Metalocalypse: Fresh Meat

by NoMoreVillains

Summary

A newcomer arrives at Mordhaus to act as Dethklok’s new special effects manager. Is he prepared for the death, chaos, calamity and catastrophe that comes with the job? No.

Notes

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See the end of the work for more notes.
"How did it come to this?" I asked myself that question MULTIPLE times as I faced the gates of Mordhaus. I don't even know WHY I was out here. All I knew was that I was seeking employment for the recent enrollment of special effects manager for the most popular death metal band in the entire planet, Dethklok. I sighed, then knocked on the door. A man with flat hair and wearing a suit and small glasses greeted me, Charles Foster Offdenson, the CFO and manager of Dethklok. "Ah, good. You are here for the special effects job opening, yes?"

"Yes, sir. I'm Thomas Wood."

"Good. Come with me."

The interior was just as crazy as the exterior. A cross between modern architecture, heavy metal and viking culture. Evil-looking portraits of demons and skulls hung from the walls and musical instruments that looked more like something out of the Spanish Inquisition were placed in glass containers.

"Now, I assume you've read the fine print," the man said.

"Yes, Mr. Offdenson. Dethklok and Dethklok Enterprises are not responsible for any deaths, injuries, illnesses and any other ailments that might and will befall upon you. Death is a commonplace element here in Mordhaus, so please do not panic...' bleh, bleh, bleh. I had to desensitize myself just to get this job by watching snuff films."

"This is going to be much different than watching death videos," the CFO said. "And believe me, you will be exposed to death." He guided me to what I assumed to be the lounge room. "All right you guys," Mr. Offdenson announced. "Our new special effects specialist is here, so try to treat him with some respect."

I inspected the band. Skwisgaar Skwigelf on guitar, was tall, blonde with blue eyes. Toki Wartooth, also on guitar, was tall, brunette with brown eyes. Both men were muscular, but Toki's were more obvious. William Murderface on bass was a portly man with a triangular afro and a handlebar mustache. Pickles on drums was an average sized man with red dreadlocks and a matching mustache and beard combo. Nathan Explosion on vocals was a muscular man with dark eyes and long, flowing black hair.

"So," the vocalist said. "He's the fresh meat?" Oh, my god, could his voice get any more gravy? Then again, he was in a metal band.

"You read the waiver, didn't you?" asked Pickles. His Wisconsin accent was VERY obvious.

"Yes, yes. I read it all about the death, and the fact that you guys don't cover it," I said, muttering.

"Well," said Murderface. His lisp was so obvious, I was surprised he wasn't spitting when he pronounced his S's. "Don't come complaining to us when your head becomes cheese."

"Speakings of cheese," Skwisgaar said. "I could uses somes at this moments. I needs my sandwich ready." Wow, his Swedish accent was sexy.

"I could also use the cheeses as well," Toki said. His high, Norwegian accented voice had a...childish charm to it.
Screw it, all the band members had a childish charm to them. A very stupid, immature childish charm. The proof of it was the way they were now blathering about cheese.

(!)

"What are your thoughts?" asked Mr. Offdenson as we walked down the hall.

I bluntly answered, "Honestly, I'm surprised they haven't burnt Mordhaus down. They are so..." I tried to think of the right word without sounding so rude. Especially on my first day of the job.

"Immature?"

"Yes. Thank you."

"Yes, it is...quite the hassle to put up with these guys. They wouldn't survive without me."

"Please tell me they are grateful for it," I said.

Mr. Offdenson scratched the back of his head. "They are. In their own way."

I stared at him. "Meaning, not at all?"

"Oh, they are. Just not in the polite and civilized way." We reached his office. "Anyway, now that the greetings are out of the way, your first assignment will begin the next day. We have a Duncan Hills Coffee commercial to make and it's to be aired at Norway and we have a thousand fans waiting for us."

"Wait, we're having a concert...and it's just one song?" I couldn't believe the absurdity of it all.

"Yes."

"But...isn't it a waste of money to go through all this?"

Mr. Offdenson sighed deeply. "You want to know what happened to the last time a concert got delayed?" I shook my head, not liking where this was going. "This." He pulled out a bunch of photos from his desk and showed them to me. I nearly gagged. "We were delayed for five minutes due to traffic and the fans started sacrificing each other to appease the gods so that Dethklok will come."

"Oh, man!"

"Exactly. It's more than just the money. It's also about keeping the people happy and from killing each other. And us."

Just how much chaos could one death metal band cause? I just found out the hard way.
"All right people," I said to the Klokateers. "It's go time. Now, let's get ready people just like we practiced."

It was strange being with a bunch of people who wore nothing but executioner robes and hoods. Apparently, it was part of the dress code in Dethklok, but thankfully, as the special effects manager, I was exempt from wearing them.

"Uh," a short Klakateer said. "We didn't really practice for anything."

I pinched the bridge of my nose. "Just drop the stage when we hover over the bull's eye."

"Got it."

What did I mean by that? Well, as part of the commercial/concert with just one song, the stage Dethklok were currently in was supposed to drop from the helicopter I and the other Klokateers were piloting and onto the target in the middle of a snowy mountain where thousands of fans were waiting.

Thousands of fans who were signing pain and death wavers. Yes, this is how Dethklok had been able to escape being sued for grievous bodily harm and death, I was told by Mr. Offdenson. Apparently, employees were required to sign them as well. I REALLY had to watch what I was signing up for.

(!)

When we approached the landing site, I flipped on the TV to watch the news feed for the commercial. "Live from Batsfjord, Norway where over 300 000 fans have travelled to the arctic circle to see the legendary metal band DethKlok perform just one song," said one of the reporters.

A female news reporter nodded her head, "Surprisingly the song itself is a jingle. A coffee jingle. Never before have so many people traveled so far for such a short song."

"A coffee jingle for international coffee moguls the Duncan Hills coffee corporation. Is DethKlok selling out? 'No,' says band frontman Nathan Explosion."

Then it cut to footage of Nathan. "We're here to make coffee metal! We will make everything metal! Blacker than the blackest black times infinity." With that gravely voice, even that silly speech sounded serious.

Then it cut to the important part. "They're called pain waivers. Fans are literally signing their life away, releasing them from any and all liability." I shook my head. Idiots. All of them.

When the news feed cut to live footage of the chopper carrying the stage, I pointed to the nearest
Klokateer. "Now!" I shouted.

With a flick of the switch, the cables holding the stage released and the stage plummeted to the ground. What happened next? Perhaps the winds were just too strong. Or perhaps I misjudged the distance. But either way, the stage missed its mark and crashed into the fans. It opened its doors, revealing the band. They were in their usual clothes, but were wearing makeup that made their skin pale and dark around the eyes.

*Cue the Duncan Hills Coffee Jingle*

"I knew it," I groaned. "I knew all that practice would be for nothing."

"But we didn't practice."

"Just shut up and tell the boys down below to be ready for the coffee and cream."

"Yes, sir."

I watched as the band continued to play. On Skwisgaar's cue to play the guitar, the Klokateers on stage dumped giant cups of coffee and cream onto the fans. I watched in horror as they screamed as they melted and boiled alive.

Suddenly, the pyrotechnic below misfired one of the fireworks and it flew straight toward the helicopter. "TAKE COVER!" I shouted. The rocket flew threw the window and hit one of the workers. Screaming, he flew out the other window with the rocket and straight into the propellers of the helicopter. Blood and body parts rained all over the stage below. That was the final straw. I leaned out the window and vomited, not caring if it landed on the fans. I'm sorry, did I say fans? I meant survivors!

(!)

I was pale in the face and sipping Duncan Hills Coffee as I sat in Mr. Offdenson's office. It had been a day since the massacre, and I still had nightmares of people melting in coffee...and drinking the coffee they were melting in. "It's not easy the first time," he said. "But you get used to it."

"H-h-h-how..." I stuttered. "How c-c-can you be s-s-s-so calm about all this?"

"Once you've seen one massacre, you've seen it all."

(!)

Somewhere in a hidden location, a group of men and women watched the latest news on Dehtklok. The man in front of the screen said, "As you can see, DethKlok is no laughing matter; they're the world's greatest cultural force. A short time since the Duncan Hills coffee jingle Batsfjord massacre fest, every other coffee company has been obliterated. Completely blown out of the water."

One of the men, a general, growled, "Freaks."

"These "freaks" as you call them are currently worth billions. General, Skwisgaar Skwigelf - taller than a tree, Toki Wartooth - not a bumblebee, William Murderface Murderface Murderface, Pickles the Drummer - Doodily doo, ding-dong doodily doodily doo, Nathan Explosion. I'm afraid that's all we know general."

Another man, a cardinal, showed stone images on the screen resembling the band. "I will remind
you again of the Sumerian artifacts. The resemblance is indisputable."

The general said, "If there the ones that we think they are, we should exterminate them immediately."

"No..." A taller man with silver hair and beard and a voice that sounded like a man from thousands of years ago spoke. "We wait..." It was obvious he had the final word.

(!)

"Uh, hello?" I called out to the band. They were in the medical ward, looking over a bunch of tubs, wires and other sorts of machinery. "Mr. Offdenson said you guys were in distress."

"Yeah," said Nathan. "We need food. And Jean Pierre is being lazy."

I tilted my head. "Jean Pierre?"

"Our chef," Pickles said. "He's surprisingly doing pretty well despite being sliced up by helicopter blades."

My face paled. "What?"

"But that," said Toki, pointing at the machinery. "Is no excuses for lazinesses!" It was then did I realize the machines were keeping a bunch of body parts alive. I gagged. Put the poor bastard out of his misery!

Pickles ran the calculations and realized, "Hold on... It says here that keeping this guy alive is costing us 10,000$ a day?!" Everyone exclaimed in surprise. Where do they get this kind of money?!

Murderface had an idea. "Well here's an idea: why don't we yankee-doodle dandy you know, pull the plug, kill him." For once, I agreed with him.

Pickles nodded, "Well let's just fire him I mean look at him he's all lazy just sitting there ain't cooked a damn thing all day long let's face it, he's bringing me down."

Skwisgaar meanwhile, was fiddling with a toaster that wasn't even plugged in and trying to put coffee in it. "What is wrong with this dumb dildo, to give us all the free coffee in the world with no instruction on how to cook it." He threw the toaster to the ground. I shook my head in disbelief. Mr. Offdenson was right, these guys won't survive.

"Well, uh," I said. "Here's an idea. I mean, I'm just throwing it in here, you don't have to do it, but have you considered buying your own food?"

"Can't," Pickles said. "Because normally, whenever we buy food, we buy booze."

"Okay, fine. Just let me handle the groceries."

(!)

"Okay," I said to the band when we arrived at the supermarket. "You all know the plan, right?"

"Yeah, yeah," they muttered.

Nathan grumbled, "Just stay by the cash registers and don't do anything. At all."
"Good boy," I said, patting his head. "You'll get a cookie afterwards."

"Hey," shouted Murderface. "How come he gets a cookie?! I want one!"

"If you're a good boy," I said. "You will. Now just shut up. Let me be."

I ignored the band's grumbling.

(!)

A few minutes later, I returned to the register. "All right, this is at least a month's worth of food, I..." I realized no one else was there. "Where are those idiots?"

"Oh," a cashier said. "you just missed them. They said something about making their own food and they took a sauce pan."

I face palmed. "I can't leave them alone for ten minutes!"

(!)

I kicked open the door to the med lab to find the band huddled around the mess of wires and flesh that was the chef. Pickles had his hands in the air. "By the power of all that is evil, I command you to awaken and make me a sandwich!" Nothing happened.

"Is this what you've been doing all this time?" I asked the band.

"We trieds makings our own foods," Skwisgaar said. "But then we remembered you forgot us."

"I forgot?! You idiots wandered off!"

"There's only one thing left to do, kill ourselves," Murderface said grimly.

"Now let's not go there," I said. "I got the food, let's just make a nice dinner and..." I glanced at Pierre. "Maybe find some other way for him to work."

"Dudes, we would like have to sew him back together to get him to cook for us," Skwisgaar said.

Toki said, "Yeah, but we is such screw-ups that he would be sewn back together wrong!"

"So you admit you're idiots," I said.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Nathan. "Great song title!"

(!)

Cue Sewn Back Together Wrong

Somehow, the band managed to pull it off. Jean Pierre got to keep his position as the chef for Dethklok and somehow lived. But he was hard to look at due to looking like the Frankenstein Monster in a chef's hat. But that didn't hinder his ability as a chef. He actually seems a lot happier.

Chapter End Notes
The recording studio...

How long? How long had it been since I first started being a part of Dethklok's employment? Too long. You want to know how I know that? The delays. Mr. Offdenson was right when he said the fans go murderous and insane whenever there's a delay. All over the world, there were reports of people committing suicide, riots, arson, and other atrocities to express their impatience.

But if you wanted someone to blame, blame Nathan Explosion for constantly deleting a MONTH'S work of sessions for the new album! And right now he was pondering on deleting the audio for the Thunderhorse music video.

"Here we go again," groaned Skwisgaar.

Pickles grabbed the remote. "Okay wait. Before we do anything drastic let's put this all into perspective Nathan. Okay? Look."

He turned on the TV to show news feed. "...Dethklok has spent a reported 500 million in the recording studio so far..." "...Fan suicide rate is up due to the album's late release..." "...Sources have corroborated that the band has recorded 16 individual albums, all deleted..." "...Sources say that the Dow Jones decline is directly related to DethKlok frontman Nathan Explosion's constant deleting of potential new albums..."


"Well maybe it'll be better if I just kill myself," Murderface said. "Huh? Why don't you record that? Huh? Would that be brutal enough for you? Me being dead."

"It's not always about you," I snarled at the bassist. I groaned as I sat next to the other members of the band. "We're back to square one all over again. AGAIN!"

Nathan didn't flinch. "Yeah, that's right, Wood. But here's what we're going to do. We're going to re-re-re-record it right there." He pointed to a spot on a globe on the controls. "Right there."

I squinted at the specific location on the map. "I'll inform Mr. Offdenson."

(!)

Mr. Offdenson communicated with Nathan via a screen, "Okay, so you want to re-re-re-re-record it, in the ocean. In. I see, no problem."

Nathan shouted, "No! Not in the ocean, inside the ocean."
"Okay."

"In the heaviest, deepest, most brutal part."

"Alright."

"The Mariana Trench."

"Well, let me make some calls."

A few minutes later, Mr. Offdenson came back. "Well the good news is they're going to give you some more money to record this album. The bad news is they're going to send a producer down to work with you so I hope that's not a..."

"Whaaaaaaaaaa?!" Apparently, it was. Nathan threw a temper tantrum and threw stuff around.

"Mr. Offdenson," I called out, ignoring Nathan's immaturity. "How exactly are we going to re-re-re-record everything in the deepest hole in the ocean?"

"Well, Wood, I made a call to the US Navy and they agreed to let us buy one of their prototype nuclear submarines."

I blinked, "Wow," I said sarcastically. "That's not an environmental hazard waiting to happen."

"I know," said Toki. "Isn't it excitings?"

I shook my head. Children.

(!)

Somewhere in the meeting room of the tribunal... "Dethklok is recording an album underwater, and they're using a submarine," the senator reported.

"A nuclear submarine," the general pointed out.

"Yes... This could prove to be a most dangerous combination."

The general made his own report, "I may have a solution. We're now in touch with the underwater record label producer that Dethklok will use underwater. His name is name is Dick "Magic Ears" Knubbler, and he's a real piece of work." The general showed mugshots of a man with blonde hair, blue eyes and wearing rose-tinted glasses along with reports of the man's crimes. "Tax evasion, disfigured a co-worker at an office party, (Melted her face in acid), soliciting, prostitution, drugs; he's looking at a 25 year sentence. He'll do anything we want."

"Excellent, then he'll be our man on the inside. We'll contact him once the underwater record is complete, and get a full report."

But the general had other plans. "A report? Now's the time to take out Dethklok once and for all! They're just sitting there underwater. We'll make it look like an underwater accident."

"No!" Once again, the ancient looking man had the final word. "It is too soon. We must watch them..."

(!)

Five months. Five months of recording, repairing any broken instruments, checking the radiation
levels in the sub with the crew, occasionally looking out the window to look at the strange underwater wildlife and cleaning up all the messes the band made. Worth it. And for once, Nathan wasn't deleting any months' worth of progress. In fact, he was very pleased with it as he listened to the recordings. "It's getting nice and heavy," he said. That's when he heard something strange. He adjusted Toki's guitar sessions. What we heard was the unmistakable sound of whales. "Your guitar's picking up strange sounds," he reported to Toki, turning the music off.

Toki shrugged his shoulders. "Well, dude, I didn't know that these pickups were that strong. It picks up the whales saying hello."

"Well, given the sounds of metal being blasted out of this sub," I said. "It's no surprise curious whales would come to investigate the noise. I have been noticing a lot of whale activity in the past four months since we started recording it."

"It looks like we's going to have to re-record it," Skwisgaar said.

"That's brutal," said Toki.

"That won't be necessary," I said. "I think the whales kind of set the ambience of the underwater theme to this album, right, Nathan?" I said it in a way to keep Nathan from deleting all that hard work and have us all stuck in this submarine for another five months.

"True," he said as he listened to the music again, much to my relief. "But we need to record a new song that has no whale sounds."

"Maybe we can isolate Toki," suggested Pickles.

Nathan pointed to something on the other side of the room. "What about that?"

(!)

The next thing Toki knew he was in a "liquid oxygen isolation submersion chamber" that was slowly being filled with a pink fluid. Toki looked around frantically. "What does this lights means?"

"He will die," a crewman said to me and Skwisgaar. "without a safety briefing."

"Hey I'll take it from here," Skwisgaar said. "Okay, buddy?"

"Swisgaar," Toki called out. "I think I need that safety briefings."

"Oh, really quickly," the blonde guitarist said, ignoring Toki's distress. "The reason I came in here is we're all going to order some food. Do you want something?"

The pink liquid was up to Toki's chest. "I can't think about it now. What are all these buttons flashing?"

"Start thinking about what you want because honestly i'm starting to get hungry."

"Anything! Gn-Gnocchi or something! It's filling up!"

"Okay, I'll write that down. And oh, by the way, don't screw this one up!"

The liquid reached Toki's neck. "What is this button, I think I hit it!"

"I got to get going, see you later." And with a press of a button, the tank was lowered all the way
down into the trench.

"I think you really should have given him that safety briefing," I said.

"Eh, he'll be fine," Skwisgar said. "By the way, what will you be having?"

"Oh, uh... ratatouille, please."

Swisgaar raised an eyebrow at me. "A French peasant dish?" He scoffed. "Figures."

(!)

The band was doing another recording session, minus Toki, when the power blew out. "Hey guys... nuclear submarine power's out."

"Thank you," I grumbled. "Murderface for point out the obvious."

(!)

Pickles and I were in the engine room, trying to adjust the power. "Ah, here's the problem." I opened the fuse box. "The power cell's busted loose somehow."

"So," Pickles said. "Do you know how to fix it?"

"All we got to do is knock it back in that's all." I tried to push it in, but it remained in place. "Give me a hand, Pickles. But be careful with it!"

"Dude... stupid nuclear... I don't know what the heck's going on. Who gives a fuck? Ain't my sub."

He and I gave it a good hard shove and after a few surges of electricity, the power came back.

"Hey, Wood," Pickles said as we climbed out the engine room. "How did you know how to fix a submarine anyway?"

I paused. "I...I don't know. It just...came to me."

(!)

"Hey guys," I announced as we ate our lunches. "Ensign says an unidentified vessel is requesting permission to board."

Skwisgaar made a coughing sound. "Oh, great. Probably some dick nose record producer comes to try and tell us how to make metal. Don't knows snakes from dildos about that. Ppht. Get in line."

"Okay calm down," I said. "Remember, we've got to be professional. Okay?"

"Unless he pushes us," said Pickles. "In which case I swear to god I will fuckin' knife him in the..."

"Yeah! Slice his face off," Murderface slurried, his sentence barely sensible with all those beans he was eating out of that pot.

"Dude, don't talk with your mouth full," I said.

"Yeah, I know mean, I mean, have a little decency," Pickles said in disgust. "We're stuck together in a friggin submarine for crying out loud."

Murderface dropped the pot, spilling beans all over the floor. "Fine," he said. "How about I starve
to death? How's that?" He farted. "Excuse me." No he wasn't. And just when I thought it couldn't get any more disgusting... "Ugh, these boots are killing my feet!" He took them off, exposing his callused, sweaty, STINKY! feet. He farted again. That was it. I ran outside to get some fresh air. I barely heard Murderface say, "These feet stink!" and vomit all over the floor. I ordered someone to clean up the mess before we met the producer.

(!)

We met Mr. Knubbler waiting for us in the loading bay. He said in a nasally voice, "Hi guys. Sooo uh... let's hear this new album." He passed out. No one moved.

"Hey, I have those same shoes," said Murderface.

(!)

"You sure you're going to be okay?" I asked Mr. Knubbler as I sat him in a chair in front of a large speaker.

"Yeah, bear with me dudes. I think I made the trip a little too fast. My... my body's having a little trouble adjusting to the oceanic pressure down here. I'm sure I'll feel a little better once I have some Pop Rocks and Coke." He swallowed the sweets, and his nose began to bleed.

"You sure? We don't want you to get the bends."  

"Nah, nah. I'm fine."

I shrugged my shoulders and joined the band in another room, watching Mr. Knubbler through a window. "Now shut up and listen to this, Dick," Nathan said. "This is metal. For fish."

"Fish don't got no good metal to listens to," said Skwisgaar.

"Yeah, it's true," Murderface agreed.

"We all got the idea," I said. "After some whales gathered around to listen to our music."

Mr. Knubbler tilted his head. "Fish, huh?"

Nathan prepared the sample track, "This one's called Murmaider!"

"It's about mermaid murder," explained Murderface.

"The clue's in the title," I said. "And you might want to hold on to the arm rests of that chair."

"Why?" Mr. Knubbler got his answer when the song played loudly, almost sending him flying and shattering his rose-tinted glasses. "STOP THE TRACK!" he shouted over the music. He was so excited. "This is amazing! I mean, there must be billions of fish out there! It's a totally untapped market! And so many hits too!"

"Yeah," I said. "Like Electric Eel Chair, Scaled and Gutted and Undercooked, Scuba Tank Filled With Farts. We have Murderface to thank for the last one."

"Hey!"

Mr. Knubbler didn't care. "YEAH! You boys knocked it completely out of the park." I heard what he said under his breath, "I am back on top!" Hmm... He said out loud, "I'm going straight to the label!"
Mr. Knubbler was about to leave with copies of the recordings. We were there to send him off. "You know something Knubbler. Y ain't that much of a dildo after all," Pickles said.

"Despite the chronic nose bleeds," I said.

Suddenly, Toki burst out of the water and crawled into the loading bay. "Not safe," he gurgled. "Not safe!" He threw up a pink fluid. "There's monsters!"

"Monsters?" I asked.

Mr. Knubbler said, not listening to Toki. "Like I said boys, when the label hears this they're literally going to shit fish. Literally." He laughed manically as he left in his tiny sub. I turned to Toki. "What do you mean 'monsters'? Did an angler fish scare you?"

"No!" He grabbed me by the shirt. "It's huge," he whispered.

"What?"

"My lords," one of the crewmen said. "You might want to take a look at this."

There was a seahorse outside, only...it looked more like Godzilla! "How did..."

"You and Pickles messing about in the engine room caused a leak," the crewman said. "You just exposed three tanks worth of nuclear fuel to the ocean!"


Record sales for the new Dethwater were through the roof for the first time in several months. I glanced down at the newspaper a few weeks after we returned to Mordhaus. "New Dethklok album so awesome, it blinds producer!" Poor Mr. Knubbler," I said.

"I wouldn't exactly say poor," Mr. Offdenson said. "He's actually quite happy."

I glanced up at him. "How? He's got no eyes anymore. I told him I didn't want him to get the bends. The pressure blew up his eyes!"

"Apparently, you haven't heard from his recent update." He handed me a magazine. The article had an image of Mr. Knubbler with new robotic eyes. And they came with a feature: they changed colors whenever his mood changes. "How did he get these?"

"We used some of the money we made to pay for his eye surgery."

I glanced down at the article again. "It says here he's staying as Dethklok's new producer." I scratched the back of my head. "I guess we should hand him the waivers as well before hiring him."

"Exactly."

Chapter End Notes
I stood on one side of the stage, making sure things were going as planned. Our latest concert in Munich, Germany was coming to a close, but not before one last trick. "Ladies and gentlemen," announced Nathan. "On bass guitar, William Murderface!" The bassist walked to the front of the stage, then dropped his pants. Normally, such an act would get people in trouble, but not if you're in Dethklok. In fact, this was all a part of the act. For you see, William Murderface once taught himself a trick long ago that allowed him to play the bass with his penis. No other musical instrument though, just the bass.

I looked away. I didn't want to see the gnarled sausage that was Murderface's penis. He had done this trick so many times, I was surprised he could masturbate without hurting himself. But then, I saw one overeager fan reaching forward. Murderface put the boy in his place by head butting him to unconsciousness.

(!)

Back at Mordhaus, the band and I sat in the lounge room, reading the newspapers while Murderface played with one of the arcade machines. A Klokateer came in with a bucket of ice. The bassist ordered, "Right, pour it in, just... easy, easy!"

"Hey, Pickles," Skwisgaar said. "Tell Murderface what you just told me about that guy... Hilarious."

"That fan that got on the stage?" I asked.

"Yeah," Pickles said with a chuckle. "The guy was a Danish prince. Can you believe that?"


"Wrong country," I said.

"Anyway," continued Pickles. "He's got a brain contusion, and a fractured skull, oh, and he's last in line for the Danish royalty, that is messed up dude."

"Well," said Murderface. "That's what he gets for going after my hog." He left, beating the game.

"Dude, I would have done the same thing. Dutch."

"What is it with you and the Dutch?" I asked Skwisgaar.

"Nones of yours business, Woods."

Pickles said. "Yeah, well it's official. I mean, you're getting really... good at headbutting."
Toki, who was busy on the computer, suddenly announced, "Guys, look at this!" It was a cartoon image of Murderface above a cake.

"A birthday E-vite?" I asked.

"Where is it going to be? In a toilet? In a bus station?" joked Skwisgaar.

"Oh, that's brutal," said Toki.

"Can you believe, right off the top of my head, just making up like thats?"

Pickles suddenly pointed out, "Wait a minute! The guy's a nihilist, what does he want a birthday for?"

The birthday E-vite said, "Inside, outside, up or down. Show up if you want, who gives a piss?" Then it filled with urine.

"Very nihilistic," I said. "That's pretty sad."

"Oh, fuck me!" exclaimed Nathan. "We're going to have to get him a gift!"

"And what does a sad, tragic creature like William Murderface want for his birthday?"

Everyone pondered on that. Then Nathan said, "I've got it! It will be so brutal, so metal, so horrible and so sad that it's perfect for Murderface!"

"What's that?" I asked. "A breast ripper?"

"Nah," Pickles said. "He's got like twenty of those."

"You will see, Wood," Nathan said. "You. Will. See."

(1)

I watched the TV in horror as the news showed images of countless deaths. "It seems that William Murderface's birthday has thousands of fans rioting in the streets of Paris. Apparantly Murderface made some disparaging remarks about the Louvre..."

"30'000 pieces of art and whaddya know, they all stink like shit!"

Apparently, Murderface's words were so powerful, a mob of French Dethklok fans stormed the Louvre and raided everything that wasn't nailed down.

The report continued, "Fires are raging in the south as four fans celebrate William Murderface's birthday..."

I switched the TV off. I didn't need to listen to anymore to get what was going on. People were killing themselves and each other in honor of the bassist's birthday.

(1)

At the tribunal's lair, the senator announced, "We've censored the media since these fans have decided that mass destruction would make a wonderful birthday gift. I believe we're all in great danger."

The general reported, "Military's on alert, you have nothing to worry about."
"Recent polls indicate that half the military are rabid Dethklok fans. Now, if you'll please turn your attention to our birthday expert, Doctor Gibbets."

Doctor Gibbets was a short man with a flat top and boy, did he like to talk. "Yes, William Murderface's charts indicate a deep seated rage, which is split off and repressed at its core. His self-loathing is expressed most publicly and unequivocally through bodily mutilation, tattooing, alcohol abuse and coprophilia. He blames others for his anger. He displaces his rage and its roots. He seeks punishment, castigation and excommunication! This self destruction is the only way to validate powerful voices he internalized as a child! This, combined with his immense wealth and popularity, should make for a monumentally horrific birthday."

(!)

The band and I, minus Murderface, spoke with Mr. Offdenson. "So, aside from whatever Nathan is planning," I said. "What exactly are we supposed to give him? He's got all this torture equipment from the middle ages!"

Pickles asked, "Can't we just give him some cash? What's the big deal?"

"You guys are billionaires," I said. "You practically are the richest people in the world. More money's worthless in his eyes."

"And the birthday cake! It's gotta be totally metal," said Nathan. He turned to a nearby Jean Pierre. "Got it?" The chef nodded and shuffled away to the kitchen.

"Or maybe, like, we get him an endangered species, and then, we could kill it? That'd be cool," suggested Skwisgaar. No one said anything. "I just read about this thing online you can buy a star and name it. Like, what if we named it, like, Mulhalmad Ali, the black prizefighter? That would be his gift." No one said anything. "Fuck you!"

"NO!" shouted Nathan. "We're going to give him ONE GIFT! And it will be the blackest most meaningless gift of all.

"Still want to know what it is, though," I said. "Oh, and by the way, Mr. Offdenson, I finished sending out the invitations."

"Excellent," he said. "We'll have the party in the concert hall."

(!)

People came to the garden by the thousands. Of course, they had to show their invitations. Those with the fake or stolen ones were executed and tossed into the moat.

One particular guest was wearing a neck brace and bandages and was accompanied by an older woman wearing royal robes. "William Murderface," I said. "The Queen Of Denmark and his son Prince Henrey."

The queen presented Murderface with an bunch of papers. "This is an original manuscript from Peter Cornolivesonoft, Denmark's most faaamous poet!"

Murderface was unimpressed. "Was he murdered?"

The queen was shocked. "No..."

"How much did it cost?"
"This is an an-"

"Ah, just keep it!" He muttered to himself, "I'm getting all the crappiest gifts." He noticed the prince was holding a marker. "What? Are you jibbing me? A Sharpie for my birthday?"

"I think he wants you to autograph his cast," I said.

Skwisgaar suddenly took the marker. "Here, let me sign it." And he stabbed it in the boy's nose. "The Dutch are scum."

(!)

At the concert hall, I took a glance at the cake Jean Pierre was finishing at the buffet table. I reached for it to have a lick, but the chef swatted my hand away. "Please do not sample the frosting," he said, his scarred-lipped mouth drooling. "It's made of...mercury. You will die!" I quickly put a card that read, "Not fit for human consumption!" on it.

(!)

"Hey, Murderface," I said, approaching the bassist. He was sitting on a throne on the stage.

"What, Wood?"

"I got you these for your birthday. Bring them in!" Nathan and Pickles brought in a pair of wooden boats. Murderface wasn't impressed. "Boats. And they're paddle boats. Why would I want paddle boats."

"They're not for boating. They're for scaphism."

"What's that?" asked Pickles. "It sounds erotic."

"It's not. It's an ancient Persian torture and execution method." I turned to Murderface. "Imagine it. A criminal is put between two boats tied together. Then he is left to float in a swamp while the executioner force feeds him milk and honey, giving him diarrhea. Then the bugs and maggots come to feast on the criminal while he slowly. Rots. Alive."

"Brutal." Nathan said. He pulled out a tape recorder. "Idea for new song, scaphism."

"Well," I said. "What do you think?"

Murderface looked at the boats. "It would have been better if it were the real boats used for scaphism. Though I must say, that is pretty brutal."

"It's the thought that counts," I said.

"Your thoughts suck."

I had enough. "Fine! Turn them into firewood for all I care you ungrateful..." Pickles pushed me away as Nathan took to the stage. "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the party. As you well know, No party is complete without a birthday party clown. And we have one of the finest Rock and roll clowns around. So please put.. your hands.. tog... yo, here comes the rock and roll clown."

"Ca-ca-ca-ca-ca-ca-yeah!" A high pitched voice shouted and a clown wearing KISS-like make up, a spiky red nose, a yellow jumpsuit with the front and back open, a cop's cap and fluffy pink boots jumped onto the stage. "I'm Dr. Rockso, the rock n roll clown! I do cocaine!" the clown announced. "Ca-ca-ca-yeah!"
I was appalled. So was Murderface. Well, he was more annoyed than appalled. "Where did you find that guy," I whispered to Pickles.

"He was the only guy who approved."

The clown pointed to Murderface. "I hear it's somebody's birthday!" He slid on his knees to the birthday boy. "I do cocaine!" Yes, we figured that out, I thought. "Dr. Rockso gonna make you a balloon bass." He took a bunch of balloons out and started twisting them into a shape. "I seriously do...a lot of cocaine..." He presented it to Murderface. "Try it out! Wait a minute, I think someone's outta tune. Just a little more." One of the balloons popped. "You popped a string! Hehe! I do coca-" Murderface had had enough. He shoved the balloon bass down the clown's throat and ordered a bunch of Klokateers to beat him up.

Everyone in the audience gasped at this. Murderface shouted at them, "Well what did you expect from ME? Other than the worst party of the history of birth!"

Suddenly, Dethklok minus Murderface took the stage. Nathan tapped his microphone. "Check, check, murder, slash. That's good!"

