

“Scrambled eggs with garlic, peanut brittle, Doritos,” blared the dull P.A. speaker throughout the cafeteria.

Perfect. Greasy had agreed.

I slowly pushed my tray down the counter, eyeing the guards leaning against the door, clearly marked *Confidential*.

*Idiots!*

“Hungry, Raggs?” Greasy asked, jolting me to reality.

“Yes, very. Decided to agree?” I replied loudly at first, then toning it down to a whisper.

He leaned in close. “As long as you bust me out of this joint.”

His breath smelled like garlic, “And if you mess up, even once, I’m turning you in. Capiche?”

I grinned as he pushed a small box into my chunky scrambled eggs.

“Eat up.”

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I scooted towards my table, trying to not draw attention.

“Finally gonna put some weight on, Raggs?” Bull snorted loudly, patting my back. Word of advice: never let a 6 foot 6 inch, 250 pound man named *Bull*, “pat” your back.

I coughed, trying to breath again. “Yeah, sure.”

I sat down and quickly pulled the box under the table.

Two words, painted in red, rested on its rough surface. *Waterproof Matches*

I gasped. Greasy might have been more valuable than I thought.

“What happened, what are you hiding?” Twitch immediately demanded.

“Nothing!”

“Are you sure?” his fingers danced on the table.

“Yes!” I shouted back, my face was burning with nervousness, turning too many heads to my table. Including some guards’.

Three of them walked toward the table.

*No! no, no, no! not right now!*

“Is there a problem?” one asked, resting the point of his assault rifle on my back.

“No sir,” I stiffly replied. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Greasy shaking his head.

The second guard peered down at my tray. “You hungry, Raggs?”

“Yes sir.”

“I bet you are, freak. You still have seven years of staying hungry.”

In the split of a second, my food was smeared across the floor. The guards walked away laughing.

*Idiots!*

I bent down and picked up the garlic, peanut brittle, and the bag of Doritos, stuffing them into the pockets of my orange jumpsuit.

“I lost my appetite,” I said, walking to my cell.

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I consider myself lucky. I consider myself very lucky. My cell is medium sized, has one bed and a large, black plastic whatever-they-are-called things blocking the view outside of the cell, and blocking the view inside the cell. That’s not what I’m lucky for. Almost everybody has a cell like this, besides the fact that I have no cellmate. What I consider lucky about this place is that under a loose block is a large empty area.

I said a silent prayer.

Actually, *silent* is probably the only type of prayer a guy should attempt with two or three armed guards patrolling the hallway.

In my prayer, I made sure to include specific thanks to whoever lived here before me. Also, I thanked Greasy, for going along with my plan. Except I’m still in freaking jail.

I stood up and neatly placed my scraps of breakfast along with the rest of my hoard of food. I may suffer from acute paranoia, but there is a reason for all of this. It will come in handy on Mantis’s birthday. He’s got it coming for him.

Harold Alman Manis is the warden of Greystone prison. He’s extremely religious... And cruel. Manis has been the warden for the past ten years, and is obsessed with “cleansing the world of all sinners.” There can’t be a more perfect nickname for him. He wears a thick gold crucifix around his skinny-ass neck, as if daring us to take off running with it, clutched in our blistered hands.

This prison wouldn’t be so bad without him, or his tall gleaming marble statue in the middle of the cafeteria. Everyone has to wax it at least once a week. You chip it, and Mantis

personally gives you 60 lashes with his whip. Ten years ago, my brother dove at the statue, his spoon in hand, and started attacking it. He chipped it about twenty times. He died of blood loss.

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“Bologna sandwiches, apples, orange juice.”

*What are you thinking Greasy!? Did you already back out!?*

“What the hell are you doing!” I scowled at him.

He ignored me.

“Greasy!” I yelled through my teeth, quietly.

He looked up. “I poured you some juice.”

“I don’t want any damn juice!”

“This kind you do.”

He placed a plastic orange cup on my tray and waved me off. He might as well have thrown me off the island into the rocks. With hate and confusion, I replayed the moment over and over in my mind

*“This kind you do.”*

How could he have betrayed me like this? Now we’ll both die either by Mantis’s whip, or food poisoning. And I used to think cafeteria food was good.

