5.60 in here somewhere.

Instead, I find 80 cents. Courtesy of the fucking vineyard.

I begin to argue with the man. I point up at the windows and tell him to ask someone on the bus to vouch for me. But he is having none of it. He waves to the bus driver, and the bus drives away.

I check my wallet for my key card. Instead I find a note. It's from my sister.

"Needed card to go to DFO. Pay you back. xoxo."

I assess the situation. Now I understand the Wermacht's position. God's red army has blown apart my only method of transportation. I have .8 of a whole dollar in which to finance my retreat back to friendly territory.

I am so royally fucked. Again.

I make a call. The familiar voice of my friend comes across the receiver. I explain to him what has happened.

"You are a walking inconvenience. Ok, I'm coming."

I love my friends. An hour later and we are driving in the direction of my house. Suddenly, my abdomen begins to pain. This isn't my normal movement pain. This pain feels warm, burning and sharp. I disregard it. My friend asks for his phone, and I turn on the car ceiling light to rifle through the glove box.

"Dude, I think you're bleeding."

I look down at my shirt. Red spots are forming where two of my incisions were made. I tell him it's not bleeding much.

"Maybe you should get it checked out."

I am telling him I'm fine when I feel my abdominals tighten and go hard. The pain doesn't increase, but my whole mid-section becomes rigid. I can feel the blood seeping out onto my skin.

"I'm taking you to hospital bud."

I don't argue with him a second time. I have no choice. God has forced my hand. I am going back.

Back to medical Stalingrad.

It is night. I am looking out the window. The same window. A crueler twist of fate I could not have envisioned, but it has happened. I am in the same room.

Tonight is the eve of Friday 13th – the day of my offensive.

God is playing hardball. He is winning.

And things have never looked bleaker.

Friday 13th - VH Day +3

Room 67, Medical Stalingrad. 0200 hours.

I have not slept since my arrival. The lights are out. A nurse patrols the hallways. The sound of her footsteps is distinct. She is the night shift. She works alone.

The situation is dire, but I am optimistic. God has failed yet again, and I have made progress on two fronts.

First, my bone marrow finally woke the fuck up and made some platelets so I didn't bleed to death. Good game bone marrow. Second, the main forces of the hospital are unaware of my re-incarceration. The only staff to have seen me is the receptionist, and the night shift nurse. They smiled when they talked. No offers of penicillin were made. This can mean only one thing.

They have no idea who I am.

My friend is coming to see me in the morning. He will bring supplies. I will need them. I do not know what will happen when psycho nurse sees me. Her shift starts at 8am. The doctor will not come until tonight. By then, it may be too late. Every organ wants inside the bomb shelter that is my ribcage. My brain is trying to abseil down my spinal cord to dig a foxhole in my lung. My displaced kidney is trying to donkey-punch my bowel. I do not blame them. For only one thing is certain.

Shit's going to hit the fan. Again.

I wake up. It is morning. I am hungry. I am edgy. It is past eight o'clock. My friend is late. Despite this, I have hope. Hope for success.

Folly.

Medical Stalingrad knows not of hope.

I hear her voice before I see her face. Her greeting is the usual - served cold with a hint of Fuck You.

"Wake up, breakf-"

Psycho nurse is a few feet inside the room when our eyes meet. She is carrying a broom and a jelly cup. Probably the same broom she uses to clean her jelly cup cave. Silence passes between us. It is Chernobyl waiting to happen. The USSR about to collapse. I am prepared to say whatever is necessary to keep her calm. I cannot; will not; give her a reason to go ape shit. I cannot afford another setback on the day of my offensive.

For the record, I so very much wanted this to end well.

So very, very much.

“Here’s breakfast.”

My friend walks through the door and throws a McDonald’s bag on my bed.

“I didn’t get you much. By the way you bled on my passenger seat. Who the fuck do you think you are?”

I look at my friend. Psycho nurse looks at my friend. My friend looks at me. I look at psycho nurse. My friend looks at psycho nurse. Psycho nurse looks at me.

Apoca-shit, initiate. All fans; GO for spin.

“And why didn’t you tell me about the staff parking pay-box. You put two bucks in and you park for as long as you want without paying extra. Your ex’s mom told me. She’s pretty hot you know.”

