

Machines

Hamburg in the shadows

Von Alaiya

XXVI – Ice cream

[JUSTIFY]“You'll need to shut down the eyes and the arms”, Heidenstein said, while Pakhet lay down onto the couch going into the CT.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“I feared so”, Pakhet muttered. She knew that the newer tomographs worked with electric waves. But of course she never liked it. Without the cyber eyes she could not see and without her arms she could not defend herself.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“You'll just need to shut them off shortly”, Heidenstein said as if he knew what she was thinking.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She gave a long sigh. “I know.” She closed her eyes, before giving the mental command to shut them off. Another command and she shut down the arms, making her unable to move them or even feel them at all. She hated this feeling.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“It will only take a minute”, she heard Heidenstein say.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Just hurry up”, she muttered.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She could feel the couch move into the CT and heard the noise created by the machine. In fact she was thankful that she had not to take out the eyes for this, because there was just no worse feeling then just being aware that her eye sockets were actually empty.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]While the machine was working, she felt more and more uneasy, but she tried to hide it lying motionless on the couch. Relief filled her once she could feel the couch moving out of the CT. “Can I turn the ware back on?”, she asked out loud.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Yes”, she heard his reply.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Once again she gave a mental comment, glad that it was all it took. She knew older ware from just twenty or thirty years ago had manual, mechanic switches that had to be pressed to turn the ware on and off. For her it would have been impossible to turn her arms off or on by herself, as both her arms had been replaces with ware.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Can I get up?”, she asked, when her vision returned and feelings returned to her arms, even though those still did not feel right.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Wait one more minute”, Heidenstein replied.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet gave a long sigh and looked up to the ceiling of the room. She understood that he was worried, but the couch was rather uncomfortable and she rather would like to lay down properly to get a few hours of sleep. After all sleep was the best way to cure head aches – to her experience at least.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Well, it seem you are alright”, Heidenstein finally said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She looked over to him, as he was still looking at the AR displays of the CT. His eyes were still scanning the 3D-display for anything unusual, but finally he seemed content. "Well, it seems you are lucky. Nothing is broken and there is no bleeding inside the brain. Crash seems to have actually quite a good control over his strength."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet sat up. "Thankfully so, I guess."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Heidenstein looked at her. "Well, never the less you should lie down for at least a day. You have a light concussion and will probably get a nasty bump."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I can do that, I think", she replied with a faint smile.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Sure?", he asked, looking at her with a smile on her face himself.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She got up. "As long as I can wear something more dignified." She looked at the johnny she was wearing.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I don't think that's a problem", Heidenstein replied.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Good." With that she stood up and went to the changing cabin next to the exam room.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Maybe an hour later they were sitting on the sofa of Heidenstein's make-shift apartment, eating some soy-noodles with sauce. Pakhet would have preferred proper food made out of real grain, but she also did not feel like ordering something. So she had to content herself with the soy-food while they were watching news, before Heidenstein agreed to watch some medical soap operas, just so she could enjoy his ranting.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]It was just after eleven in the evening, when Heidenstein turned off the trideo. "I think I'll go to bed. And you might want to lay down, too."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I know", she said, as she felt that her head-ache was returning. But there was still something she had been thinking about for days now. The entire CT-ordeal had made it just more urging. "Doc?", she asked faintly.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Half in the movement of standing up, he turned to look at her. "What is it?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet hesitated for a while. "Well, I thought about what you said, you know? About the arms. And if you say, that the flesh-arms won't be any worse physically then these are, I'll do it."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"If we upgrade you via gene treatment, they will be as good as your cyber-arms", Heidenstein said. "Maybe even better."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Okay", Pakhet replied with a long sigh. It was still a weird thought to consider that she might have real, warm hands with real feeling. Arms, that can be hurt.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Heidenstein, too, hesitated. "For what it's worth: I think it is a good decision."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY] [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet spent the next day, doing as Heidenstein had said: Lying down. She still had some head-ache and hence actually enjoyed just resting. And after all there was nothing that could be done, as just around noon a sudden freak storm started to blow over Hamburg. And as if a storm was not bad enough it also caused some electric malfunction.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]And even though black-outs were rare out of the sprawls, there was about half an hour of such a black-out in Bergedorf. But as they were in a hospital and hence had an emergency generator they were barely affected by it.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Somewhere in her subconscious she knew that she should have more

