

“Teak, you worthless shit!” Rumlow growled as he tossed his near empty beer bottle to the floor. The sweaty glass bottle shattered against the carpet floor, throwing broken glass and frothing beer all over the stained and dingy old carpet. “Get your ass up, I think now is a great time to freshen up your hand-to-hand!” Rumlow wiped his mouth with his forearm and got to his feet, locking his eyes on the smaller soldier as his face twisted into a drunken sneer.

“Fuck off Rumlow, it’s too fucking late for that shit you drunk asshole.” Teak sat at the edge of the bed, hunched forward with his elbows on his knees, a drink loosely clutched in his hands. His bed was adjacent to Rumlow’s, and they had a matching set of faded sheets draped ungracefully over the tops. Teak turned his head up to look at Rumlow, his golden hair falling in front of his eyes.

“You little piss, you’re gonna do what I tell you to!” In a few swaggering strides, Rumlow closed the gap between himself and Teak, and he grabbed a fistful of that golden hair and yanked Teak to his feet.

“Let me go, that fucking hurts!” Teak cursed and clutched his scalp with one hand, while the other bought his beer bottle crashing down on Rumlow’s skull. Rumlow staggered back with a grunt, dropping Teak and holding his head as the room spun in front of him, lights dancing in his vision. “You wanna fight, I’ll give you a damn fight!” Before Rumlow could recover, Teak took another drunken swing at him. He missed, and the wet bottle slipped from his hands and smashed itself to bits against the wall.

Rumlow spit at Teak and shoved the smaller man, jamming his palms into Teak’s chest. Teak stumbled back with a grunt, the room wobbling from all the booze. He barely managed to raise his arm in time to block a wide swing from Rumlow. He could feel the force of the blow rattle down the bones in his forearm. That was going to bruise.

Too slowed by the alcohol, he didn’t even see Rumlow’s other fist swing in from the opposite side, and those knuckles collided with his jaw, sending a spurt of blood spewing from his lips as his teeth bit into his cheek and tongue.

Teak fell sideways, landing on his shoulder on the dusty carpet. He thanked his luck that Rumlow had stripped off most of his combat gear, and fired a kick right at his exposed shin. Rumlow yelped, and halted his advance just long enough for Teak to stagger to his feet and wipe the blood that was splattered at the corner of his mouth. The bleeding had already stopped. “If you keep going this slow, I’ll kick your ass for once!” Teak mocked as he straightened his stance, sobering up several times faster than his opponent.

“Don’t fuckin’ mock me or I’ll have you sent back to lockup you animal!” Rumlow grabbed a pillow from the bed and hucked it at Teak, who deflected the lumpy object with ease. As the pillow sailed out of his vision, it was filled only with the sight of Rumlow charging him with the sheets in his hands. Teak tried to retreat, but found himself backed against the dresser that sat against the wall. His muscles twitched to dive, but it was too late. Rumlow slammed into him like a wall of meat, pinning his lower body. In a blinding flurry, Teak found himself tangled in the sheet, the fabric wrapped uncomfortably tight around his neck. Rumlow grabbed either end and pulled tight, squeezing Teak’s throat. “Still having a laugh? I can’t hear you laughing!”

Rumlow headbutt Teak for emphasis, just to spite the boy. The blow left both of them dizzy, but Rumlow held tight as Teak grabbed at the sheets and tried to loosen them, gagging between each raspy breath. He tried to kick, but with the dresser behind him and Rumlow

practically on top of him, he had no room to wind one up. He could feel his lungs burning, his muscles started to ache, his fingers lost their grip. As his body collapsed against Rumlow, the sheets were loosened, and Teak fell to the floor in a passed-out heap.

“Fuckin’ little... shithead. Passed out before I could teach him a lesson, son of a bitch.” Rumlow kicked one of the bedposts, making the bed rattle. He groaned and rubbed his eyes, and then his head, his drunkenness giving way to a powerful headache. He could feel his heart beating through his skull, pounding it like a drum. Determining that the best cure for a post-workout hangover was more booze, he sat himself on the edge of Teak’s bed and cracked open another beer. He glanced over at the passed-out Teak and snorted. “Enjoy your hangover, dumbass.”