I look at my friend. I plead with my eyes for him to be quiet. I switch into overdrive. Damage control is in effect. I am still calm. The fans are still spinning. And while the fans are still spinning, there is still hope.

“You going to eat it or what?”

It is now that psycho nurse plays her hand. She points at my friend. The fans are struggling to cope. They sense the shit about to come. I am desperate to defuse the situation. I consider over-over drive for a third time. My displaced kidney has no exit strategy. My brain is in my lung. My lung. There is nothing I can do.

The following statement - reproduced word for word; profanity included - marks the moment in time the fans stopped spinning.

“You; get out. You’re in my fucking hospital and you do what I say. This is plain madness.”

I look at my friend. I know what is coming. From beyond the grave, Miss Portman bows her head. I will need her strength.

“MADNESS?”

My friend tilts his head towards psycho nurse. His voice is bellowing. It echoes out into the hallway. If God didn’t know I was here before, he does now.

"NO."

Psycho nurse is taken aback. Fleeting silence fills the room.

“THIS. IS. SPARTAAA!”

Psycho nurse looks to him, and then to me. Her mouth is open. There is outrage and confusion in her eyes. I think I want to die.

My friend laughs and walks out the door.

“Don’t go flying away on that thing yeah?”

Psycho nurse looks at the broom in her hands as my friend disappears around the corner. My McDonalds bag falls on the floor.

Room 67, Medical Stalingrad. 2100 hours.

Doctor can't see me until tomorrow. My friend has been barred from the hospital. Psycho nurse gave me another painful-as-shit heparin injection. My bone marrow is threatening to stop platelet production unless working conditions are improved. My displaced kidney is lost and disorientated. The better part of my brain is still in my lung.

My offensive; the counter offensive; has failed. My only chance to halt what has now become the inevitable, has come and gone. Tomorrow, I make my last stand against God's Red Army with what little I have left. I will be ready. I will stand before the castle. I will herald the dawn.

A man once said Medical Stalingrad knows not of hope.

But none the matter.

Medical Stalingrad knows not of me.

It is morning. I have eaten soup. I sit alone in a bunker, watching an empty beach. I am tense. I am nervous. For 10 long days, God's Red Army has been on the warpath. His cunning has been nothing short of genius. His resolve nothing short of steel. God has fucked my shit up. Epicly fucked my shit up. Millions of fans have been destroyed. Good fans. Heroes to the last blade.

Today is His last chance for vengeance. I have no equipment. No master plan. No ally. I have showered, but Rheem will not answer my calls. It dawns on me that Room 67 holds no promise for my survival. I will need help. Expert help. And thus, my mission becomes clear.

Contact the Resistance. Defeat psycho nurse. Kill God.

Easier said than done.

I get up and walk out into the hallway with mild pain. I take my friend's driver's license with me. It must have fallen out of his wallet during his battle with psycho. I will protect it from her.

Walking North I reach the Patient Lounge. Switzerland. Home of the Resistance. I walk in. The Medical SS have been here. There are no Woman's Day's on the table. New Idea spies have replaced them. I must tread carefully.

A familiar face greets me as I sit down. It is the man in the wheelchair who witnessed my failed breakout from Medical Stalingrad. He is smiling. He seems surprised to see me.

"I thought they let you out. What'd you do this time?"

I cut to the chase.

"Pissed off God."

He laughs. I cut to a better chase.

"Was in a bus crash. Just waiting for doctor to give me the OK."

"Damn, that sucks mate."

I talk to the man in the wheelchair for an hour. He is in his sixties and has been here for 2 months. He's divorced and has kids, but they don't visit very often. I feel sorry for him. He jokingly refers to himself as "Wheelchair," since

he's been in one for so long. I like this name. I take him under my wing. Sitting next to Wheelchair is an older man. His eyes never move from the floor. A cane rests in his lap. I can tell the two are good friends. They both smile and laugh.

I bring up the topic of psycho nurse. Instantly, the two men know who I am talking about. They recount similar horror stories. One thing becomes painfully clear - she is insatiable, and will stop at nothing.

A few hours later we three meet Wheelchair in his room. They laugh at my story.

"Shit guys, 6 o'clock," says Wheelchair.