*Cue Happy Dethday*

As the band played, everyone in the audience danced and jammed to the music. Jean Pierre presented the lethal cake to Murderface. He blew the candles and gave it a thumbs down, not even bothering to eat it, thank God. Pierre set the cake aside. Unfortunately, one person licked the frosting. The Queen Of Denmark. I gasped. "No!" I tackled her to the ground. "How much did you eat?!"

"What is the meaning of this?!"

"That frosting has mercury in it, you dumb broad!" The queen's eyes widened. That was the last thing she ever did. Alive.

(!)

After the song ended, Nathan placed a black box in front of Murderface. "And now, the blackest present for the most brutal of all bass players..." The box collapsed, revealing... "NOTHING!"

Murderface shouted, "Oh, you all suck! You all suck!" He stormed away.

"Awwww, what's wrong?"

"Ah yeah, go play records backwards and kill yourself," shouted Skwisgaar.

"Hey fatso! We got your favorite thing: disappointment!" exclaimed Pickles.

I shook my head. "You are the worst."

(!)

"William!" I called out, reaching his room. "You got to come out to the track! We've got something better than nothing!" I noticed the bags he was packing. "What's this?"

"I guess this is a good time to start my side band, Planet Piss." He walked by me. "I shall send for the rest of my parcels in the morning."

"Uh, okay. But before you go, will you at least go to the track? One last birthday present. And it's
better than nothing."

Murderface glared at me. "Fine. But after this, I'm making Planet Piss."

(!)

At the track, I gestured to Nathan, Pickles, Toki and Swisgaar being lowered by helicopter harnesses. "Attention! You big baby!" Nathan shouted in a megaphone.

Skwisgaar said, "Ah, what are you doing? Going for a crybaby walk?"

Murderface was confused. "Hey! Why's everybody wearing camouflage? Joining the Marines?"

Nathan said, "We wanted to, uh, surprise you. In outfits."

"And night vision goggles," I said.

Murderface's glum expression didn't change. "Y'look like stupid Navy Seals."

"That's part of the surprise."

"Why?"

"Because it makes us harder to see! That's awesome."

Suddenly, the track lit up, and one of the headlights landed on a limo. "Happy birthday, William," I said.

"But I already got, like, a million limos."

"Not this one," I said, pointing out the details. "This is the limo that Kennedy got his brains blasted all over his wife! And the chair is the one that President Lincoln sat in when he has his brains shot all over his wife!"

"And," said Pickles. "And... you're entered in the first-ever Dethklok Dethmolition Klok-a-matae Deth Derby!"

Toki held up a paper plate with...macaroni art? "And I made you this macaroni murder lady. What used to be the red hots were the blood, but I ates them."

Murderface...smiled! "You mean I get to destroy United States history? LITERALLY?!" He jumped into the limo and drove right into the demolition derby track, laughing maniacally. I was pleased, as I watched the cars get smashed...along with the people in the audience. "Another happy ending." A tire suddenly smacked me in the face and I went unconscious.

(!)

When I awoke in the medical bay, I was diagnosed with a fractured skull. Yep, my work was definitely going to be on hold.

Chapter End Notes
In the Deth Train...

"So," I said as I looked over the plans for the "We're so sorry we blew up Finland" concert. "The concert begins when we torch the national flag of Finland and replace it with Dethklok's variant of it." I looked over at the poorly drawn design of the flag. "Okay. By the way," I asked Nathan, who was talking to his tape recorder. "What song are you going to play? We haven't discussed that part of our plans yet."

"Working on it. We borrowed one of their books for inspiration from a shady guy in an alley."

I raised an eyebrow. "What book? Because there are some books that are very...iffy."

"It's...ah..." His train of thought got lost. Then he went back to talking to his tape recorder. "Idea for song: murder. A guy, a guy gets murdered. At an...all-you-can-eat buffet..."

"Last I was Finland," said Skwisgaar, strumming his guitar. "I must have loved about...500 girls."

"Oh, and that happens forever," Nathan said in his tape recorder. "Yeah."

"Old spark estimate," Skwisgaar continued. "Whatever."

"Not like it's so hard," Toki said with a hint of envy. "You're in like the biggest band in the world. Probably would even if you was in lollipops factory."

"Women have a quality attraction to me. Mmm, you got to deal with it."

"Oh, I'm dealing with it. Believe me, I'm holding back gallons of throw-up as we speak!"

"Don't do me any favors, throw up on yourself."

Suddenly, Mr. Offdenson came into the room, carrying a box. "Okay," he said. "Before we go out there here are your Deth Phones." He opened the box and handed the phones to the band members. He even had one for me. They were basically a cellphone with spikes and a little chain with a three pronged hook sticking out. I already hated it. It felt like I was carrying a weight with spikes on it. I couldn't even press it to my face to talk to it; the spikes poked me. "Who designed these things?" I then realized the word "Deth" was in the title. "Of course."

"What is this," Skwisgaar said, looking at the phones.

"Don't you remember making this deal?"

"Nope," said Pickles bluntly. "Were we drunk?"

"Yes. Yes you were."
Toki tried his phone. "This is heavy. It hurts my face. Boy, I really hates it."

Mr. Offdenson said, "Well, it's your design. You may have been drunk, but you made a really convincing case to me."

Nathan said, "All right, you know we get really, really excited about really bad ideas when we drink, and it's your job to talk us out of it."

"Oh, I tried. I tried very hard, but you all threatened to kill me, if you don't remember."


"Yeah," I said. "They like, threaten everyone."

Mr. Offdenson shrugged. "Noted. Anyway," he said, looking at the paperwork. "Look, you're on the Band Plan and the Weekend Murder Minutes start at 11:00 PM. How do you like that?"

Nathan did a double take. "Wait a minute, night time minute starts at 11:00 PM? That's brutal."

"Well, it was your idea."

"Well, they suck," said Murderface. "I approve."

"All right," Mr. Offdenson said. "Finland is expecting our apology for almost destroying their nation last tour."

I asked, "When was the last time the boys apologized for...anything?"

(!)

In the town of Espoo, the boys stood on a stage with a Finnish banner as the backdrop. "Finland!" said Nathan. "We are here to...uh..."

"Of course they would screw this one up," I muttered. "It's not in those cavemen's nature."

"Apologize...for alleged...happenings...during...during...during...uuuhhh..." Nathan looked to the side. "Hey, what the hell is this?"

"You're apologizing to Finland," I said. "And failing."

"Yeah, well, you know what?" Nathan asked as he took out a beer. "I pass."

William Murderface took his place. "Wrote my own speech." But he didn't get the chance. His Deth Phone rang and he chatted away on it. So Pickles took his place. "Friends, we're... we're not used to the whole apologizing thing. We're not professional apologizers. We're... musicians. So, we wrote a song for you, a new national anthem. We took the lyrics straight from your Finnish folklore book of necromomic spells." The crowd gasped in horror as Nathan took Toki's place. I just stared in horror. "THAT'S the book you chose?!" I shouted.

"You may recognize this one, though it hasn't been sung for a few thousand years. "Awaken, awaken, Mustakrakish, the Lake Troll"!"

*Cue Awaken, Mustakrakish*

As the music played, the ground started to shake. The sky grew dark and a giant pair of red, clawed hands burst from the lake behind the stage. I slowly turned around and saw what was rising from
the water: it was a red skeletal, horned beast with the face of a skull and wearing nothing but a loincloth made from algae. The troll let out a loud roar and started to devour everything in sight.

..., "...the entire southern section left in shambles. Finland is reporting..." "...no word from Dethklok..." ",..., "...late vigil was given last night in Salzburg..." "...satellite feed is being destroyed..." ",..., "...by what locals are calling 'the troll virus'..." ",..., "...knocking down all technological advancements..." ",..., "...this small piece of disturbing footage is all that we've seen since this blackout occurred."

The tribunal watched the news footages before Senator Stampingston said, "Gentlemen, it's clear that we're in a universally precarious situation. Dethklok has summoned a troll."

General Crozier blinked. "That's impossible. There's no such thing as trolls."

"Then how do you explain the dead unicorns?" Stampingston showed images of slaughtered unicorns. "This may be the first you've seen this, but since Dethklok has gained more power, odd events have come to our attention. Let me introduce you Dr. Amon Skagerakk Fredrickshaven.

The doctor was a man with dark hair and wearing a black suit with an upside down pentagram. "This troll is no myth," he said. "He is a breathing entity banished from this world hundreds of years ago. It took a magnificent force to wake him. Dethklok is more powerful than we've expected."

The cardinal, Ravenswood, challenged this, "God will crush this demon."

"I should hope He would soon, because the more your God waits, the sooner He will find Himself joined by more entities whose power will dwarf His."

"You dare to challenge God?"

"You have no idea to true danger you're in. You will do well to remain silent!"

"You dare-?!

Stampingston shouted, "Gentlemen, gentlemen, please! We've contained all footage of this troll. The rest of the world will not know of it. We need Finland safe. We need their wood, their salt and their cellphones."

"Then we will send our military to attack," barked General Crozier.

"It will only upset the beast," Dr. Fredrickshaven said.

"We must look to Dethklok," the ancient man said. "Be patient..."

It was night time, and the troll Mustakrakish was till going on a rampage. And what was the band doing? Staying in the Deth Train, testing their new phones. Mr. Offdenson wasn't pleased. "Well, it's official: Finland is being destroyed by a troll that... you summoned."

Skwisgaar continued to play with his phone, not caring. "Well, I'm not sorry."

"Huh, I can't believe we summoned a troll," said Nathan, pleased with himself. "Why didn't we think of this earlier?"
Toki acted like the excited child he was. "Oh, high school would've been awesome with a big pal, like him. He could have carried me to school!"

"I know!"

"Good luck trying to do that," I said. "Assuming he doesn't eat you. Like what he's doing to Finland."

Pickles, who was enjoying the hot tub (which was more urine than water) found a problem with his Deth Phone. "Dudes, I'm turning on my Dethphone and I'm hearing Murderface. Wait a minute! Do we just get one phone line in five phones?!"

"That's brutal," said Toki.

"So wait - we can't make any out-calls?! Dude, Murderface, get off the phone! Please! Get off the phone!"

"Okay, hold on. I just need to check my messages." Murderface pressed the button and got the answering machine talking back to him. "You have 67 new telephone answering machine digital phone wireless fidelity Dethfone messages. To hear the messages, press "1" on the keypad located on the front of the phone. Preparing to play answering machine number message number one. After this message, would you like to save, or delete, or replay this message, please listen to the directions that will follow the message..."

Nathan was amazed. "Oh man, this thing's just designed to eat up minutes. It's brutal."

"You made them that way," I pointed out.

Mr. Offdenson had had enough. "So do you think it might be a big business move to put that troll back to sleep?"

"Pfft," said Nathan. "I just don't see that happening, you know? Crappy troll knocked the DSL and it takes two minutes to get to text..."

"Okay," Mr. Offdenson said, his patience waining. "I did not want to say anything, but this is affecting your record sales." He paused. "There I said it."

Pickles would have thrown his champagne if he wasn't too busy lounging in the hot tub. "Dude, nice one. What are you trying to do? Depress us? Well, it's working! Now I need a drink. A different drink. In a different place. Not this one." All the other bandmates agreed with him.

"Well," I said. "There is a local pub in town. Assuming they'll let you drink an account of the..." I pointed out the window, showing the troll still slaughtering the village. "...you know."

"Oh, it's fine," said Toki. "Maybe they's be happys they gots a troll. Might be a new mascots."

(!)

I hid behind Nathan as a headless sheep flew over our heads. "Looks likes that troll killed that power everywhere," he said.

"Well," said Skwisgaar. "There's only two things to do in a blackout: get drunk... one thing to do."

"Oh, I hate Finland. I need a hundred beers."

The boys and I entered the bar. As soon as the people inside saw the band, they gave them VERY
angry glares. They looked as though they were ready to lynch them. Nathan either didn't notice or didn't care as he walked up to the bartender. "I need a hundred beers. Exactly... exactly one hundred. Thank you."

One of the patrons shouted, "We don't serve to people who awaken lake trolls!"

The bartender, an old hunchback, said in a wheezy voice, "You must play a song to put the troll back to sleep!"

"How are we going to do that?" I asked. "These guys play electric guitars. And since there's now no power in Finland, that might be a bit hard."

"Follow me." He led us to his home and took a trunk from his closet. He opened them, revealing antique instruments.

"What are those wooden things?" asked Murderface. "Chairs?"

"They are acoustic instruments."

Toki raised an eyebrow. "What is acoustic? Oh, you mean a grampa's guitars?"


"You don't have a choice," I said. "It's either acoustic or death."

"Whoa, this is a tough one guys."

Nathan said, "Pickles is right, we have a tough choice. Playing acoustic is totally lame and not metal. But then again, if we don't put that troll back to sleep, we may never be able to check our e-mail with high-speed DSL again."

(!)

I watched the boys play their instruments like they would their electric guitars. This might actually work. Suddenly Toki stopped playing. "Hey," I said. "Why did you stop?"

Toki looked ashamed. "I... have a confessions to makes. I can'ts reads music."

Skwisgaar laughed. "Dudes, Toki can't read music. Hah! It's a laugh!"

"Can you?" Toki demanded.

Skwisgaar lowered his head. "No. I haves music dyslex-kia. You know that. I... don't wish to talk about it."

I blinked. "If neither of you can read your music sheets, how are you able to play ANY of the songs on your albums?"

"Honestly," said Toki. "I was just hitting any note."

"Yeah, me too," said Skwisgaar. "That's an old music school trick."

I pinched the bridge of my nose. "Grade school music trick, perhaps."

"Sounded pretty good," Nathan said.
"Dude check it out," Pickles said, turning the back of his music sheet. "There's guitar tablets on the back of it."

"So what?" asked Murderface. "We just play the song and go home?"

I inspected the tablet. "It says we have to play the song at the lake you awoke Mustakarakish the lake troll in."

"Not you!" Murderface was talking to his phone. "You! So we just play the song and go home?"

(!)

The bartender slowly rowed us to the middle of the lake. "This is where he was birthed," he said gravely.

"I don't like this," I said.

"What?" asked Pickles. "You scared of a big troll?"

"Yes."

"Heh. Pussy."

Suddenly, a giant red hand grabbed the bartender. "There he is!" shouted Toki.

"Yep," said Skwisgaar calmly. "That's definitely a troll."

The barkeeper shouted, "Play, damn it! PLAY!" He was swallowed whole by Mustakarakish.

The band played their lullaby. It was...surprisingly working! The troll's eyes drooped and he slowly started to sink into the lake. Suddenly, Murderface's ringtone interrupted the song. He reached for it to answer it. "I'LL KILL YOU!" I shouted as the troll let out an angry roar and threw us all to shore.

Toki shouted, "THE GRANDPA'S GUITARS ARE SMASHEDS!"

Skwisgaar pointed, "Dudes, here comes that guy!"

The troll reached the shore.

"Wait," said Nathan. "The phones! The phones! Use the Dethphones! Throw them at that guy!"

Everyone, except Murderface did what he said. But the phones were too heavy and landed only three feet. The troll let out a loud roar. I pissed myself. I literally pissed myself. "I didn't think I would die like this," I whimpered.

Nathan, still calm, took out his tape recorder and said, accepting death, "Idea for last song ever: killed by a troll."

Meanwhile, Murderface was still talking on his phone. "You did not. What?! I can't here you! I can't..." He pressed a few buttons. "Oh, I just lost the call! God damn it, piece of crap!" He threw the phone...right in the troll's mouth. A loud, audible gulp was heard. What happened next was a blood fest. The troll literally tore himself apart trying to get the phone out of his body. Blood spilled all over the place and we just watched in shock as he disemboiwled himself. Then he fell on a TV antenna, electrocuted himself and exploded. The surrounding area burned.
Nathan had only one thing to say. "Metal."

(!)

Who would have thought cooked troll meat tasted so good? The next time we have a concert, I am definitely keeping any occult books the boys bring with them hidden.

Well, on the plus side, we saved Finland. The negative side, I don't think they'll be letting us back in for a LONG time. But hey, they got their cellphones working again, so there's that.

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendan Small and Adult Swim
Over the past month, there have been several lawsuit threats from victims of the latest album, Dethwater. Apparently, the idiots who bought it took some of their lyrics too literally. Over a thousand drownings have been reported. And apparently, it was enough for Dethklok to go to court. I watched the whole proceeding on the lounge room's TV. The prosecutor was playing Murmaid. "The lyrics clearly state: 'Go into the water, go into the water. Live there, die there.' Well, my clients all tried to breathe water and nearly died because of this 'Underwater Album' (he air quoted that part) by your band, Dethklok."

Pickles said, "Why don't you... go breathe underwater?" Everyone laughed.

"I suggest that it was your intention to create an album that caused destruction to human life!"

Murderface heckled, "Suggest all you want! It won't make your weenie any bigger, you dildo-licker!"

The prosecutor was losing his patience, "This band is a danger to the human race!"

"You's a danger of putting us to asleep," said Skwisgaar. "I would'a brought a sleepinsbag if I knows this guys was gonna show up."

The prosecutor loudly shouted over the laughter, "Your Honour, we DEMAND 50 million dollars for medical bills and punitive damages."

Toki called out, "Hey, how 'bout we compromise..."

"We'll give you half," Nathan said before pausing. "Of NOTHING!"

Mr. Offdenson held up a copy of the album. "The album clearly states 'Intended for fish only'. I rest my case." Thank God he went to law school.

"Not guilty," the judge declared.

I switched off the TV. "I always knew you were going to win, Dethklok."

(!)

I eventually met the band at the picnic. And to my surprise they were...reading?! "Okay, who are you and what have you done to Dethklok? They're too proud and famous to stoop so low as educating."

"For your informations," Skwisgaar said. "We ams learnings comedy."

I raised an eyebrow. "Comedy?"
"We're taking a break from the dark and bleak. Being bleak and dark for a living sometimes makes you lose your objectivity for, you know, being bleak and dark."

"I see. But you guys are a death metal band. Tragedy is part of the schtick of being in one." Then a thought crossed my mind. "Actually, comedy is just as bleak and dark as tragedy when you think about it."

"How is comedy brutal?" asked Nathan.

"Gallows humor." I sat next to Nathan as I explained to him and the other boys. "It's like this: you look at something horrible that's happened, then you try to make it funny. Like, some guy was in a plane accident, that's the bad news. The good news? He arrived on time." I got a few chuckles. "Or, this one I learned in high school. A woman visits the doctor as she has some abdominal pains and suspects she may be pregnant. After her examination, the doctor comes out to see her: 'Well, I hope you like changing nappies/diapers'. She replies: 'Oh my god am I pregnant, am I pregnant!?'. To which he responds: 'No, you've got bowel cancer.'" More laughs.

"You're right," Toki said. "Comedy IS brutal."

"But we need more," Nathan said. "Where can we learn more of this comedy?"

"I can think of one thing. And it's so soul crushing, so humiliating that it's just as brutal as death metal."

"Don't spare us the details," Murderface demanded. "Tell us!"

"Amateur hour." (!)

At the tribunal, Senator Stampingston reported, "It appears that Dethklok has taken to studying comedy. This is not good, gentlemen."

General Crozier raised an eyebrow. "With all due respect, Senator, how can this mean anything to world economics?"

"It means everything. It's true that comedy has been no threat to us in the last fifteen years, but with Dethklok in the mix, they threaten to excite a field of entertainment we all know to be dead. Gentlemen, our comedy specialist, Dr. Donald Gorfield."

The comedy specialist was a small, middle aged man with a brown suit. Behind him a screen with various images of famous comedians and famous comedy channels like Comedy Central, Adult Swim and MTV appeared behind him. "Well, the people of the world are depressed and stupid. They look to comedy to lighten the load of their boring, dreadful lives. These idiots have been force-fed garbage from our own secret cable networks and our employees covering high-profile standup and sketch comics. Should we lose control of this, only God knows what will happen." (!)

"Are you sure about this, Wood?" asked Nathan. We were in the Mammy Yaks, a run down comedy club where the bottom of the barrel we call society come to get the weight off their backs called their depressing lives. And right now it was amateur hour, just as I predicted. The guy currently on stage was making "Remember this TV show?" jokes. It was pretty bland yet somehow people were yucking it up like it was the funniest thing on earth. "Alright," I said to Skwisgaar and
Toki. "This is amateur hour, so don't feel bad if you bomb it out there. And if you do, you can take it out on the audience."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the announcer. "Please be gentle, it's their first time on stage, The Brothers... of DECEPTION!"

Skwisgaar and Toki took to the stage with the former starting their act. "So, I was thinking of killing myself..."

"That's funny, I was thinking of killing you too."

"Well, how d'you like dat." There was no sound save for Skwisgaar playing his guitar.

"Mom always hated you most."

"She hates boths of us, deh most!"

Toki played his guitar, but dropped it. He whispered, "I hates you. Seriously."

Skwisgaar whispered back, "Okay."

(!)

Up next was Nathan's routine that seemed to go all over the place. "What if your guts was a bowling ball? Well, I bet it would look something like this!" He held up a ball of organs. My face turned green. He continued, "Yeah, I'm real sick of my brother, yeah we're twins. Anybody got twins out there?" No one responded. "Anybody got one like this? Meet Kuato." He lifted up his shirt revealing a... fetus thing strapped to his belly. It vomited and fell off. No one laughed.

(!)

"Dude," I said to Nathan backstage. "You guys are totally bombing it out there!"

"Relax. I got this one." It was then that I realized he was carrying a black body bag. I prayed no one I knew was in it. Nathan took to the stage and held the bag like a ventriloquist dummy. "Well hey Body Bag! How's it going? 'Smells like somebody took a crap in here!' Ohh, Body Bag!" No one laughed. "Well, look Body Bag, it's your old friends Brains!" He held up a human brain. An old woman the audience turned green. "'Hey idiot! I'm Brains, I go in your head.'" The old woman vomited.

(!)

Up next was Pickles and Murderface's impromptu routine and by this point, the audience had had enough. "Okay," said Pickles. "We are gonna delight you all with a little improvisational comedy. Now all we need to start is one location."

Someone in the audience shouted, "HOW 'BOUT A DIFFERENT COMEDY CLUB?" Finally, people were laughing, but not because of Dethklok's jokes. Oh boy, I thought. This is going to be harsh.

"Okay, I heard a... gas station." Pickles was losing his nerve.

"I'm a gas station attendant!" called out Murderface.

Pickles sat on a stool and pretended to drive. "Fill her up, I am driving a Corvette. It is, midnight blue with-"
The heckler wasn't done yet. "HEY PIPPY-LONG-BORING! YOU SUCK!"

"Can't you fill it up just a little bit faster?" asked Pickles.

Murderface pretended to fill the drummer's gas. "Well I'm trying! I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO FIND A FUCKING GAS TANK!"

"That's because it's a stool Murderface!"

The heckler shouted, "HEY IDIOT! DON'T NEGATE THE PREMISE!"

Poor Pickles was starting to choke. "It's on - it's on - it's over there - wherever. Just please hurry. I would like to leave this horrible place..."

"Ahhh, I should check the oil... better go get my tools." But at this point, Murderface cracked. "You know what? I'm gonna leave... this sucks! Good luck dying out there!" And he walked offstage.

"Are you leaving?"

"Yes, I'm leaving!"

Poor Pickles was left in the mercy of the heckler. "HEY, UGLY! WHAT ARE YOU JUST SITTING THERE FOR?! MAKE US LAUGH!" The drummer just sat on the stage, crumbling before the booing and the heckling. Now all the audience joined in. "GET OFF THE STAGE! GET OFF THE STAGE! GET OFF THE STAGE!" Pickles fell flat on his back, tangled in the microphone's cord. I had seen enough. I dragged the poor drummer offstage. Bastard was heavier than he looked.

(!)

"God damn," I said after amateur hour was over and the band was at the bar. While Toki, Skwisgaar, Murderface and Nathan chatted with me, Pickles sat far away from us, clearly traumatized. "I knew people would be harsh on amateur hour but not THIS harsh."

"That was the most horrible thing in my life," Murderface said. "What happened to all that stuff you said, Wood?"

"Look, I never said you could be comedians in just one night! Also," I said turning to Nathan. "Lose the conjoined twin, will you?"

Nathan was outraged. "Cut Kuato? I'll cut Bodybag before I cut Kuato. Kuato stays. Kuato's gold!"

Skwisgaar took his...I lost track after the fifteenth drink. "The best metal band of all times," he bemoaned. "And we gets boos off the stage."

"Pfft," said Murderface. "Yeah, they didn't get us, right?"

"They laugh at the dildo who is onstage before us."

Toki scoffed. "That guy was amazing! Are you kidding me?"

Skwisgaar was appalled. "He is horribles, Toki. He just made the reference. 'Remember this? Remember that?' He is dildo."

"But you laugh."
"I did?"

Murderface shrugged his shoulders, "He was good."

"HE WAS GREAT!" shouted Nathan.

"Eh," shrugged Toki. "Maybe we'll do better tomorrow."

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME?!" screamed Pickles. "I DIED UP THERE! IT WAS BRUTAL!"

"Hey," I said. "You wanted brutal, I gave you brutal. You idiots asked for this."

"I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO HUMILIATED IN ALL MY LIFE!" Pickles shouted. "And I ain't going back up there again because I ain't funny! And neither are any of you. I'm dark and brutal and filled with hatred. I ain't got no sense of humor. You want to do comedy? Do it without me. I'm leaving." And just like that, the drummer left with a slam of the door.

I winced. Then sighed, "You guys can do better."

"Oh, yeah," demanded Murderface. "How?! Tell us, oh wise man of comedy!"

"Yeah!" shouted the band members.

"You guys didn't take my advice," I said. "You didn't take it out on the audience."

"He's right," said a Scottish voice. We all turned and saw a sailor sitting nearby. "Name's Lorkey. And the boy is onto something. But it's more than just taking out the hecklers and the gallows humor, son."

"It's not?" I asked.

"Nay. Comedy ain't never about humor. T'ain't no difference if you ask me."

Toki scratched his head. "But, that just doesn't seem to make any sense at all..."

"Comedy is about expressing your hate. The more hate you have, the funnier those rusty dildos sitting at them tables will think you are!"

"But I bombed and I hates every thing!"

Lorkey turned to the blonde guitarist. "Aye, but do you hate yourself?"

Toki thought about what he said. "Hate...myself?"

"Ah yes, especially now eh? Bombing on stage and Mr. Tangerine Pigtails went running away!" The sailor gestured to the door Pickles went out. "It will take some time for him to recover from that horror he went through."

Toki seemed to get the message. "I hate myself!"

Lorkey was pleased, "Yeah, now you're getting it. And once you can get in touch with your inner hatred, you can unleash it into the world. And once you embrace your hate, you will MURDER THEM! And you will kill, YOU WILL KILL!" He turned to me. "Let's start with you. You's on the right path. You take out your anger on the hecklers, but you REALLY need to hate. Is there something that you hate?"
I thought it over. "Well, there is the job I currently have. Honestly I don't know how I even got the job."

"And? What do you think?"

"You mean aside from the low pay, the mortal danger I constantly find myself in, the waking nightmares, and constantly going back from a concert covered in blood and having to go to the med lab to get a tetanus shot?" I didn't realize my voice was raising in anger until I saw the looks of shock on the band members' faces. "Or having to put up with a band who never respects me or their manager and are so ungrateful and are so much like CHILDREN THAT THEY CAN'T EVEN TIE THEIR OWN SHOE LACES, LET ALONE READ THEIR OWN MUSIC SHEETS?!" I blinked. "Whoa. That felt good."

"Now you're getting it, boy," the old sailor said. "Now, transform that hate into comedy."

(!)

For three days, the sailor taught the band to turn inner hate into comedy. For Murderface, how to hate himself and express it with self harm. For Toki and Skwisgaar, how to hate each other and to express it with physical violence. And for Nathan, how to express his hate with singing. The week following their training, the band expressed their hate for the audience: throwing piss and shit at them, self mutilation, shouting, you name it.

(!)

I tossed a magazine that talked about how successful they were. I was still worried about Pickles. Last time I saw him, he was in the lounge binge drinking one hundred barrels of beer and was currently drinking the one hundredth and one. "It smells like a brewery in here," I commented.

"Go away," he slurred.

"Okay, I really don't want to say it, but my new comedy mentor has to have me do this." I inhaled. "You suck." Pickles gave me a look that said, "What was your first clue?" "Let me finish. You are unfunny and you've got no sense of humor. Until now."

"What?"

"You said you're so full of hate. The problem was you didn't let it all out. THAT'S the secret comedy. He more hate you have, the funnier those hecklers will think you are." I wanted to sit next to him, but after seeing the stains on the couch, I opted to still stand. "You see, people are bored and stupid that's why they look to comedy to entertain themselves. Why do you think they laughed at the guy making those 'Remember this TV show?' jokes? But you've got something even funnier: hatred. So, let me ask you a question: who do you hate the most? Who do you hate so much that you would just take a dildo and shove it so far up their ass, they have to shit it to get it out?"

Pickles thought about what I said. "Here," I handed him a ticket. "Your band going live on stage. They really need you. No one hates more than you." I left him, but not before slipping on one of the beer stains. "God damn it!"

(!)

I pulled the golden curtain back to take a look at the audience in the opera house. It was full of people and all of them were waiting for something to amuse themselves. "Boy," I said, turning back to the band. "A full house."
"All right," said Nathan, taking charge. "Everyone do a crappy job! Remember to hate yourselves." Everyone cheered. Then a familiar voice said, "Well I really hate myself."

Toki was excited. "Pickle, you back! We think you gone for good!"

But the drummer was still depressed. "Bombing on stage really screwed me up. I can't even play my douchebag drums no more cause of stupid comedy!"

Lockey walked up to him. "You know there's only one way to fix that. You gotta get back up there."

"But I can't."

"BUT WHAT?!!"

"The audience," the drummer whispered.

The sailor looked to the packed stands. "Aye, the audience. Now gather round, all of you. I've been talking a lot about hatred, but there's something out there. Something you should hate even more than anything and that's the audience." He turned to me. "THIS is where the tactic of taking it out on the hecklers comes to play, boy. THIS is where it comes in." I nodded, then turned to Pickles. "You know what to do."

(!)

"And now," announced Nathan. "please welcome to the stage PICKLES!"

The drummer walked onto the stage carrying a box. "So, anyways, I just got back from vacation. I went to the beach...for vacation...and...you know what I got at the beach?" No one responded. Pickles gave them the answer when he reached for the box. "SAND!" He flung the sand into the people in the front row's faces. They screamed in pain while everyone in the rows behind them laughed. "So," said Pickles. "I donated blood the other day. But not mine! Want to see me donate some blood to you? Huh? Yeah, okay!" He reached behind the curtain and pulled out a hose. He switched it on, spraying blood all over the crowd.

Offstage, Lorkey and I watched impressed. "Eh, can't teach 'em no more." He pulled out a gun.

"Wait, what are you -?" I screamed as brains and blood splattered all over my face and in my mouth. Oh, well. Dying is easy, comedy is hard.

Chapter End Notes

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I never knew why, but the one subject Dehtklok refused to talk about was their families. Whenever I asked about their families, they would tell me to piss off or throw heavy objects at me. I even brought up the subject to Mr. Offdenson, but he turned me down, stating that he doesn't talk about the band's personal life. I wasn't going to give up. I did some hacking into the personal files of the band's families, and uncovered their names, their locations and sex life (eww). With permission from Mr. Offdenson (and lots of begging) we were able to get an interview with the Nick Lisbon show. I watched the interview off camera. "We're back with arguably the greatest entertainment force in the history of the world, Dethklok. Gentlemen, you are the twelfth largest economy in the world and climbing, and yet you all are intensely private. Little is known about your personal lives. Why?"

Nathan said bluntly, "Because."

There was a pause.

"Well, we at the Nick Ibsen show do pride ourselves on uncovering, the, most - "

Murderface suddenly stabbed the table. "Hey douchebag, why don't you drill a hole into your forehead and let all the sap run out."

Skwisgaar chuckled. "Pancakes."

Mr. Lisbon continued, "As intimidating as it is to interview such amazing entertainment figures, I nonetheless have a journalistic duty to uncover... certain... Are you urinating on my shoes?"

Murderface smiled. "Yes I am."

I was impressed with Mr. Lisbon, he didn't even flinch! "Well as I said before, while met with resistance, we have a great surprise in store for you. We, have uncovered something you have desperately been trying to hide. Tonight, you will all be reunited with your families."

A curtain lifted, revealing a group of people. There was a blonde haired woman who looked to be in her 50's, a couple (a tall blonde man and a short brunette woman) wearing suburbia clothing, another couple wearing business clothing with a young man that looked an AWFUL lot like Pickles but with short brown hair, another couple wearing clothing that belonged only to ancient priests, and an obese elderly woman version of Murderface sitting in a motorized scooter with an old man sitting in a wagon tied to the scooter.

The band looked horrified. Nathan let out a loud, "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!" He turned to Mr. Lisbon, "You're going to pay for this!"

The elderly Murderface wanted to greet William, but her scooter tugged on a wire, causing a headlight to smash into Nick Ibsen's jugular. The exposed ends of two cables landed in a pool of
blood, in which Nick Ibsen is standing, electrocuting him. Nathan's eyes widened. "Great song title. Bloodructuted!"

I vomited.

(!)

The tribunal watched the footage of the interview. Senator Stampingston was the first to speak as usual, "Dethklok's parents have been uncovered and are visiting. This could be devastating."

"What do we have on the families?" asked General Crozier.