I had to move on, without Greasy. I picked up the cup, and placed it on my parched lips. A sudden shudder ran up my spine. “Grease!” I exclaimed. I look over my shoulder to Greasy. He’s grinning.

“Thank you,” I mouthed.

BRRRINNG! Dismissal bell. Time to go.

“Raggs! Wait!” I turned around to see Greasy holding a large black bag. “I need you to take the trash out to the chute.”

He is the smartest jail cook. Ever.

“Gladly.” I took the bag and walked towards the garbage chute at the end of the hallway. Directly to the left, is my cell.

I looked around, nobody. Everyone had left to the courtyard. I pretended to lift the bag as I shoved my hand through the thin layer of trash. My nails scratched against metal. I took a grip and I pulled upwards. Nope, too heavy for one hand

*What is it!?*

I placed the trash bag on the ground, and with both hands this time, I pulled.

*Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God.*

On top of the pressure cooker, one world stood out. *Presto.*

A pressure cooker!

Even though it was old, maybe 10 years, it was still a pressure cooker. And at that moment, I thought about a million ways to blow the statue up.

*NO!*

This was my one chance to escape. I was not going to waste it.

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BRRRINNG! The last bell of the day rang, announcing dinner.

I shoved the cooker back with the hoard of food and I started walking to the cafeteria. Once I near the doors, I noticed the large crowd gathering around the courtyard.

“Savages! This is what happens when you don’t follow the rules!” yelled Mantis.

The crowd was too dense to push through. Even when having a body as skinny as mine. I heard the crack of the wip. Again. Again. And again.

I heard screams of pain. Again. Again. And again.

“This is what happens when you do not respect what has been given to you!” Mantis was still yelling.

The curiosity is too much. I shoved past people, until I run into Bull. His face was struck with terror. I continue to move on. I finally broke through the barricade of inmates, and I saw a wooden pole erected in the middle of the courtyard, chains running down to a pair of hands. The body was hunched over, but I knew who it was. *Was.*

“GREASY!” I ran towards Mantis. A guard gets in my way. “LET ME THROUGH!”

He raises his arm, clenches his fist, and smiles the second his hand makes contact with my face.

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My face stings with blood when I awaken. I look around my jail cell

*Who brought me back?*

I shake the thought off.

I sweep my feet over the side of my bed, landing hard on the cold stone floor. Moonlight is still shining through the tiny crack in the wall that I can call a window, but it's much too high up to see anything.

*Would it be so hard to install a clock?*

Really, the only person in this hell-hole with a watch is Mantis, and his is a golden Rolex. I swear, he wears all this bling just to play with our minds.

BRRRRRING!

*Shit! Are they trying to give us a heart attack?*

Ahhh, mornings. My least favorite part of the day.

The bars swing open releasing a horrible screeching noise. I trudge along the hallway, along with the other thirty-something people who live in Corridor G. The only good part of mornings is Greasy gives me stuff for...

*Greasy!*

Holy crap! I forgot about him!

I quickly locate Bull and Twitch.

"Guys! What happened to Greasy?"

Bull looks down at me, towards Twitch, then back at me again.

"Raggs, he... he..."

"He what?" I'm almost screaming now.

Finally, Bull grabs me by the shoulders and looks me directly in the eyes.

He just shakes his head.

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*Oh joy*

I poke my cereal with my spoon.

*Unflammable food*

Yeah. That was it. All that food I'm storing, all flammable.

"Bull," I ask "Did he chip the statue?"

He put his plastic cup down. "Naw, Some guards caught him stealing from the kitchen."

*Oh crap!*

"Did he rat me out?" I anxiously ask.

"What?"

“He didn’t rat me out!” I owe Greasy too much. “Bull, Twitch, I need your help. do you guys like living here?” I ask them.

“Of course we don’t!” Twitch answers. You can tell by the way his eye is quickly contracting that he’s getting really annoyed.

“What if I told you Greasy and I were planning to esca-”

“I’m in,” Bull interrupts.

“I’m in two,” Twitch adds.

“Perfect. By the way, how does tomorrow work for you?”