thoughts about staying in the hospital again. Yet she was somehow okay with it. After all she admitted by now, that she considered Heidenstein as a friend. And while she never stayed over night with Robert, she told herself that it was, because Robert only had a one-room apartment.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]And for most of the day Heidenstein was down in the street clinic, building something he said. Apparently he was already preparing for the gas-rig. Pakhet was eager to prepare for it herself, but at least for this day she was keeping her promise to rest.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]This of course did not mean, that she was not at least thinking about what she would need to do before going on that run. She planned on getting herself a better armour – just in case – as well as a better assault rifle, as she doubted that the Parashield would do her much good on that rig. She also would need to stack up on grenades and considering what Schmidt had said about them learning to dive it was probably a good idea to stack up on some diving supplies. Thankfully they had some Saeder-Krupp conscript and hopefully would be able to buy something from S-K.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]With all of that in mind she spent her afternoon in the guest bed looking up things out of several catalogues from S-K on her commlink. Mostly she was looking for some prices to see how much she would have to spent on the equipment she would need.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]In the early evening the storm ceased and news appeared, that it had been caused by a huge toxic spirit wrecking havoc in the harbour, which then just returned into the North Sea after a few hours.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]It was somewhat after the storm had ceased that her commlink started to buzz. At first she did not not recognize the number, but she recognized the picture from the video call immediately.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Hey, Pakhet”, Murphy said grinning into the camera.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]So what did he want? “Hey, Murphy”, she said and raised an eyebrow.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“I kinda did not get to ask about that yesterday”, the elven boy said. “But what is about my ice cream?”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Geez, the boy really had taken that offer quite serious, eh? Well, in a way at least, as it was clear that he just wanted to make sure she was to pay up on her joke. “I guess you deserve that.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“See”, Murphy replied. “So, when do we meet?”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet sighed, before thinking about it. “Well, the doc was quite adamant that I'd stay down today. So what about tomorrow in the afternoon? 3 p.m.”, she suggested.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]The grin on the elf's face broadened. “Sounds fun”, he said. “So where do we meet?”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“You know the shopping arcade near where the old harbour was in the north of Mitte?”, she asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]He nodded. “Yeah, of course.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Let's meet there tomorrow afternoon”, Pakhet said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Okay”, Murphy replied. “I am looking forward to it.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“I bet you are”, Pakhet sighed.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“See you tomorrow”, the elf said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Yeah...” Pakhet hung up and shook her head. Great, so she was about to babysit a teenage elf. But the hell – she had said she would pay him in ice cream and

who was she to break her word?[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY] [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]In the end Pakhet spent the rest of the day and the night at the hospital. Maybe the worst part about this was, that Heidenstein did not even say anything to it. It seemed to not even be a question, that she stayed here. Well, maybe she really she should get worried about it after all. But then again what else was she to do?[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]At least the small cut healed up rather quickly and for the most part she had barely any more head-ache when she got up the next day.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"So you are up again?", Heidenstein asked, when she came down to the shadow clinic. He was sitting in parts of his chemical laboratory doing – well – something sciency.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Yep", she replied taking a sip of coffee as she had not been able to help herself and had taken a mug with her. He had a block with actual paper lying in front of him, making her once more roll her eyes. For actually not being that much older then her, he played the old guy part pretty well.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]He was using his equipment, which was hooked up to a computer, to apparently run some sort of simulation, while he was taking notes. He shot her a short look. "Then you are feeling better?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Well enough", she said and took another sip of coffee. "What are you doing?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Trying to mix together a combat drug", he replied, making her raise an eyebrow again.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She did not think too highly of any sort of drugs – well, except alcohol – especially combat drugs. "So, you are going to be a drug lord next?", she asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Not quite." He sighed and turned around. "I am trying to mix up a combat drug for myself, so that I – if needed – can be of better help in fight."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"So, you are trying a Mr. Hyde?", she asked, eyebrows still raised.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Well, hopefully not that drastic", he replied.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Hopefully", she muttered. The last think she would need out on that gas-rig was a doc that had gone out of control.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]He gave her a hurt look. "You know, I actually know what I am doing."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"That's what Jekyll said", she replied dryly.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]At that he just sighed. "Suite yourself. I take it that you won't be interested in a custom fitted combat drug."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"So far I never have taken any combat drugs, so: No", she said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Heidenstein shrugged and got back to work, while she kept standing in the doorway nipping on her hot coffee. Only after a few more minutes she raised her voice again. "You know, about Schmidt's big run. I am thinking about getting a proper armour for that – and some other equipment, so... I guess I will go shopping tomorrow. Are you coming along?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]This time he did not look up from his work. "Sound's like a good idea. Why not today?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"You know I promised Murphy some ice cream, right?", she said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Yeah. So you meeting with him, I figure", Heidenstein assumed.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Pretty much." She put her now empty mug down and went, to have a look at his notes. She did recognize some of the chemical formulae, but was not entirely