"From Tomahawk, Wisconsin we have Pickles' parents: Calvert and Molly with older brother Seth, a recently released convict. From Victory Gardens, the premier armed forces retirement community in Florida: Rose and Oscar Explosion. She's the once lovely Miss Sweden 1956, the brave single mother whose neglect helped form the world's fastest guitarist: Serveta Skwigelf. And the curious and rather off-beat grandparents who raised William after the tragic murder-suicide of his parents: Stella and Thunderbolt Murderface."

"What's the wagon for?" General Crozier asked.

"MASSIVE stroke," said Senator Stampingston.

"I see..."

"And last but not least, from an abandoned village near Lillehammer, Norway, Anja and the Reverend Aslaug Wartooth."

Cardinal Ravenswood predicted, "I see the families reunite." He gasped, "I see father killing son! In the end it's ultimate brutality!" No one really believed him.

"This may be the answer we've been waiting for," General Crozier said. "This could rip them apart!"

The ancient man said the final word, "We will allow the darkness to unfold..." Could Dethklok's own families literally drive the band insane?

(!)

"You guys," I said, munching on a cookie. "You have GOT to try Mrs. Explosion's cookies. I think I just found someone who's a better cook than my mum!"

"Yeah," Nathan muttered. "Whatever..."

I noticed how glum the band was as they sat in the lounge. "Dudes, what's wrong?"

"What's wrong is our families are here," Pickles said with more hate than usual. "That's what's up!"

I blinked, taking out some papers from my coat pocket. "Well, I did some background checks and it says, Pickles, that your older brother Seth was convicted of multiple drug charges. I would have thought you would appreciate your parents liking you over him."

"APPRECIATE?!" shrieked the drummer. "FAVOR ME?! My parents favor him over me no matter what I do!" He slumped in his chair. "Even called me a piece of garbage." He took a big gulp of his beer.
"I noticed," I said to Toki. "That there's little background information about your family. Why is that?" Toki didn't say anything. He didn't even move. He just laid down on the floor and stared out into space with wide eyes. There was more to Toki's childhood, but it was obvious he was not telling.

Skwisgaar snarled, "I just want to climbs into a hole and not deals, you know? Right, Toki?" Toki said nothing. "What, you're not talking to me?"

"I'll never not be embarrassed by my parents," said Nathan.

I know that feeling. Truth be told, I was getting along pretty well with Nathan's parents. Mainly due to the fact that they seemed relatively normal. I was too creeped out by Toki's parents to strike a conversation with them. Murderface's grandparents, well, it was just like talking to Murderface and the man just sat in a wagon doing nothing. Skwisgaar's mother...I think she tried to have sex with me. And as for Pickles' family...the moment I met Seth, I hated them immediately. I actually heard him talking about money with Pickles and I knew one thing: the guy was trying to mooch him.

"It's repugnant," said Murderface. "I'd rather be sanded faceless than grow old and... repugnant like that."

"I know," said Pickles. "I think we all wish those guys were dead."

"We can say it and think it," I said. "But you wait. You'll end up like a bunch of mummies in no time."

"Pfft. You'll see. Maybe we can just take them out to dinner and get them off our back."

"Eh, you're right," said Nathan. He turned to his and the others' parents who were standing right behind them this entire time! "So what do you feel like eating?"

"How long have you guys been standing there?" I asked.

"Long enough," said Mrs. Murderface.

(!)

At Burzum's the band and their families gathered at one table. Mr. and Mrs. Murderface were the only ones not sitting their due to their wagon and wheelchair, so they instead sat near William.

Mrs. Explosion was talking to her son who was doing his damnedest to ignore her. "You remember Mrs. Miller, don't you?"

Nathan groaned, "No..."

"Well, they had to cut her legs off. Poor thing, there was an ice-storm and the power went out in her house and she woke up with her feet frozen."

"God, Mom, that's brutal."

"Her feet were black, like... uh, a black person's feet." Everyone looked at her. "Not that I have anything against black people, but this, this was frostbite. And besides, black people's feet are pink on the bottom."

"Hey," I said to Nathan. "That may be a good song inspiration, right?"
"Eh...I'll sit on it."

"So," I said, trying to strike up a conversation. "Mrs. Murderface, I am curious. How did you get the name, Murderface anyway? I always thought it was just William's stage name."

"Oh, god," William groaned. "Please don't get her started."

"Well," Mrs. Murderface said. God, she even sounded like William. She even had the same lisp, but it was even worse for her! "It was my dear husband's great, great, great grandfather's name. I think he got drunk and he declared his name to be Murderface." She added in a hushed tone, "Truth be told, the old fart was an ugly, stupid imbecile who always smelt of whiskey. Everyone called him Murderface because...well...look at Thunderbolt." We turned to the fossil of a man sitting in the wagon. "My little William clearly gets his looks from him."

"Yeah..." I said, not believing it. "Uh, isn't that kind of rude? I mean, he may have a stroke, but he can still hear us."

"Oh, no, he doesn't mind. In fact, he pretty much believes it."

William groaned.

The hag faced her grandson, "I learned they have these wheelchairs now with computers in them that you can control by blinking, your eyes - and with all your money, William, your grandfather has to sit there in a wagon like a dead cat."

"Oh! I guess I'll just run out and buy one - hey, anyone else want one? Electric wheelchairs! I'll buy a million of them -" Mrs. Murderface slapped his hand with a spoon. "Ow! Don't hit people on the head with a spoon!"

"So," Mr. Explosion asked me. He is definitely the source of Nathan's gravely voice. "How is it that a college kid like you got to be in my son's employment?"

I rubbed my temples, trying to remember. "I honestly don't know how. I just found it in the newspaper ad and I apparently got the job as special effects manager. I didn't even know the previous one died after his kidneys exploded in a radiation accident until the first week started."

"That was the most brutal things evers," Skwisgaar said. "His piss becomes his blood as he died."

"And you just found this ad in the newspaper?" Mr. Explosion asked. "Funny. Normally kids like you start off as fast food workers, but look at you, working with my son!" He patted Nathan's back. "Your parents must be proud."

I rubbed my head again. "Yeah...I guess they are...are they?"

Seth said, "So I took a music management course at a Wisconsin state prison, ya' know, can you believe that crap?"

"He's a manager," Pickles' Mom said, like it was the most exciting thing ever. "He's gonna make an office above the garage!" Really? How is that any good?

Then I heard Seth say to his brother, "Hell yeah! I manage like five bands in D block. You know? For good! You ever heard of the Twixies? It hasn't gotten out yet, but you know, I record some stuff, then hit the phones, I'm so good! It blew my mind! just wanted to talk to you, dude...we should start a frickin' label! Can you imagine that? You know? Brothers in business? I would be in charge of numbers. You just play the music, play those rat-a-tat-tat, play those drums. And I want
to do it plenty, and big fans and labels."

Murderface had had enough. "Awwm lemme outta here, I gotta pee-pee!"

"Yeah me too!" shouted Nathan.

"Yeah that's for sure!" shouted Skwisgaar.

The only band member not to leave the table was Toki who just stared in silence while his parents eyed him. I drummed the table nervously. "Uh...Reverend, can I escort your son to the restroom? I think he does, he just doesn't want to embarrass his family." The priest said nothing. He gave a slow nod instead. "Okay..." I walked over to Toki and put his arm over my shoulder. "Oof! Heavier than you look," I muttered as I dragged him to the restroom like a limp doll. "A little cardio wouldn't kill you."

(!)

I dropped Toki's catatonic body onto the bathroom floor. The other band members were having a fit. "I AM GONNA LOSE MY MIND! MY PARENTS JUST BRAG AND BRAG ABOUT MY BROTHER!" He imitated his mother's voice, "Oh, he's in a room above the garage! Big deal, HE'S AN EX-CON!" He took out an inhaler from his pocket and huffed it. "I haven't used one of these things in like 15 years."

Nathan and Skwisgaar kicked the door to the bathroom open. "WHAT THE FUCK?!" the former shouted.

"This whole thing gives me a case of my stomachs throw-up," Skwisgaar shouted as he took his place at the urinal next to Murderface.

"Don't worry about it, your mom seems cool!"

"Cool?" I asked Murderface. "I'm convinced that blonde beehive is a wig, she looks that old!"

"Hey," the bassist shouted. "She is a beautiful creature!" What DID he see in here?!

Skwisgaar explained his reason for hating his female creator, "She was the most prosqueeminous women in Swedens, has sex with everybody! Pffft! Thanks mom!"

"The fact that my parents had sex in order to create me makes me want to be buried alive," groaned Nathan.

"If you did that," I said. "Kiss possibly the planet goodbye."

"That would be brutal."

"My grandma has an odor that's so very wrong and she wants me to buy that bastard a wheel chair," slurried Murderface. "SHE WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT IT!"

"I have to admit it," I said. "But Seth REALLY rubs me the wrong way."

"YOU THINK?!" snapped Pickles. "Why do we make it so hard on ourselves? We'll just solve it like any other problem!"

"Of course," exclaimed Murderface. "We'll them put to sleep!"

I raised my eyebrow. "That's..." I thought of the horrible state of Mr. Murderface. "Probably not a
bad idea."

"No, we'll lie," said Pickles. "We'll lie through our teeth and throw money at them! We'll buy that bastard a wheel chair, take them to miniature golf or whatever the fuck people do. We'll pretend we're interested in what they're askin', and when that weekend's over, we'll ship them outta here, never to be seen again. Deal?"

"You know," I said. "Parents can tell when you're lying. There's just no escape from them."

"Oh, believe me," Pickles said. "We can make it look VERY convincing!"

I didn't participate in any of the family outings for two reasons: one, there was paperwork that needed to be done about the next shooting for the new music videos, and two, I HAD to get far away from Skwisgaar's mother. The old hag was trying to flirt with me; her son was right, she likes to have sex with ANY attractive man she sees! I had to keep away from her otherwise, I could help her create a bastard brother of the blonde guitarist!

I was filing the paperwork when I got a call on my dethphone. It still hurts to put it up to your ear whenever you try to talk with it. "Hello? Nathan? Mini-golf? I don't play golf. I...no, I won't do it. Besides, I can't be ANYWHERE near Mrs. Skwigelf! She scares me! I don't care if it's coming out of my paycheck! What? FINE! I'll be wearing a condom when I get to the field though."

I made sure to keep far away from the blonde hag by staying near Nathan and Pickles. Sadly, I didn't feel safe when Seth turned on the charm and talked to Pickles. "All I'm sayin' is that I did most of the numbers right? So I did most of the work right? So all I need, is percentage. What I need to get started, get the labeling, you know. Phones. Chicks to answer the phones, desks, all that stuff." Was he...haggling him?! "Just need a couple bucks. You just sign a check, see?" He held up one. "I already wrote a check. Right there, you just sign. Alright, I know what your PIN number is. That's not a threat. So just - I'm the real deal, okay. I'm no one of those frickin' assholes you meet sometimes."

"Just give him the damn money," I growled to Pickles.

"Why don't we talk about this cool stuff when I come over and visit next weekend?"

The brother of Pickles said, "I'll remember that. You just tell me, where and when. Send me a plane ticket, send me an e ticket."

"I pray that you crash you moocher," I whispered. As I walked away, I made a mental note to have Mr. Offdenson keep track of how much Seth was spending Pickles', and by extension, Dethklok's money. Suddenly, I heard Murderface yell and I gasped in shock as he was choking his grandmother! Nathan and Pickles held him back and I kicked him square between the legs. "What the hell was that?!"

"Sorry! Sorry! I just... It's my fault! I can't stand to see her chew, I just locked in on it! My fault! Sorry!"

"Are you okay," I asked the grandmother.

"Oh, I'm fine, son."
"Thanks." I saw Thunderbolt in his new wheelchair. "So, Mr. Murderface, how's the new chair working out for you?"

He typed some words in the keyboard and a computer voice said, "**Kill me. Kill me. Kill me. Kill me. Kill me. Kill me.**"

I shrugged my shoulders. "You look fine to me."

(!) In Dethklok's studio...

"Okay," I muttered as I went over the plans with the Klokateers. "So, Skwisgaar is going to ride in on a dragon while playing his solo. Then, on the final chord, the dragon will explode and he will jump onto the stage and the band can proceed with Electric Eel Chair. Got that?"

"Yeah," the guys muttered.

"All right, so, we have plenty of time for the Jordan concert. So, we'll just get straight to the recording after the band's families have left..." I realized we weren't alone. "Hey, what are you all doing here?"

"Tommy dear," Mrs. Explosion said. "Would you mind calling down the boys? We have a surprise for them!"

"What's the surprise?"

"You'll be surprised."

(!)

The band and I were surprised. "You want to do what?"

Seth said, "We are going to do a Dethklok family Death metal album! There it is, I said it. Okay? And I got it all figured out. Everybody's on board. Now we can all enjoy the fruits of our talents! After all," he put an arm around Pickles' shoulder. "hey, you're my little brother. I friggin' love you. But you got all your ideas about music from me first! The idea to become a rock n' roll star, that was mine. So face it; you owe me!"

"THAT'S IT!" I punched Seth square in the face. "I won't have you mooching off of your brother! Pickles was right about you," I snapped to the drummer's parents. "You really don't care about your more successful son! You ungrateful pieces of shit!"

Seth rubbed his broken nose and said, "I can't take this away from them! We're family!"

"What the hell are you talking about?!" Pickles shouted as he began to choke his brother.

Nathan growled, "We are the most brutal band in the world! What do any of you know about being brutal?"

"Yeah," snapped William.

Skwisgaar shouted, "Now you guys better check out or you'll has each other's lunch for dinners!"

All of a sudden, Mrs. Murderface pulled out a can of pepper spray and fired it at Pickles' face. As he screamed, he let go of Seth. Mrs. Murderface spat, "Oh, you gutless pieces of living garbage!
You think you know what it's like to be brutal?" Then she sprayed her own grandson! "Can you imagine cleaning the feculent crud off this moron's diapers every morning?" He got sprayed again. Then the hag said in a low voice, "Let me tell you billionaire lowlives something, there's nothing, NOTHING, in this world more brutal and grotesque than raising children!

"I would have thought you would have gotten used to it," I said. "Seeing as how you already raised one son, Murderface's father."

"USED TO IT?!" Then she ran right over my foot! I yelped and fell down, clutching my crushed foot. "You honestly think I LIKED raising a boy who became a murderer and committed suicide?! And he left me with this idiot!" She pointed at her grandson. "That's the REAL beauty of being a grandparent, son. So that your offspring get to know what it's like to live through the Hell us old farts went through!"

"You ruined my vagina!" shouted Mrs. Explosion to her son.

"I could never lose the weight after you born," Mrs. Skwigelf scorned her son. "And look at the veins in my bosom!" She lifted off her shirt, revealing a horrible sight. "They're like a road map of Stockholm!"

"I used to be happy," snapped Mr. Explosion. "Until YOU! When I started spending all my time with HER, and I spent all my beer money on little kid's clothes! That's brutal!"

It appears that Dethklok did inherit one common trait from their families: their self hate.

(!)

In Machaerus, Jordan, the band was performing their first song in front of thousands of fans. Everything was going well until Skwisgaar accidentally tripped on the power cord to Murderface's bass. In retaliation, he punched Skwisgaar. Skwisgaar fell on top of Nathan. Nathan shoved him and Murderface into Toki. Toki charged at the two of them, wielding his guitar like an axe, but Skwisgaar pushed him into Pickles' drum set. Pickles threw one of his cymbals, but it instead struck the neck of a fan. Then it became a full out brawl. The band were all over the stage, punching, kicking, biting and pulling each other's hair.

It was too much. I pulled out a dart gun and fired a single dart into each of their buttocks. They fell into a heap. I walked onto the stage and took Nathan's mike. "Ladies and gentlemen," I said. "Due to Dethklok no longer able to perform due to getting shot with enough tranquilizer to take down a blue whale, this concert has been cancelled. Thank you." I ignored the booing and the jeering and signaled the Klokateers to help me drag the band off stage.

(!)

I was shaking my head as I read the recent headline when we got back to Mordhaus. "Jordanians sue Dethklok 16.7 Million US Dollars.' Nice one, guys."

But the band wasn't even paying attention. They were just looking up at the lounge's ceiling, amazed at something only they could see.

"Dude," Pickles said. "You have got to tell me the source of those blue whale tranquilizers. I could actually see things that I don't see when I'm taking angel dust."

"I was able to experience my past self as an eagle," Nathan said.

"I was a clown," Toki said. "And I was surrounded by clones of my childhood self."

"I ams my owns fathers," Skwisgaar awed.

"Well," I said. "You're not going to do that again. This is the fifth riot and the fifth time I had to risk my life dragging your unconscious bodies because of your immaturity. I talked to Mr. Offdenson and he agrees that you need help."

A howl brought everyone's attention to the window. "It appears the yard wolves has grown up. Are we finally finished with thes colds dead winters?"

Suddenly, Mr. Offdenson walked in. "Gentlemen, I have done some research and to avoid future bands and riots, the only answer I keep coming back to is...uh...band therapy."

I nodded, "And who did you hire to be our specialist?"
The tribunal watched live footage of Jordan in flames. "These Jordanian riots are all Dethklok's doing, gentlemen," Senator Stampingston said. "Acres of destruction in the Holy Lands because of an onstage quarrel. Now it turns out they're in need of a band therapist. General Crozier?"

The general showed images of a man with a flat top haircut wearing a pink vest, a teal shirt, and huge glasses. "His name is Dr. John Twinkletits. He was once in a big band called the Amazelingtons; they broke up. Twinkletits lost his mind, he disappeared for ten years, reemerged with a therapy degree and a bone to pick. He's now called the most extreme therapist by several reputable psychological publications. I feel that if we send him in," he added with a bit of hope. "the band would turn inwards and tear itself apart."

Stampingston pointed out, "Imagine how much more destruction could be caused by Dethklok fans if they were to disband."

"That's a risk I feel we should consider taking."

"We will allow Dethklok to look inward," the ancient man said. "There is nothing more dark than one's own soul..."

"It's so good for you to come, Dr. Twinkle Tits," I said to the man, shaking his hand. Only, when I said his name, he didn't look happy. "What did you say?"

"Dr. Twinkle Tits. Is that not your name?" His grip was suddenly getting tighter.

"It's pronounced Twinkletits. Say it with me," he said, his voice suddenly growing lower. "Twink. Lettuce."

"I'm sorry," I said, trying to break free from his grip. "I didn't know..."

"SAY IT CORRECTLY!"

"Ah! Twinkletits! Twinkletits!" He let go. "Jesus Christ..." I cleared my throat and escorted him. "Anyway, the band is in the next room down the hall on the left. And Mr. Offdenson has asked me to accompany you in case they get too wild. I must warn you," I added as I patted my tranquilizer. "these idiots are a bunch of children when it comes to mentality so be ready for any temper tantrums, objects being thrown and generally unruly behavior."

"Oh, please, I've met worse. And besides, like any child, they can be rewarded for good behavior."

"I thought that was for pets."

"It's the same process."

Dr. Twink...er...Twinkletits faced the band as he swiveled back and forth on a desk chair, occasionally pressing the switch on his red pen. I stood nearby, tranquilizer gun at the ready. "Your band is in trouble," he said. "You're on the verge of destroying each other! You're a bunch of jungle monkeys! You're hurting each other's feelings, and why? Why? It's the end of the day, what's so great about that? Cause you know what that tells me? 'I ain't okay with myself!' 'I ain't okay with this guy over here!' It literally makes me ill to see people do that. You're a family! You
are! Don't you know that? Well, if you don't want that, Jack, there's the door! Take a walk, take a hike! I know what I'm talking about, cause I was in a band once!"

Skwisgaar scoffed, "Well I bet you guys totally sucked! The worst band ever of all time..." Suddenly, Dr. Twinkletits slapped him in the face, surprising Dethklok and I! "I'm in charge now you ugly idiots," he shouted. "I'm here to help you! And you NEED help! Why? Because you're weak! You're terrified! And you're out of control! One small move and you could lose everything. EVERYTHING! Is that what you want?" No one said anything. "Great," he said, reassuming his cheery persona. "Then let's begin, shall we?"

"You slapped at my face."

"No, I didn't!"

(!)

Two weeks later, Dr. Twinkletits was invited back to Mordhaus and was escorted to the recording studio. "You should know that we don't really let anybody in here," said Nathan to him.

"Relax, Tonto, don't get all neurotic on me, jeez. I'm just going to observe you all. Now I want you all to be yourselves. Act like I'm not here, go!"

Pickles said. "Don't worry, I've been tryin' to do that since yeh got here."

"Well then it shouldn't be a problem then, should it, SMARTASS?!"

"Dude, no hitting."

(!)

Toki was in the booth doing his one hundred and sixty third take. Nathan said, "Do it again, Toki. Take 164." Toki played again only for one of his strings to break.

"Just... let me record it," Skwisgaar said. "Each take gets worse! He's slowly learning how to unplay the guitar."

"I can hear that," Toki said. "The talkback mike is on."

"Pickle, please let me know when the talkback mike is on so that Mr. Sensitives don'ts goes to crysbabies house for vacation?"

"I can stills hear you."

"So, what do you want? A be-able-to-hear-things award?!"

"Eh, not really. Doesn't sound like a greats award, to be honest."

"I told you they were a bunch of children," I whispered to Dr. Twinkletits.

"Is this the way you normally record?" he asked with a hint of anger.

"Well, yeah," Nathan said bluntly.

"What, you just push little Toki around?"

"They do it all the time," I said.
"What's wrong with that?" asked Nathan.

"Are you kidding me," snapped Dr. Twinkletits. "Do you have any idea what that's doing to his little ego? Listen, we're going to do a little exercise in changing band dynamics."

(!)

Toki's guitar was replaced with a microphone.

"This idea is dildos," whispered Skwisgaar to Murderface.

"Toki," said the doctor. "You are now the lead singer of the band."

"No thanks."

"You know, your creative voice is unappreciated and we're going to change that."

"Honestly," Toki said. "I don't want no creative voice. It's cool."

"Are you kidding me? You are now the lead singer, go! Make up some lyrics! One, two, three, go!" He pressed the button and played music. Toki started to sing, unenthusiastically, in his Norwegian tongue. Only Dr. Twinkletits liked it.

(!)

The band and I were watching a surgery documentary in the dining hall when Dr. Twinkletits came in. "Band meetin' everyone, BAND MEETIN'!"

Pickles frowned at him, "Dude, you may be a therapist, but you can't call a band meeting!"

"Yes I can! For the purpose of these exercises, I am a band member! To reward Toki for great work today, I should like to give him something that the rest of you may one day earn." He unlocked a locked box on his belt and held up a banana sticker with tweezers. "The banana sticker," he said with awe. He handed it to Toki.

"That's it?" I asked. "That's your reward for good behavior?"

"YOU GOT ANOTHER GOOD IDEA?!"

"How come he gets a banana sticker? asked Murderface. "Don't I get one?"

"No, Murderface, you do not get a banana sticker, not until you have proven yourself! Until then, these banana stickers shall remain locked in here."

The bassist suddenly grabbed Toki's guitar and swung it around and smashed it, shouting, "I wanna banana sticker!" like a naughty child. I fired my dart in the bassist's posterior. He collapsed with a thud and started muttering, "Banana sticker..."

(!)

We were waiting for Murderface and Twinkletits to come out of the recording studio and we didn't have to wait long. The two of them were walking side by side; there was a banana sticker on Murderface's shirt and a wet stain on his pants. "What happened?" I asked.

"We had some rock talk," Murderface said.
As the weeks passed, I began to notice a change in the band. The band was starting to get a lot more friendly with each other and the use for the tranquilizer gun had lessened to a great extent. And there were banana stickers all over their clothes. But it slowly became apparent to me that Dr. Twinkletits was slowly taking over the band when he demanded certain changes to the band's image as part of their therapy.

I wanted to tell off Dr. Twinkletits, but I immediately stopped when I heard him talking on the phone in his office. "Hey, it's John Twinkletits. Remember me? I was in the Amazelingtons with you. Just wanted to let you know that I'm in another band and we're called Dethklok, so no big whoop, no big whoop. Just give me a call back whenever you can, but then again you probably can't BECAUSE I KILLED YOU!" I slowly backed away from the door when a huge pair of hands grabbed me by the shoulders and pulled me into another room. "Guys?" I asked.

"We heard everything," Skwisgaar said.

"I knew that guy was crazy," I said, hushed.

"How could you say something like that," Murderface asked. "He's a genius."

"A genius?!" I shrieked. "Twinkletits thinks he's in your band! I mean, look at yourselves!" He had dressed them in clothes and gave them hair styles from the 70's.

"He's right," Nathan said. "I think we gotta fire him."

"Wait, we can do that?" asked Toki.

"Yeah. I just found out we can fire anybody we can employ."

"Can we fires ourselves?" asked Skwisgaar.

"Yeah, no, I found that out too."

"Can we give ourselves a raise?" asked Pickles.

"Yeah, I think so. Don't quote me on that but I think we can."

I shook my head when the band declared they gave themselves raises...and a solid gold telephone...and a bunch of boats with Vietnamese people on fire.

Then Pickles made a realization, "Dudes, I just thought about something. If we fire Twinkletits, then we ain't gonna see no more banana stickers." The band hushed in horror. I pinched the bridge of my nose. "You know you can buy those things from the dollar store right?"

"You can?" asked Toki.

"Sure. There's one down the street. But before we do, please go back to wearing your regular clothes. You look like a bunch of women."

We met Dr. Twinkletits in the lounge. We noticed there was a change to his look. He was wearing death metal eye shadow and was wearing a pair of spiky death metal bracelets. "All right," he said.
"We've got a lot of work to do because...we're going on tour!"

"Hey," Nathan said. "We were thinking. Not very hard but, you're fired. Yeah. We hate you."

Dr. Twinkletits scoffed. "I'm sorry, what?"

"Hey, it's not that bad," said Murderface. "You know, I pride myself on being able to pit people against each other, but you're amazing, you're a real dick, and we appreciate that, but we never wanna see you again, you ugly idiot dick!"

"Hold on for a second. I'm your therapist!"

"Hey, I'm no therapist," Skwisgaar said. "But I hate your mustache."

"Don't you want a banana sticker?"

"No they won't," I said, pushing a chest in front of Dr. Twinkletits and opened it, revealing a bunch of banana stickers. "Turns out you can buy psychological validation."

A vein swelled up in the doctor's forehead. "You sons of bitches! HOW DARE YOU! I AM THE BAND! YOU CAN'T KICK ME OUT! I'LL KICK YOU OUT! YOU'RE ALL FIRED, YOU BUNCH OF STUPID PUSSIES! I'LL KILL YOU!" He raised his pen and lunged at the boys, but a quick fire from my tranquilizer gun and a slip of one of the banana stickers sent him flying out the window. Surprisingly, he landed without that much harm. Then the yard wolves came.

"Look. The wolves eat him," Toki said.

"Yes, Toki," Skwisgaar said. "And his body will nourish the wolves."

"I believe the cycle of learning is complete."

"Indeeds. Alls of us should learns a lesson."

"Yeah. And what lesson might that be?" asked Pickles.

"I haves no idea. But it's pretty metal that he's being eaten, look at that right there."

"The only lesson I learned," I said. "Is not to hire a doctor with psychological problems of his own."

"I loved him. I ... can say that now." Nathan said that while video taping Twinkletits getting his arms ripped out by two wolves.

"Now that he's dead," said Murderface. "It's much easier to say emotional things about him."

Pickles' stomach growled. "Guys, maybe this is weird to say, but am I the only one who is being made to feel hungry by watching this?"

"Let's eat." decided Nathan.

"Take out?" I suggested.

(!)

"You know," I said as I dragged Dr. Twinkletits armless body back into Mordhaus. "You should consider yourself lucky the yard wolves didn't finish you off. They were already fed this morning."
And you should consider yourself lucky Mr. Offdenson is giving you a second chance of being the band's therapist despite the fact you tried to kill them." I placed him on a stretcher. "Perhaps a little blood loss and dismemberment is what you needed to have a new perspective on life."

"My arms..."

"Oh, don't worry. We've got enough money for that." A pair of Klokateers came to carry him to the medical wing.

Mr. Offdenson approached me from behind. "I will take full blame for what's happened," he said. "It was my idea to hire Dr. Twinkletits, but I had no idea he would go this far."

I faced him. "Next time, run an even more thorough background check on your new employees."

"Oh, don't worry. I will."

Chapter End Notes

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Snakes n' Barrels

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Wood, Wood!" Nathan kicked down the door to my room. "Lounge! Now!"

"But I'm making plans for...hey!" The vocalist picked me up and carried me to the lounge where Murderface, Skwisgaar and Toki were sitting. "What the hell are you idiots doing?!"

"Shut up," Nathan shouted and flipped on the TV. "Watch this!"

"Nathan, I got no time to..." I stopped when I saw what was on the TV: an image of four young men dressed in glam rock clothing. One was black haired and wearing a black vest, black denim pants, black boots and a black top hat. The second was blonde haired and wearing pink pants with white suspenders, white boots and a pink bandana and was bare chested. The third was brown haired and wearing a loose long sleeved shirt, baggy blue pants, cowboy boots. But the fourth was easily recognizable. It was Pickles! He wore the same clothes he did now, but his hair was more wild, and he looked a couple years younger.

"Very girly," Skwisgaar chuckled. "Ain't he?"

"Who are those people with Pickles?" I asked.

The TV provided the answer, "They were known as Snakes n' Barrels, a tough group of rock thugs from the wrong side of the tracks with a ravenous madman on the forefront, a man simply known as Pickles, who would eventually become the legendary percussionist for Dethklok. But years earlier, Pickles was a young midwesterner on a dust-covered bus headed towards L.A..

A black man in front of a music store said, "This boy couldn't have been older than 16... walked right into my pawn shop located on Fairfax and Wilson... and he said, 'Gimme your guitar.' And I said, 'Oh, we got this sweet old jazz box guitar.' And he said, 'No! I want that Gibson Les Paul gold-tar with the humbuckers.' Now, the way that he told me that, I just knew that he meant business. And I was like, 'Uh oh! Here comes. This gonna be big.'"

"And the musical persistence of the young man paid off. Within months, he had his own band signed to a major label. This was the beginning of Snakes n' Barrels. Record sales were through the roof but the constant touring took its toll... on Snakes n' Barrels, and drug use became a regular part of their lives."

The next clip was a hand written letter by Pickles. It read, "Antonio shot heroin into his balls again this morning. He says this time it was an accident. I'm sure we'll have the usual difficulties on stage tonight. I know I sound like a broken record but I need heavier music."

The next clip were pictures of the band going downhill. "The scourge of drugs would force Snakes n' Barrels to disband nearly overnight at the top of their game. Rumors of overdose and death circulated in the press, leaving the world to forever ponder the possibility of a reunion. Will there ever be..."

Suddenly, the TV switched off. We all turned to see Pickles (the present day one) holding the
remote. "Hey," Nathan shouted. "We were watching that!"

"Dude, right. So you can make fun of me, I know."

Skwisgaar teased, "No way. To compliment you. You were such a beautifuls lady back then." He laughed. "Maybe you wills alls favor us with makeups tips."

"That's very funny," Pickles said sarcastically.

"It's exciting!" said Murderface. "Turn it back on. I want to see what happens!"

"What do you mean? I'm here, that's what happened. That's the end of the story."

"That can't be what happened after," I said.

"Well, it is."

"Well, it's boring when you say it," droned Murderface."

"I know."

"Pickle?" Toki said, making a "pbbt" sound like a motor boat. "This Snakes n' Barrels, it's... It's not my cup of tea. It sucks."

"Well... That's not a nice thing to say, Toki."

"Not my fault it sucks."

"Well, you know, it's still not..." Pickles waved his hands defensively. "I don't play in that band anymore. It's history, all right? There's no need to be threatened."

"Hey," Nathan said. "We're not threatened."

"I know. I'm just... It's over. All I care about is Dethklok."

Mr. Offdenson called Pickles and I to his office. "You wanted us to see us, sir?"

"Yes, Wood. Snakes n' Barrels' record sales have gone through the roof since the documentary began airing and there's interest of a reunion tour."

"Okay," Pickles said instantly.

"Figures. I muttered. "If there's anything that has Dethklok in it, people will instantly buy it. Wait, what do you need me for?"

"They're in need of a special effects manager and you're the best one we've got."

"You mean the only one." Mr. Offdenson raised an eyebrow. "Hey," I said defensively. "I'm okay with that. Besides," I picked up an old Snakes n' Barrels album from his desk. "I'm actually looking forward to see Pickles' old friends."

(!)

The tribunal had an image of the Dethklok logo with the word "Postponed" written on it. Mr. Stampingston began, "Dethklok is on hiatus while Pickles reunites with Snakes n' Barrels."

Cardinal Ravenswood said, "Alone, they are weak."
"I believe the weakness lies in Snakes n' Barrels' predisposition for drug abuse," said General Crozier.

Stampingston pressed a button and an image of the man in the top hat appeared, only he was fatter and older. "Gentlemen, Antonio 'Tony DeMarco' Thunderbottom on bass guitar. Once a major alcoholic, he's now sober." He pressed another button and showed an image of the man in suspenders; he too was fatter and older. "Sandy 'Candy Nose' Twinskins on drums. A crack cocaine fiend; sober." He pressed another button, showing the third musician. He too was older and he was bald and was wearing a girdle. "On rhythm guitar, Snizzy 'Snazz' Bullets. Hallucinogens and heroin left him with partial paralysis in the face; also sober."

General Crozier smiled, "Just because they're sober right now doesn't mean they can't relapse. We have available somebody who could prove to be very important to us. Military pharmaceutical psychotropic drug manufacturer, Dr. Amomolith Chesterfield."