Heparin needle time, courtesy of psycho nurse. She is rostered on tonight. A fact we are all well aware of.

"We could make a break for it. Get outside before anyone sees us."

I look at Wheelchair. He is grinning like a crazy cake. From this point onwards, I want one thing made clear.

I love this man.

We begin. Wheelchair rolls himself out first. The guy with the cane walks out second. I walk out behind them. The hallway is deserted. We begin our trek to the set of elevators. It takes forever. Wheelchair moves slow. I glance at my watch. We are behind schedule Dangerously behind schedule.

We get halfway before the doors open. Halfway before She exits into the hallway. Psycho nurse. Hospital detective. Hot on our trail. She sees me. There is rage in her eyes. I am afraid. She yells for us to stop. She is pissed. Beyond pissed. I am convinced I am going to die.

"Back up."

It's Wheelchair. He turns to look at me.

"BACK THE FUCK UP."

Psycho nurse begins to shout. She starts to stride. The gap between us is closing. Fast. I am transfixed on her approach. She is the jelly incarnate. Her movements are fluid. Natural Selection has granted her inhuman speed. She is more sugar than man.

"Push me."

I look at Wheelchair. He wheels himself around in the opposite direction.

"PUSH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE."

I take hold of the wheelchair from behind. Wheelchair grips the rims. He tells his friend with the cane to turn around and find another way out. His friend says he knows a way. Psycho nurse is cantering. Hard. There are mere seconds between us. This is my last chance for survival. There will not be another attempt. The forces of evil pursue us into the night. Darkness, be my friend.

I slip into over-over drive. The gear stick breaks off. The revs are high. There is no going back.

Go-time baby.

We begin tearing down the hallway away from psycho nurse. She charges. In slow motion, Wheelchair

outstretches his hand in front of us. He raises his head to one side. His voice is deafening.

“TO FREEDOM!”

Pushing a grown man in a wheelchair, even with his help, is fucking hard. I am exhausting myself. But by God are we flying. We approach an intersection. Wheelchair’s friend is running - cane in hand - in front of us.

“Left!”

The corner is 90 degrees. We are coming in fast. Wheelchair leans just enough to raise the right wheel. We whip around the corner like a skater on black ice. He has earned his title. One day I hope he will teach me.

Down the end of this new hallway I see another threat. The ward head. She is careening towards us. Wheelchair and I stop. I yell out to his friend, only a few paces in front of us and still running.

“Turn around! What are you blind?!”

Every now and then, we experience a moment that totally floors us. This is one of those moments.

“YES.”

He doubles back and runs past us. Wheelchair and I race to catch up. I am in disbelief. Here I am, madly pushing a 60 year old guy in a wheelchair; a jellywoman trying to absorb us into her jellystomach, following a blind-man trying to coordinate an escape from Medical Stalingrad.

“He knows this hospital better than you or I do. Trust him.”

I give a weak smile. I will have faith.

“ROOM NUMBERS,” says blind-man.

I begin yelling them out as we pass them. Psycho nurse and the ward head are right behind us. Another nurse has joined the pursuit.

“74! 72! 70!”

“LEFT.”

We round another corner. I recognize the hallway. Room 67 is towards the end. Racing down the carpet, I see my friend standing in the doorway looking into my room. He is here to collect his driver’s license. He turns and sees me.

“Hey dude I think I left my what the fuck is going on here.”

There is no time to slow down. I tear past him.

“Escape. Angry nurse. Sweet mother. Jesus.”

My friend knows better than to get involved. He does not follow. I hear him call out after me.

“Fuck that. Your funeral you idiot.”

Then, a voice.

“Hey you, you’re not supposed to be here! STOP!”

My friend looks at psycho nurse. Psycho nurse looks at my friend. She is running fast.

Ten seconds later, I look to my right. It is my friend

“HEY GUYS! Room for one more?!”

Fucker.

“LEFT”

My friend sees the problem first.

“What left?! There is no left! Are you blind?!”

Silence. Running continues. My friend sees our leader’s cane. It bashes into the floor and the walls around us. My friend turns his head to face me.

“Holy shit dude I think this guy is actually blind!”

Wheelchair and I speak in unison.

“WE KNOW.”

My friend’s eyes go wide with fear. He thinks he is going to die.

Fuck, I think I’m going to die.

