

To Smite the Heathens

A small group of people clad in similar blue clothes were working on the dirty concrete wall of a building in the Downtown sector. A stylized white goat head was painted on the backs of all three. One of them, a balding man in a trench coat, was keeping watch with a clip-fed shotgun while a younger man with glasses and a young woman were putting the finishing touches on a colourful decoration of the wall. With the words “LLAMAS SUCK! GOATS OWN J00!” the text on the wall was politely suggesting that following the Goat cult would be preferable to joining their Llama-worshipping rivals.

“Are you two going to be much longer?” the coat-clad man demanded, “can’t be long now before somebody finds us, and if the Llamas don’t, the firewalls will.” The woman replied in a tone of voice indicating that she was slightly tired and extremely annoyed: “don’t worry brover™, we’re just about finished, you won’t have to sit there and so arduously watch out for us mere labourers much longer.”

The woman took a step back to assess their artful graffiti masterpiece. With a satisfied nod, she put the lid back on the spray can she was holding and reached for her bag. Just as her hands closed around a leather strap, a sharp pain tore into her thigh. With a scream, she fell over and frantically scrambled for the pistol in her bag while gunfire erupted all around her. The reactions of her companions had been quite different from each other. The old man had dropped down behind a railing and unloaded several shells from his shotgun in the general direction of the attacker. Her younger friend had jumped 3 feet into the air and was sprinting down the street in terror.

It was a fair fight, three llamas against three goats. At least it would’ve been if the third man hadn’t chosen to panic and run away. As he reached the alley behind the Fan Fic Book Shop, a large armoured arm swung out from the shadows and hauled him into the alley from which a nasty crunching sound proclaimed the end of his life.

The old man fired two more blasts between the bars of the railing, blasting one of the attackers directly in the face, and rolled away into cover behind the corner of a brick building. Three llama warriors had attacked them, and he had no doubts the remaining two would take advantage of this opportunity to close the distance between them while he was reloading his weapon. Instead of getting out a new clip, the proud old man stood up and drew his sword. He stood there for what seemed like an eternity, trying to get his breathing under control and prepare himself for a good old-fashioned melee skirmish.

He heard barely audible footsteps on the other side of the building. A command was whispered, “check the girl, I don’t think she’s dead.” From his current location, the old man could only see the feet of his female co-goat lying limply and blood-specked on the asphalt. He blinked a few times to clear his vision, and then he swung out from his cover and removed the head of a llama worshipper with one clean swipe of his sword. He kept his pose, ready to block the next warrior’s attack, but the street was empty. Too late he asked himself where the other warrior had gone, and he let out a cry of pain as cold metal cut across his back and tore through his flesh. The other warrior had taken the other way around the building the old man was hiding behind. He staggered forward and turned around only to see his attacker about to bring a bloody sword down on him for the final stroke.

The explosion of a bullet leaving a gun. The horrible sound of brain matter colliding with a wall. The dull thud of a body hitting the asphalt. Wearily, the old warrior turned his head to stare into the eyes of the young woman who had just saved his life. In her eyes, he saw horror at what she had done, but in her face he saw defiance and determination. “Help me up!” she said, wincing at the

pain in her leg as she sat up. He reached out and helped her to stand. She swayed a little and leaned against his shoulder, but she quickly regained her balance and looked at him. "Thank you, we must get out of here." She seemed to remember something and surveyed their surroundings. "Where did he go?" she asked, doubtlessly referring to their cowardly young brover™, but the old man shrugged and started moving along the railing away from the Fan Fic Shop. Their so-called partner was probably back in Goat City already.

Dragging the wounded woman along was taking its toll on the aging man, and the slash across his back showed him no mercy. The old man had been quietly praying to the great 00n as they made their way along the green-lit plateau, but as they were just outside Sol's Bar, he was feeling more fatigued than ever, and he was starting to lose faith in their chances of reaching the entrance to Goat City alive. Suddenly, the woman at his side jerked her head around and pushed him away from her with as much force as her weakened condition allowed her. Her scream cut through his head a moment before a rocket hit the wall behind her and sent her body hurling through the air. The old man lay paralyzed while his mind attempted to process what he had just witnessed, then he heard heavy footsteps approaching across the grass around the llama temple. Through the haze of smoke from the explosion he could make out an enormous armoured figure calmly making its way towards him. With a rush of adrenalin, the old man scrambled to his feet and quickly found the body of his companion. The poor girl had been scattered across an area of several square yards and her blood was everywhere.

With an effort, the old Goat worshipper prevented himself from vomiting and started down the asphalt in a steady jog. The dust in his eyes was obscuring his vision and the sharp smell of gunpowder was tearing through his nose. He didn't know if the mech had seen him, but with a bit of luck he could reach a small group of buildings ahead of him before the smoke cleared. As the exhausted man reached the first low brick building, he collapsed against the rough wall and lay there panting. He was afraid that he could not rest here long, but his body desperately needed it.

On a small bridge above the crumpled figure, the shape of a man could barely be made out if you knew what to look for. A subtle restless quality of the air was the only indication of his presence while he was watching the wounded warrior and silently debating the man's fate with himself. He was in a dilemma. A bit down the street, the imposing Watchman of the Llama temple had determined the direction his target had taken and was calmly following the trail of blood stains to his current position. A rescue attempt at this moment would not only render the cloaked man vulnerable to attack, it would also most certainly attract the full attention of the mech. But if he was to just leave the man down there, he would no doubt get up as soon as he saw the advancing mech and flee towards the secret entrance to Goat City, leading the Llama watchman straight to it.

The cloaked man made a difficult decision.

When Abomination found what he was looking for, his target had already flatlined. Thermal sensors indicated he had died recently, but losing the amount of blood Abom had seen so far could not have been fatal. The huge armoured man bent over the corpse to examine it and quickly found the cause of death. The throat of the warrior had been cut deeply, but the wound had been burned shut before it had time to bleed. Abomination stood up and scanned the area with thermal vision, but the murderer had already left the scene. Cursing the stolen kill, the mech turned around and walked back towards his post in front of the Llama temple.