The doctor was wearing a brown suit and had slick black hair. He spoke in an airy voice, "I've been experimenting with a new kind of drug called Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. The smallest dosage of this drug will drive the user completely insane. With a high enough dosage, their memory will be wiped clear and thus be a blank slate waiting to be reprogrammed in any way one sees fit."

"And once we reprogram Pickles," General Crozier said. "We will be able to destroy Dethklok from the inside out."

(!)

I was disappointed when I saw where the rest of Snakes n' Barrels were living: a condo that looked like it had taken a beating. "What happened? I thought your friends were living the good life like you were?"

"Well," said Pickles as he rang the broken doorbell. "It's what happens when the good life makes you poor as fuck."

The door opened and a man in a top hat stepped out and he instantly smiled when he saw the man in the red dreadlocks. "Pickles! Buddy!"

"Hey, Tony."

The two men fist bumped. Then Tony pointed to me, "Hey, who's the kid?"

"Oh, this is Tommy Wood, he's going to be our special effects manager."

"Nice to meet you, Tony."

"Sure, kid." Tony gestured us to come inside. We met the other two band members in the garage, and they greeted us. I was immediately captivated by Snizzy's bald and scarred scalp. "What happened to your head?"

"Hair transplant gone bad," he said. "I don't want to get into details about it."

"Looks you guys are all set up," I said, noticing the beat up drum kit, speakers and guitars.

"Yeah," said Sammy. "When the record sales and demands for a reunion came in our mailboxes, we got ready for everything."
Pickles said, taking charge, "Look, I know you're all sober now and I can totally respect you. So, I'm going to resist the urge to do drugs and drink around you. I will still do them... but I will excuse myself and go to a different room. Cool? Good. So, we don't have a lot of time before the reunion tour which I am very excited about. So, let's just jump into Water Horsy Blues. It's good to see you all again."

Sammy took out his sticks. "One, two, three, four!"

I plugged my ears with my fingers, the noise was so awful. Pickles agreed with me. "Stop! Stop, stop! For the love of God! Sweet lord! Have you people forgotten how to play?! That sounded awful!"

"No way, man!" protesting Sammy. "We're better than ever!"

"Dude," I pointed out. "You're sitting OUTSIDE of the drum kit."

"No, I ain't!" Then he realized, "Oh, wait, you're right. Sorry. That's why it felt weird. Let me just get on back there."

"Just go around it," said Pickles. "Don't climb..." CRASH! "...over it. Tony, dude, I couldn't even hear your bass at all."

"My amp is off."

"Why?"

"I'm saving money on electricity, bro. I'm not made out of money."

"Just turn it on. It'll reimburse you."

Tony thought it over. "You got a deal." He flipped the speaker on, and a loud buzzing sound came on.

Pickles cringed. "Great," he said sarcastically. "That sounds wonderful." Then he turned to the rhythm guitarist and saw he had a guitar attached to his girdle. "Hey, Bullets, what is this thing you're wearing?"

"It's an invention of mine. It's a strapless guitar that also functions as a girdle. It's called a gigirdle-a-tar. I can make you one."

"That won't be necessary," I said. I pinched the bridge of my nose. "You guys," I said to the band. "You're way out of practice and out of shape." I poked Sammy's belly to prove my point.

"Dudes," Pikkle said. "The kid's right. We have got a lot of work to do and not very much time. We've gotta get you in shape or we're gonna disappoint a whole bunch of people out there. Snakes n' Barrels has got no choice but to rock harder than ever."

"We do have time," I said. "That's why I made a schedule." I handed the band a couple of pieces of paper. "If we practice one day and then work out the other day, we'll have enough time to get into shape and play better. Besides," I added, looking at Pickles. "The workout will distract your friends while you do your drugs, drinking and smoking."

"All right."
For the next several weeks, Pickles and I helped the aged Snakes n' Barrels get into shape and actually play their instruments. For one whole day, I made sure they did plenty of push ups, curl ups and chin ups while Pickles coached them to run a 2 mile lap around the house. Every other day, Snakes n' Barrels practiced their choreography and playing their instruments. My personal favorite became Water Horsey Blues. I made sure the band stayed FAR away from Pickles whenever he drank, took drugs and smoked.

It looked as though my training schedule was working. The boys' fat levels were decreasing despite the fact that they were tired and would occasionally complain of heart problems.

(!)

I measured the boys' muscles and nodded. "I think you boys are ready physically. Just one last thing." I handed the boys music sheets for the song Kill You. "Let's hear you play."

*Cue Kill You*

I smiled. All our hard work paid off.

(!)

One day, a week before the concert, I was gathering the equipment to put in the truck to be delivered to the band shell when I noticed Bullets' rhythm guitar sitting on the counter. I don't know what compelled me to do it, but before I knew it, I was playing the instrument, playing a tuneless song.

"Dude," I heard Bullets say. "If you want a gigirdle-a-tar, don't steal mine."

"Oh! Sorry, Snizzy." I handed the instrument back to him.

"So...uh...when did you start playing?"

"Um...just now."

Bullets sniffed. "It needs work."

"I know. Hey, help me with this last crate. It's pretty heavy."

"Sure."

We both lifted the heavy thing and we both heard the distinct sound of bottles clinking. Bullets blinked. "Wait, is this Pickles' beer cooler?"

My eyes widened. "Uh oh!"

"It's all right. I got it."

But I could see his lips drooling at the sight of the box.

(!)

I peeked back the curtain when we reached the Apollo Theater. "A full house." I walked backstage and met up with Pickles who was going over the songs. "You're on in 15 minutes Pickles," I said.

"Okay. Hey, could you find the guys for me? I think they got lost, I can't find them."
"I think I saw them take the emergency exit, I don't know why." I went after the band when I bumped into Dethklok. "Oh, hey guys." I sniffed. "Whoa, you guys are drinking the strong stuff?"

"Yeah," Nathan muttered. "We just came to say good luck to Pickles and...and...uh...not to forget us."

"Dude, he's not going to forget you guys," I said. "You asked him that a million times in the past month. Though, given the alcohol, I can see why you would forget."

"He's a good boy," Murderface slurred. "He's a good boy."

Toki only said one thing, "Your music sucks."

"Yeah...uh, listen, I gotta go find Snakes n' Barrels, okay? I'll get right back to you." I left the band to talk to Pickles while I continued my search for the boys. Eventually, I found them in a back alley talking to a man in an obviously fake beard. "Hey, you guys want to do some Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake?" he asked, holding up four vials of a blue bubbling liquid. The boys droned, confused. "You guys are gonna get so high that your minds are gonna blow chunks... to outer space and to the Milky Way. And what better way to celebrate the reunion than with a good old-fashioned Milky Way chunk-blow?" The boys droned again.

"How much?" asked Tony. I gasped.

"It's free."

"Thanks."

The man left. I confronted the boys. "Dudes, what the hell are you doing?! I thought we agreed no drugs and alcohol!"

"Uh..."

"Oh, this isn't for us," Sammy said. "It's for Pickles!"

"Yeah," said Tony. "It's totally for Pickles! He can take it because he's not sober."

"Yeah," Bullets said. "And he get's to have all the fun and parties and..." He started to look sad. "...and babes...and millions of dollars..."

I raised my eyebrow. "Are you jealous of Pickles?"

"Well..." said Tony. "Maybe a little?"

I sighed. "How about a four way drink. That way Pickles can take responsibility if something were to happen." The boys shrugged. "Okay. Now, let's go! You gotta get on stage in 10 minutes! I hope you've been practicing."

"Uh, yeah, mom," Tony said.

"Cute."

(!)

"Hey, found them Pickles."

"Cool. All right. Let's kick ass tonight."
"Oh, I almost forgot," Sammy said, holding up the vials. "We got some Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake from a dude."

"Come on, guys. I don't want to encourage any drug... OK, I'll do it." The boys took a single vial. "Cheers," they said.

"Wait," I said, stopping them. "I just want to say, before we go out there, I honestly expected something horrible to happen. Like the stage exploding or one of you guys getting crushed by one of the lights."

"That's brutal," Pickles said.

"But," I continued. "Nothing of the sort happened. For once, Pickles, I think this might be the first concert in a while that doesn't involve death and mutilation. And...good luck out there, boys."

The boys said nothing. Then Tony asked, "Would you like some Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake?"

I looked at the vials. "Uh..."

"Come on," Pickles said. "Don't be a party pooper. Think of it as a reward for getting my friends back into shape."

I looked at the vials again. "How about a small lick and you give me some more for parties."

"Hold on," Sammy said. He held up a red picnic cup and added a tiny bit in it. "Drink up kid."

I stuck my finger in it and licked it. I immediately spat it out. "Oh, god! That's awful!" The boys laughed. "Yeah, yeah, just drink your shit and get on stage."

"Cheers."

(!)

"Yeah, yeah, yeah!" shouted Pickles to the cheering crowd. "Snakes n' Barrels are gonna rock you! One, two, three, four!"

*Cue Water Horsey Blues*

As the band played, I noticed something strange in the audience. It was the drug dealer with the fake beard and he looked as though he was smiling. What was going on? I got my answer when Sammy, Tony and Bullets stopped playing and started screaming.

(!)

Back at Mordhaus, Dethklok and I watched the news. The reporter said, "Apparently Snakes n' Barrels were given psychotropic drugs that have erased their minds. Except for Pickles who the drugs had no effect on whatsoever."

Pickles said on the TV, "I grew up smoking government weed every day. You know, I had kiddie glaucoma. Don't ask me. I'm immune to just about everything."

I gasped. "Oh, god, that could have been me! I licked that stuff!"

"Only puny lick," Pickles reminded. "It was pretty pathetic. By the way, I brought the rest of the stuff in that red cup you didn't finish."
I looked at the accursed thing sitting on the kitchen table. "Uh, I'll have the boys in the lab run some tests on it before I try it out."

"Pffft, wimp."

The report continued, "The recording of that night's concert event has rocketed... through the charts and is being called the most brutal album of all time."

Nathan switched off the TV. "Most brutal album, huh. I hate to say it. They're right. It's an amazing album. Congratulations, Pickles. It is so chilling."

Murderface nodded, "What a great way to go out, too. I only hope we can end that way, clawing our eyes out and throwing up acid blood."

I hated to admit it, but it was actually pretty awesome to see Snakes n' Barrels do that. Still, I felt bad for them, they were locked in an insane asylum last I heard them and were still screaming.

"I officially takes backs whatever I say about Snakes n' Barrels," said Toki. "You're amazing!"

"This music is likes potato chips," said Skwisgaar. "I can't stops listening to it. Plays it again."

"All right," said Pickles. And he pushed the button.

(!)

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUUUUGH! Oh, no! My gigirdle-a-tar is choking my tummy and my guts which is where my brains are! Oh my god, there's little Civil War soldiers walking on my skin! I'm aware of my tongue! AAAUGH! AAAUGH! AAAUGH! AAAUUGH! AAAUUGH! Get them off me! Oh, no! I am also aware of my tongue! NOOOOOOOOOOOOO! I'm a chicken! I believe I am a chicken! I'm a chicken! I'm a chicken! I'm a... I'm a chicken! I believe I am a chicken!

Chapter End Notes

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News footage showed Dethklok on a stage in front of dozens of people. Only these people looked horrible: some had extra arms and legs, others had their faces completely melted, others were conjoined siblings. The reporter said, "Dethklok traveled to the Gulf of New Guinea to Krangor Island, known for containing the majority of the world's nuclear waste. The islanders that have been transformed by the waste welcomed the band who was there to give this very special message."

On the stage, Nathan Explosion held a giant pair of scissors before a large red ribbon. "We have liberated your island from you... your island that was once a nuclear... nuclear testing facility that has in turn tragically disfigured you all into ugly horrible-looking mutants. And we now decree your island the Dethklok Home For Wayward Kitties." Nathan cut the ribbon and a large banner that read, "Dethklok Home For Wayward Kitties" was revealed. "Release the kitties!" Cages opened and thousands of angry cats were let lose upon the mutants, causing chaos everywhere.

"Well," I said, watching the carnage. "It's for a good cause." Suddenly, I felt something tug on my pants. I looked down. There, chewing on my pants like a dog, was a fat fourteen-year-old boy with stringy black hair and wearing a gray shirt, a black backwards baseball cap, black pants, black boots and spiky bracelets. His face looked like a pig's and when I asked if he needed help, he just snorted.

The tribunal watched the carnage on their screens. Senator Stampingston reported, "It's the end of the fiscal year and Dethklok, as predicted, is scrambling to donate as much as they can to various charities to get tax breaks."

General Crozier reported, "We're trying to track their spending but it's just too difficult. They've gotten smart and found ways to erase their paper trail. On the surface, it appears they're doing everything by the book."

"What else?"

"The most confusing thing to us is this young man," the general showed an image of a fat boy chewing on the pants of Dethklok's very confused special effects manager. "present at Dethklok's recent public appearance."

"What do we know about him?"

"All we know is that he's been in and out of foster homes for the last 14 years of his life and now is very close to Dethklok. They call him Fat Kid, or Fatty."
The band, Mr. Offdenson and I watched the news on the TV in the conference room. "Is Dethklok making too much money? Well, to some, that would be a rather comfortable problem. As the tax season draws to a close, the biggest band in showbiz..."

Mr. Offdenson switched off the TV. "Well, they're right. We did it again. We made too much money. So, I'm going to need you guys to pay extra special attention today because we're going to have to..."

Nathan didn't pay attention and instead played with a laser pointer. "My God. These things are amazing. Check it out. I'm an eye doctor." He pointed it in Murderface's eye.

"Can you please give me the laser pointer? It does not belong to you."

"Hey, wait your turn."

"Hey, point that into my eyes again," said Murderface. "It's awesome!"

"Point the laser beams at my too eye." Nathan complied and pointed it in Skwisgaar's eye. "Oh! Cool."

Pickles said, "Dude, check it out. If you press really hard on your eyes, it's awesome, dude." He pressed his hands to his eyes and when he removed them, the pupils shrunk then expanded.

"Awesome!"

"Yeah! But checks this out," Toki said. "I can force all the bloods to my face and gives myself a real cool blowjob!" He clenched his face hard until his cheeks turned red. Then blood oozed out his nose. "That's what I'm talking about!"

"That's actually pretty impressive," I said. That's when I noticed a pudgy hand reaching for my paperwork. "HEY! Don't eat that!" I got into a tug of war with the fat kid, who squealed like a boar.

"I'm sorry," Mr. Offdenson said. "Who is that fat kid?"

"Don't play dumb. You know who that is," said Nathan.

"No I don't. Who the hell is that?"

"Uh," said Pickles, as if Mr. Offdenson was being dumb. "Hello? That's our son."

"SON?!" I shrieked, finally tearing the papers out of the kid's mouth. I held it away, as he tried to reach for it, but I held him back with a foot.

"Yeah," said Murderface. "We adopted him for charity."

"I'm sorry," said Mr. Offdenson. "How is that for charity?"

"That we are his foster fathers," said Nathan. "What do you mean? That's for charity, right?"

"No Nathan," Mr. Offdenson said. "That's not donating money to organizations. That's... That doesn't help our tax situation."

"I'm sorry," I said, kicking the pig away. "You have to give him back to the orphanage."

"Hey, that's a crappy thing to say," said Nathan. "But, no, I don't think we can. We tried?"
"What do you mean, you tried?" I asked, avoiding the kid's attempt to reach for my paper.

"They were pretty glad to get rid of him," Pickles said. "Said they couldn't spend any more money feeding the fat fuck. Their words, not ours."

"Well," Mr. Offdenson said, getting back to business. "Let's talk about the big show. You guys are performing at the United Celebrities Of The World Foundation with the London Philharmonic. Kind of a big deal. Blah, blah. London Philharmonic. The donation will go to pharmaceutical research."

"What kind of pharmaceutical research?" asked Nathan as he played with the laser pointer.

"Well, I'm not sure. It doesn't say."

"Have those guys cured anything?"

I looked at the paper in Mr. Offdenson's hand. "No, it says here. No. They have not."

"Shouldn't they have cured at least one disease?"

I explained, "It's more like, 'We MIGHT cure some disease. We just need more money so that we MIGHT cure the disease.' It's no wonder cancer hasn't been erased like small pox yet."

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Mr. Offdenson. "If you want to keep your money, you do this show."

"That makes more sense," said Pickles. Just say that from now on."

"We're not going to do it unless we have... a big laser light show thing at whatever that thing is you're talking about," demanded Nathan as he pointed the laser at his own face.

"That's fine," Mr. Offdenson said. "Honestly, the more expensive this thing is, the more you can write off."

"Then let's have a mother fucking laser-light show then, OK?"

"I just said it was fine."

"Well, then let's still do that."

The fat kid ate some of the carpet and burped.

(!)

"Okay," I said to the band in the recording studio. "It took about five million dollars and a lot of contract, but I was able to convince the US and Russian militaries to put aside their differences and give us the lasers that will appear on the stage. And we've got the system set for, 'Dazzle', 'Blind', 'Stun', and 'Death'. They do not recommend we set it to death."

"That's fine," Nathan said. "As long as it's lasers. We need lasers!"

"Well, you've got lasers."

"All right. Now let's practice."

The band only played a few notes before the music became garbled. The reason? The fat kid was playing with the sound system! "Hey! Get out of here!" The fat kid squealed and took off running
"Hey," Skwisgaar said. "We got a lot of work to do." He turned to Murderface. "Can you please contain your son?"

"Oh, my son! He's your son, too!"

"That's impossible. He gots no regambience to me."

"He's not supposed to, douche bag. He's adopted!" The fat kid smashed one of the speakers. Skwisgaar said in a hushed tone, "I thought we agreed to never tell him he's adoptsted."

Pickles groaned in frustration as the kid stole one of his cymbals and chewed on it, "Dudes, what the hell is wrong with this guy? He can't stand still."

"Maybe he gots to go outside and goes to the b-a-s-t-h-r-o-h-m-n-s-e."

I turned to Toki. "Where did you learn English?" I asked.

"Hey, fatty ding dong, Murderface called out. "You want to take it easy on the horsing around?! Your daddies gotta rehearse for a charity event. Do you know what a charity event is?" The fat kid pushed Murderface into the drum kit. "Damn it! Get that fat little son of a bitch!"

It was chaos. The kid jumped onto the chandelier and swung around, grabbing one of Pickles' dreadlocks. Then he took off running, crashing through the speakers only to be caught by Nathan. "Don't kill him," Toki pleaded. "Leave him alone! He's my son!"

"I'm not, you idiot! I'm using hug therapy. I read somewhere it's supposed to calm 'em down."

Nathan grunted as he squeezed the kid. He stopped struggling. Then Nathan's eyes widened. "Oh, dear sweet Lord! I think he just used the restroom in his shorts." He let the kid go. "I guess he did have to go outside."

The kid hid behind a speaker as Pickles scolded him. "No, Fatty. No going to the bathroom inside! Only outside! There's gotta be a better way to calm him down."

I looked at Pickles. "Do you think he's a dog?"

"Dog huh?" asked Nathan. "That gives me an idea."

(!)

"Well," I said as the band escorted the kid to the medical wing and took him to a surgeon. "This just answered my question."

The doctor was appalled by what Dethklok suggest he should to to the kid. "This is rather unorthodox, I should tell you."

"When I was a kid," explained Nathan. "We had a dog. He was a real rascally goofball. And, well, you know, we neutered him. So, that seemed to do the trick. So, you know, what do you do?"

"You may not have to actually neuter him," the doctor said, patting the boy's head. Apparently, he thought he was a dog, too. "Maybe it's his diet. What are you feeding him?"

"Well," I said. "Let's see. They've been feeding him chocolate, hamburgers, hot dogs, ice cream, candy..."
"If you gave him something with a little less sugar, maybe he'd calm down."

"Oh, but he loves eating that crap," Toki said. "What are we... We can't just take that away from him. What are we - Nazis? You know, we'll neuter him."

The doctor seemed to have given up. "You know, OK, fine. Fine. No, it's fine. All right, I'll do it. Fine."

"Great," said Pickles. "Thank you, doctor."

I gave the doctor a look that said, "Don't do it!" He gave me a look that read, "I won't."

Thankfully, no one noticed.

(!)

A few minutes later, the kid came out into the waiting room. "Hey, goofball," Nathan said to the boy as if he were a dog. "Look who's all neutered. You are! Yeah, you're neutered, goofball. Yeah. Who's a neutered guy?"

The kid suddenly grunted and tried to take off. "He's scrambling away," Pickles shouted. "Get him!"

Murderface took out a taser and fired. Unfortunately, the boy bit into Toki's leg, electrocuting him as well. "OOOOH! YAH! YAH! MAMMA MIA!"

(!)

Weeks later...

I was aghast at the sight of Toki and Skwisgaar tying the kid to a tree on a short leash. "I don't know if I should call animal or child welfare."

Skwisgaar was disgusted. "You know, I'm starting to get sick of this fatherhoods thing. And why are we the ones that always get stuck feeding his fat ass? I think they racist or something."

"It's not racist," I said to Toki. "You guys just got the short straws. Besides, did you really think fatherhood would be easy?"

"Pfft," Skwisgaar scoffed. "Whats evers." He said to the boy, "Eat your food, fatty ding dong... because daddies going to take you to the charity show to sees daddies play." The boy didn't move. At first, I thought he was dead until he started chewing on a blade of grass. "He's not listening. I don't know, Toki. Fatherhood is a strange bird. So much responsibility and what are the rewards?"

"I suppose I feel a sense of pride knowing I help raise him. So, there's that." Toki took a bucket of slop and tossed it at the boy, but it landed too far from him. "Here's a bucket of hankboirgers... and a couple of big gulps and crap, you fat tits!"

"Try not to choke, you fat tub of shit," said Skwisgaar. "We loves you."

Pitying the boy, I pushed the food a little closer. "Oh, don't do that," Toki said. "You're encouraging bad behavior!"

(!)

A reporter said, "The biggest charity event thus far in the history of the world. The United Celebrities Foundation event starring Dethklok... with special guests the London Philharmonic."
Experts say they will raise an estimated $20 million from this night alone.

Backstage, I was given the unfortunate task of keeping an eye on the boy. Right now he was interested in the laser generator. "Don't touch that you little..."

"Oh," said Murderface. "Leave him alone before we report you to child services."

"You should report?! I should report you! But then again, you are Dethklok and I could be killed by all those people out there."

"Just let him play with the lasers," Nathan said. "It's not hurting anyone."

* Cue Dethharmonic*

I cursed myself for neglecting to look at him for one measly second. The kid turned on the 'Death' setting for the machine and I gulped. "RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!"

I grabbed the kid and we both ran off the stage, ignoring the blood and guts flying all over the place as the lasers sliced clean through the bodies of the orchestra.

(!)

Back at Mordhaus, the band had a little talk with their son. "Well, Fatty," Pickles said. "that's was not great back there how you killed an entire orchestra. Looks cool, but it does not reflects on us very well."

"Fatty ding dongs," said Skwisgaar, putting a hand on his shoulder. "We's would likes to have a word with you... fathers to son."

Nathan said, "Now, we know it's totally your fault that the London Philharmonic was sliced in half by a laser beam. And we know that you're sorry. We know that. But I guess... I guess we'd kind of hoped that you'd use better judgment, you know. You know, and as your fathers, we like to..."

Suddenly, Murderface burst into the room carrying a pair of chewed up shoes. "Oh, he ate my fucking SHOES! You little bastard! He ate my Civil War shoes!" He tossed them aside and got in a slap fight with the kid. "THEY ARE FUCKING IRREPLACEABLE CIVIL WAR SHOES, YOU FAT SON OF A BITCH!"

"I can't take this anymore," I said. "You guys are CLEARLY not ready for the responsibility for parenthood. You can't even take care of yourselves!"

"I think I know what you are all trying to say," said Nathan. "I, um... think we have to build a space helicopter." Everyone stared at him.

"Well, that's impossible," said Pickles. But I think I may have a better idea."

"You're giving him back to the orphanage?"

"Better, Wood."

(!)

"THIS ISN'T BETTER AT ALL!" I shouted as the band tossed the kid out the helicopter and into the Dethklok Home For Wayward Kitties.

"Look," said Skwisgaar. "There he goes. He is free finally."
Toki nodded, "That fat beautiful sons of a bitch will be better off there."

A swarm of cats pounced on the fat kid.

"Oh, he'll be fine," assured Nathan. "He's fat."

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendan Small and Adult Swim
"And we just delivered the dragon," I said to my Dethphone, walking down a hall. "It's not going to catch fire like what happened the last time, is it? No, we cannot afford to get another dragon. Not to mention, we have to keep Dethklok far away from this one. The last one got destroyed because they got drunk and rode it like a horse. No, we're not making the dragons wear saddles. We don't need dragon riders - oof!" I bumped into something. Wait, not something, someone!

"Hey," a skinny man said. "I don't care how much you want to see Dethklok. You have to wait in line like everyone else!" Line? I took another look. There was a line of people in the middle of the hall!

"First of all," I said. "I work here. Second, WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MORDHAUS?!"

"Duh," a pudgy girl said. "It's International Deth Fan Day!"

I blinked. "Oh, right. Forgot about that." International Deth Fan Day was the day where the circus freaks came out of their cages and got into the audience according to Dethklok. All over the world, the fans the band hated more than anything else would gather at Mordhaus to be given a grand tour of the studios and were warned not to touch anything otherwise, they would be shot. One major problem was the fans get in the way of business. Like right now. I couldn't get to my room with this long line of nerds in the way. "Well," I said, trying to be polite as possible. "Could you at least make room to let me pass? I've got to get to my work space."

"No way!" a mother shouted. "My boy and I waited over twelve hours in line to get into Pickles' room and we're not going to move!"

Okay then. I guess I was taking the long way.

(!)

"There you are," Mr. Offdenson said. "You're 20 minutes late."

"Sorry. It's just, I had to take the long way and swim through a sea of rabid Dethklok fans."

"Well," he said, like it meant nothing. "Did you remember to use the fire escapes to get by them?" Oh. "Well, we're twenty minutes behind schedule," he said. "So I need you to do the animation for Facebones when the tour starts." Facebones was a talking cartoon version of the Dethklok skull who was the host of the Mordhaus tours.

"Okay. Have you got someone to do the voice?"

"Yeah. He's just finished recording his lines."
"Oh, good."

"By the way," Mr. Offdenson said, as I prepared the Facebones animation. "Speaking of rabid, how are the nightmares?"

Oh, yeah, that's right. For the past several days, after I gave that "Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake" to the labs, I experienced frightening nightmares. Strangely, it was always the same one: the band surrounding me, clad in armor that belonged in Dungeons And Dragons with fire surrounding us and a voice in the distance saying, "The Metalocalypse is upon us..." And then I would wake up screaming. Mr. Offdenson thought it might have been from me licking that tiny amount of the stuff.

"Yeah. It's not that bad," I lied. "By the way, did the boys in the lab find out what was in that?"

"They couldn't trace the source of it," he said. "But they say that the drug isn't the kind you can find in the streets or in the cartels."

"So, who made it?"

"We don't know yet, but the boys in the lab did make a very disturbing description of it: a mind control serum."

"But...why am I not under mind control?" I asked, worried.

"The boys say that you consumed too minimal a dosage for it to take affect," he theorized. "But that should prove a lesson to you: don't take anything Dethklok gives you."

"I won't." A loud scream was heard outside. "Another fan?"

"Yep."

(!)

"It's being called the ticket of the century. Mordhaus, the home of Dethklok will be open to the public for the first time... in celebration of this year's International Dethfan Day. Banks have closed because customers are withdrawing all their life savings... in an attempt to purchase one of these coveted tickets. An official statement from Dethklok calls this... 'a psychotic day of insane celebration for regular jackoffs.'"

The tribunal watched the news footages. Senator Stampingston was the first to report, "Dethklok is opening their home to their fans. It seems that their popularity is still growing at an alarming rate. We get most of our Dethklok information by monitoring over 100,000 fan web sites... the biggest of which being diefordethklokdotcom, run by the Jomfru brothers Eric and Edgar." The senator showed an image of two young men: Eric, the tall and skinny one and Edgar, the fat one confined to an electric wheel chair with a computer. "They dropped out of Harvard to become dedicated Dethklok fans. Their web site alone gets more hits than all of South America."

General Crozier decided this pair of nerds could be useful. "We can interrogate them later and find out what's really inside Mordhaus."

"Yes..."

(!)

"Okay, people!" I shouted to the Klokateers. "The first wave of tourists are arriving on the train!"
Activate Facebones!

"Yes, sir!" A Klokateer pressed a button on the computer. If all went well, Facebones would appear on the train's TV and tell the fans the rules of Mordhaus. "Activate the video monitors," I ordered. "I want to make sure Facebones is keeping them placid and under control."

"Yes, sir!"

A large screen lowered and turned on live footage of the group. A talking skull with horns appeared on the train's monitors and spoke in a high pitched voice. "Hey, pals! It's me, Facebones! Welcome to Mordland, home of the international metal band Dethklok. Now, we got a big list of dos and don'ts because we at Mordland like to run a really tight ship! Remember: our snipers have new .50 caliber rifles that can kill you from almost 3 miles away." The footage cut to a Klokateer shooting a thief. "Yikes! And remember: deadly force is authorized, so do not ever enter into..." Static interrupted the speech.

"What happened?" I demanded.

"Signal's cut off," a Klokateer said. "Hold on." He gave the computer controlling the program a smack and Facebones came back.

"And you have to use the restroom, make sure and don't go into the..." Static. A smack fixed that. "And remember: no recording devices or cameras will be allowed or your life will be terminated." The footage cut to two Klokateers catching a man with camera glasses and a wire and proceeded to pummel him before returning to Facebones. "Now, Dethklok has decided to allow you to listen to one secret song to be played one time only for you, the fans!"

The fans cheered except for two individuals with stern looks: a tall, lanky young man accompanying a fat older man in a mechanized wheel chair with a computer.

"Keep a close eye on those two," I ordered to Klokateer guards.

"Yes sir!"

(!)

"God damn it!" I shouted, once again blocked by a line of fans. "I can't get around anywhere! This place is getting more tighter than Hank Hill's narrow urethra!" Thankfully, there was one place that wasn't lined up with fans: the dining hall. There, I found the band, drunk out of their minds except for Toki, who was building a model jet.

"Why do I drink so much before stupid Fan Day?" Nathan slurred.

"I believe you drink because it's Fan Day," pointed out Murderface.

"Don't talk to me about that. Wait, where's Skwisgaar?"

"Oh, I don't think he's gonna be here for a while," said Toki. "He have a very big night with a very 'huge' fan."

"How huge?" I asked.

"Hippo."

"Ah."
"Yeah, we were all up late," groaned Nathan.

Toki said as he adjusted his model, "Not me. I actually gots good rest."

"Will you please be quiet," groaned Pickles, clearly not through with his hangover yet.

"What's wrong, Pickle? You just need to eat something. Your name is Pickle. Maybe you should try a pickle-herring sandwich, famous from Oslo!"

The moment the guitarist put the sandwich on the drummer's plate, Pickles turned green in the face and tried to make a run for it, only to find the exit blocked by fans. He slammed the door on their faces. "God! Everywhere I go, there's fans everywhere. Can't I just throw up in my own house?!"

"Oh, God! Don't! What are you, bulimia?" asked Murderface.

"Oh, great," groaned Nathan. "Now you're gonna start a whole chain reaction puke-a-thon."

Pickles vomited, Murderface vomited, Toki vomited, I vomited, Nathan vomited blood...wait, blood?! I vomited all over Nathan's vomit, then the whole process started all over.

"Oh, blood puke," exclaimed Toki. "Good song title. Someone write that... Oh. That's right. We already wrote that. Good song though. It should go back in the set list."

Nathan looked pale. "Hey, you okay?" I asked.

"Oh," he groaned. "I think I need another liver transplant."

"ANOTHER?!"

"Yeah," Murderface said. "This is like the fifth transplant he's going to go through this month."

"Fifth?! How many does he have?!"

"About fifteen transplants a year."

"MEDIC!"

(!)

"Is everything ready?" I asked a Klokateer when I got to the stadium (finally!).

"The video's ready to be played," she said.

"Good. The fans are all gathered. Play the Facebones thing."

"Yes sir!"

A screen lowered down and the cartoon skull appeared. "Hey, guys! It's me, Face Bones! Now is the time you've all been waiting for... your very own exclusive, super duper exclusive... fan song and one-time-only song videoooooooooooooooooo!!! Roll it."

*Cue Fan Song*

It was the epitome of hatred. The song basically taunted the band's fans, calling them hunchbacked 32-year-old virgins who live in their parents' basements and have no sex partner and that they should all just die.
Suddenly, my communicator went off. "Wood here."

"We got them, sir," a Klokateer on the other line said. "Those two nerds just finished recording the whole song."

"Bring them to the lounge. And tell Mr. Offdenson. I'm sure he would want to deal with the situation personally."

"Yes, sir!"

(!)

Nathan looked out the triangle window the conference room. "I'll be very glad when this is over with."

"If they only knew how much we hated them," Murderface said. "I mean, they just keep crawling back like groveling putrid stupid zombies that... well, just want to eat out brains that is our art."

"That's the price of being gods," I said. "The masses pray to you like idiots to give them what they want. And it doesn't matter how much you hate them, as long as they're happy, nothing else matters to them."

"Ugh," Pickles said. "I hate them so much.

Suddenly, a Klokateer entered with the two nerds I was keeping an eye on. "Hey, what are you doing?!"

