

Monish S.

## Biowarfare

*The annoying hum of the fans above our lab station was really pissing me off. Furthermore, the janitors are so underpaid that our floors have are practically covered in dust and gross strands of hair from the biochemists.*

I sighed, “Another day in the laboratory, another virus for our beloved Russia. Are you excited, Dimitri? Today’s the last day before we launch the virus into Ukraine. No more mess-ups.”

“What do you mean? I never make mistakes,” Dimitri said confusingly.

“That’s exactly what Jordan Hughes, our fellow colleague said and look what happened to him,” I said, urging Dimitri to proceed with caution.

“Okay don’t worry about it I would never do such a thing. Now hold this beaker for me while I pour these chemicals in,” said Dimitri guaranteeing that there will be no screw-ups.

However, the thought of what happened to Jordan was still on my mind and my soft, white hands were trembling as I held the round, glass beaker. The room’s temperature suddenly felt like 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Tiny little droplets of sweat from my forehead started to fall to the floor.

“Hey Victor, you, okay? There’s nothing to be worried about. Come on, remember about the mission. We must finish this by today or else we will both be fired with no family or food to support us,” Dimitri said trying to remind me about what I should be worrying about.

“Yeah, you’re right we should get back to work. But let me go splash some water on my face first.” I said anxiously.

*Was I out of my mind? How could I forget about Sandra, my grandmother, I am already way behind on paying off her medical bills. Yet, something does feel off about today...*

While Victor was gone, Dimitri grabbed the dirty, little graduated cylinder that has a diameter of just 2 inches. He had to be careful of which one he grabs since they are so small. Except, he didn’t pick the right one. He swiftly poured the cool, blue fluid with the silky red. The blue and red substances neatly mixed together, caused an unexpected chemical reaction, and a faint purple cloud of gas, almost like cotton candy, started to fill the room.

“Code RED, Code RED,” was what the emergency alarm was alerting to the chemists in the lab.

One by one, as Victor was gone, the other chemists in the room including Dimitri started to drop like a bunch of fleas. Each of them started coughing and wheezing, struggling to catch a breath of air. People tried to stand onto the tables and cabinets, but nothing was enough. Glass started to break, and tables tumbled over; everything was a mess.

*What is going on out there? I leave the lab for just 2 minutes and something crazy starts up again. And why is the alarm going off???*

I quickly turned off the faucet, wiped my hands dry with rough, brown paper towels, and sprinted out the door only to find out everyone was already dead. It was too late... no pulse, no heartbeat, nothing. Except for the strong, unpleasant smell of the poisonous gas.

*What do I do now? Do I go outside and make a run for it? No, because then the virus will spread all over the world. But what about my grandma in the hospital? Will she be, okay? Of course not, she has SCLC, the deadliest stage of lung cancer you could possibly have. That too and an 87-year-old woman! But what matters more, the life of my grandma or the lives of millions?*

As he slid down against the wall, Victor thought long and hard about what to possibly do in this situation. Time was running out; he could feel the shortness of breath as he cherished all his memories of his grandmother whose life was on the line. Finally, Victor remembered the day he signed up for the army and what his main purpose was as a biochemist for the Russian army.

*"I look very sharp in this neatly ironed, green camouflaged outfit. Don't I grandma?"*

*"Of course, you do my little angel, but remember with this suit comes great responsibility and you must always make the decision of what's best for the country and never be selfish."*

*"Yes ma'am!" I said to my grandma as the bus arrived at the station to pick me up.*

*Screw it, making my grandma proud is what matters the most. The fate of Russia is in my hands.*

Through his grandma's words, Victor has finally come to realize that a day like this may come, and his grandma wanted him to make the right decision. Therefore, Victor sprinted towards the emergency lockdown room, and scanned his fancy white key card against the wall, but then... he heard the soft, quiet, timid footsteps creepily sneaking up on him.

"Turn around with your hands in the air. NOW," the 6'3, about 240 LBS man in the sleek, pitch-black suit said.

*What the heck? I thought everyone was dead. Was this a planned attack? What do I do now? It's not like I could compete with an armed killer. After all, I am only 5'11, 180 LBS which is just the average Russian.*

"Ok, ok, calm down," I said as I cooperated with the man.

"Give me your key card. If not, I will shoot you straight through your huge forehead."

I tossed my key card toward the attacker's feet. In the split second that the man was caught off guard, I slide tackled him down to the floor and stole his gun.

**BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Nothing was going to stop Victor from saving his home country, Russia.

Things started to blur out of his vision, so Victor frantically scanned the key card, hit the giant, red button to shut down the laboratory for good. In the end, Victor was proud that he had made the right decision to save the lives of millions.