“Mantis’s birthday? I think I could fit in in my schedule,” smirks Bull.

I tell them the rest of the plan, until the guards shove us out of the cafeteria. I love the way they fear Bull. They tremble a little, stiffen their back , then speak in a really high voice.

“You’re so lucky the guards fear you Bull,” I said.

“See you tomorrow,” he says, jutting away my last comment.

“I’ll be there.”

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BRRRRRRRRING!

I’m so glad that’s the last time I’ll ever have to hear that stupid bell. It’s the last time I’m going to have to sleep in that stupid bed. God, I hope I’m not getting sentimental. I march on into the cafeteria gloomily. Greasy helped me so much. I have to break out now. For Greasy.

“Surprise!” Twitch yells behind me “Guess who’s the new cook!?”

That caught me off guard. “You’re the new cook!? Wow, they really are trying to kill us.”

“Relax scrum, all I have to do is heat up some stuff,” he says as if I was supposed to know.

“Whatever. Are you ready?”

He smirks. “The stove *accidentally* got wheels attached to the bottom, thanks to Yours Truly.”

“Good. Wait for my call at lunch.”

Lunch can’t come soon enough. I’m daydreaming so much the guards have to shove me a few times to get back to work. Finally when the bell rings, I rush towards my cell. Once I’m there, I pick up my, what should I call it? How about *refurbished* pressure cooker. Yeah that’s it *refurbished*. Anyways, I run down the hall with the cooker in my arms, towards the cafeteria.

Mantis's birthday is my favorite time of the year. All the guards are off someplace else getting drunk, and you can just walk right into the cafeteria with a pressure cooker. There are only three people in the cafeteria right now, Bull, Twitch, and me. Everyone else is sleeping in.

"Let's get to work," I announce.

I unload all the food from the cooker and replace it with oil. Bull helps me move the stove to in front of the *Confidential* door and we place the pressure cooker on top lining the door with the food.

"Twitch, care to do the honors?"

"Gladly," he replies.

He drops a single lit match on the pile of food and turns the stove on way up to the highest setting.

After about 20 minutes the pressure cooker finally starts to shake violently.

"GET BACK!" Nothing.

Thirty minutes later, the cooker erupts in a metallic explosion.

"What now?" Bull asks.

The rest of the huge double-door engulfs in flames and falls apart. I walk through the doorway, Bull and Twitch following. Inside is a large armory with weapons all over the wall.

"Wow," I gasp. "They really could have killed us anytime they wanted."

Suddenly, a door near the end of the room opens, and emerges a dizzy and very possibly drunk guard. He shouts something and hurries back inside. I can't hear him, I'm picking as much stuff as I can carry. The three of us run into another doorway leading to a narrow hall. We're halfway through when more guards start chasing us.

"BEHIND ME!" I order, setting up my riot shield. The guards shoot a few times, barely making a dent on the shield. I take out a pistol and return fire.

"STOP MOVING!" I scream to them.

*That was stupid.*

At the end we find an unlocked door. We walk inside.

"This is it. All the rumours are true," I whisper.

We lock the door, and look around. A large tank occupies the center of the gargantuan room. This place is more like another building built into the side of Greystone.

"Military supplies," I tell them. "This is where they manufacture them."

After searching a bit, I see an EXIT sign.

“Guys,” I say “time to go.”

They don’t argue. The door behind us is being wildly pounded on. Bull and Twitch zip to the exit. As I march out, I hear the click of the gun on my back.

“Don’t move,” Mantis says coldly.

Without restraint, I twist around, punch him in the stomach and I rip the gun from his hand.

“Oh, and Harold? You have a happy birthday.”

But he can’t hear me. He’s unconscious.

I swiftly walk over to a pile of crates labeled DANGER EXPLO... aw hell, who cares what it says? I start running to the door. The pin of my grenade hits the floor in a loud *CLANG*. The military speedboat comes into view as I run towards it. Bull and Twitch are yelling something.

*BA-BOOM!*

Something hits me in the neck. The world shimmers into darkness.

“Raggs! RAGGS!” Bull is slapping me and spraying me with a hose. “Welcome to Miami.”