

The Pawn

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As I gaze down on the ruins of the town I once knew, I can't help but contemplate what would have happened if I'd acted sooner. I grasp my daughter's teddy bear, and my wife's locket. Tears weave pathways through the grit on my face. I would have orchestrated a stronger World Order, to govern the flaring tempers of aristocrats that had taken hold of their countries' respective seats of power. They bickered incessantly, in spite of the paper tiger that was supposed to unify us all. I would implore from this, that governments had been more forceful in their tactics to stop wealthy citizens from seizing the three countries through civil conflicts. I would have banned the weapons sales by opportunistic regimes. It's no matter; the thoughts and feelings of the pawn are never considered.

All of this started eight years ago. A small petroleum drilling firm was surveying at a spot where the three countries' borders met, when they struck black gold. Unbeknownst at the time, a multi-nation, semi-civil conflict would invariably ensue. Satellite imagery showed us all what lay unseen beneath the desert sands. A massive sea of crude oil sat underneath the ground, nearly half a mile deep and a thousand miles long. In their everlasting quest for wealth, aristocrats saw it fit that they should stake claim to the vast underground ocean of gold. They bought weapons stockpiles and employed their own armies, storming their countries' governments and overrunning the newly pacifistic states. The world had just tried to unite in pacifism, but in vain. If only the World Order had been better prepared for this unseen inevitability, innocent people would still be alive. It was then that the chess game was set.

I was a freelance special operatives agent, and began working for the mock head of my country, a man named Brailent Jordainian. I received good pay for my respectable position, and my name grew in notoriety. On one assignment, to take hostage an advisor to another country's leader, I overheard another soldier in my unit. My home city had

been stormed; buildings and homes had been destroyed. My family... I could only hope they were all right.

Inside the compound where we were to subdue and extract the man, paranoia clouded my thoughts; I hope... Anger welled inside me for even having to consider the idea. In a haze, I missed a simple motion sensor trip, and the alarm sounded. My unit was separated, and I was away from them at the moment. I was better trained than they, and quickly crawled up into a ventilation duct. I heard gunshots, and navigated the variable labyrinth of tubes leading to the place from which the shots had emanated. My unit lay bloodied and dying, slain without regret. The alarm stopped, and I slipped away into the brutal night. In this moment, I realized the ultimate futility of my situation. I no longer felt loyal to the façade of my country; righteousness seeped into my veins. The greed of man can destroy almost anything. I felt it due time for revenge. The pawn moves to contention.

I flung my rope down from a skylight on the roof of a military warehouse, landing silently upon a crate. I took ample amounts of explosives out through a loading dock, and commandeered a vehicle to carry them, but not before activating a few charge timers. As I rode off into the lucid desert sunset, I saw in the rear view mirror an explosion, and a rare smirk graced my dry, cracked lips. I crisscrossed the lands, untouchable in my moral stealth. A high ransom went up for me, and I found amusement in watching it rise weekly. The pawn strikes rooks, knights, and bishops.

I took an old mountain pass back to my hometown to elude detection. The anguish took its position again in the pit of my stomach, incessantly pounding at my gut. Many buildings lay in ruin, and the town was a shadow of how it once was. The bustling metropolis was reduced to rubble. The place I used to work at was still smoldering. My house and neighborhood in the suburbs seemed saved from the attack. On arrival though, my house lay empty, no sign of anyone. My daughter's favorite doll lay on her bed. I knew but one thing to do... take the aristocrat's headquarters who was guilty of this act of blatant terrorism. Jordainian.

The full moon shone bright onto the topless jeep I drove. I saw the massive edifice in the distance, and was sure of exactly where I would take it out. Like some phallic symbol, it stood in singularity against the flat desert, perched upon the belly of the

beast. It existed in duality, both a massive skyscraper, and a concealed petroleum derivative. I knew that the wretched old man dwelt in the top of his tower day and night, and the thought of his judgment comforted me. I snuck into the building from a window ten feet above the ground, first lowering my explosives onto the cold granite floor, then myself. The three guards were just a formality. I traversed the room quietly, reaching a brass elevator door. The elevators were drawn to the top floor to prevent invasion, and the staircases were locked. I pried a shaft open with much force, and tied my rope off. I plummeted into the compound's innards, with only a tiny light and my intuition. It was easy to discern the four giant support columns and I drilled tubes of high explosives into their very cores. For good measure, I planted peripheral charges on a few other support structures. Once I wired the charges to detonate in unison, I left the way I had come. The button was pushed. There rose a massive column of smoke and flame, then a thunderous roar.

Checkmate.