"He's in a wheelchair, my lords," the Klokateer said. "I didn't know what to do."

"That does not means you get free lunch for entrance to everything," scolded Skwisgaar.

"We are the Jomfru brothers," the fat one said. "Proprietors of diefordethklokdotcom."

Pickles didn't care. "Really? That's interesting. What are you selling? You know, handicap stuff?"

The skinny brother said, "No. We want you to pay for a good review on our web site."

"HAH!" laughed Murderface. "That's rich."

"We are the fans," the fat one threatened. "We have the power. Without us your precious brutality means nothing!"

"Take a walk," Nathan threatened back. "before I kill you."

"Not so fast, Mr. Explosion," the skinny Jomfru said, not at all intimidated by the vocalist. "Though I do appreciate your simplistic views of smashing that which you don't understand."

"Effective," agreed the fat one.

"Oh, come on! Screw that Internet crap," Pickles shouted. "I mean, come on, what is the Internet, you know?" He paused. "Seriously. What is the Internet?"

I pinched the bridge of my nose. "You've really got to keep up with the times, drummer boy."

"Perhaps," the fat Jomfru held up a tape. "you will give us more than a link when we debut this on our web site." It was the Fan Song. "We've taken the liberty of appropriating your exclusive song which is ready to be hyperlinked and sold exclusively on our web site with a single keystroke."
Murderface said, "How about we have a link to the bottom of the stairs... by me throwing you to the bottom of the stairs?!
"

"I think not."

"You really don't understand how gods work, do you, Jomfru?" I asked. "As long as we give the commoners what they want, they don't care how much we hate them."

"But do you know what happens to the gods when the mortals turn on them?"

"They smite them."

"True," the skinny one said. "But what happens when you have nothing to hate?" Silence. "You NEED us so you can hate! Otherwise, you have no purpose in this universe."

There was a brief moment of silence. Then Mr. Offdenson faced me. "Get the money and meet us at the turret on the west side."

"Yes sir."

(!) "Are they ready?" I asked in my earpiece.

"Yes, the Jomfru brothers and I are coming up the elevator. Is the money ready?"

"Yes." And by money, he meant the snipers all waiting to fire. "It's ready."

(!) The elevator opened to a corridor with no roof. "Your money's way down there... behind that door. Can you see it? Hey, you better hurry up. Closing time is in two minutes. I'd serpentine if I were you," Mr. Offdenson warned before returning to the elevator.

"Why should we serpentine?" asked Edgar.

"FIRE!" I commanded.

Eric's face, brains and whatever was left of his skull splattered all over Edgar's chair and computer. Edgar shrieked. "Serpentine!" He obeyed Mr. Offdenson's warning and serpentined across the corridor, avoiding the snipers' bullets. When he arrived at the door, he found no money, but the special effects manager waiting for him.

"Congratulations," I said. "You're alive!" I punched Edgar in the face and tossed him out of the wheelchair.

"Wait," he groaned. "I have a spinal problem!"

"Tough luck," I said, dragging him into the room by his disused legs. He tried to grab onto something to keep him from being dragged, but a good tug stopped that. "You really should have listened to Facebones. We here at Mordhaus like to run a tight ship, which means there can be no distractions like you." I smiled wickedly. "Oh, and about the money? It's being sent to your parents to keep them quiet. No one's going to come looking for you."

"Wha..." the fat nerd whimpered. "What are you going to do to me?"
"Just think of this as your extended vacation away from your website." I gestured to two Klokateers. "Throw him in the dungeon. And ready the radiation suits for when we go to Krangor Island."

The Klokateers nodded. The last thing Edgar Jomfru saw was a Klokateer's boot colliding with his face.

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendan Small and Adult Swim
The new music video was in progress. Skwisgaar was to perform his solo on top of a mountain. Then, with the effects of a harness and special effects, he was to fly into the air; two dragons were to fly up with him. He blasted one with his guitar. The second was blasted, but that's when things went wrong. The dragon malfunctioned and sparks flew all over the green room as it exploded.

"Cut! Cut," the director shouted. "Oh, my God! Everyone get out of here!" Everyone scrambled to escape, but it did them no good. Equipment crushed them, sparks burnt them, wires electrocuted them, one of the dragon's horns went down a man's mouth, and the director's head got sliced in half.

Skwisgaar, meanwhile, swung on his harness in discomfort. "Ooh! This thing squish my ball." He winced. "Eehh. I might throw up." I took a fire axe and threw it at the harness, cutting him free. He yelled as he landed on his face. "Ow."

(!)

After putting out the fire, the band and I were in the green room watching TV. It was some sort of public cable show featuring some Spaniard guitarist teaching the viewers how to play and (amazingly) how to even stand on one.

"Hey, who that guy with the guitar?" asked Toki as he ate from a bowl of candy.

"His name is Sergio Pampingheiser," I said. "World renown guitar teacher."

"He's fantastic," said Murderface.

"Hey, that guy's a multi-millionaire," said Pickles. "From slinging these crappy guitars and half-assed lessons."

"Really?" asked Nathan.

"It isn't really a crappy guitar, Pickles," Murderface argued. "I mean, you can stand on it."

Toki got an idea, "Oh, Skwisgaar! That's what you should be doing! Makes a billions dollars on TV teaching guitars!"

"If I did, it woulds have to be the most brutalist guitar things on TV special pay-for-view ever."

"How will you do that?" I asked Skwisgaar.

"Don't worry. I'll makes a lists."

(!)
The report reached all over the world. "Skwisgaar Skwigelf is now preparing for what people are calling the ultimate pay-per-view event of the year... The Skwisgaar Skwigelf Advanced Fast Hand Finger Wizard Master Class."

"Okay," I said to the blonde guitarist. "Your costume is ready and the guitar displays are going to be put on stage. We still need to make a new dragon since the first two exploded."

"No," he said. "I said I wanted a real dragons. Not another fakes ones."

I blinked. "Eh...I'll see what I can do."

"Good." Some boxes arrived. "Oh, cool they're here."

"What is it?"

"Comes to the lounge and get the guys."

I blinked as I and the rest of the boys eyed the objects Skwisgaar took out of the boxes. "Are those custom guitars?"

"Just some prototype inventions I've been working on," he said. He held up a giant Swiss army knife (also called an Offiziersmesser in German). "This one is a Swiss-army-tar. It's a good guitar for a camping trip. It's got toothpick." It was puny compared to the giant tools attached to the guitar.

"Yeah, good tone," said Pickles. "What's that one right there?"

"Is just an Ant-farm-atar." It was exactly as he said it. "Eh. Still workings on it."

Murderface nodded, "Nice, I'd like to stand on that thing."

"Yeah, I'd stand on that."

Next, Skwisgaar held up what looked more like a sword rather than a guitar. "Yeah. And this is the Gibson Excalibitar."

"How do you play it?" I asked.

"Still working on it," was all he said before he picked up a wooden guitar with the word "INIRI" on it.

"I thought you hated acoustic guitars," I said. "Or as you call them, grandpa's guitars."

"This is no grandpa's guitar," he said. "This is a guitar made from the wood of Christ's cross."

"Get ready for a billion e-mails," Murderface warned. "Here comes the offended religious weirdos."

"What's offensive about the most religious instrument ever?" Suddenly Skwisgaar's Dethphone rang. "Sorry, I got to take this. It's the guys from the pay-per-view event. Starting to really drive me crazy!"
Like a child throwing a tantrum, Murderface threw one of the guitars, "I want an endorsement deal!"

"What are you talking about?" I asked. "You guys got DOZENS of endorsements. Duncan Hills Coffee for one."

"No," Murderface said. "I'm talking about individual endorsements. Not Dehtklok. Like, I want my own endorsements."

"Oh. Well, what did you have in mind?"

"One word: doorknobs."

(!)

The tribunal reported the recent happenings. Senator Stampingston said, "It seems that Dethklok has gone beyond the music world and has acquired endorsement deals."

General Crozier reported, "They're systematically conquering different markets one by one."

Senator Stampingston introduced the new specialist, "Our endorsement specialist Ronald Von Momnaldberg."

The specialist was a tall man in a brown suit and resembled Sigmund Freud. "When celebrities as dangerous and popular as Dethklok endorse a product, it threatens the very core of commerce. For example, Toki Wartooth now endorses the Willard Wonky Candy-hand Candy Corporation. As a result, childhood obesity has quadrupled. Nathan Explosion has his own barbecue sauce known as Explosion Sauce, a North Carolina style mustardy blend with a hint of cilantro. I must confess, it tastes amazing. William Murderface has loaned his name to a high-end doorknob company known as Murder-Knobs. And, finally, Pickles is endorsing Pickles Nickels, the first-ever endorsement deal with money."

Senator Stampingston expressed his concern, "This Skwisgaar Skwigelf Advanced Fast Hand Finger Wizard Master Class pay-per-view event... could be incredibly destructive as well."

Cardinal Ravenswood said, "I should confess, I am looking forward to it." Everyone looked at him. "I began playing recently."

(!)

Trying to explain to Skwisgaar that there were no such things as dragons was like trying to bluntly explain to a child there was no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny. "OK, let me explains again in perfectly clear English," he said to me. "I wants flies in on a dragons, OK?! How many times I got to tell this, peoples?!"

"And how many times do I have to tell you, there are no dragons!"

"So, go get one. What are you doing here? Go! Go get one now. Go, go."

I said through gritted teeth. "I can't go get one because there's NO SUCH THING!"

"You telling me they're out of dragons?"

I screamed, "They never had dragons!"

"Who didn't?"
"The world! Unless you count Komodo Dragons, but they're just giant lizards."

"Get this guy out of here," shouted Skwisgaar as he stomped to his dressing room. "Find me a
dragon!" He slammed the door. I growled in frustration.

"Tough, isn't it?" asked Mr. Offdenson. He was carrying what looked like fish bowls.

"You have no idea." I pointed to the glass things. "What are those?"

"Oh, these are protective solid crystal oxygenating hand aquariums. Skwisgaar is under contract to
wear these so long as he's not playing. You're in charge of the key," he said, giving it to me.

"Okay. I'll go check on the boys. They're supposed to be ready with the costumes."

(!)

"Hey, Tommy!" I turned to find the other members of Dethklok. "We gotta talk about Skwisgaar."

"What? The fact that he's screaming at people?"

"It's the stress," Nathan said. "He doesn't realize he needs zazz."

"Zazz? You mean pizazz?"

"Yeah," said Murderface. "That's what he needs."

"Shh!" Hushed Nathan. "Here he comes!" We all faced Skwisgaar. "Hey! What's happening?! How
is the big show coming together?"

"Fine! Everything's going great! See you later."

Murderface said, "Hey, we've been talking, Skwisgaar, and... We think this whole production could
be a lot more... Zippy. It just... it needs zazz! Am I... I mean, I'm right to say that, right?"

"You're right," I said. "How, I don't know."

"No offense, Skwisgaar," said Pickles. "But I gotta say this whole thing, it lacks zazz."

"Well put," said Toki, stuffing his mouth with more candy.

"Can't you just put it on the Zazz train to Zazzville?" asked Murderface.

"Yeah, because, no offense," said Toki, scarifying more candy. "There's absolutely no zazz to be
found. Not here, anyway. Not in these parts.

"What we're trying to say," said Nathan. "Is that there are two kinds... of shows out there: Those
with and those without..."

"Will you please stop saying 'zazz'"? asked Skwisgaar, getting sick of hearing that word.

"Please stop saying 'zazz.'"

Pickles offered, "Why don't you let us help you out?"

"Yeah, we'll help lighten the load, make it more za..." Murderface stopped when Skwisgaar glared
at him. "You know!"
In the costume room, Toki looked in the closet. "Nathan, is this all we got for costumes?"
"Yeah."
"This isn't good! He can't wear none of this!"
Nathan waved his hands defensively. "You don't need to freak out, Toki."
"I just want it to be great. Maybe you don't, but I do!"
I noticed the mad look in Toki's eyes. "Maybe you should lay off the candy."
"Maybe you need to shut up!"
"Dude, you're getting hopped up on sugar because of your stupid candy endorsement deal!"
"No, I'm not!" He suddenly groaned and pulled a black tooth out of his mouth.
"And now your teeth are falling out!"
"Are you a dentist?"
"No, but..."
"Well, then shut up! Oh, by the way, teeths grow back!"
"No, they don't," said Nathan.
"Yes, they do! Don't you remember being a little kids when your teeth would fall out and grow back and you would get the old one under the pillow so the ancient Norse god Othar The Tooth Collector give you a Pickle Nickel?"
"WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET OUT OF HERE?!" Nathan and I shouted.
"Fine! Goodbye!"
Pickles blinked. "That was weird. Was that your first fight?"
A cry of distress came from Skwisgaar's dressing room.
(!)
The blonde guitarist was panicking. "I don't know what to do. This solid crystal oxenagating hands aquariums won't comes off."
"Skwisgaar, you gots to gets on stage soon!" shrieked Pickles.
"Oh, no!"
"Break them together over your head!" suggested Murderface. "Burst them! Hurry!" All that did was make a clinking sound. "It sounded cool."
Pickles suddenly had an idea. "Wait, no. I got it. Do we have any butter?"
"That's a good idea," I said. "We can lube him out!"
"Oh, no! All I got is stupid doorknobs!" exclaimed Murderface.

"Damn it," cursed Pickles. "Why didn't any of us get a butter endorsement deal?"

Nathan, who had been drinking barbecue sauce all day, held up his bottle. "Wait! We could try my barbecue sauce."

"Do it!"

Nathan put the sauce and Skwisgaar's wrists, then with a good tug, he and Murderface pulled him free from the tanks. "You're free," shrieked Toki. "Run away, Skwisgaar!"

Pickles asked, "Why should he run away?"

"OK. Somebody please hands me my guitars and a towel." Skwisgaar tasted the sauce on his fingers and his eyes went wide. "Oh, god! Is there cilantros in this?!"

"Yeah, said Nathan. "Why?"

"I am allergic to cilant..." He didn't finish his sentence; his tongue swelled up in his mouth.

"Skwisgaar, your hands!" exclaimed Murderface. The blonde guitarist's hands swelled as he said, "My hands are turning into... I'm turning into a..."

"Oh, what the fuck are we gonna do now," cursed Toki. "FUCK!"

"Oh, man!" I was panicking. The show was about to begin in five minutes! If only I had unlocked those stupid tanks earlier, I...oh...shit! I decided not to tell Skwisgaar that I had the key in my pocket and I forgot all about it. "Well," I said to Toki, Nathan, Pickles and Murderface. "You better hope your 'zazzing' can save the show."

(!)

Nathan and Murderface took the stage, the spotlight shining on them. "Well... Isn't this a nice surprise, me being here at this incredibly zazzy event?" asked Nathan.

"A fantastic star-studded evening... of zazz." said Murderface.

Pickles suddenly popped out of a trap door. "Got any room for any more zazz up here?"

Toki sat on the floor. "I think I have diabetes. I gotta take a fucking nap."

"And now," I said backstage in a microphone. "A message from our sponsors."

"Let's roll the clip," shouted Murderface.

A screen lowered, and a clip of Murderface overlooking a desert cliff played. "Over a million babies and ladies die every hemi-second. That's why I use Murder-knobs. Doorknobs for a new world."

The next clip was of Pickles overlooking the same cliff. "I'm Pickles the Drummer and our country is experiencing a horrible problem. Nobody is using nickels. Use nickels. Nickels is money, too, guys." Paid for in nickels by the US Department of Treasury.

Nathan was at the same cliff in the next clip. "I guess I've always hated my father. Explosion Sauce changed that. Explosion Sauce. It's good on its own."
In the last clip, Toki was lying down. "I Toki. I slips in and out of diabetic coma. They should makes insulin-flavored candy. Whatever. Candy. Tastes like chicken if chicken was a candy."

Finally, the screen raised and the stage was completely lit up, revealing Skwisgaar's collection of custom guitars. An announcer exclaimed, "He's the mighty god of the axe here tonight to teach the world the art of shredding! Skwisgaar Skwigelf!"

I cringed as I watched Skwisgaar take to the stage, his allergic reaction worsening. "Hello, everyone," his voice was barely coherent due to his swollen tongue. "Thank you for coming to the Skwisgaar Skwigelf Advanced Hand Finger Wizard Master Class." Everyone was dead silent as he tried to play his guitar, but the swollen fingers were so huge, all that came out were off-key notes.

(!)

"That night, the Master of the guitar literally reinvented the instrument," a news reporter said. In the days that followed the disastrous pay-per-view event, people started to play exactly how Skwisgaar did: stiffly. When word got out that it wasn't supposed to happen and that he was suffering an allergic reaction, they didn't care. Even Sergio Pampingheiser was copying Skwisgaar...while standing on one of the custom guitars. Looks like Nathan, Pickles, Murderface and Toki were right. All it took was a little pizazz to save the concert. That or the fans are too stupid to even care.

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendan Small and Adult Swim
We had all returned to Mordhaus after the shopping spree. Skwisgaar, Toki Pickles, and Nathan plopped into their chairs in the lounge and put their shopping bag on the coffee table. "Whoo whee!" exclaimed Toki. "I am such one tired guy. How come shopping is so stupid? What's I have now all this stuff. What I do?"


"And waste everything?" I asked as I put my bags down.

"What's the points? We're just gonna die anyway."

"Guess it's full circle," Toki said.

Nathan turned his bag upside down and spilled its contents all over the table: watches. "Dude," said Pickles. "I thought you hate wearing a watch."

"I smash them." Nathan crushed one of them to prove his point.

"Why?" I asked.

"It's a good stress reliever," he said as he smashed another one.

"Can I try to do that?" asked Pickles curiously.

"Yeah, you can... I mean, they're mine, but, yeah."

"That's nice. What's that, a Hamilton?" Pickles smiled as he smashed some watches. "Yeah. It's, you know, fun."

"Can I try?" I asked.

"Get your own watches," Nathan said.

"Check it out losers," Murderface said, coming in with his bags. "Direct your attention to my crotch." We looked down. Our eyes went wide! Strapped around his waist was a metal codpiece shaped like a sharp rhino horn with diamonds embedded in it. "See it? Feel it. Envy it."

"That's..." I said, amazed. "Got to be the best purchase ever."

"That's a good codpiece," complimented Skwisgaar.

Murderface shrugged his shoulders. "It's not a big deal. It's just totally diamond-encrusted with a titanium base."
"What a coincidence," Toki said. "I gots a real cool codpiece too!" He strapped on a green thing around his waist and pressed a button; it started to vibrate. None of us were impressed.

"Uh, that's a dildo," Murderface said. "A strap-on dildo."

Toki frowned. "Oh, screw you all off! My codpiece is the coolest!" He ignored the muttering from the other members. "Jealous!"

"Anybody else got something's cools?" asked Skwisgaar.

"Well," I said. "I just got this," I pulled out a PS2 game. "Dethklok music and fighting video game. You can play as anybody and can fight anybody."

"Oh, that's awesome," Nathan said.

"As for me," Pickles said. "I was trying to shop but I'm just too drunk right now. I tried to buy that cinnamon bun franchise thing but..."

"Oh, yeah," said Toki. "What the hell?"

"...too drunk!"

"There you are," Mr. Offdenson said, coming into the room. "I've been trying to get in touch with you all day."

"Cinnamon buns," Pickles said.

"Today's our big employee evaluation conference and raffle."

"Hah!" laughed Skwisgaar. "That's a funny one. Who cares about that?"

"Well, perhaps you should care because it has come to our attention that one of our employees is a major embezzler."

"Awesome!" exclaimed Nathan, still smashing more watches. Right?

"Embezzle?" asked Toki. "What means that?"

Pickles explained, "Well, it's a super awesome way of saying take having something."

"That's a simple way of saying it," I said. "But yeah, it means to take something, usually money."

"Hey, guys," said Skwisgaar. "I have the good use of the words unsbozzle. My lungs unsbozzle the air from the earth... as I can breathe it, period."

"Well, I don't see the humor in any of it," Mr. Offdenson said.

"Oh, lighten up, Mr. Dooms and Gloom. Embezzle is metal."

"Well, who's the guy embezzling from, you know, anyway?" asked Pickles.

"Well, he's embezzling from you."

Nathan screamed, "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"
The tribunal started their meeting with Mr. Stampingston beginning. "Dethklok is now the 12th largest economy in the world. They've just passed Belgium and they're holding their annual employee conference and raffle."

General Crozier nodded, "This is the perfect time to let me put someone undercover. With all the employees converging at Mordhaus, an agent could slip in there and find out what's really going on."

"Who did you have in mind?"

A man in a Klokateer uniform and executioner's hood and wearing a tattoo of a falcon holding a globe entered the room. "Gentlemen," General Crozier said, "I give you Agent 216. He's a master at infiltration and sabotage, and of course, he's a trained killer. He's perfect."

"Of course, he'll just be gathering information," reminded Stampingston.

"Y-yes, of course." In a pig's eye.

(!)

The band and I were going over Klokateer Number 421 in the conference room. "Okay," I said. "So, Number 421. You are part of the sector 18 recording studio maintenance clean team. A couple questions. 'How do you value your... ' Wait, what?' Something was off about these questions. "Uh, 'What you contribute of, to, the work force?' Second part: 'Which do you most, can't the least?'. I...I can't read these." I turned to Skwisgaar. "Did you write these?"

"Yes, I did."

I sighed, "Just roll with it," I said to the Klokateer. "Do you have an answer?"

"I'm a highly skilled microphone cleaner, my masters and what I most, can't the least would be doing not a bad job but always a good."

"Good answer," said Skwisgaar.

"Well," I said. "Since I need to take these to be proof-read, I think that's all the time we got."

"No. I got one more question, and answer honestly," Natan said. He leaned forward. "Are you embezzling from us?"

The Klokateer said simply, "No."

"OK. I believe you."

"Well, you are all set, 421," I said. "Thanks for doing a great job."


We are really, really good bosses," said Nathan.

"I know," said Skwisgaar. "We cares about all of thems. It's like a plantations but the slaves are friends."
"Uh, I don't think that's a good comparison," I said. "Considering there are black Klokateers here."

"I would like to ask questions next time," said Toki.

"Are you asking us to do that, Toki," asked Skwisgaar.

"Ja. I don't know."

"That's interesting. You said, 'I would likes to ask a question.' That's a statement.

"What is the difference?"

Skwisgaar paused. "That's a great question."

I pinched the bridge of my nose. "Just...bring in the next guy." The Klokateer that came in was a huge man with a tattoo of an eagle holding a globe. "Here, Toki, read the questions," I said, handing him the paper. "If you can."

"Hello," Toki said, reading the paper. "Would you have a seat?" The Klokateer took a seat.

"First of alls," said Skwisgaar. "First of alls, how are you? We cares about each and every one of yous little, tiny goofballs."

"I thought we agreed Toki would ask the questions?" I said.

"I didn't," said Skwisgaar.

"Fucks you," Toki whispered.

Suddenly, Mr. Offdenson's voice came on the loud speaker, "Attention. Everyone please proceed to the performance atrium for the Dethklok employee motivational seminar and raffle."

"Well, that's us!" Murderface stood up, and somehow split the entire table in half! One half pinned the Klokateer to the floor, knocking him out cold. "How did-" I started to ask, but I got my answer as soon as I looked at Murderface's crotch. "God damn it, you're still wearing that stupid codpiece?"

"Hey, it's not stupid!"

I groaned. "Whatever. Let's just hurry to the rally."

"Sorry, pal," Murderface said to the Klokateers as he and the others left. "We're gonna have to do this later but could you do me a favor?" He leaned in toward the unconscious man's face. "Could you have a great day? Could you do that for me? Thanks."

"I'll send someone the smelling salts to wake you up before the rally," I said to the unconscious man, not really caring. Suddenly, I kicked something. I looked down and picked up the object. It was a pistol with a silencer on it. "Hey, Murderface," I called out. "Did you forget to put your gun away..." I stopped when I saw one of the Klokateers dead on the floor. Normally this wouldn't be a problem since they die all the time, but this one was right in front of the conference hall, right where... "Dethklok was," I realized. "Oh, god!" I ran back to the conference room, gun ready, but to my shock, the Klokateer that was pinned to the floor was gone!

"Oh, no!" I ran to the rally, hoping that I could reach Mr. Offdenson before the big Klokateer could make it. Suddenly, something struck me in the temple and everything went black.
At the rally, the motivational speaker ran back and forth on the stage, rallying the Klokateers up. "Come on! Is everybody ready to die?" Everyone cheered. "I can't hear you!" Everyone cheered louder. "Are you ready to die the death of opportunity?" Everyone cheered again. "We're gonna hammersmack the face of workplace responsibility! Come on! Get up, get up! Come on! Grab a..."
The motivational speaker tripped, caught his neck in the microphone cord and hung himself; his neck snapped instantly.

A screen was lowered and Facebones appeared. "Welcome to the Dethklok employee forum where we're gonna learn to use your motormimation. We're gonna learn how to be considerate at the workplace."

Footage of Skwisgaar and Murderface reading their scripts appeared. "I have to works with you every day," said Skwisgaar. "So please would you please take it easy on the cologne?"

"While that hurts my feelings," Murderface read. "I understand."

Then it cut to footage of Nathan and Pickles at the lunch room. "When you see a piece of trash on the ground, don't just stand there. PICK IT UP!"

"Yeah," said Pickles. "And don't leave your lunch laying around either. It attracts ants."

Finally, it cut to footage of Toki dumping some trash only to encounter a body and exclaiming in a very unconvincing manner. "And most importantly," said Facebones' voice. "Remember, death is an everyday part of the workplace. So when you see a dead body, don't freak out. Just ring your death bell." Toki smiled and dinged a little bell. Facebones reappeared. "And now, an exclusive corporate video world premiere. This is Briefcase Full of Guts."

*Cue Briefcase Full of Guts*

I groaned, rubbing the back of my head. What hit me? Suddenly, I remembered the gun and the Klokateer with the tattoo. I ran to the rally, hoping nothing bad has happened. I burst open the doors just in time to hear Mr. Offdenson say, "Congratulations, 216. You have won..." Suddenly, a dwarf Klokateer tackled the assassin; he landed face first into Murderface's codpiece. "...this diamond-encrusted codpiece."

Murderface rang a little bell.

(!)

Nighttime, in the picnic grounds of Mordhaus...

I stood by Mr. Offdenson and Dethklok as the other Klokateers put the body of the assailant on a pile of logs. "So, wait a minute," said Skwisgaar. "Stupid level-two employees get Viking funeral? That's bulls."

"How many times do I have to tell you," I said. "He wasn't an employee. He was trying to kill you!"

"Still," said Pickles. "That's got to be expensive and, you know, still with the embezzler on the loose?"

"Actually," said Mr. Offdenson. "Accounting discovered who was embezzling this morning."

"Oh, good," said Toki. "We should kill that guy. No police."
"Well, there will be no action taken legal or otherwise."

Pickles was angry. "What the hell? No punishment? Give me one reason!"

"Because it was you, all of you. You have been stealing from the company that you own."

Everyone was dumbfounded. "Well, that's, you know... That's bad, huh?"

"Yes, it is, Nathan."

Nathan scratched the back of his head. "Maybe we can blame it on, somebody." He pointed to the corpse. "Him. That guy."

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "Yes. Let's do that."

"He was trying to kill you," I said. "Besides, the dead don't care."

Nathan announced, "We release you from your earthly duties. And I... yeah, doodly. I don't know."

The Klokateers dumped gasoline on the body and readied the torches. Before the body was lit, I saw something on its wrist: a watch with live video footage of a group of men and women watching the funeral. Did they send the assassin? I didn't have time to wonder; the whole body was engulfed in flames. I'll ask Mr. Offdenson to beef up security next time.

Suddenly, Muderface rang out, "I get his pension. Dibs! Called it."

Chapter End Notes

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I heard Nathan screaming as I walked down the hall. "Guys! He had the dream again!"

(!)
Dethklok conference hall..

"I think we should all congratulate William," Mr. Offdenson said. "Who has been invited to be on Celebrity Spelling Bee. That's quite an honor, William."

Murderface looked smug. "Yeah."

"Did you ever stop to think," said Toki. "That maybe you're on that show 'cause they want high ratings?"

"That's pretty cynical, Toki," said Skwisgaar.

"Ehh," I said. "There might actually be some truth there."

"You've also been invited to give the commencement speech at Harvard," continued Mr. Offdenson. "You'll be giving honorary degrees."

"Free degrees?! I want to be a foot doctor!"

"I want to be able to fly the plane!" Called out Skwisgaar.

"You can't actually use those degrees," Mr. Offdenson said. "They mean nothing."

"What's the point of even going?"

"Well, because, Pickles, it's Harvard."

"Yawn!" mocked Skwisgaar. "Big deals."

Just then Nathan entered the room. "Sorry I'm late, guys. I, uh..."

"Had another I'm so stupid I can't tell left from right and vice versa' dream again? Yeah, we know."

"It's just, Wood," Nathan said to me. "I think I might be stupid."

I wasn't surprised. "And you just figured that out now?" Nathan punched me. "OW!"

"He didn't graduate high school," Mr. Offdenson whispered to me. "Please don't make him feel badder."
"How can you be stupid," asked Pickles, outraged. "You're famous."

"That is true," Mr. Offdenson said.

"And you's a billionaire," pointed out Toki.

"That sounds smart to me no matter how many times you slice it," Skwisgaar said.

"Hey, quick," Murderface teased. "What's 6 times... 9... 12." Nathan punched him. "Ow! Hey, what the fuck?!" Toki laughed, but got punched as well. "I gets punched for laughing?!"

"Laughing hurts more."

Nathan sighed, "Well, all I know is that these dreams aren't gonna stop until I get my G.E.D., and that's that."

"I'm going to be on Celebrity Spelling Bee," Murderface reminded.

There was a pause until Toki spoke, realizing what they were talking about. "Oh, he didn't graduate from high school!"

"I thought there's an age limit to get a G.E.D.," I said. "Nathan's too old to go back to high school."

"There is no age limit," Mr. Offdenson said. "And he is allowed to go."

(!)

When word of Nathan Explosion getting his G.E.D. reached the Tribunal's ears, they started a meeting. "Nathan Explosion is furthering his education." Senator Stampingston said. "This could have devastating repercussions. General Crozier?"

The general pulled up the vocalist's school history. "Nathan Explosion dropped out of high school. He was a failure as a student, excelling only in frog dissection and football."

"We've called in an expert. Dr. Natasha Nesciantskidovich. She runs a Dethklok think-tank in Washington, D.C., and specializes in Nathan Explosion studies." The woman was the sort of person you'd expect to be a high school teacher. "Doctor?"

She spoke in a monotonous voice. "General. America is the dominant force in the world because our great people are dangerous and stupid. Nathan Explosion is a hero to the ignorant. If he seeks higher education, they will start to act as if they are as good as anyone. If the secret gets out that the working class is as smart as the upper crust that runs the world, well, the results would be catastrophic."

"The meek shall inherit the earth," said Cardinal Ravenswood."

General Crozier said, not really seeing the danger, "Is Explosion really this much of a threat? My file said he didn't even speak until he was five years old."

"Yes. Nathan Explosion has a similar psychological profile to that of Joseph Stalin. He has the potential to galvanize billions of metal heads with his message about the true purpose of brutality and metal."

"Dear God," Stampingston shuddered. "We can only hope he fails this G.E.D."

(!)
The Mordhaus library's interior seemed more like the interior of a church rather than a public
library. There were thousands of shelves that reached the very top of the ceiling with millions of
books lined up in them. Rare books, scrolls, poems and other forms of presumed lost literature
could be found here, all of which were donations from museums. While Murderface babbled away
about the Spelling Bee on one side of the spacious chamber, Nathan and I sat at a table with a
female Klokateer on the other side.
"Okay," I said. "Mr. Offdenson has asked me and the librarian to be your tutor to prepare for the
G.E.D." I doubt you will do it, I said mentally. "Anyway, I said, if we ignore the others, let's focus
on the math. It's basic algebra so even someone like you could do it. Ahem. 'What is 5 - x?'"
"What do you mean '5 minus x'? What is x?"
"Oh, sweetie," said the kindly librarian. "It's just algebra."
"It's stupid, and it's not even akickablable."
"Applicable."
"I take it back," I said. "You can't do this."
"Maybe," the librarian said. "We're just doing it wrong. Let's try to make this more metal."
"Well," I said. "It works on grade school children, so, let's give it a try. Let's see. Maybe the others
can help us out on this."
(!)
The band each took turns helping Nathan with his education. It seemed to be working wonders.
Nathan was listening to every word. "Sara has 15 nails in her neck and 12 thumbtacks in her eye."
"...goes one miles an hour. He gets hit." The train... pow! Comes at him 200 miles an hour. Pow!"
"I don't know what it is. I've just always been an unusually great speller."
Now came Pickles. "OK, see, playing simultaneous rhythms... Polymeters... it's math. Let me give
you an example. Remember 'Guts, Punch, Balls, Throw up'?"
"Yeah."
"When we go,
'Digidididgidigdigdgidgigigdidigdigdididgigdididgidgididgididgidgidgidgidgidgidgidgidgi -' You
got that?"
"Yeah."
(!)
We were currently on the Dethbus, taking Nathan to his old school. While Nathan looked over his
notes, I sat by the TV, not really paying attention to the show and more focused on the spelling.
The other members were in the hot tub, helping Murderface with the spelling.
"The word is 'construction'," said Pickles to Murderface.


"Oh, that's a good one," Murderface said. "Construction Meaning to construct, to build, the act of building." He took a marker and spelled it out...incorrectly. "C-u-n-s-t-r..."