We continue straight ahead. I am still yelling out room numbers. Wheelchair has turned his head to face our pursuers. He yells as I yell.

“36! 34! 32!”

“AIE YE DEMONS, I DELIVER THEE UNTO HELL!”

“28! 26! 24!”

“...BURN IN ETERNAL DAMNATION!”

Wheelchair whips his head back and explodes into maniacal laughter. It is absolute insanity. My friend turns to face me. I have never, ever, seen him more genuinely afraid.

“SHIT DUDE ARE WE GONNA DIE.”

“LEFT.”

All four of us round the corner at high speed.

Sure enough, two elevators lie at the end of the hallway. The doors on both are closed. I look at my friend.

“GO.”

He charges ahead to the elevator and calls it to our level. Meanwhile, Wheelchair is slowing down. I am exhausted. My arms are useless. They have no more give. Psycho nurse and her entourage round the corner. They charge towards the elevators. My friend desperately pushes the button. The doors open. It is empty. If I can just reach it...

I give one last burst of energy. I push hard. Wheelchair pushes hard. Blind-man hauls his blind-ass. My friend is terrified. His finger is on the close door button.

“COME ON.”

We crash into the elevator and Wheelchair hits the back wall side on. My friend slams the button. The doors close with time to spare. I hit the button for ground level. I begin to think, just for a moment, that we have won. That we have escaped.

This, boys and girls, is called complacency. One day, I will learn.

My friend is excited. He jumps in the elevator. Fucking idiot. Never jump in an elevator kids. They will break. It's just what happens.

The elevator stops moving. The doors open to reveal a brick façade. We are in between floors. Wheelchair's friend, somehow, looks in the direction of my friend.

“I'm blind and even I can see you're an idiot.”

I laugh. Wheelchair laughs.

We quiet down. After ten minutes the lift is reset and begins moving again. Wheelchair turns to face me. His face is still flush.

“Hey.”

I face him.

“Whatever happens. Thanks.”

I understand where he's coming from. Two months without a significant other, a son, a daughter, a sister, a brother, a mother, a father or simple friend come to see you. It would depress me too.

But God has one final, ultimate hand to play. His last chance to kill me. To kill a local man.

The lift doors open to reveal the nurses. They are more subdued now. There is an empty bed being rolled by a little ways in front of the lift doors. I move to exit out the elevator. I don't notice that the floor of the elevator is slightly below the floor of the hospital ward. My foot catches on the lip and I fall forward.

I remember the steel bars at the base of the bed getting closer and closer. I remember hearing a few gasps as I fell; drawn out in slow motion. I remember a dull sense of pressure all over my head.

Then nothing.

I would not regain consciousness until late Sunday evening. I would later be told my three friends staged a bedside vigil for me throughout Saturday night. I was, and still am, touched to think about their efforts. I was checked for head injuries, and determined to be OK. I was however, being kept overnight for observation.

That same night I got permission to go outside. It is dark. Traffic flows in red and white lines in the distance. A cold wind filters through the car park. The occasional headlight strafes the hospital wall. My breath curls in tendrils towards the clouds. I sit on a bench. My friend joins me soon after. He's late, as always. I am the first to speak.

"Hey."

"Hey."

"You know they transferred psycho nurse? They received something like 30 complaints from patients."

"Yeah I heard."

Silence passes. It is a beautiful night. The kind you wish you could capture in a bottle and keep forever. The air seems almost electric. It is thrilling to just sit, and watch, and listen.

"Dude, I know I'm not real great with words and stuff..."

I watch my friend waffle on. He eventually gets to the crux of it.

"I just thought I'd let you know that I'm glad you're still here."

There is sincerity in his words and in his face. My friend is a true friend. I have no doubt about that. I could not have endured the last fortnight without him.

I look up at the sky. I had defied God's Red Army and won victory over Medical Stalingrad. The end of a long and arduous campaign had come. I am smiling. I am happy. Soon, I can leave. My strength is returning. I feel better than I ever have in my entire life. I still return to the hospital every so often to visit my friends there. They are good people, just like Miss Portman and the population of Switzerland. One day, you might pay us a visit.

But I hope you don't have too. Not for a very, very long time.

I am local man. God once wanted me dead.

And this has been my story.