sure what this was supposed to do. Considering that he was using hand writing – something she most certainly was not used to – it did not make it any easier. “Whatever”, she muttered when she decided that she did not care enough about it to try and properly understand it. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]In the end she turned around and wanted to go, when it was Heidenstein, who started to talk again: “Once more question, Pakhet.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She just had taken the mug back up to bring it upstairs, when she turned around. “Hmm?” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“There was something else, I asked you about, do you remember?”, he said looking over to her. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]At that she had to think for a short while. She had already talked about his suggestion to clone her arms and it was pretty clear that – against better knowledge – she would for now stay with the little “team” of theirs. But then she remembered. He was talking about medicine. At least she hoped he was. “You mean the teaching thing?” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Yeah, that”, he replied with a faint smile. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Actually Pakhet had mostly forgotten about that. But she remembered that he had offered her to learn more about medicine, to learn about to properly do a surgery from him. Having forgotten about it, she of course had barely given it any more thought, making her unsure how to reply. “Oh, that”, she said and made a long pause to buy herself more time. A part of her still wanted to agree with it – and be it just to show him, that she could be a good doctor. Another part, though, protested heavily as she could not shake the feeling that it would turn her into something she was not. “Well, I guess that it would be helpful”, she said vaguely. “I guess we could try something *after* we are back from that gas-rig. If we return, that is.” Her tone was dry. Somehow she was still sure that Silent, Dacart or even Slap would find a way to kill them out there. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Good enough, I guess”, he sighed. “Though I could use a helping hand out there, too.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“You might get two helping hands, as long as those are not too busy keeping things away from you.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]He smiled and gave a sigh. “Fair enough.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY] [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]The shopping arcades were in a modern part of Neue Mitte, near to the harbour. Pakhet knew that the arcades had been build right where another arcade once had been standing before the black flood. When the water retreated, they had rebuild the arcade at least in function, as the architecture had been completely renewed. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]The building was modern and most of its outer walls were made of glass and metal, reflecting the beams of the sun that managed to find their way through the smoggy air. All in all it was actually a rather nice day. The sky was mostly blue. The only thing that was off, was the fact that the wind was blowing from the sea, keeping the polution gasses above the city. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Even though it was the beginning of the week the arcades were buzzing with life. Mostly young people, teenagers and a few students, were walking through the shops, sitting in the cafes and generally seemed to have a good time. It was the afternoon and school was probably over for them. Maybe it was even vacation time? It was so long since Pakhet had visited school, that she did not really know. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Of course there were some adults around, too. People that were probably