"That's not right," said Skwisgaar. "I thinks construction's is spelled possibly a different way."


"Are...are you trying to cheat?!" I asked.

"No I'm not," Murderface said, trying to wash off the marker.

"Dude, they're going to say random words, not what you write on your body."

"Hey, I don't care how wrong it is. Just admit it. I'm a great speller and it burns you."

"You're not a great speller," shouted Toki. "You've got to spell right to be a speller."

"So, if a guy hits a home run, but he's fat, it's not a home run? It has to be perfect? What's the point?!"

"No, that is the point! That is spelling!"

"They can't helps it, Toki," Skwisgaar said, shaking his head. "Not everyone gets the advantage of superior Scandinavians egucation."

"Really?" I asked suspiciously. "Okay, name something that has nothing to do with guitar." All I got for an answer was, "Oh, um... Ah... Um..." IDIOTS!

(!)

The bus stopped and once Dethklok became fully dressed, they escorted Nathan outside. "I'm ready. I had that "I'm late for class and I'm in my underwear" dream... but my palms are sweaty and I can't concentrate. I can't concentrate!"

Murderface pointed out, "That's anxiety. A-n-x-i-e-t-y."

"You missed the 'y'."

"Oh, yeah. He's got test anxiety," said Pickles.

"Wait! What's that?" asked Murderface.

Toki said, "That's like even when you know everything, you freaks out and then you don't remembers nothing."

Skwisgaar said, "Yeah, you can't remembers nothing."

Pickles said, "Oh, you must be really nervous."

"Yeah, I guess I am," panted Nathan. "I'm nervous. I'm a nervous guy!"

"You must be freaking out," said Toki. "I'm totally freaking out."

"Nathans," said Skwisgaar. "What do yous do before you're nervous at a show?"
"You know what you do," Pickles said as he lifted a bottle. "Yeah, what do you do? What's Nathan do?"

"Just have a little drink," Answered Murderface.

"That's it," Nathan declared as he snatched the bottle and guzzled its contents. "I have a little drink."

"That's what you do."

Nathan threw the bottle to the ground and marched into the school. "Uh," I said. "I don't think liquid courage is the kind of courage Nathan needs."

"Nonsense," Pickles said. "He has a drink every concert and does great, this will be no different."

(!)

After the test, Dethklok appeared at a podium in front of the whole school. Mr. Offdenson held up an envelope for Nathan.

"Nathan, I have your test results," he said.

"Oh, you open it. I can't stand the pressure."

"Let's see here." Mr. Ofddenson took the contents from the envelope. "OK. It's a, uh... Zero. No questions were answered."

I was dumbfounded. I turned to Nathan. "YOU DIDN'T ANSWER A SINGLE FUCKING QUESTION?!"

Nathan growled at me, "Do you think you're better than me?"

Mr. Offdenson blocked his way and handed him a piece of paper. "I took the liberty of writing your Harvard commencement speech."

"Thanks." He walked to the podium. An announcer said, "Please welcome Nathan Explosion." Everyone applauded as Nathan walked onto the podium and took the microphone. He cleared his throat. "Harvard. Solutions... Solutions to you...Salutations..." Then he got mad and threw the speech away. "I don't need this stupid speech! You think you're smart, huh? That you can come up here and take a piece of this, huh? Any of you. You? You? Listen, Harvard, I'm a billionaire. And most of you are gonna graduate and move back in with your parents. I'm gonna tell you something though: We have something in common. We're all gonna die. No matter what you do, no matter what you do with your lives, you're dead. You're dead. You die. You're gonna die, all of you. Dead." He pointed to the students. "You, dead. You, dead. All of you. You, lady, your tits will be eaten by maggots in just a few short years. So, here's my message, my message to you. Very simple message: GO FORTH AND DIE!"

*Cue Go Forth And Die*

We watched the Spelling Bee on TV when we got back to Mordhaus. "William Murderface has been on the stand for about 45 minutes. The word is 'technicality', and it's his first word of the night. It's kind of an ironic situation when the word is 'technicality' and he is technically already out because he used his first letter 'p,' which a letter in the word. And he decided to very confidently speak out before the word was finished being said."
"Technicality." P-i-s-s. Fuck you.

Chapter End Notes

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Toki, Mr. Offdenson and I were backstage, watching a TV, more specifically, the Dethklok Minute show. "Dethklok frontman Nathan Explosion is the latest celebrity lending his voice to the famous Books On Tapes series. He's being paid a reputed one billion to record all of Shakespeare's works. And get ready all you MILFs, GMILFs, and soon-to-be MILFs. Dethklok's resident Lothario, Skwisgaar Skwigelf has been hitting the night club scene lately and is also interested in acquiring a new stable of FBLs. Good luck, girls. Could it be the long awaited William Murderface side project, Planet Piss, is going to happen?"

The footage cut to Murderface doing an interview. "This is really going to happen. The key word here is organization. It's just, it's all about being professional."

The footage cut back to the host, "And finally we've all heard those vicious rumors about Pickles the Drummer not really being as big a drinker as he claims to be. Well, Pickles is going to do something about that."

Pickles appeared, "It hurts when people say things that ain't true, but, you know, in retaliation, I'm going to do something. I'm going to drink more than I ever have in my life."

"I believe he will, and that's the Dethklok Minute."

Toki switched off the TV in anger. "Oh, bull shit! I got lefts off of Dethklok Minute again! That's bull!"

"You are receiving a distinguish award," pointed out Mr. Offdenson.

"What's so distinguishing about the..." I pulled out a card from my pocket. "'Argentinian Kids' Choice Award?"

An announcer on stage said, "Mr. Toki Wartooth! It is of a great honor to present you with the most distinguished Argentinian award Los Ninos Favoritico!"

Toki walked onto the stage and took the award. Then a shower of green Nickelodeon slime rained on him and two kids sprayed him with more slime using squirt guns. The audience, a bunch of children, cheered and clapped. Toki's face turned red. "I hate kids."

(!)

The Tribunal watched footage of the Argentinian Kids' Choice Award with concern. Senator Stampingston reported, "Toki Wartooth has become alarmingly popular with children. This is something we are not prepared to deal with. You all know our child control expert, Professor Jerry Gustav Mangledink."

The child control expert looked like an aged cross between Charlie Chaplin and Adolf Hitler. "We
must fear children. We have many successful programs in place to silence and control children, but I fear this Toki Wartoofth. His natural child-like ways and children's affinity towards him may be a threat. Do you remember the Sixties?"

General Crozier said with distaste, "Yes. Yes I do."

"Well, that was just hippies. Dirty hippies with flowers and mushrooms and acoustic guitars. Can you imagine a whole generation of children raised on metal?"

(1)

Mr. Offdenson called us all to a band meeting. He apparently got a video email from the Wish For Something Foundation. The video began, showing a huge, black football player accompanying a little girl with blonde hair, a smile with two front teeth missing and sitting in a wheel chair. "This is little Julliette Sarmangsadandle. She does not have much time left. With our foundation she gets one last wish. And what is that, sweetie?"

"I want to meet Toki!"

The TV switched off. Mr. Offdenson said, "Toki, the Wish for Something foundation wants you to be their poster boy. Quite an honor. Sick and helpless children-"

"I pass!" Toki said angrily. "I'm sorry?"

"I'm not associating myself with kids!"

"But these kids are dying, Toki."

"Good!" The band was shocked. "Yes, I mean that! Dead!"

Mr. Offdenson explained, "All you would have to do is spend a few hours just talking to children."

Toki wasn't having it. "Well, how comes I can't sit around and drinks like Pickle? How comes I can't fucking sit around and screw sluts or something? But no, you are the cutesy guy that kids like. You got to helps people gets over their problems. Fuck that! You dos it!"

"You're one to talk," I snapped. "You're the biggest child in this room!"

"No I'm not!"

"You sleep with a teddy bear, you boob! Face it, the reason why you connect with kids so much is because deep down, underneath all that bitterness and brutality, you're a kid! You're scared of your own parents for Christ's sake! That's how much of a child you are!"

Toki stood up. "Then I don't wants to be a kids anymore!" And he ran off to his room.

(!)

Toki slammed the door to his room. He sat on his bed and held his teddy bear. "Kids, Wish For Something Foundation! I gonna make kids wish theys was never born!" In a matter of minutes, he had covered his room in blood and torture devices, then covered himself in blood and put on spiked shoulder pads and a flamethrower. "I'm gonna be a demon! That lives in their nightmares. Right, teddy bear?" He torched the toy immediately.
In the Dethklok recording studio...

I found Mr. Knubbler and Murderface. "Hey, how's the Planet Piss project coming along?"

"Oh, it's ready," Murderface said.

"Well," I said. "I got nothing better to do for the time being, so, mind if I help out?"

"Eh," the bassist said. "Why not?"

"All right," Mr. Knubbler said to Murderface. "So you got your songs ready? Got your lyrics ready? You're organized?"

"I got my songs ready."

"You got everything ready to go?"

"It's all about organization."

"It's time to do it. It's time to do it. Yeah, we're ready to go. Just ready to go. Ready to go." There was something odd about the way Mr. Knubbler emphasized on the word, "Go."

"You know what my fear is? I just hope this doesn't get bigger than Dethklok. You know that'd be something, you know."

"Well, you don't have to worry about that," I said.

"How do you know, Wood?"

"Snakes n' Barrels," I pointed out. "Sure, they had Pickles in it, but they're not as big as Dethklok." I paused. "I still have nightmares."

"Well," Mr. Knubbler said. "There you go. Let's go in there. - Let's do it."

"Hold on, hold on, hold on. Just let me gather myself. Gather myself. Get ready."

"We've been here sitting for five hours," pointed out Mr. Knubbler.

Murderface responded, "This just doesn't happen overnight."

"OK. OK."

"It's only Sunday."

I blinked. "You guys have been sitting in this chair for five hours, not doing anything?"

"I want to savor the moment, you know?"

"I think you've done enough savoring, William."

(!)

It took some time, but Mr. Knubbler and I finally got Murderface into the booth. "Okay," I said. "Vocal session take one. Recording, go!"

*Cue Planet Piss*
"Find the downbeat," Mr. Knubbler said. One thing that was cool about his robotic eyes was that they could look in two directions at once like a chameleon's. Perfect for looking at Murderface and his keyboard at the same time.

Murderface stopped singing. "Where's the bass," he demanded. "Where's the bass?!"

"Find the downbeat! Go, go, go!"

"And show more anger," I ordered.

Murderface resumed singing.

"Louder, louder," Knubbler said. "Do it louder! Come on!" Murderface obeyed. "There you go! Get mad! Get madder!" On the final "PISS!" Knubber stopped the music, "We got it! Hey, come on in. We got it! It was great. You know, I got enough to work with. It's ProTools."

"I think you'll love it," I said.

(!)

Weeks later...

I whistled as I walked down to the lounge. Suddenly, I smelt smoke. I gasped as I saw Toki slinking down the hall, firing a flamethrower randomly. "See you in your nightmares, dickweeds!" he said in a scratchy, high-pitched voice.

I ran straight for the lounge where the others were. "Guys, Toki is taking this child hating thing way too far." It was then I noticed Nathan had a scarf wrapped around his neck and was sipping tea. "What happened to you?"

Nathan's voice was but a whisper. "Lost my voice recording Shakespeare. Pickles," he gestured to the drunk drummer. "Didn't record it all!"

"I said I was sorry." Pickles took another swig of beer.

"Uh, yeah," I said. "We got a bigger problem. Toki's acting really crazy with child hate."

"I know. I've never seen him like this," said Murderface. "He's turning into a real asshole."

"Can we kick him out of the band?" whispered Nathan.

"OK, all right, here's what you do. He sleeps, sack, bar of soap. Brain damage, cornfield, gun. Funeral."

"Pickles," I said. "Go to sleep." A shot from my blue whale tranquilizer did just that.

"Looks like I'll have to cancel Planet Piss," complained Murderface. "Damn it!"

"Why?"

"Yeah, why?" asked Skwisgaar.

"'Cause I'm emotional. I probably have to cancel it. Oh, darn!"

Mr. Offdenson said, "If you really want to fire Toki, I can begin processing the paper work... but before we do that, I might have a plan."
"Does it involve that dying little girl?" I asked.

"Yes it does. She'll be here any minute."

(!)

A black limo parked itself outside Mordhaus and a woman came out. Then she pulled out a wheelchair and put the small, frail girl in it. She was wheeled into the lounge where the band, Mr. Offdenson and I were waiting. The sick girl asked, "Where is Toki?"

"He's...ah...stewing in anger," I said.

"Oh." The girl coughed. "Well, can I see him?"

"It's probably best that you don't," Mr. Offdenson said.

The girl sadly looked down. "Well, can you give him this?" She handed him a DVD.

"I'll see to it." And he left for Toki's room.

The little girl coughed again. "Don't be sad, little girl," Nathan whispered. "One day you're gonna grow up and you're gonna be big." Then he remembered, "Oh, wait. Nevermind. Sorry."

The woman escorting the girl shook her head, "We better go."

"I got something to cheer you up," I said. I handed her the sick girl my blue whale tranquilizer dart gun. "My famous dart gun. Well known for being the only thing in the world to calm Dethklok down in their moments of rage. Would you like to fire it?" The girl looked at it uncertainly. "Here, we'll take this to the shooting range outside."

(!)

"This is not safe at all," the escort woman said.

"It's all right," I said. "I'm just guiding her hands." Holding onto the girl's hands as she held the gun, I carefully had her aim at the bull's eye. "You got this?" She nodded. "Okay. I'm going to let go of your hands. Then you're going to fire. You okay? Other than dying?" She nodded again. "Okay." Carefully, I let go of her hands. Then she squeezed the trigger and fired. What happened next? Perhaps the wind changed the direction of the dart. Or perhaps her strength gave out. Whatever the case, the dart missed it's mark, bounced off the leg of the tripod holding the bull's eye up and ricocheted right back to the girl, sticking her in the shoulder.

"Oh, god!" everyone cried.

The girl's eyes dilated, then she slumped over. Everyone was wide eyed. The escort woman shook her, but got no response. She checked her pulse. "She's dead!"

Everyone looked at me. "Uh oh." I chuckled sheepishly. "Well, uh...how much money is it going to take to keep this quiet and say she had a good time with Toki."

"Sorry," she said. "But until she meets Toki, the foundation won't be taking any bribes."

"Little girls, wait! Wait!" Toki came running out of Mordhaus and into the shooting gallery. Oh, boy. "I'm sorry. I was all screwed up inside. I was selfish, a selfish idiot but now I know how wrongs I was. I have all the times in the world for you now. So please, comes back with me."
"Uh, Toki..." I tried to say. "About the girl...she's..."

"Aw, look," the brunette guitarist said. "She's sleeping. Little girls, wakes up!'' He shook her a little, and she fell out of her seat. When he saw her eyes rolled back into her head, he let out a scream. "Oh, my God! I'm dead now! No! Oh, my God! Oh, my God! She's dead, she's dead! You killed me Toki! Oh, no! Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no! She's dead! She's dead! She's dead! I'm dead! Oh, my God! Oh, no! Oh, my God! Oh, my God! I killed her!" You killed me! I'm dead because of you!

I blinked at the traumatic scene being played out, then fired a dart at Toki. "That was getting annoying. So," I said to the escort woman. "Technically, she met Toki, so does this mean she had a good time?"

She looked at the scene with the dead girl and the unconscious guitarist. "Technically, yes. We can say she had a good time. Besides," she said in a low voice. "You did me a favor, lifting that dying weight off my back."

"I, uh...what?"

"You can't imagine how much torment it was for me to carry around that sick little shit, just waiting for her to die! But now I'm free! FREE!" A dart to the ass shut her up.

(!)

After the foundation left, I found Mr. Knubbler and Murderface at the picnic grounds. "So," I said. "How's Planet Piss coming along?"

"Listen for yourself," the former said, turning on the music. "That's pitch corrected."

"My voice is pitch corrected?" asked Murderface.

"No, your voice is not pitch corrected. It's you."

"Can we pitch correct it?"

"We can do anything," I said. "It's your project. It's your call."

"What are our options?"

Mr. Knubbler said, "Well, we can uproot it and start over again if you want."

"No, I don't want to do that."

"No we don't, Murderface," I said.

(!)

I think the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake hit me again because sleep was full of nightmares. It was raining dead bodies of the fans that died. The little girl was among them. They all stacked on top of each other until they formed thrones; sitting on those thrones were the band members, clad in armor straight out of Dungeons And Dragons. Then a sixth throne was formed. Sitting on it was a man with long, white hair, a white beard and his face looked ancient, like he was older than he really was. Then he spoke in a raspy voice, "It's almost time..."
I awoke with a shriek. I put my hand over my face. "Damn it, Pickles, why did you give me that stupid drug?"

Chapter End Notes

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Bluesklok

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

It happened. IT happened! From backstage, I watched as the band did absolutely NOTHING! Nathan didn't even sing; all he did was sigh loudly into the mike. The audience shouted, booed and jeered. A booming voice in the front row shouted, "COME ON, MAN! PLAY SOMETHING!"

(!)

Somewhere in the southern United States, an elderly African American man strumming a guitar watched the news on his small TV. "This is the last piece of footage we've seen of the band. They're calling it the concert that Dethklok didn't play. Rumors are circulating, cancelled tour dates, no public appearances. Has the band thrown in the towel?"

The man said, nodding his head, "Them boys, they got the blues."

(!)

"I've never seen them this bad," I said to Mr. Offdenson. "They're just sitting around the lounge not doing anything. They're just eating ice cream and saying how fat they are."

"I know," he said. "They don't even care that we're wasting money on all these delays and postponing."

"Perhaps I can be of assistance," an elderly voice said. We both turned around. There, by the door way was an old black man wearing a tattered straw hat and an acoustic guitar strapped to his back.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Mashed Potato Johnson," he said, tipping his hat. "Blues guitarist since 1938."

"Well, we don't need a blues guitarist," I said politely. "This is a death metal band."

"Oh," he chuckled. "I'm not here to audition. I want to help your band."

"Help? How?" asked Mr. Offdenson.

"Your boys got the blues," Johnson said. "And what more do you need than a blues expert?"

Mr. Offdenson nodded. "He's got a point."

"But the blues are depressing," I said. "I don't think it's a good idea to make them even MORE depressed."

"Trust me," Johnson said. "This is good for them. Is death metal not depressing as well?"

I thought it over. "I suppose..." Then a thought hit me, "Wait. How did you get past security?"
Normally people get blasted in the face before they even reach the gardens."

Johnson chuckled again. "Blues folk can find their way in any place."

I smiled. "Impressive. Deal. I'll take you to them."

(!)

I guided the old man to the lounge. I cleared my throat. "Boys," I said. They just groaned at me. "We have a visitor."

Skwisgaar glanced at Johnson. "How did he gets in here?"

"Heh," he chuckled. "Your friend Wood asked me the same thing. I'm a blues man. A blues man find his way in anywhere."

"Who are you?" asked Pickles.

"I'm Mashed Potato Johnson. And I want to help you."

"Pack your bags," I said to the boys. "We're going to the southern United States."

(!)

The tribunal heard through the grapevine and started their meeting. Senator Stampingston began, "Dethklok is in a celebrity depression. This could be monumentally bad."

"Could this celebrity depression be the end of Dethklok?" asked General Crozier.

"Well, it's difficult to speculate. Gentlemen, celebrity depression expert... Vincenzo de Alimamala Corningston the Third."

The celebrity depression expert was an old man with a long white beard and wearing a white suit. He spoke in a squeaky voice, "Many celebrities become celebrities because world recognition is the only thing that pulls them out of the horribly depressing realities of living. They no longer live in reality. Anything could send them spiraling into a depression: a bad photo, a slice of pizza before sleeping and their world can immediately turn upside-down! Thus they turn to outside forces to enlighten them such as shamens or gurus."

General Crozier asked, "And who do you believe Dethklok will turn to?"

A picture of Johnson appeared on the screen behind Stampingston. "Mashed Potato Johnson. He's the oldest living blues guitarist. They say he made a deal with the devil - standard blues musician rap sheet."

"All due respect, why should we be worried about Dethklok learning the ways of the blues?"

"Because the blues is as cursed as this metal is," said Vincenzo.

"The Devil himself," warned Cardinal Ravenswood. "Is at the helm of this music."

"If Dethklok embraces their depression, we could all be in great danger," concluded the depression specialist.

The ancient man had the final word as always, "We will let Dethklok explore this new territory..."
CRASH! The helicopter landed with a tremor. "Oops," I said. "Sorry about your house, Johnson."

"It wasn't mine."

"Never mind then."

The helicopter doors opened. The area around us was a vast farmland that had dried up. The only signs of life were the roads and the few trees that somehow were still green with leaves. The sun burned down on us. Only Mashed Potato Johnson was unaffected by the heat since he's lived here all his life.

"It must be 200 degrees," groaned Skwisgaar. "Oh, fuck this shit. I'm taking off my fucking shirt off."

Pickles asked, "Where are we?"

"We're in the South," Mashed Potato Johnson explained. "The birthplace of the blues."

"Well, it's too hot," complained Nathan. "And I'm taking my shirt off." He saw the other band mates had taken off their shirts as well. He took one look at Toki's muscular body and said, "My God. I have let myself go."

"You have put on a few pound-a-ropenises," said Murderface.

"You're not supposed to agree with me, dick-brain."

"What are we even doing in this horrible microwaves," complained Toki. "I doesn't care nothing about this blouse."

"The blues," Nathan corrected.

"Yeah. All I cares about is dark and brutal."

Mashed Potato Johnson smiled. "You want to know dark and brutal? Come with me."

(!)

He led us to a chicken coop. "This here where the blues began, right here where we're standing. Blind Harlan Davenport killed his wife buried her in that chicken coop right there. That night, he recorded 'Wife Gone On The Funeral Train Blues'. Next morning, the police shot him in the eye 52 times."

(!)

He led us to a cotton field right next to the chicken coop. "This is where Smoky Toe Brown was savagely beaten for sleeping with his neighbor's wife shortly before he recorded 'Train, Leave This Station Blues'. They say his ghost come back to life and killed his neighbor, pitch-forked his intestines, and hung them on a tree."

(!)

He led us to a railroad. "Everybody knows Shorty Turnytop made a deal with the Devil. He was hit by a train at this exact spot. As his head traveled in the air, he wrote 'Blues Train Blues'."
"All they sings about is trains," pointed out Skwisgaar.

"Is there anything else really to talk about?" He chuckled.

"That's not true," I said. "There's a lot of things to talk about. When you're broke, or poor, or just a very unlucky piece of shit."

"Trust me, kid, they all have trains in there. You just gotta read the fine print."

"Ah."

"Come on."

(!)

He led us to a tree right next to the railroad tracks. "This here is where Mustard Tits 'The Murder Master' Brown slaughtered 22 men just for being ugly. He went on to record 'Here Come That Train A-coming Blues'."

(!)

Mashed Potato Johnson led us to his shack. There were farm tools, a tractor and, curiously, a record player with still working vinyl records. One of them stood out. "Excuse me, Mashed Potato," I said. "Before you begin their lessons, I thought it would be a good idea for them to know what the blues sound like."

"Shoot son. Go ahead."

"All right." I took the record. "'Gloomy Sunday' also known as the Hungarian Suicide Song."

"What, does it cause Hungarians to commit suicide?" asked Pickles.

"No, Hungary's where it came from, but it DOES cause people to commit suicide."

"Oh, great, that's what we need," Murderface said sarcastically.

"Indeed, you do."

*Cue the Billie Jean version of Gloomy Sunday*

When the song finished, the boys were on their hands and knees. "This musics!" gasped Toki. "So powerful!"

"The depression!" Nathan put a hand on his chest. "So brutal!"

"Now that you've got a taste of the blues," Johnson said. "Now it's time to learn how to play them."

(!)

He led us outside. "Now, the first rule of the blues is translating that feeling, making somebody feel just as bad as you. Now, I want y'all to pair up. We gonna have a blues-giving session."

"Dude," said Pickles. "Does anybody have any SPF? I'm, uh, very Irish American."

"Real blues man get sunburn," Johnson said. "Now, go on, Nathan. Give Murderface them blues."

"Okay. Uh, all right, all right." Nathan pointed to the bassist. "Hey, dog-face... why don't you go
eat some dog food and eat your own throw-up... 'cause you're a dog-face."

"Jeez, Nathan! A little below the belt. I guess I really do have a dog-face. Maybe I should throw up and eat it."

Johnson nodded. "Good! Now you feeling them blues. You go on now, Murderface."

"OK. Hey, thin-lips," Murderface pointed at Nathan. "Why don't you go... make out with Glenn Close and go and... bring her Academy Award and shove it up your ass. That'd be great."

"Maybe you're right. Maybe I should use my crappy thin lips and make out with Glenn Close."

When he led us back inside the shack, Johnson turned to the two guitarists. "Now, Skwisgaar, let's talk about blues guitar."

"I only plays metal. It's embarrassed for us to even have this grandpa's guitars."

"That's because you don't know how to make the blues sound. Why don't you try to play this?" He played a simple slow tune. Skwisgaar and Toki did the same thing, only faster. "That's close. One more time. Try to play this." He played another slow tune, but the same thing happened: too fast fingers.

"We can't nots plays fast physically," Skwisgaar said.

"Yeah, it's hard," said Toki.

"It's that muscle memory," I said. "You've been playing fast for so long, you can't play a slow tune."

"All right," Johnson said, understanding the problem. "Let's try something else. Wood, help me with those cinderblocks."

"This is actually working," I complimented. "Not a bad idea."

Johnson's idea was to tie cinderblocks to the guitarists' hands, slowing their movements. At one point, they hit Toki. "Ugh! I gots the hit in the balls with the train cinder block right in the balls!"

"Now, Nathan," Johnson said. "I want you to play me some blues harmonica."

"They don't play the harmonica," I said.

"Well, that's OK. You can use mine." He handed Nathan the instrument. Lick it."

"I'm sorry, what," asked Nathan.

"A real blues man get a flavor for his harp. Now, you go on and lick that thing." Nathan licked it reluctantly. "Now, you play them blues."

Toot. "There. I'm finished."

Johnson raised his eyebrows. "What?! You've hardly played that thing at all."
"Yeah, well, I mean, I got it."

(""

Johnson took us to a crossroads, said he wanted us to meet someone important. "Dudes," I said, noticing how the band looked more like tomatoes. "You guys could use some aloe vera."

"Leave them," Johnson said. "A blues man endures the pain. Now, you boys come a long way... but some of you might not know, down here in Mississippi, there's evil. The blues Devil live down here. If you want to be a real blues man, you gotta sell your soul to the Devil."

Thunderclouds suddenly appeared as a black car drove up to us. A man with long dark hair and wearing a black suit stepped out. "I understand you wish to bargain your eternal souls for blues fame," he said in a hissing voice.

The band wasn't intimidated or afraid at all.

"Yeah...Hey, fancy-pants, we're Dethklok. We're kind of famous already," pointed out Murderface.

"Oh, come on," said Pickles. "We're supposed to do this to become, you know, the blues guys." He said to the Devil, "Sir, sorry. We wish to bargain our souls, you know, for whatever."

"Very well. You understand then that you will have to sign a binding contract." He handed each band member their own contract.

"Well, see, our lawyer is not here," Murderface said.

"Well, it's not like we haven't negotiated a contract before," Pickles said.

"Hold on," said Nathan. "Page 4, the language is kind of murky. That's gonna have to be rewritten. I'm seeing other revisions, too.

What happened next was so shocking...and surprisingly boring: Dehtklok was outbidding the Devil himself!

"Page 7...dividends not recoupable of all and/or any monies..."...0.8% of all sales prorated because of back end..."...behavior system is 16.9%..."...gotta do is piggyback said sales..." onto recoupable sources, IE..."...7% of the back end on your soul, and you in turn...will get this $5.00 gift card for Hot Topic." "I can lives with that."

I blinked. "Wow, you really HAVE been paying attention to Mr. Offdenson.

The Devil just looked at the Hot Topic gift card, unsure what to do with it. "I'll sleep on it and contact a notary."

"I'm a notary."

"I'm gonna sleep on it," the Devil said, walking back to his car. "Take care, guys." He drove away.

"I like him," said Pickles.

"We can't even get the blues right," Nathan bemoaned. "It's making me depressed."
Back at the shack, the teacher had one final lesson.

"We have one final thing to do," Mashed Potato Johnson said. "And your journey of the blues is complete. You gotta play a show."

"But we can't!" said Murderface. "We're not ready!"

"Oh, hell, you ready.

"But it's unpossible."

"No back-stage, no champagnes... nos potato salad in the shape of a dead ladies. We don't even have the concerts book."

"It don't matter," Johnson said to Skwisgaar. "You go to where people are and you play them blues."

"What did you have in mind?" I asked.

(!)

Johnson led us to a ravine where a bunch of hippies were camping.

"This'll do just fine," he said.

"Dirty, worthless hippies," growled Murderface.

"These guys is way too happy," hissed Skwisgaar.

"And smelly too," I said. "Seriously, have they ever taken a shower?"

"Make 'em wish they was never born," Johnson said. "Give 'em the blues."

"Somebody slap my sunburned back," Nathan said. Instead of a slap, I did something else: I whipped him with my belt. He let out a loud bellow. "I can feel pain again! I'm ready."

"We just received some very awesome and rad news, everybody," the lead hippie said as the band took the stage. "Dethklok has returned to the public. Yeah!"

Nathan said into the microphone, "We're here to play some Mississippi Delta blues. We're in a horrible depression... and I gotta admit it: We're starting to like it."

*Cue Murder Train A Comin'*

The depression had grown so powerful, the winds picked up and became a violent so strong, trees were ripped out of the ground roots and all, the hippies were blown away in tornados and the sun vanished instantly.

"The students have become the masters," Mashed Potato Johnson said.

"Darling I hope," I sang as the blues master turned to leave for home. "That my dream never haunted you..."

Chapter End Notes
In my office, I tapped a pencil on my sketch pad, brainstorming the next big stage for the new concert. "Maybe...a couple of towers swinging giant scythes...rising out of the ocean." I tapped my chin. "Yeah, that will work."

Suddenly, Mr. Offdenson entered my office. "Uh, the band wishes you to be in the hospital."

"I'm a little busy. If Nathan needs another liver transplant, tell him he can leave me out of it."

"Actually, it's William. He's been in a motorcycle accident."

I looked up at him. Dethklok has its custom made motorcycle with four sidecars; Nathan is always the diver. "What happened?" I asked.

"I think it might be best if you saw for yourself."

(!)

"Oh, my god! Your face!" The bassist was in a hospital bed with bandages all over his chin and his legs in casts. "Dear god, when I heard you were in bad condition, I thought...ugh...I mean, the doctors told me your skin was peeled off your chin!"

"Yeah," the bassist said. "I know. I experienced it."

"Still, it's pretty gruesome." I noticed there was a pile of bass guitars next to his bed. "Gifts from the fans?"

"And the band."

I saw a fish bowl full of blood. "What's that? Piranha?"

"No. Asian fighting fish from Skwisgaar."

"Oh."

Suddenly, Nathan let out a scream. "I did this to you!" He grabbed Murderface by the shoulders. "I was driving the murdercycle! It should be me there still alive with all those gifts! I'm sorry. I'm sorry! Oh, God. I'm sorry!"

I blinked. "Wow, I didn't think you would apologize, Nathan."

"Dude," Pickles said. "We're not that cruel."

"Yes you are," I said.
"Yeah, you're right."

"You know," Murderface said, thinking. "Almost dying made me think. Not very hard, but, there's got to be something out there beyond this life, this life as we know it."

"What?"

"I think I need to become religious."

The other members of Dethklok and I went silent. Then I burst out laughing. "Oh, that's a good one! You? William Murderface, the most brutal and hate-filled bass player, a religious person?!" I laughed again. He wasn't laughing. I regained my composure as I realized, "Oh, my god, you're serious?"

(!)

When word reached the Tribunal, they were nervous. "It seems William Murderface is exploring religion," reported Senator Stampingston. "This is a dark sign."

"We have been fearing this," Cardinal Ravenswood warned.

"Yes. When a celebrity decides to embrace a religion they can become incredibly powerful and their fans can become even more passionate."

General Crozier stood up in his seat. "This could turn into a major incident! All the signs are there! We should immobilize them. Our peace is at stake." He turned to the ancient man in the center seat. "Mr. Salacia, I'm outlining several plans..."

Mr. Salacia interrupted him. "You are working for me, General, and your job is to collect information, clues, nothing else."

"This is absurd!"

Mr. Salacia's voice rose in volume for the first time, "That is enough, General!" Crozier sat down in his seat. "I will not be challenged by you."

The general and the cardinal looked at each other with suspicion.

(!)

In a random fast food joint, the cardinal and the general (both donning civilian clothing) met. "So," Ravenswood said. "What do you have?"

"Very little," Crozier said, putting a black and white picture of Mr. Salacia wearing a dark suit, spectacles and a black fedora on the table. "I'm suspicious. His background is murky, he's hard to track. He's like a ghost."

"He keeps appearing in my dreams," Ravenswood said as he eyed the picture. "He speaks to me in an ancient language that I don't understand, but I think he is telling me that I am going to die."

Crozier and Ravenswood eyed each other. For a while, they said nothing, then Crozier said, "I don't trust him, and I don't think you trust him either. And I'd like to know that I have an ally in you and the Church should this operation blow out of control."

Ravenswood was silent for five seconds before saying, "Yes, you do."
The band and I watched Murderface sit on a couch like a guru, chanting, "Religion...religion..."

