

BombsNet

Chapter 5: Christmas (?)

The trio gathered on the roof of the UNATCO base. They hadn't really set a time, but JC had finished her debrief, and Alex saw her walk out, and Paul info-linked Jock, and now here they were.

The weather was as warm as it usually got in December. Jock had lost his leather jacket, and Alex was periodically tugging on the collar of his jumper. He would have taken the thing off, had it not stored the batteries for his remote hacking keyboard.

JC was the only one unbothered by the heat. Her nano augments were to thank for that.

"So, how do you wanna do this?" Jock asked, just as he finished setting up the picnic blanket.

"How should I know? I'm an orphan." JC replied.

She hadn't moved from the spot where Jock had thrown down his jacket, which she was now using as a pillow.

"You bring that up a lot," Alex complained.

JC shrugged.

"Right, well I have spiced pudding, potatoes, and soy stuffing," Jock continued.

"And I have turkey,"

JC raised her pistol to the sky, and fired. Seconds later, a thin seagull - or perhaps a large white pigeon - landed on the picnic blanket.

Jock smirked, and Alex cringed, before noting:

"I don't think either of you know how Christmas works."

"Well, du-uh." JC rolled over on the jacket so as to face the duo.

"You're the only Catholic here," Jock continued, "Should we pray to Jesus, or can we just eat?"

"Wait." JC jolted up, suddenly remembering something, "Aren't there special trees named after Christmas?"

"Christmas trees are just regular pine trees."

"They only grow in the northmost parts of Canada. They're similar to those you have on the West Coast, but, fun fact, the leaf shape differs -"

"Yeah, yeah." JC cut Alex off.

"Back when your brother was still in the academy, we used to exchange gifts as well." Jock continued. "That's where that blue wobbly figurine on my dashboard is from."

"My parents used to do that too." Alex said, with a small smile on the corner of his lips. It wasn't often he felt nostalgic when talking about his parents. "Did you stop when Paul graduated?" Noticing the look JC and Jock were giving him, he quickly returned the conversation on topic.

"No." Jock shook his head. "One year, we got each other an identical set of socks, and that was when realised this was stupid and we should stop."

"Oh yeah, the red ones with the little fish on them!" JC exclaimed. "Heh. Paul actually loves them. I think he bought an identical pair last year. Maybe we should pick up that tradition again..."

They sat in silence for a short while, thinking the idea over. There wasn't really anything any of them wanted or needed that they couldn't get themselves or ask for.

Alex gave Jock a 'some traditions are best lost' look, before asking:

"So, who wants a portion of cold potatoes?"

"Sure."

"I'll have some."

"Okay. Just move the dead bird somewhere else."

"Oi! I'm still having that!" JC protested.

Jock, who'd already gotten ready to throw the thing off the roof, gave JC a reprimanding look.

"What?" She asked. "My stomach is augmented."