either working shifts or not working at all. After all: Even in the sixth world there were people, who had a husband or a wife working, while staying at home themselves. And maybe some of them had jobs that mostly took place at night. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet found Murphy standing at the entrance waiting for her. He was looking like an elf again – and like a teenager, fitting right in with most of the other visitors. Just like both times she had seen him in the safe-house he had short brown hairs and blue eyes. Once he saw her, a grin appeared on his face and he waved at her. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]And with the thought that – all things considered – she owed him what she had promised, she shrugged and went over to him. “Hey, Murphy”, she said though it was audible that she had to suppress a sigh. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Hey, Pakhet”, he echoed her tone perfectly, before grinning again. And there was a certain child-like sincerity in this grin that Pakhet could not quite decide whether it was charming or creepy. There was a moment of silence, before he added: “So, where are we going?” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“To a place that has real ice cream”, she replied. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Real like in with real milk?”, he asked. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]With a faint smile on her face she nodded. “Exactly that.” She looked through the arcades' glass doors. “Well, let's go.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy nodded and followed her, when she went inside the arcades. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Even though it was not that hot outside, the aircon was apparently running at full power inside. Well, she just hoped she did not catch a cold from it – because she knew she had to be on that gas-rig in twelve days. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“So, how are you feeling?”, Murphy started chatting, while they were standing on the escalator. “I bet that punch had hurt.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“You don't say”, Pakhet muttered. “But it's alright. Just a small bump. The big guy has actually good control over his strength.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Now he only needs control over his smell”, Murphy said with a dramatic sigh. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She shrugged. Sure, the Minotaur stank but as this was not the only weird thing about him, so she had just done her best to ignore it. “You better don't say it in front of him.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“I'll try”, he replied. “Though sometimes things might slip out.” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet sighed. Was the boy just playing though or was his simply not that attached to his life? “So you are really playing his manager, then?” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Yep.” Murphy grinned. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“And I thought you were afraid of him”, she teased him. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]They arrived on the second floor, when the elf gave a shrug. “I am not keen on being hit by him. But he is a nice, big guy... Who still cannot stand me, but we can work on that, right?” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Your funeral”, Pakhet replied and gave him a smug look, before she turned to lead the way to the cafe she was looking for. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“I can watch out for myself”, the boy replied. “Even if he gets angry at me, I am quicker than him!” [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“Until you are not”, she said. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy just shrugged and grinned and followed her, when she went for the ice cream parlour she had been looking for. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She sat down at one of the tables right in front of the parlour and looked at

the menu in AR. She had been here before, but she was curious whether there were any special offers. Especially as prices for real products were changing all the time. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"AR menus, eh?", Murphy asked and got out sunglasses. "I should've put in my contacts." [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet shot him a look. "Well, I don't need anything like that." [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I know", he replied and paused for a while. "But doesn't it feel weird?" [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]People asked that question definitely too often. She had always thought it was common knowledge that this kind of question was considered rude – but by now she felt like she had to correct herself. And so she just shrugged, as she did not feel like answering the question. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]At least the boy seemed aware that he had somewhat offended her, as he changed the subject rather quickly. "So I can order real ice cream? Made of milk?" [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Yep", Pakhet said before adding: "As long as you are not lactose-intolerant." [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy hesitated. "Actually I don't know... I am not sure whether I ever had real milk." [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Well, obviously not. He was still young, right, and many that were born in the sixth world had never tried milk, corn or real fruits and vegetables. Considering that many shadowrunners were just poor chummers that tried to make a living and knew nothing but the streets the percentage of people who knew such things in the shadows was probably even smaller. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I guess we'll take that risk then", she replied. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"If you say so." The boy shot her a smile. "I there anything you would recommend?" [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"How about a strawberry chocolate sundae?", she suggested. She did not really like chocolate or strawberries, but kids liked at least the chocolate part, right? [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy shrugged. "Okay. Then I'll take that." [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet nodded and ordered. A sundae for the elf, an iced coffee for herself, as she barely ate anything sweet. As the order worked through the AR as well, she had just to wait for the things to be brought to their table. At least there was still some service personal here – as there were quite a few cheap cafes and restaurants that did everything but the cooking automated. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Wow, that is actually quite a lot", Murphy exclaimed when the sundae was put in front of him. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet just gave a faint smile. She was still unsure what to make of the boy. After all she still did not know for sure, whether he really was as young as he looked and acted. Considering he was able to change his appearance at will, she could not know for sure. But she still could not shake it that something about him really was childlike. Not that she normally spent a lot of time with children or youngsters. Maybe that was, why this felt kind of weird. Heck, until recently she had never hung out with anybody but Robert. First Heidenstein and now this boy. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]So while Murphy started to eat the ice cream, as well as the strawberries on top with maybe a bit too much enthusiasm, she slowly spooned that one scoop of vanilla ice cream out of her coffee. [/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"By the way, have I even thanked you properly?", he asked while scrapping