"That's not how you choose a religion," I said. "In fact, I don't really think he's going to go through with this. He's too bitter to have faith in God."

Skwisgaar scoffed, "This is dildos. Doesn't he know there's no such things as religion?"

"So you're an atheist?" I asked.

"No," the blonde guitarist said. "Atheists believes Gods doesn't exists. I believes religions don't exists."

Nathan raised an eyebrow. "You mean, you don't believe in God. There is such thing as religion."

"Well, then proves it. Show me miracles that religion exists."

I frowned at him. "Dude, you made a guitar made out of the wood of Jesus Christ's cross. There's your proof right there."

Skwisgaar paused. "Oh, my gods, you're right! I think I need to reevaluate my life."

Murderface stopped chanting. "Guys, I need to find out which religion works for me, the guy in here," He put a hand to his chest. "And I can't do it alone. I need you to come with me."

"Fine," I said. "But don't drink any Kool Aid if you find yourself in a cult."

Our first stop was at a Christian rock concert. William was in the front row, bobbing his head to the beat of the lyrics. Needless to say, they STUNK!

Pickles had a face of disgust as he shouted over the screaming fans, "Come on. I grew up in the Midwest. I don't need to see another Christian rock band."

"Listen," Nathan shouted. "I almost killed him. He needs our support. Just give it a chance." He continued to listen to the lyrics "See, it's not so bad. It's fun." In a pig's eye.

"I don't think this is the kind of song God would approve," I shouted over the screaming fans.

"There is no God!" shouted Skwisgaar. "Just listen to his guitar!"

"I'm gonna check out this Christian rock mosh pit," Toki said. All he did was bump into people and one of the barriers. The lead singer of the Christian rock band suddenly jumped off the stage expecting a mosh pit to save him, only to be impaled by the barrier.

Murderface was the only one not repulsed. "I've seen enough," he said, bored. "Pretty good."

Murderface's next choice was a church of atheists. I'm surprised there even existed one. The church's interior was white and lacking any of the typical religious symbols usually found in Abrahamic churches.

"I think this might be your kind of place, Skwisgaar," I said. "You and Toki are atheists. I think."
"We're not atheists. We are nihilists. We don't believe in anything."

"Can't a nihilist also not believe in God, too?"

"I don't know."

Murderface shushed us.

Just as the minister began his sermon, a brick flew through the window. "Oh, no! We're being picketed by agnostics! Get them!"

Pickles explained to a confused Dethklok. "Agnostics honor the possibility of there not being a God. They hate each other. This is gonna be awesome."

Murderface watched the agnostics and the atheists fight each other in the pews, not impressed. "This isn't for me."

(!)

Back at Mordhaus...

Murderface was looking out the kitchen window with a look of desperation while the others ate their dinner. "Just give me a sign. Show me the path of enlightenment, dear sweet demilord icon."

"I don't wants to sound harsh but this is getting weird," said Toki. "He's been through every religion. He ain't decided on nothing. This kind of thing could really fucks up a band. We might needs to kick his ass out."

I shrugged my shoulders. "He hasn't tried Judaism, Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism yet."

"That's not the point!"

Pickles raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean? Why do you say that?"

"Because he's creepy," said Toki. "He's acting like he's a fucking demon possessed. Look at him."

We all faced Murderface who was licking the window.

"That is creepy."

"Ja. I agree," said Skwisgaar. It always happens. One band member, you know, becomes religion... and the whole band has to change to accommodate the guy, you know. The dynamic is all to boom. Magic is gone. It sucks, you know but I say we kill him."

"Come on, you dicks," said Nathan. "He's the bass player. Without him we're nothing. Sure, we mix his bass out of pretty much every song... but we need him." He paused. "OK. We don't really need him but it's my fault he's this way. I guess that's my point."

"I'm telling you," I said. "He's not going to go through with this." I watched Murderface press his nose to the window, still pleading for a religion to come. "That's it." I got up from my seat and headed for the landline phone. "I'm going to pick him a religion that is SURE to be his choice."

"Wood, what are you doing?" asked Toki.

"Making a call," I answered, taking out a phonebook. After finding the number, I dialed it down. A few rings later, I got an answer. "Hello, is this the Church Of Satan? No, this is not a prank call. I work for Dethklok. Yes, Dethklok. What? Look, I don't care about the blood. Murderface is in a stump and he's looking for a religion. Problem is he can't pick one. I was thinking you guys could
do something about it? What's his phone number? Uh...hold on."

(!)

Murderface was still at the window after I gave them the number. "You got that? Okay. Make it sound convincing. Yes, we'll make sure this reaches the news medias. And hurry! He's starting to creep us out! Okay, bye." I hung up.

(!)

The newspapers' headlines raised peoples eyebrows. "Murderface recruited by Church Of Satan! Actor Tom Sizemore's Phone Call Makes The Difference!" "It's Going To Be The Most Metal Religion!" says William Murderface." "Murderface To Attend His First High Satanic Mass! Promises To Be The Most Brutal Black Mass EVER!"

(!)

The interior of the church was black and the red tinted windows helped to create the appropriate "brutal" atmosphere. The people in the pews were both regular attenders of the church as well as Dethklok fans. Dethklok themselves were seated in a reserved pew. Murderface was still frowning, arms crossed.

The minister (who resembled Marilyn Manson) began his sermon, "Greetings, you children of Satan. Tonight, we will pay homage to our Underlord and make sacrifices unto him. But first a couple of announcements. Last week, some people left some trash behind candy wrappers, coffee cups, and empty chip bags. This is a church of Satan. This isn't a waste paper basket, can. So if you could please just remember to clean up after yourselves... and we can avoid having, you know, ants, worms, raccoons. Hail Satan."

"Hail Satan!" the churchgoers said.

"Also, the neighbor next door is on a real tear. He wants... He's towing cars, so try not to park in front of his house because your car will be towed, and that's around $300. $300. Hail Satan."

"Hail Satan!"

"Wow," I said to myself. "You guys are NOT how you presented yourselves in the advertisements."

The minister asked someone to join him on the stage. Toki was chosen. He knelt before the minster who held up a sword. "Pray now the prayer of revenge. From whom do you seek revenge?"

"I seek revenge on Rachel Ray from Food Network. Can't you make her eyes fall out or something? Tits fall off?"

The minster said nothing at first, then declared, "Satan, grant this man the gift of revenge against his foes at the Food network."

Toki was wide eyed. "Seriously?"

"Yes."

"Seriously?"

"Yes."
"Really?"

"Yes."

Toki smiled as he walked back to his pew. "That's cool."

Meanwhile, in his pew, Murderface was NOT impressed.

(!)

The minister resumed his sermon, "And now we will summon the four demons of the apocalypse! Mephistopheles, Beel... Beelzebub..."

Murderface had had enough. He walked onto the stage and stole the mike from him. "Excuse me! Excuse me! Does anyone know where the nearest bar is? Does anyone know any good bars around here?" No one answered it. "You're killing me. You're killing me here. It's all the same. It's all the same. All religions are a bunch of boring crap! Does anybody know where there's a good bar around here?"

(!)

I watched as Dethklok danced around the bar in their alcoholic stupor. "I knew you wouldn't go through with it," I said to Murderface.

"Damn right, Wood," he shouted. Then he said, "Hey, I just realized something! Your name is Wood! Morning Wood!" The other band members laughed.

"It's afternoon," I said. "It kind of makes the joke pointless." The guys ignored me and continued to laugh. My eye twitched. "You guys are lucky I voted stay sober in order to drive you back."

Chapter End Notes

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The sound of Murderface screaming was the thing that woke me up from my current nightmare. I ran down the hall, blue whale tranquilizer dart gun at the ready and burst open the door to the lounge. "What the hell's going on in here?!!" I saw a strange sight: a clown with his hands behind his back with a very angry Mr. Offdenson (clad in a sleeping robe) and Dethklok frowning at him. With the exception of Toki who was defending him. I recognized the clown. "Hey, aren't you that party clown we hired for Murderface's birthday?"

"I'm Dr. Rockso," the clown said in his high pitched voice. "The rock n' roll clown! I do cocaine!"

"Yes, we know," I said, putting the dart gun away.

"Apparently," Pickles said. "Toki here thought it was a good idea to drive around with this clown in Murderface's limo and steal his gun."

"And put the keys in back my pocket," the bassist said. "I woke up with a clown's hands in my pants. That's what I did today."

"Oh, come on," complained Toki. "How come I can't have a friend that's a clown?! He makes me laugh!"

"We care about you," said Skwisgaar.

"No you don't," I said. Then I said to Toki, "Look, have you never learned of stranger danger as a kid? I mean, this guy is clearly a bad influence on you."

"No he's not! Besides, it's metal to like a clown." The band disagreed with him. "It's true," he said. "Clowns are statistically the most hated of all creatures." Well, he was right about that.

"Statistically or not," Skwissgar said. "But I just don't likes this guy."

"OK, look, it's late," Mr. Offdenson said. "Let's just all calm down and discuss this in the morning. May we offer you a ride home?" he asked Dr. Rockso. The clown nodded.

"Okay," Toki said cheerfully. "Calls you laters!"

"Give him whatever he wants," Mr. Offdenson said to the Klokateers escorting Dr. Rockso outside. Then he stopped me. "Tell the boys to give him the boots, medium style."

I smiled wickedly. "With pleasure. I can't stand that annoying voice anyway."

(!)

I laughed as the Klokateers kicked the poor clown. "Walk home, clown!" One of them said before
they walked back to Mordhaus. Had I been more careful, I would have noticed that Dr. Rockso still had the gun.

(!)

The Tribunal started their latest report. Senator Stampingston was the first to begin, "Gentlemen, satellite photos reveal something very disturbing at Mordhaus last night. One of the members of Dethklok was joyriding with a clown. A rock n’ roll clown. General Crozier?"

"His name is Dr. Rockso. He's the rock n' roll clown. He does cocaine. I'm afraid that's all we know."

Cardinal Ravenswood said in his sagely voice, "It is the fool that tempts fate. The fool can be the fly on the back of the beast."

"I think we should bring him in."

"Yes," Senator Stampingston agreed. "I suppose we have to deal with nefarious characters to get close to Dethklok."

(!)

I watched the band practice their next song, but there was a problem: Murderface was constantly twitching and adjusting his pants; he had a look of discomfort on his face. "Hey, Murderface, do you have worms or something?"

"No! I ran out of clean underwear so I put on a bathing suit."

I raised an eyebrow. "Why a bathing suit?"

"What am I going to do? Not wear underwear?"

"Uh, yeah," I said. "It's called going commando."

"It's also called free balling," Pickles said.

"Yeah," said Nathan. "I only wear underwear about... Like, 4, 65... 65% of the time. Otherwise, I'm, honestly just free-balling."

"Really?" asked Murderface.

Skwisgaar nodded, "Oh, yeah. In Sweden, underwear is, the kinky stuff. You know, worn as a fetish. Yeah, but, the exciting sexual stuff is, you know, always free-balling."

Murderface thought it over. "Free-balling, huh? I'll give it a try."

(!)

Later...

Murderface was able to perform the song without any problems and even did his own solo. He smiled. "You know, I feel pretty good. This free-balling is amazing!"

(!)

In an undisclosed location, General Crozier ordered two men to fit a camera on Dr. Rockso. "You'll be paid to gather whatever you can with this camera in your hat. And no fucking around,
got that, candy nose?"

The clown nodded. "Oh, you just keep that cabbage coming, Daddy-o and Dr. Rockso's gonna get you what you want the way you want it. Now, which one of you humps got a cigarette for Dr. Rockso?!

"Just calm down," Crozier said. "And be careful. And watch out for this guy," he said as he showed him an image of Charles Foster Offdenson. "He means business. Stay away from him."

Dr. Rockso blinked. "I DO COCAINE!"

"Yes, I know. Make sure no one sees you taking him out of here." General Crozier ordered his goons as they put a bag on his head and escorted him out. "Rock 'n' roll clown..."

(!)

The boys were in the game room; while Toki played Dance Dance Revolution, the others sat in the hot tub. As for me, I watched some TV. "You actually has been playing the almost the bass that cans be listened to lately, Murderface," said Skwisgaar. "You know, maybes we even turns it up on the next album."

"I noticed that," I said. "You're playing with more confidence now."

"I think it's this free-balling. Pickles, I cannot thank you enough. If only the whole world free-balled. Hey, what do those Arabs wear under their dresses?"

"Free-ball."

Suddenly, the doorbell rang. Toki stopped playing the game and hopped off. "Oh, that's Dr. Rockso. Yeah, I invites him over. No big deal."

"Oh, no! Toki!" Groaned Skwisgaar. "You don't have to overscompensate, all right. We's pays more attentions to you."

"Screw that psychological mumbo-jumbos. I just likes to laugh." And Toki took off for the front door.

Nathan yelled, "Hey, don't run. It's wet! I thought we agreed, no clowns!"

"No you didn't," I said. "You just yelled at him and beat him up."

"Oh, damn. I don't want that asshole around here."

"Oh, boy," warned Skwissgar. "Get ready for a lots of screamings."

"You know," said Murderface. "Normally that painted dildo would piss me off... but lately I've made friends with a distinguished old gentleman... sitting on two duffle bags. I'm free... downstairs. Think about it."

Suddenly, the clown slid into the room. "Ca-ca-ca-ca, it's me, Dr. Rockso, the rock 'n' roll clown!"

Toki laughed. "I cracks up every time!"

It was then Dr. Rockso saw Mr. Offdenson enter the room. "Hey, business man. What you do for a living, sell shoes?"
Mr. Offdenson remained emotionless. "May I have a short word with you?"

Dr. Rockso laughed as he followed him to his office. "Oh yeah, you are short!"

Toki laughed again. I raised my eyebrow at him. "Why do you like that guy?"

"He's funny!"

"He's a drug-addicted clown. What's funny about that?"

Suddenly, Dr. Rockso came back with a CD. "Who wants to watch a rock-sclusive Dr. Rockso music video?"

"Oh, me!" Toki raised a hand. "This gots to be hilarious!"

"I'd rather die," said Nathan. "than watch your fucking video, how about that?"

The clown just waved it off. "I caught that. But that's OK. Dr. Rockso forgives ya. Now, I'm gonna show you boys that you're not the only ones who know how to rock. This one was banned from Music Television because you could see my junk through my jumpsuit."

"I believe," Murderface said. "That is what's known as free-balling."

"It's called, 'I'm Just A Rock N' Roll Clown.'" Rockso put it in the CD player.

* Cue I'm Just A Rock N' Roll Clown *

While the boys watched the music video, I noticed Dr. Rockso slinking away. Suspicious, I followed him.

(!)

Quietly, I watched as Dr. Rockso entered in and out of various rooms around Mordhaus. The funny thing was, every time he entered a room, a strange clicking sound came from him. It was only after the fifth click did I mentally slap myself for not realizing it! The clown had a hidden camera on him! When he started walking to Mr. Offdenson's office, I pressed the silent alarm in my pocket.

(!)

By the time Mr. Offdenson and I arrived at the office, Dr. Rockso already had his hands on my plans! "Find something interesting in there, did you?" asked Mr. Offdenson. The clown pointed a gun at him. "Easy, Rockso. Easy. Don't you think you might have had a little too much cocaine?"

"Back off man," Dr. Rockso stuttered.

"Don't do something you'll regret," I said, slowly pulling my blue whale tranquilizer dart gun from my holster. Unfortunately, Rockso saw me and fired the gun out of my hands before taking off running. "Ca-ca-ca-yeah!" He jumped out the window and ran as fast as he could, surprisingly able to avoid the snipers' bullets. "Follow the clown!" I shouted.

"Wait," Mr. Offdenson said, looking out the window. "See where he goes."

"We will." Then I turned around to face the band, who saw everything. I noticed two things: Toki was smiling like Dr. Rockso did something funny...and William Murderface standing up in the hot tub wearing his pants. "Why are you wearing your pants in the hot tub?"
"I'm free-balling, what does it look like?"

Oy...

Chapter End Notes

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*Cue Castratikron*

After the song was over, the female fans screamed and cheered, demanding that Nathan would do a mosh pit with them. But instead, he just gave them a look that said he was uncomfortable. The reason why soon became clear when he said to them, "I can't. I have a girlfriend now." He pointed to the blonde woman in the red turtleneck on the left of the stage glowering at him. All the female fans booed.

(!)
Backstage...

"So," I said to Nathan. "How long have you been dating Ms. Rebecca Nighthrod?"

"Quite recently." He didn't look happy about it.

Meanwhile, the other members of the band were having their bare torso's painted by scantly clad women. "Hey, Nate," Pickles called out. "What the hell? Aren't you going to get painted by naked ladies with us?"

The look on Nathan's face read that he wanted to, but a glare from Rebecca stopped him. "Uh...No. I'm cool."

"You always get painted by naked lady, huh?" pointed out Skwisgaar. "You loves it!"

"I want to go NOW!" shrieked Rebecca.

Toki pulled Nathan away. "What the hell hells, Nathan, you bring your girlfriens backstage?"

"She knows how..." Nathan said, depressed. "where it is, you know, so..."

"Oh, great," I muttered. "Is she going to be this band's Yoko Ono?"

"Oh, god," Pickles said. "Please don't let it come to THAT."

"We gotta go," Rebecca demanded. "We got plans with our parents, remember?"

"Yeah, I wish I could, but..."

"Lets. Go."

(!)

The tribunal watched the Dethklok Minute talk about the latest news regarding Nathan and Rebecca. The news reporter said, "The world seems to be going crazy over the whirlwind romance
of Dethklok frontman Nathan Explosion and celebrity Rebecca Nighthrod now simply known as Natebecca or Rebesplosion. Despite the thousands of female suicides, the world has come to embrace the joining of these two media monsters. No talk of babies yet but we've done some work on our own and are ready to show the world what the metal baby god might look like."

Senator Stampingston began the meeting as usual, "It appears that Nathan Explosion has found himself a girlfriend."

"A celebrity girlfriend," specified General Crozier.

"Her name is Rebecca Nighthrod and she's a world-class tennis player turned sitcom actor/model."

"And her father is a decorated dignitary. Very influential in the political world."

Senator Stampingston introduced a new Dethklok specialist, "Gentlemen, celebrity relationship expert Horace Marmingblat Wimplestein Jr."

The specialist was a bald man wearing a brown suit. "When two high-profile celebrities begin a relationship, it can upset the balance of the world. The joining of these two monumental egos can create a sociological supernova that overshadows worldly events and shifts the perspective from importance to peripheral. The good news is that this makes the public more stupid and malleable; the bad news is that it makes them, the couple, thousands of times more powerful and we cannot have that."

Senator Stampingston questioned, "What do you suggest we do about this?"

"We have one thing in our favor, the male sex drive. You see, when a man who can have any woman he wants enters into an exclusive relationship he's forced to consider that which he is leaving behind. Combine that with Rebecca Nighthrod's tight public hold on Explosion, and we could create a relationship tornado."

The senator nodded, "Yes..." If Nathan's male-driven desires makes him cave, it could end his and Nighthrod's relationship for good.

The specialist continued, "Gentlemen, have you heard of the United States Pornography Awards?"

The male members of the tribunal shifted in their seats. "I've read reports," General Crozier said.

"This is the biggest adult film event of the year. I believe that if we can involve Dethklok in participating then we may have a chance at tempting Nathan Explosion and tearing his relationship apart."

General Crozier shifted again. "I feel that this would work better if I were there at the Pornography Awards."

Senator Stampingston's feet shuffled a little. "Perhaps I should go too."

The other male members of the tribunal volunteered to go, too. All but one. "No," Mr. Selacia said in his ancient voice. "You're not allowed to go..."

Killjoy. No one DARED to say that out loud.

(!)
Mordhaus Conference Room...
"So, you've been cordially invited to host at the United States Pornography Awards," said Mr. Offdenson once he got the invitation in the mail.

As soon as he said that, I felt a hard-on. "Pornography Awards, huh?" I shifted in my seats. "That sounds right up our alley."

Immediately after I said that, Skwisgaar, Murderface, Toki and Pickles cheered.

Mr. Offdenson frowned. "Not the most distinguishing event, I advise we pass."

"Oh, HELL NO!" I shouted, grabbing Mr. Offdenson by the collar and shaking him. "You're GOING to approve them going to the Pornography Awards!"

"Yeah," Pickles agreed. "What are you, a eunuch? Sign us up!"

"They're not paying you, and you'd lose money," Mr. Offdenson said, not caring that I was shaking him.

"So? FUCK THAT!" shouted Toki. "I pay them for this! I just want to makes outs with thems beautiful girls!"

"Ditto!" I agreed.

"Well, uh, financially speaking..."

Murderface interrupted him, "Hey, listen, Mr. Numbers. Sometimes you gotta just do something because your heart tells you it's the right thing to do."

"Gots to listen to your hearts," agreed Skwisgaar.

"Now signs us up," shouted Toki. "Naked ladies!"

"It's unanimous," Pickles said.

"You heard them," I said. "Sign. Us. Up!"

Mr. Offdenson pushed me off him and brushed himself. "Nathan?"

The vocalist was talking to his girlfriend on his dethphone. More like getting verbally abused by her. Finally he hung up. "You dicks got a problem?"

"No," everyone said.

"All right," said Mr. Offdenson. "Nathan, the United States Pornography Awards. Are you in or out?"

"He better be," I warned.

"Listen, I can do whatever I want. I'm fucking going!" Nathan's dethphone rang again. Guess who was on the line.

"How can he stand being with that shrieking harpy?" I asked the other band members quietly.

(!)

Days passed and Nathan didn't answer his question. In fact, Nathan hadn't even been seen at all. It
was like he just vanished. He didn't even show up for today's rehearsal. I checked my dethphone. "Damn it. He's not answered ANY of my texts!"

Skwisgaar tapped his foot nervously. "I'm getting worried. United States Pornography Awards in two days and Nathan hasn't been to rehearsal."

Murderface scoffed, "That's ladies for you. They rob you of your very essence. They're soul murderers!"

"You're just saying that because you don't have a hot girlfriend who won't run away the minute she sees you up close," I joked.

"Oh, and you can?" snapped Murderface.

"Sorry, don't have the time. Too busy trying to keep you guys from killing each other."

"Pfft, sure you are."

"Guys," Skwisgaar said. "That's is not the points! She's not good enough for hims. I hates her, yet I would totally dos her."

"Yeah, me too," said Toki. He shook his head. "So strange is the minds of men."

"Yeah, my little friend. We are so evolved, yet our animalistic inskincts always remind us of who we truly are."

"Mens art beasts and womens the demons of the night."

I found myself quoting Jurassic Park, "God creates dinosaur, God destroys dinosaur, God creates Man, Man destroys God, dinosaurs eat Man, Woman inherits the Earth." Everyone nodded.

Suddenly, Nathan entered the rehearsal room. He looked sadder than ever. "What's wrong?" I asked. "Did she break up with you? PLEASE say she broke up with you."

"No."

"God damn it," the other Dethklok members cursed.

"But I have some bad news! I can't go to the United States Pornography Awards. I'm not allowed."

Everyone was silent. Then Pickles said, "Dude, but if you can't go, then we can't play, and we're don't... we can't go! We can't go!"

Nathan looked like he was about to cry. "I'm sorry."

"I wanted to kiss the girls," protested Toki.

"I want to die," said Pickles.

Skwisgaar said only one word, "WHHHHHHYYYYY?!"

Nathan shouted, "You don't understand! She won't let me!"

"Nathan," I said. "Look at yourself! You call yourself a man?! She's abusing you, she's interfering with our music career, SHE'S NOT THE GIRLFRIEND YOU WANT!"
"I don't care!" Nathan screamed. "I love her!" And he ran out the room.

"I won't stand for this," I growled. "I'm not going to watch that harpy destroy him!"

"Agreed," Murderface said. "We've gotta save him!"

(!)

That night, while Nathan was asleep, I fired a blue whale tranquilizer dart right into his balls. The big lug was going to be asleep for a long time.

(!)

Nathan suddenly awoke to the cold feeling of water splashing all over him. Though he was still groggy, he realized he was tied to a chair. "What the hell are you guys doing," he slurred. "I can't move!"

Pickles lit a cigarette. "Yeah... Funny thing about being tied down..." He burnt it into Nathan's cheek. "It's hard to keep your defenses up."

Toki punched Nathan in the gut. "Why," he groaned. "Are you doing this?"

Murderface sharpened a meat cleaver. "You have been blinded by a manipulative cow and we are here to save you." He turned to Toki. "Taser him."

Toki obeyed. The water made the electric shocks from the taser even worse as Nathan screamed.

"Stop," Pickles ordered. "Take five on the juice, Toki."

Skwisgaar gripped Nathan's shoulders. "Your attitude is unacceptable. WHY DO YOU LIKE THAT LADY?!"

"She's abusing you to no end," I said. "She's treating you like a god damned slave not a boyfriend!"

"Yeah," Pickles said. "Every time we see you with her, you look like a beaten dog! AROO!"


"You hate her," Murderface asked. "And yet you are with her? Why?"

"I don't know!"

"Toki?"

Toki zapped him again.

Nathan explained after the shocking through labored breaths, "It's the most brutal thing ever. It's not like regular hate. It's so much more black! If she were a street gang, I'd fucking go to war with her with bottles and chains! But this is different. There's nothing I can do."

Pickles punched him. "There's nothing you can do? There's nothing you can do?!"

"I can possibly break up with her but, dear God, man, you don't know what she's like! What if she won't let me?" Toki aimed a crossbow at Nathan's penis. "You're right. You're right! Oh, God, you're right! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry." He was untied and sobbed, hugging Pickles.
"Dude," I said. "I've never seen you cry before. Was she really that bad?"

"You have no idea," he sobbed. "She made me carry a grand piano up a staircase, and it wouldn't fit through her door!"

"Nathan," I said. "Please, the next time you find a girlfriend, make sure she won't turn out to be an abusive witch!"

(!)

A few hours later, Nathan came back. "So, how did it go?" I asked.

"She fell down the stairs and now she's in a coma."

I blinked. "Wow, did she really take it that bad?"

"No, her stiletto broke and she tumbled down the stairs."

"Oh." Me and the rest of the band shuffled our feet. "So," I said. "About the porno awards?"

"Uh, she's approves. I think. I can't tell cause she's...you know. In a coma."

Everyone cheered.

(!)

Just before the Pornography Awards, I decided to pay Nightrod a little visit. She was lying in a hospital bed, tubes and other machines doing all her bodily functions. I spoke to her, "I don't know if you can hear me or not, but I just want you to know, you're the worst thing that has ever happened to Dethklok. You abused Nathan, you treated him like a slave and you made him cry. It takes a lot to get under his skin and you did just that. Let's face it, Nathan deserves a better woman than you and there are a lot of female fans out there who would agree with me." Nightrod said nothing, but I didn't expect her to anyway. My eyes fell on the plugs. "Honestly, it would be the right thing to kill you right now, but since Nathan still loves you...somehow...I don't think I will. Consider yourself lucky. But let me tell you something." I leaned into her ear. "You BETTER be still capable of listening to me, because if you come out of this coma and still treat Nathan like a kicked dog, I WILL end your life." I left the hospital, hoping to get a boner from the Pornography Awards.

Chapter End Notes

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In the Mordhaus lounge, I watched what was the band's newest event: a guest appearance TV sitcom called Dating Penelope or something. Honestly, it was every family sitcom cliche you could think of...with a little touch of death. The proof was in the pudding when Murderface arrived as the guest star, carrying half of a dog. "God, this is stupid," I said, shutting off the TV. I sighed. It reminded me of the current project Dethklok was working on: a movie. The problem was that is currently in development hell. And worse still, they were wasting money and time and the owner of the studios was losing patience.

(!)

The tribunal watched the sitcom. Senator Stampingston was the first to begin the report, "Gentlemen, it seems that Dethklok have decided to become professional actors. Gentlemen, our resident acting expert Dr. Chazz Fazzledopenhoffer. Dr. Chazz?"

Whenever the doctor talked, he would always puff up his cheeks, making him look like a frog. "This Dethklok acting business concerns me. We've worked a lot to control movies and blend them together with television into one bland, lifeless face that the humanoid public can nourish off of."

General Crozier raised an eyebrow. "You think Dethklok could really have an impact on the movie industry?"

"What Dethklok threatens to do is awaken the imagination of the public! They have charisma. They have... it! They have... zazz."

General Crozier nodded. "Supposing they do make a successful movie, what's the worst-case scenario?"

Dr. Chazz said, "Independent thought returns, creative control goes back to the artist, actors become smart and cool again, movies become thoughtful, endings become hard to figure out, people go to theaters and... interact with each other."

"And become entirely harder to control," Senator Stampingston said.

"A domino affect," General Crozier said gravely.

Dethklok plus movie equals free will.

(!)

The Dethklok Minute was on in a particular man's office. "The highly anticipated Blood Ocean starring Dethklok is currently in its 13th month of production. No one has seen any footage but it promises to be one of the biggest-budgeted movies in film history. Behemoth studio head James Grishnack was quoted as saying, 'This will be a monumentally brutal film.' Now, the plot of Blood
"Shut it off!" A man shouted to his secretary. He was a bald, round around the stomach, chewing a cigar like a gangster would, wore a fancy suit and spoke in a slur.

"Congratulations, Mr. Grishnack," the secretary said with a happy voice only to get slapped in the face.

"Congratulations?! For what?! Having blown more money on a movie than anyone in history?! A movie filled with mumbling idiots that no one can understand?! And they're still making it?! And there's no ending?!"

The secretary said, cautiously, "Look on the bright side, at least everyone is happy." That earned her another slap to the face.

"Are you happy now?" threatened Mr. Grishnack.

"I wasn't trying to be -" She got slapped again.

"Go get daddy a drink."

In the studio were Dethklok did their act in front of a green screen, Nathan and Skwisgaar performed their next scene. I had no idea where this was going. At all. Nathan said his lines like he was reading directly from his script, "Before we take over and pillage the space planet... Alfa Udero 7, we must pray to Space Odin." He gestured to Skwisgaar, wearing a cross between a viking costume and a space suit. "Space Odin, go."

Skwisgaar said his lines, "Yeah. And die. And there be a space sword... whos be your dad's serial killier." No one understood him.

"Yeah, I know. Now, but maybe we'll find your father out there. You go."

"Swell, swings! That... I look at hims fors a billion year."

The director shouted, "And cut. That's just great." He said to the blonde guitarist, "Skwisgaar, can I talk to you for a minute? How are you feeling?"

Skwisgaar said impatiently, "Yeah, cut, print, movings on! That's the one!"

"I agree, it was great but, we're having a hard time making out what you're saying."

Skwisgaar raised an eyebrow. "Like what?!"

"Like the words."

"I can't say those words any harder than I tried. I don't know what to tell you."

"Well, how about this, Skwisgaar, we'll make a deal. I'll direct as best as I can if you say them words as best as you can really do it."

"I'm afraid you can't do that," Pickles said to the director. "If you read our contract, you'll realize that you can't direct, note, or berate us because it sickens us. You're fired."
"I wasn't even trying to direct him! I was trying to speak clear, that's all!"

"Sorry," I said. "But your contract clearly states, 'Don't tell Dethklok what to do.' And you did just that."

"See?" said Pickles. "Wood gets it."

"So now I'm fired?!"


"Hang myself?"

Apparently, he did just that. The latest newspapers read, "That's A Wrap! Director Commits Suicide Over Blood Ocean!" "Top Directors line up to take on Blood Ocean! Who will sit in the big chair once occupied by suider Adam Nerrgal? Previous Suicides Not A Problem!"

"Legendary Actor J.F. Amarth To Set Sail For Blood Ocean! Troubled production gets a needed shot in the arm."

On the Dethklok Minute, a live interview with Amarth was played. "We're talking with J.F. Amarth live on the set of Blood Ocean. J.F., you've worked with a lot of legendary actors over the years. What's it like working with Dethklok?"

The graying man said, "What you need to remember is that in my day, acting wasn't a game..." Not anymore it seems, as Dethklok played around on a forklift in the background, disrupting the interview. Amarth did his best to ignore them, "...just mince in off the street and put on some makeup." When the forklift crashed, he had had enough. "DO YOU MIND?!"


Amarth growled in frustration. "The movie business is changed, it's too much for us - AAAAAAUUUUUUGH!" He screamed as Pickles drove the forklift and impaled him through the chest. Pickles tried to shake him off the forklift using the controls, but all it did was make him bleed more.

"Hold on," I shouted. I grabbed onto his arms and tugged him off the forklift. It only made things worse; the rescue attempt left him with a gaping hole in his stomach. "You idiots..." he groaned. "I'll see you all in Hell..." He died.

I growled. "YOU IDIOTS! Now you have no director!"

"Whoa," Pickles said. "Just take it easy. We can handle this."

"What? Are you going to do all the directing, the producing, the acting and the editing by yourselves?"

"That's not true," Murderface said. "You're in charge of the special effects!"

"Just make sure you include these," Nathan said, handing me a list.

I read them over. Oh, boy, this is bad. Really bad.
Me and my big mouth. Back at Mordhaus, the band and I watched the trailer in the lounge room. The boys cheered in their hot tub, while I just watched with a gaping mouth of shock. The trailer was just a jumbled mess that had no idea what genre it was supposed to be. It was worse than those Friedberg/Seltzer movies. And I don't want to talk about the movie itself.

Mr. Offdenson walked into the room, "I don't mean to rain on the parade here but..."

Nathan cut him off, "Don't! Just don't. Just go away. Can't you see we're happy? Don't ruin that."

"You are all very drunk, yes?"

"Yes they are," I said.

