

I woke up from – what I'd call – a nightmare. It reminded me of the old times, when I was a different person. Don't want it to happen again. Don't want to be enemies with Zharena again.

My phone got a notification. I quickly grabbed the device. Hmm... it was twenty minutes before midnight. Didn't sleep much, it seems. Oh... that guy. He asked me if I can meet him tonight in the alley near the park. Ugh... don't want to go there, but I have to.

I began to dress up. Clothes were clean, so this wasn't a problem. However, I had to remember to bring a document file with me. A quick exchange, if everything will go smooth. And that's not always the case.

I went straight to the bathroom. After briefly looking at my face, I used a toilet, washed my hands and then my face. I closed my eyes for a moment and opened it when I was looking directly at my reflection in the mirror.

""You're the one looking like the devil..."" – I said to myself. – "Perhaps, but I'm not one."

When I was leaving the bathroom, something strange happened. It was a faint sound coming down from the ground floor, where Zharena lies on the couch. I had to think about what exactly it was, but I think it was a... moan?

I went down the stairs to see what's happening. The bird wriggled slightly on the sofa, most likely to find correct position to go asleep. But this sounded like... she was hurt. I quickly got to her to see what is the problem.

"Ren?" – I asked, quietly.

"Ruvim!" – she shouted and then paused for a moment. – "I..."

"Are you hurt?"

"Eh... yeah, my back hurts a bit. It's from the work."

"You should lie on a side. Or we can change the beds, if you want."

"No, don't worry. It's okay."

"Are you sure?"

"I'll be fine."

"If you say so..." – I said, as I was going to the door.

"Wait... where are you going?"

"I can't sleep, so I decided to go for a walk. Clear my mind."

"Oh..."

"I don't want you to interrupt your rest. You said that you need it."

"Yeah..."

"I trust you to leave you alone here. Many would do a mess during my absence. So good night, Ren."

"Good night..."

I locked my house and started my walk. My house isn't on the one of main streets, but it's still connected to it. And that means the neighborhood is quiet here. I could hear several howls, but that's understandable, given what

time is it now.

After couple of minutes when I was walking, I got to one of the main streets. All shops nearby were closed. I turned left and was going straight to the park. Even now, I could see a moving car from time to time, but there are periods where it looks like a ghost town you can walk in the middle of the road without any consequences.

I was passing through several crossroads. When I continued going down this street, I looked at various buildings. Here, I could see that there's more businesses - big and small - than residential buildings.

I could see the park in the distance... or at least part of it. I was feeling strange when I got closer to it - I blame my recent nightmare. Nonetheless, I couldn't turn back now. I'll do what I have to do and return to my home.

When I hit the next crossroads, I immediately turned left. As I was going further, I looked at the park again. I saw some movement, but I thought that these were just homeless. I ignored that and went into my destination.

In the side alley, a rat was waiting for me. He was short, dressed in black-grey hoodie, loose pants in similar colors and was wearing round glasses. He was visibly nervous - maybe he thought that he was followed?

"Good, good - you're here." - rat started the conversation.

"Greetings." - I replied. - "You look nervous."

"Maybe a little..."

"You're alone?"

"Like I promised."

"Okay. I have what you need."

"Can I have a brief look?"

I showed him a fragment of one of the pages. He was visibly relieved.

"Finally, something real." - he stated.

"It's yours, after you give me money."

"I have the exact amount, right here." - he showed me the bundle.

I got closer to him. He was smaller in reality. In this type of exchange, one should be focused and careful. When I was giving him the docs, he grabbed them and felt that he wanted to escape without paying. Fortunately, I grabbed his money hand by the wrist.

"What the..." - he started.

"Ot durak..." - I replied. - "You thought that you'll escape me that easily?"

"Ehm..."

"Don't shout - you'll have problems too."

"I-I-I..."

"Why would you do something that stupid?"

"I stole the money. With these documents and stolen cash, I could have more fair

start in normal life."

"And you fucked up. I'm taking both as a compensation."

"You can't do this to me! We aren't different. We should help one another."

"Maybe we have one thing in common. Still, I know what you are and I'll let you go, but without the items."

I did like I said - took everything and started going out of the alley.

"The Da..." - he started, but I interrupted him.

"Him?" - I asked, turning my head to rat. - "He's locked. He can't do anything on his own. Just sending more like him. So stop shouting his name. It won't change anything."

He was tapping his feet, but that's the most he could do. As I was returning to my house, I noticed a police patrol. Strange thing was that I could see two cars instead of one and I'm sure that I'm sober. What was the cause of this? Didn't hear about anything important enough lately.

I opened the door to my house quietly. It looked like Zharena was sleeping. I took off my coat and slowly went upstairs, to my bedroom. I took off the rest of my clothes and lied on my bed. What a day... good that it's weekend now, so I can take some rest. A deserved rest...