the last bit out of the ice cream bowl.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Sipping on the cold coffee she looked over to him. "For what?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"For switching places with me", he replied.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet shrugged. "You were right. Without you talking them into having the doc take both me and that boy, we probably would not have gotten everything that easily. And yeah, the big guy would have probably killed you." She shot him a smug grin.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Still", he replied. "Thank you. I mean, that was really courageous, you know? Really, for a moment I thought Crash really had killed you."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I am not that fragile, you know", she said.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I've seen that." The boy grinned at her. "But really, thank you."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Once more Pakhet just shrugged and took another sip of the coffee. When he would not stop looking at her, she sighed. "You are welcome."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]This seemed to content him as he went to scrapping out the bowl again. "And thank you for the ice cream, by the way. This is really good."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Well, I promised, right?", she muttered with a sigh and looked at her commlink for a moment to see whether she had any new messages. After all she did not see it above Heidenstein to just write to make sure she had not crashed her car into another house.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Are you waiting for something?", Murphy asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Not really", she replied. "Just checking for messages."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]The boy gave her a weird look, still a smile on his face. "So there is nowhere you need to be today?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"No. Not really", she said. "Why?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Ah, nothing. Just wanted to know whether you are free for the rest of the day", he answered with a rather self-confident smile.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]For a moment she raised an eyebrow, as she could not shake the feeling that he wanted to tell her something, but then she shrugged it off. "Yeah, for the most part I am free."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Do you maybe want to go somewhere later on", he muttered, before putting the spoon with the last scraps he had been able to salvage in the mouth.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet sighed. She had not planned on spending the rest of the day with the boy. After all she did not even know about what she was supposed to talk with him – in the end he was just a kid. Still, she did not want to give him the boot like that, which why she replied: "What do you suggest?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Now it was the elf boy who shrugged. "I don't know. A bar maybe?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Aren't you a bit young for that?", she asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"I don't have to", he replied and switched his eye colour to green just to make a point. "Really, what would you suggest?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Slowly but surely the situation started to feel awkward. But Pakhet at least tried to be nice. "I just don't want to corrupt the youth, you know?"[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy chuckled. "Oh, there is nothing more to corrupt here." He gave broad grin. "You can be sure of that. So no need to hold back."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Okay, something was weird about the boy right now. "That's what you say."[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]"Yeah, what I say. But look at me! Could this eyes lie to you?", he replied and gave her a suggestive look with his now green eyes.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]And there was something about this look that made her feel even more uncomfortable. He was not trying to flirt with her, was he? Nah, that could not be – could it? “I am pretty sure they can”, she answered him dryly.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“You hurt me”, he protested and tried to look serious for a moment, but failed. Once again he gave a chuckle and then smiled. “Well, I don't know. We also could go somewhere else.” For a moment he seemed to think, before giving another very suggestive look. “What do you suggest.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Okay, maybe she had been right in the first place. She gazed at him in disbelief. “Murphy... Are you trying to flirt with me?”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]His smile became brash for a moment, before broadening again. “I am. Why? Is it working.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Pakhet drew a long breath. She could not believe him. What had given the boy this idea? Was he really serious? Well, apparently he was. And Pakhet was really not sure how to react to this. Of course she had rebuffed some guys before – but normally those were too drunk guys in their twenties or thirties. Not teenagers. Another long breath, then a sigh. “Murphy... How old exactly are you?”, she finally asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]He grinned. “However old you want me to be.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Ouch, that phrase had been old when she was born. “You are like what? Sixteen? Seventeen?” At least that was, what he looked and acted like.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Murphy did not reply but rather gave another look of his, which actually told her more than he might have considered. After all it just seemed as if he, while not wanting to reply directly, also did not want to actually lie to her.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She gave another sigh. “Listen, *kid*”, she said putting a hard emphasis on the later word. “For all intents and purposes I could be *your mother*.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Once more he grinned. “But you are not.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“That's besides the point!”, she replied with some annoyance.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Not it was Murphy who sighed. “Well, too bad. I just thought you were more... Pragmatic.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“This has nothing to do with pragmatism either”, she said quietly. “You are just *too young* for me. I just don't go for kids.” Not to speak about her rule to not start anything with another shadowrunner. She wanted to stick at least to that, after she had already violated the “don't make friends” rule too much. “Sorry, kid.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]For a moment he actually looked a bit disappointed, but then he pulled himself together and managed a smile. “It's okay.” Slowly the smile broadened. “It was worth a try.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]Geez, he regained his composure rather quickly. She actually felt a bit sorry for him still.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]“The ice cream is still on you?”, he finally asked.[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY]She, too, gave a faint smile. “Of course.”[/JUSTIFY]

[JUSTIFY] [/JUSTIFY]