

Aeroplane City — Chapter One, Killjoy**MEDIA RES**

“A man like that lives a lonely life. Boo-hoo. I'm not impressed. We all live lonely lives. But let's assume you are telling the truth Baxter.” Teshher laughed as he went on, “Ha! Of course you're telling the truth! Even lonely men give up secrets Baxter.” It was becoming clear to Teshher the truth serum was opening Baxter up. He quickly spun a chair and sat at full attention prompting Baxter to continue.

“Logan is a stolid man. Friends in every city but the company knows he's indiscernible.”

“What is the company name?”

“Vee-vee-vee.” He sighed as if he needed to recover.

“Ooo. VPS.” This new information stunned Teshher. VPS was the last name on his list if he had one. Yet this new starting point made sense. In the farthest back of his mind it made sense. It confirmed his wildest speculation. It just gone to prove one's instincts are always best. Teshher's confidence showed in his commentary. “The most private of the big ten. You two are well vested. He must have one place he travels he calls home?” Teshher questioned.

“Yes!” Baxter felt his head splitting from his fight against the armbatrol 88.

“Where is the place your friend calls home?” Asked Teshher.

“Wrong. He's not my friend.” Baxter glared.

“Not your friend.” Teshher immediately answered aloud.

“Not my friend.” Baxter repeated. He knew the next question. And it would be hell to dodge.

“Is this person family?” Suddenly Baxter loved this question. He could answer this truthfully. In doing so, this spy hunter would never be able to find him.

“No.” Answered Baxter. And despite it being the truth, it was also a lie.

The frustration returned to Teshher's face. He tried to disguise it. "Let's go back then. What city does this *person* call home?"

Baxter's head dropped with shame, "Aeroplane City." He was beginning to have trouble keeping the words inside himself. His struggle to give up some information the armatrol demanded began to create more and more physical pain by withholding it. The salt he licked off the floor had counteracted the drug some, but the drug still had a lot of bite.

Seizing the opportunity Teshher interjected, "What's his name? What's his fucking name Baxter!"

Nothing. Baxter shut down. The pain of withholding Dalton's real name made him all but pass out completely. The sweat on his face was pooling. The remaining salt on the floor made his face burn in the sweat as he collapsed. Teshher needed to get his prey back on track before he simply passed out from stress. He returned to his leading questions to prevent Baxter from blacking out.

"Why is Aeroplane City the truth?" Asked Teshher.

"Because it *is* true. And because you won't be able to track him there, you know that. Aeroplane City is the one place no spy hunter wants to track a man." Baxter didn't stammer on this answer.

Teshher felt the burden of his prey passing out was no longer an immediate concern. "You have a point." Teshher answered. "But I'm not your typical spy hunter. I'll take that challenge." Teshher leaned back cocking his head in satisfaction.

"You? One man?" Baxter began to laugh with what satisfaction he had left in life.

Teshher's body turned in agreement. "You're right." Then he smiled a knowing smile.

"What does he look like? When will he be there again?"

"Will you let me go? Just leave me tied up somewhere a week, but let me live!"

"I'm sorry. Did I say that?" But the idea did fit in with Teshher's instructions to get his information without killing his targets. He turned his head towards Baxter as if he was considering it. Then he taunted

him. He turned his head just a bit further once again to demonstrate he was never serious. This may have broken Baxter.

“Why is this important to you?” Baxter demanded. Meanwhile his mind raced to the end of every possible outcome in extending this conversation. Nothing could save him. Every outcome was death. The only choice left was how to die. People die in accidents never knowing their time had come, others die from disease in a fading life but with opportunity to have dignity. This short notice was close as Baxter would get to having a choice. Baxter’s mind raced. Teshher was right, most everyone on the planet lives an isolated existence within their soul. Then there were those like himself. Those with families, fortunate enough to have blood relatives with emotional attachments. Baxter felt he had little time to make choices. He looked off in the distance at his daughter’s guitar resting in its stand. He’ll never see her play it again. She’ll never have him to play for. Baxter knew she would find him. He knew how he wanted her to find him, with a shred of dignity. In this choice, he would also save the one person this man was out to find — and if the mood struck, kill. In all this Baxter accepted he was about to die. Baxter could have one element of satisfaction. He could take control of one last thing in his life. His death.

This situation was without precedent. Teshher decided to violate his creed of being the one to give up information. “I know you’ve been telling me the truth for good reason. My employer did tell me it's worth a lifetime of money for a number of entities. You’ve confirmed that. He also told me that you two would most likely separate the information between you two as a safeguard. I need what both of you have. I’m certain what’s on this data dot is half of a complete set. You two are just too smart to keep what I need all in one place.” Teshher paused pretending he didn't mean to share that information. “Damn. Now there is the reason why you will die.”