

INT. RUN-DOWN OFFICE - MORNING

We open inside a dimly lit office, SERGEI, grizzled and silent as ever, is seated across a desk. GENERAL TORQUE sits at the desk, his chair turned away from Sergei as he rummages through a filing cabinet.

GENERAL TORQUE

Ah. Here we are

Torque retrieves a file from the cabinet, laying it on the desk as he sifts through it

GENERAL TORQUE

Sergei James Benhil, the ravenous
Benbian Raven

Sergei maintains a numbed, blank expression, mundanely nodding along to Torque's words

GENERAL TORQUE

Four Firefight's, and a survivor of the northern spice-farm ambush, the battle of Banshee lake, and an active contributor of the "Red Mist" mission, and awarded the Maroon Ribbon of Benbian courage, quite the name you've made for yourself, Mr. Raven. A name we still have much use for.

SERGEI

Wait- forgive me sir- is this meeting not about my ribbon?

GENERAL TORQUE

What about it?

SERGEI

I- had never received it. The service said it was still lost in the mail.

GENERAL TORQUE

Ah, such difficulties are expected in a time as trying as this, your patience is greatly appreciated, But you're here for much more than a ribbon.

Sergei adjusts himself as the meetings tone grows to be serious.

GENERAL TORQUE

As you can tell, recent events have stirred the Benbian people, Fulcra's carelessness regarding the treaty has everyone biting their nails regarding another war. Now, morale is as dwindled of a resource as our rations. The people need hope to look to.

Torque slips a paper from the file onto the desk, an old report establishing Sergei's retirement. Torque POUNDS a red stamp onto the paper, covering the discharge statement with a big red: "ACTIVE"

GENERAL TORQUE

Rejoice, Raven! Children will parade the streets, hopes will be high when word of the great silver raven being back to arms, the people will arise with might!

Sergei's tired eyes widen, but he's interrupted before he gets a word in

GENERAL TORQUE

Worry not, old timer, it's just simple border patrol. Guard your post, shoot anyone who steps over the line, and we all get to go home happy. And depending on how it goes, It may even promise another medal.

Sergei glances at the stamped paper, before gathering himself. He stands up straight and salutes Torque

SERGEI

It would be my honor, Sir, thank you
for this opportunity.

GENERAL TORQUE

Gloria to Benbia, Raven.

EXT. BARREN BORDER - EVENING

As Sergei puffs the glowing roll of paper, Kristoff unwraps his sandwich from the foil. He gestures it towards Sergei who declines with a headshake.

KRISTOFF

(Eating)

You know, my Pa did the same thing.
Ma called them cold stares, you could
barely talk with him before he'd
completely space out.

Sergei took a long drag from his smoke

SERGEI

I'm sorry to hear that.

KRISTOFF

No one to be sorry for, he probably loved it. The old man didn't care for most people so to him it was a superpower to avoid the in-laws.

The two shared a brief chuckle

KRISTOFF

Honestly the only thing he probably hated were the meds they put him on. You don't seem to mind them though.

Kristoff gestures to the paper Sergei was smoking

KRISTOFF

Lazarus Spice, the pharmaceutical officer hyped it up as some old war drug. Supposed to keep you moving and out of shock, but in reality...

SERGEI

You breathe in pure poison. I know.

A long silence droned as sergei took a long huff.

KRISTOFF

Only takes a few years being on it 'fore your lungs start bleeding, real bad.

SERGEI


I know.

KRISTOFF

Nausea, loss of appetite and hair loss are almost guaranteed.

SERGEI

I know.



KRISTOFF
Recent reports say death is almost
guaranteed after 5 years of consistent
spice smoking.

Kristoff glares at the puff of smoke Sergei blows

SERGEI
I know.