"I'm concerned Grishnack, the studio head has been dodging my phone calls. And it's not a good sign. Sometimes that means that the movie is very bad."

"Yeah, so?" asked Swisgaar. "Who give a craps, eh?"

"Well, movies are a big deal, and a bad one can ruin your image."

This confused the band and started pronouncing "image" in various ways.

I said bluntly, "If this movie sucks, people will think you suck and they won't buy your music again."

Silence.

The premier. Dethklok was silent. They just sat in their seats, nervously chewing their popcorn. The movie began. It didn't even reach the 3 minute mark and it sucked! Silently, Dethklok left their seats so no one would notice them. But Grishnack did.

Back in the lobby, Nathan had one thing to say about the movie, "What the fuck?! What a piece of shit!"

"Was I more fat or was I more stupid looking," asked Murderface. "My God. I'm hideous."

"Whose was that voice?" Skwisgaar asked, referring to the narrator in the movie.

Pickles said, "It didn't even made sense!" He turned to Mr. Offdenson and I, "You, do what ever it takes! That piece of crap AIN'T getting out!"

"Not even on DVD?" asked Toki.

"NOT EVEN ON DVD!" I shouted.

"You don't have to be so loud."

"Hello boys," slurred Mr. Grishnack as he crept up to us. "Hope I'm not interrupting anything."

"Dude," I said. "You CANNOT release that piece of shit movie! It's hurting your business and it
will hurt Dethklok's reputation!"

But the fat studio owner had other plans, "Oh, don't be drastic. This happens all the time. We just happen to make another... what you call in this business... a real piece of shit."

"So, you're not going to release it?" asked Murderface.

"Normally with a movie like this, I'd just, I'd just eat it and it would die. But since it's you, we're gonna put this out. And it's gonna make the money back. I don't care if it ruin's your careers. I'm making my money back. It's Dethklok in the movie."

"Money back?" I questioned. "That film is a box office bomb! No way will it get back your money."

"Who said it had to be MY money?"

"That's our reputation you're messing with, Grishnack!" growled Nathan.

"All right, dildos, listen up: I've been fucking over fat-head celebrities since you were all shitting in diapers. Now, this movie, it's a $500 million shit sandwich and you're all gonna take a bite and you're all gonna smile, 'cause you love how it tastes. Got it?!"

"You wouldn't dare!" I shouted.

"Oh, I dare and I WILL! Now, you go out there to your adoring public. I wrote all the reviews. No one knows what a good movie is anymore. Just shut up and smile. Remember, shit sandwich tastes great. Now, go."

(!)

Dethklok Mr. Offdenson and I walked out of the theater, and boarded the helicopter, ignoring the praises from the ignorant and idiotic fans. Once we boarded the Dethcopter, however, things became chaotic. You see, what I forgot to mention, my dear readers, was that the theater was placed on an oil rig. And the tail blades of the copter cut the oil line. One unlucky cigarette later, the whole oil rig was set on fire. That film and Mr. Grishnack will never see the light of day.

"How fake," Murderface commented.

"Who cares?" I said. "That fat fuck isn't going to mess with Dethklok ever again." Everyone nodded.

Chapter End Notes

Brendon Small and Adult Swim
In the Dethcopter...

Jean Pierre served the band their favorite wine while Mr. Offdenson talked to them. "Gentlemen, you've been receiving death threats from some of your fans."

"So, they gonna die?"

"No, Pickles. They're threatening to kill you."

"That's a different thing."

"Apparently," I said. "They're pissed that you're selling your Dethwater album only to fish."

Mr. Offdenson nodded. "Before the show, we should do a couple of safety briefings. I've outlined a very specific..."

Nathan cut him off, "Is there anything else?"

Mr. Offdenson just decided to skip the briefings. "Any new ideas on the Deth merch? I remember you guys complaining..."

Skwisgaar said, "Oh, yeah, you guys ready?"

"Here's the new merch," Murderface said as he and the other members of the band held up black bags.

"Garbage bags?" I asked in disbelief.

"They're not garbage bags," Skwisgaar said. "This is Time Travels Face Bag."

Murderface took his off. "Dear God, you boy in the street. What day is it?"

Pickles said, "It's Wednes... I mean, it's Friday. It's Friday."

"I must have figured out how to travel through time itself!"
Nathan said, "We've figured out how to travel through time at the speed of regular time with plastic bags."

They put the bags back over their heads.

"Do you think they'll destroy the last of their brain cells through a lack of oxygen?" I asked Mr. Offdenson.

"Yes. Yes, I do."

News of Dethwater played on TVs, and radios all over the world. A reporter said, "Dethklok's underwater album Dethwater is making huge news again after being the biggest budgeted record in history later followed by a class action lawsuit. The band's frontman, Nathan Explosion has sworn that this album would never be played live."

Footage of Nathan in front of interviewers played, "This album isn't for humans. It's for underwater sea creatures, therefore we will not play it for humans."

"That was several months ago. Since then billions of Dethklok fans have circulated standard petitions which did little until a group of renegade Dethklok fans instilled the suicide petition and terrorist petition, destroying national monuments and leaving the streets littered with the carcasses of metal fans and other innocent people."

Nathan reappeared. "Though I do not believe this is the right thing to do artistically, I do, however, believe that this is the right thing to do financially."

As the tribunal finished watching the news, Senator Stampingston began his report as always. "Dethklok is performing Dethwater Live for the first time ever. General Crozier?"

"This is taking place in Poland on the Gulf of Danzig. They're planning to play to the sea, to the fish in the Baltic Sea."

"Yes. Anything else."

"No, senator. We expect severe destruction of natural resources and death to fans." The usual stuff.

"Very well. Meeting adjourned."

No, it was not over yet. In another part of the tribunal's temple, Cardinal Ravenswood met General Crozier in secret. "Now is the time," the latter said.

"Yes, I know. According to the ancient scriptures, they must be killed or an apocalypse of metal will be upon us."

"Good, then our plans are set."

"General, Selacia is in my mind. I have a dreadful feeling that something very bad is going to happen. There is more. He tells me he already has eyes upon Dethklok before we even know what goes on in their lives, but they do not know this."
"Who are these 'eyes'?" asked the general.

The cardinal shook his head, "I cannot tell. They are cloaked in shrouds, but he calls them his right and left eyes."

This was something they'll have to look into.

A soldier greeted them. "General, your transport awaits."

Crozier stood up in his seat. "I'm off to meet an important ally. You'll ship off tonight and we'll meet at the rendezvous."

"Yes," Ravenswood said.

(!)

In a butcher shop in an unknown location, the general met his contact, currently torturing a poor soul. The room was littered with the corpses of disemboweled men and women. The man turned to face the general. In the single source of light, a light bulb, Crozier could see the features of the man: he was tall, built like a body builder and he had long white hair. But the most eye-catching feature of all was his face. The man was wearing a silver mask that covered the top half of his face, leaving only his mouth exposed.

"You know who I am?" asked General Crozier.

"Yes..." the man's voice was gravely.

"I've been trying to reach you for months. You're an elusive bastard."

The man with the silver face grabbed a cleaver and stroked it. "The only reason you found me is because I let you."

Crozier cut to the chase. "Your bother's been killed."

The man looked up. He said nothing for a while then asked, "How would you know?"

"Because he worked for me." He held up a picture of a man wearing a Klokateer hood with a gaping hole in his mouth. Agent 216. "He was the best I had."

The man took the picture and stared at it before asking, "What do you want?"

"I know who killed your brother." Crozier handed him a picture of Dethklok. "And if you want revenge, I can give it to you."

The man with the silver face took one look at the picture, then sliced it in half with the cleaver.

(!)

*Cue Go Into The Water*

At the Gulf of Danzig, thousands of Dethklok fans gathered around to await for their gods to play for marine life. Unaware that military vehicles and a single man with revenge on his mind were approaching them.

Inside the Dethsub, I exhaled as I watched live footage of the crowd. "Okay people," I called out to the Klokateers. "We've been waiting for this moment. My plans are coming to fruition. Now, let us
give the oceans and seas what they need now: Dethklok! Raise the towers!" On cue, four towers with swinging scythes bearing the Dethwater album logo rose up from the water. "Raise the stage!" The fifth tower, the stage where Dethklok performed, rose to the cheering of the fans. They weren't the only ones pleased. Dozens of whales and fish gathered around the towers.

I nodded, this was my crowning achievement as special effects manager for Dethklok. Then I noticed them: military jets heading straight for us! "Mr. Offdenson?"

"I see them, son. Close the stage!" I pressed a button and the stage closed, but the jets fired their missiles. "They can't take another beating like that," I reported. "This gunfire is going to shake them into the water!"

"Get into the penta pods now!"

Suddenly, five escape pods flew out of the stage, carrying Dethklok with them. Suddenly, a lone gunman fired at Toki's pod, making it crash into Skwisgaar and separating them from the other three.

(!)

When the sub rose from the water and headed for land, Mr. Offdenson and I were the first to exit. "This is bad," I said. "Someone's trying to kill Dethklok and they might actually succeed! What's worse, it looks like they have the USA army as backup!"

"That's why we have them." He gestured to the army of Klokateers.

"Mr. Offdenson, what chance do they have against a government military?"

"You'll see." He gave the signal and the Klokateers, all armed with guns, swords, maces, shields and halberds marched out into the snow. This was becoming a war. "While our troops distract the armies, we'll search for the boys. I'll look for Toki and Skwisgaar."

"And I'll look for Nathan, Pickles and Murderface. Got it."

(!)

I eventually found the three boys. They were unconscious and surrounded by soldiers. "Guys!"

"Freeze!" A soldier pointed his gun right at my face. A shot from my blue whale tranquilizer stopped him.

As I ran closer to the boys, I saw two figures looming over them: a general and what looked like a priest. "Get away from them!"

The general pointed his gun at me. "Stand back, son! We're doing this for your own good!"

"I don't know what you're doing, but this..."

I suddenly stopped when a bright light appeared. A figure stepped out of the light: a man with long silver hair, a silver beard and wearing a grey suit. "YOU HAVE BETRAYED ME!" That voice...didn't sound natural. The man raised his hand and formed a fist. All the soldiers' heads exploded instantaneously. Then he turned to the priest. "Be blind." The priest's eyes exploded and he screamed in agony as his intestines burst out his mouth and strangled him.

"What are you doing?!" shouted the general.
"You, I need alive. Sleep." The general passed out instantly as soon as the man said that.

I don't know what possessed me, but I fired my dart gun at the man. It did absolutely nothing! Then he slowly turned around to face me. I felt fear when I stared into those eyes of his, a fear far greater than the fear I felt whenever I had those nightmares caused by the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. What I saw... I can't bring myself to say it. He waved his hand and my dart gun disintegrated. I collapsed to my knees, shaking. "Who... what... are you?"

"We will meet again..." And he was gone. He and the general.

I didn't even realize Mr. Offdenson was behind me until he put a hand on my shoulder and shook it. I screamed and punched him in the face. "Stay away from me!"

"It's all right. It's me."

"Mr. Offdenson?" I realized for the first time he was bruised and bleeding. "You look like hell."

"Nothing I couldn't handle. That gunman learned not to fuck with my bread and butter."

"Ugh..." We all turned around. The priest was still alive somehow! "The Metalocalypse... has... begun..." Those words, I heard them before! I ran to the dying man and grabbed him by the shoulders. "What's the Metalocalypse? Who was that man? Why did those soldiers try to kill Dethklok?" But he was already dead. I felt a presence behind me and I turned around to face the band, all of them looking down at me and the priest's body.

"I think it's best we go home," Mr. Offdenson said.

I looked down at the dead man, then back at him. "Yeah, we should."

Chapter End Notes

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Dethecution

Chapter Summary

Months passed since the Dethwater attack. Thomas Wood's nightmares have gotten worse, the job has become more dangerous and a new player has come to stalk Dethklok in the Tribunal's name.

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fire. Brimstone. The smell of burning flesh. That's all I could see, could smell, could hear. I'm in Hell. I can see the bodies of Dethklok's fans being piled up. I can see Dethklok, clad in ancient looking armor, surrounding two people: that general and that priest. And that man...that man with the silver beard and long silver hair. No...no... "Be blind." NO!

(!)

"AAAAAUUUUGH!" I awoke screaming bloody murder and sweating up a storm. "A bad dream. It's just another bad dream from that stupid drug Pickles gave me." I tried to convince myself that, but I wasn't so sure anymore. Something strange was going on and it involved Dethklok somehow. A knock on my bedroom door made my heart jump and made me grab my new blue whale tranquilizer dart gun. "Mr. Wood? Are you awake?" Cautiously, opened the door and pointed my gun at the knocker. It was my boss. "Oh, Mr. Offdenson! I am so sorry!"

"Still having those nightmares?"

I put the dart gun on the nightstand. "Yeah."

"Maybe it might be best if you take a vacation. It's pretty clear you're not well."

"I can take it. I've survived getting maimed and butchered and nearly getting eaten by a lake troll. I can handle some nightmares."

"Well, if you're sure, we've got a new schedule for our rehearsals."

"Right. Just let me get dressed and I'll meet with you."

"Sure." He left.

I wondered how Dethklok was doing. It had been months since the band got attacked by the military, that gunman and...No, don't think about him. Concerts were pulled, public appearances were cancelled; not even the President of the United States Of America could talk them out of it. They were clearly afraid for their own lives for the first time now. It was hurting our business. Which is why I need to suck it up and help them suck it up.
News footage played all over the world. "We are now in the middle of a record-setting global economic depression." "It has been months since the legendary metal band Dethklok was allegedly attacked by fans in the Gulf of Danzig." "It is believed that these dangerous events had forced the band to completely reconsider public appearances."

Then it cut to footage of the Oval Office where the President made a short speech. "It pains me that I do not have the ability to bring Dethklok back to the public and therefore, I give you this." And he shot his jaw right off its hinges.

In the Mordhaus conference room...

Mr. Offdenson held up some papers as he said to the band as they ate dinner, "Gentlemen, I have the recording schedules right here. You'll see that we need to get started on the new record pretty soon, so..." No one said a thing. "Uh, nothing?"

"Can you at least ask us how we're doing or something before you start with all this robotic crap? Am I wrong?" asked Pickles.

"Yeah," agreed Murderface. "You're all like, 'here's the schedule' and 'now, get to work, you ugly humps'."

"You're like a robot. You're like an emotionless robot."

Mr. Offdenson said, "Okay, fine. How are all of you?"

"Hows are we's?" asked Skwisgaar indignantly. "We's in the middle of having a fuckings dinners meal! That's hows we am."

"Uh, Toki?" asked Nathan, ignoring the blonde guitarist's shout. "You may clear the table when you feel that it's time."

The brunette guitarist glared at the turkey. "Any of you guys mind if I mace this stupid turkey?"

"No," said Pickles. "Go ahead. I don't want no more."

And Toki pissed all over the turkey! No, wait. That wasn't piss. "What the hell is that?" I asked him, pointing at the strange looking device around his waist.

"Oh, it's a pelvic-thrust mace belt."

"Yeah," Pickles said. "We all got one."

"Why?" I asked.

"Duh, to protect ourselves!"

At the picnic grounds...

Mr. Offdenson and I found Dethklok testing out their new mace belts. Only, they were spraying themselves in the crotch. From what I heard, the stuff hurts even if it makes contact with skin and not the eyes.
"Could you stop doing that?" I asked. "That's not how mace works and it looks like you're pissing on each other."

"No we're not," Murderface insisted. "This is mace. Very effective. I can actually feel my balls burning up. Thanks a lot, Toki."

"Hey!"

"Well," said Mr. Offdenson. "You have to get back to work and into the studio and make another record, so start thinking about that."

"Oh, yeah?" shouted Nathan. "Well, start thinking about this!" He tried to throw the table, but to no avail.

"Don't bother," I said. "Mr. Offdenson had that permanently fixed to the ground."

The vocalist pointed at Mr. Offdenson and shouted, "Don't you take away my ability to have tantrums, all right? That you cannot have, all right, you robot?!"

(!)

Mr. Offdenson and I found the boys sitting in their hot tub. "All right," I said. "That's it! This has gone far enough! It's been months! Months! Don't you cry babies think you've grieved enough?"

"Fans out there tries to kill us," shouted Toki. "Is that enough reason to grieve?!"

"You cowardly..."

Nathan slammed his fist on the edge of the hot tub. "You take that back!"

"Why? Because you know it's true? You're hiding from the world for months because you're afraid and you don't even care! You've become cowards!"

Nathan walked out of the bathtub and grabbed me by the collar. "Take. That. Back."

Mr. Offdenson separated us. "That's enough. Wood is right. You have been hiding from the world and it's put you in a slump. But I have an idea to get you out of it. I have a proposal and I think you'll be interested since your concern with security has increased. A number of criminals are to be executed soon and the prison system has asked you to perform at this execution because..."


"...And they want you to pick how they're executed."

The vocalist paused. Then he said, "Oh! Oh! Darn! That's awesome! That's really awesome!"

"Is this, uh, something you would consider doing?"

"Oh, yeah! But it's gotta be really fucking brutal!"

"Well," I said. "You still need a special effects manager. And if all goes well, I'll take back everything I said about you."

"You get one chance," Pickles said.

(!)
When word that Dethklok was coming back reached the public, everyone was ecstatic. News channels were being watched all over the world. "They're calling it a 21-gun suicide salute." "By coinciding their official return to the public with the biggest single act of capital punishment in recorded history." "These prisoners are being called the worst of the worst and they're all to be executed." "Criminals from as far away as Australia and Thailand have traveled here to be part of this event."

A death row inmate was being interviewed. "I consider it an honor to be killed before Dethklok. Dethklok rules! Kill me!"

Another reporter (safe in his studio) said, "But some prisoners don't feel the same. The now-famous cannibalistic baby murderer Alfred Belmer known for killing and eating up to 274 babies and toddlers had this to say."

Alfred Belmer, an elderly British man in thick glasses spat, "Dethklok is scum! It's repulsive to the fucking ear. That's what it is."

(""

In the middle of a desert, a reporter said in front of a camera, "And so we wait, as all of the world does. Several hundred have died from heatstroke and dehydration but still, they wait."

(""

"Is it ready?" I asked the driver of the mech.

"It is."

"All weapons go?"

"Ready."

"Fuel tanks full?"

"Check."

"All cameras pointed at the band?"

"Yes.

"Okay. Let's give these death row inmates an execution they'll always remember in Hell!"

(""

Suddenly, the ground began to shake. At first, people thought it was an earthquake. But something worse was coming out of the ground: a giant drill. When the drill reached the surface, it sprouted legs and a stage appeared on the body. Attached to the stage were huge screens with Dethklok's live image on them. Mounted on top of the stage was a large cannon.

The fans cheered; their gods have returned. "It's Dethklok!"

Nathan said in his microphone, "Let the dying begin!"

And that's when I gave the signal. "FIRE MISSILES!"

*Cue Laser Cannon Deth Sentence*
Attached to these missiles were the thousands of death row inmates. When they were in range, the mech’s lasers fired down upon them, creating a fireworks show. The sky was raining with the pieces of death row inmates and the people reveled in it. The mech proceeded to stomp through the audience, heading toward the prison. All was going well until... "MY EYES!" The driver of the mech suddenly let go of the steering wheel and the mech stumbled out of control. When I saw the yellow substance on his face, I immediately recognized it as Dethklok’s piss mace. "Damn it!" And then one of the legs destroyed the walls to the prison, releasing all the death row inmates.

"And here lies the bloody aftermath of history's worst prison escape." The news showed a video of what was left of the fans, the guards and the death row inmates. I don't know if the country could ever come back from this horrible tragedy." But that wasn't the only news. "Stocks are climbing, a record turnaround for our economy especially with a new Dethklok record on the horizon."

The President of the United States Of America had this to say after having his jaw reattached. "Thank you, Dethklok. On behalf of America, thank you."

At the picnic grounds, Mr. Offdenson and I found Dethklok in the new tennis court. They were playing tennis with a pitching machine firing and eating mace covered turkey legs. I hear it burns. "You wanted to see me?" asked Mr. Offdenson

"Oh, yeah," said Nathan. "Sit down."

"No thank you, I'll stand."

"Oh, we, we wanted to say we're sorry. There, there you go. Get out of here."

"You're sorry. For releasing dangerous criminals back into the streets?"

"No, for calling you a robot."

Everyone agreed. "And we know that must have made you feel bad," Murderface said.

"And listens," Skwisgaar added. "you's the best butler. we's ever had, so we no want you's to quit."

"I'm not a butler," Mr. Offdenson said.

"You could have fooled me," I chuckled.

"Mmm-hmm. That's all then?"

"That's it," said Pickles. "I mean, uh, we're glad you forced us out here again. You know, it felt good. A couple things I would have done differently... You know..."

"You mean like," I said. "Blinding the stage driver and make him crash into a prison and let loose thousands of insane death row inmates?"

"No, that was a happy accident. I was talking about the lighting, you know, changing that up a little bit; not by much, just slightly, you know, 'cause the mood wasn't totally captured, not totally."

"Noted."

Skwisgaar said, "And I want those turns you know, Murderface and Toki's, down a little bit in the
"Yeah, just little things," Murderface added. "I wasn't crazy about my new boots either. Comfort while playing is really important."

"Yeah," said Nathan. "It is. It is, but no big deal. Hey, you'll get them next time. But, oh, hey... hey."

"Yes?" asked Mr. Offdenson.

"Keep up the good work. See you later."

"Goodbye." He paused. "Oh, and remember, start thinking about that new record."

"ROBOT!"

Oy vey.

(!)

The tribunal watched footage of the prison massacre. "Gentlemen," Senator Stampingston said. "It appears as if Dethklok is back."

Chapter End Notes

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*Cue I Tamper With The Evidence At The Site Of Odin*

Toki played his solo for the new album in front of a live stage. Suddenly, Skwisgaar walked up to him and yanked his plug out. "Hey, what the hells are you doing right now?"

"Whys it's gots to be about you? What about my guitar playing?"

Oh, boy. Another on stage quarrel? I aimed my blue whale tranquilizer, but... not yet. They didn't start physically fighting yet.

Skwisgaar asked Toki indignantly, "Whats about it, you know?"

"I'm the guitarist, too, Skwisgaar. Sometimes you forget I wants to play the scales of the notes and everything like you, but you don'ts lets me. You don'ts lets me!"

Skwisgaar scoffed. "You're totally attacking me right now."

Toki pointed at him and shouted to the audience, "He's holding me backs, everybody! I'm a guitarist, too!" And he slammed his guitar to the ground and walked off the stage. Wow. It didn't get THIS bad.

(!)

In the Mordhaus conference hall

Mr. Offdenson said to me, Pickles, Murderface and Nathan, "It should be clear at this point that Toki is concerned about his role in the band."

"What do you mean?" asked Nathan, not clearly understanding the gist. "He's on rhythm guitar."

"You heard him," I said. "He feels like he's inferior compared to Skwisgaar. This isn't the first time they've had this argument, especially on stage."

"What does he care?" asked Pickles. "He don't even practice. He doesn't write. He just shows up. That guy doesn't do anything."

Nathan defended, "Hey, he makes sandwiches, all right?"

"I make sandwiches." pointed out Murderface.

"Whoa! That guy doesn't do anything!"

Mr. Offdenson said, "Well, uh, he is a band member so try to be nice to him.

Murderface said, "Hey, hey, why don't you just get out of here and let the big boys deal with this
one? Or maybe just write it down in that stupid little book, you know, you file away with your little receipts for your lollipops and your pretzels, idiot."

"Excuse me?"

"I'm just messing with you, man."

"You sure about that?"

"Just palling around. Being a little dick. You know."

"Fine, then. Good day." And Mr. Offdenson left the room.

I blinked. "How did you do that?"

"You notice how I'm not mad. He gets mad. That's being a dick."

"That's amazing just to be able to manipulate like that. Years of practice."

"Okay," I said, sitting up. "While you guys learn how to be dicks, I'll go find Toki and keep him from destroying his room."

(!)

Toki's room.

"Stupid, dumb, dildo, jack off, jerk, tits, ass."

Well, he didn't destroy his room, but Toki was still pissed. "You okay?"

"No, I ams nots! Skwisgaar thinks he's better than me, just because he can play guitars toos! I play guitars! But does nots he's appreciates me no matter what I do!"

"Why not take more sessions?"

"Oh, hells no!"

Oh, yeah, that's right. Apparently, Skwisgaar's lessons were so brutal, he beat Toki for even the smallest mistake. I shuffled my feat. "Well," I said, taking out a slip of paper. "You can take lessons for this guy."

Toki read the paper. "Dimneld Seltcark?"

"He's a guitar teacher who lives next to a gas station. He's not too hard to find."

(!)

I found the other members of the band, gathered at Skwisgaar's door. "Hey, guys, I just dropped Toki off at his new teacher. Watcha doing?"

"Teaching these guys," Murderface gestured Nathan and Pickles. "How to be dicks. Now, being a dick takes a lot of work. The objective, guys, is to drive somebody crazy." The others nodded. "Skwisgaar's in there, practicing away. Let's drive him crazy. Follow my lead. Try to keep up. You too, Wood." Don't know how I'm dragged into this but okay. We entered Skwisgaar's bedroom and found the blonde guitarist practicing his guitar. "So, uh, sounds like Toki's really getting going over there with that new guitar teacher."
"Yeah," said Pickles. "I went by his room, dude. He was doing some stuff on the guitar. I was like, 'what?' I never heard nothing like that."

Murderface turned on the dick charm again, "I was like, 'are you speeding up a tape with a guitar solo on there?'"

Nathan nodded, "I was like that, too. But then I found out that he was not."

"No, he wasn't," I said, playing along. "He was really doing it." Then I pretended I noticed the blonde guitarist for the first time. He looked afraid. "Hey, oh, hey, Skwisgaar."

Skwisgaar muttered, "He's getting pretty good, huh?"

"Yep," I said with a smirk.

"If you guys don't mind... I maybe wants to be bys myself for a second." When we left the room, we heard a loud, muffled, "NOOOOOOOOO!

We giggled. Who knew being a dick would be a good thing?

(!)

The tribunal were well aware of Toki and Skwisgaar's feud. Senator Stampingston began as always, "It appears as if certain members of Dethklok are taking music lessons. Allow me to officially introduce Vater Orlag, political and spiritual specialist."

The newest member of the tribunal and Cardinal Ravenswood's permanent replacement was a man who resembled an awful lot like Grigori Rasputin. He spoke in a British accent, "Having two guitarists in the same band is potentially destructive by itself, but when one attempts to take away the other's status, God help us. The clashing of these evils is like two warring titans. It's like Clash of the Titans." He paused, then repeated, "Clash of the Titans."

"We get the reference, Vater," a soft voice said.

"And who is this?" General Crozier pointed to a skinny figure in a dark hood in the corner of the room.

"The left eye," the soft voice spoke. "I am your newest spy, and the only one allowed to spy on Dethklok. Any information you want regarding it comes from me from now on."

"And why should we trust you, a child," the general said. "With handling Dethklok espionage?"

"Because I've already infiltrated their ranks. They never see me coming. And because Master," the spy gestured to Mr. Selacia. "Approved it."

"Very well."

(!)


"Where is he? Where is Toki?"

"He's practicing with his new teacher. To be honest, he hasn't been doing much this past week
"so..." Suddenly, Skwisgaar grabbed my throat and growled, "WHERE. IS. HE?!"

"Gas station," I choked. "I can take you there!"

(!)

"This the place?" Skwisgaar demanded.

"Yes," I choked. "Please let me go!" He tossed me to the ground, roughly and kicked the door open. I could hear everything going on inside. "Is this hims? This piece of trash! That's what you are. You know that? You -" I have no idea what he said after that.

"Skwisgaar, no! He's like a father friend!"

"Oh, yeah? This garbage can right here? That your friend father? Well, it's either hims or the band." Wait, what?!

Toki thought the same thing I did. "What are you saying?"

"I heresby perform citizens band firing...effective now!"

"Oh, you can't do that! You needs to present it to the band congress first! It gets the 2/3 vote!"

"I wills begins the paperwork! Good day!" And Skwisgaar stomped past me, ignoring the look of shock on my face.

"He can't do that," I said to no one. "Can he?"

(!)

The news spread all over the world. The Dethklok Minute reported, "Well, it's been a rough time for Dethklok with a full-blown guitar war waging behind the scenes. All this while the world waits. to hear what Toki Wartooth can really do on guitar. I guess we'll find out at the Toki Wartooth recital, scheduled this week. In a press release written by Nathan, Pickles and William Murderface...it was stated that, 'Skwisgaar Skwigelf is a Swedish dildo licker and that Toki has grown into a true guitar master and is a lady on his period.' And that's the Dethklok Minute."

(!)

I switched off the TV. "You can't do this, Mr. Offdenson!"

"He's right, Skwisgaar. I cannot in good faith sign off on this citizen's firing."

"Why nots?"

"Because some of the other band mates neglected to vote."

"I said it once, and I'll say it again," said Murderface. "Voting sucks."

Pickles said, "I was actually the President of the Voting-sucks club in high school."

"Oh, yeah?" asked Nathan. "How'd that go?"

"Well, I never got re-elected."

Murderface exclaimed, "Git-r-done!"
"You know it."

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "Well, Toki, I don't know what to say. Either you work this out with Skwisgaar or you'll have a bigger decision to make."

"No, I nots works it out." And Toki left the conference room.

"See?" Skwisgaar pointed. "See? Right there. I can'ts even talks to him. He's unrationals."

"Well, there you go."

(!)

Later that day, I heard Murderface's voice coming from Skwisgaar's room. "Uh, Skwisgaar, that uh, "Toki getting really good" thing, just kidding. All a lie. See ya!" When he exited the room, I said to him, "Okay, what are you doing now?"

"Being a dick."

(!)

The recital had begun and I can tell this was going to be bad. Toki hadn't practiced his guitar in DAYS! It was so obvious. When the spotlight reached him, he started sweating.

In the audience, I pinched Skwisgaar's shoulder, "Listen here, blonde boy, I want you to know that Toki looks up to you. All he wants is a little appreciation from you. Look at him! He's clearly going to bomb up there!"

Skwisgaar fidgeted in his seat. "I has to tells him somethings."

"What?"

"I cannot tells yous. Only him."

"Ladies and gentlemen", an announcer shouted. "Toki Wartooth! Toki will now give information about his musical instrument."

"Thanks you," said Toki. "And nows I demonstrates the name of the string. This one is an 'E,' and there's another 'E' heres. And the 'G.' And the 'P.' And the 'C.'" The crowd started murmuring and shifting in their seats. This is NOT what they meant when they wanted information about the guitar. Toki continued, "Those are what's called the fret. That's... That's not a string. But it's... it's near the string, and, uh, never mind. Let's play the scale that's, uh...the major scales on the guitar string." His voice was cracking at this point and he started sweating profusely. "No, I can't do this!"

Toki's teacher came on stage. "What? What's wrong?"

Toki gave him a hug. "Can't do this anymore, master. I can'ts takes no more piano lessons."

"You mean guitar?"

"Whatever. I just wish I could be..."

"Shh. Shh. It's just as well. I'm dying, boy. I'm dying." He coughed.

"Toki, stop," Skwisgaar shouted. "I wants you to have this. This is an importance to you that you
have a magical things with that guys right there. And I now know that you never gots good at
guitars. So it's okay for you to have this relationships."

"Hey, over here!" Nathan? "I'm sorry. I know it was wrong to have manipulated you. If I could take
it back, I would. I was wrong."

Toki held the dying man in his arms as he said, "Skwisgaar, you were afraids that I was better than
you?"

"Stop! Over here!" Oh, god, what did Pickles want? "Don't quit the band, Toki! I'm sorry! I
shouldn't have manipulated the situation!"

"Hey! Pickles, over here!"

"Yeah?"

"It's Nathan! Um, I already said all that stuff, like, already."

"You did?"

"Yes," Skwisgaar said blatantly. "Toki, the bands needs you evens though you don'ts do nothing."

"Stop," Murderface shouted. "I'm sorry! Sorry about being a dick, but sometimes it's hard to
suppress the urge of ruining other people's lives! Why doesn't everyone of ya just go kill yourself,
idiots? I'm sorry! I'm just being a dick!"

"Wowee!" Toki exclaimed. "You really are my family."

"Boy, I just wanted to say one thing before I go. I love you, boy. I love y..." Dimneld Selftcark died
in Toki's arms.

(!)
Mordhaus...

"Well, that was dark," I said to Mr. Offdenson a day later.

"Indeed it was. But the important thing is that Toki and Skwisgaar have put their silly feud behind
them and we can get back to work.

"Good." I was about to leave when he out a hand on my shoulder.

"By the way," he said in a grave voice. "I've noticed that some of our Klokateers have gone
missing. And before you ask, no, they weren't killed. We would have found the bodies if they
were. I think someone's kidnapped them. And I have a pretty shrewd idea who."

"Who?"

"That gunman that attacked us when the military came. A man with a silver face. If you ever
encounter this man, I want you to run. DON'T fight him."

I nodded. When he spoke to me about that, I knew I had to boost the security around Mordhaus.
This place was going to be tighter than Fort Knox after I'm done with it.

Chapter End Notes
Dethvengeance

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Somewhere in the middle of nowhere, torture was taking place. The Klokateer had already witnessed his comrades being disemboweled alive by the man who was currently carving him up like a Christmas goose. But he was trained to NEVER give Dethklok's secrets even when experiencing death no matter how slow it was. The man torturing him then ripped out his arm with a single yank, making him scream.

"Is there a secret entrance into Mordhaus?" he demanded in a gravely, deep voice.

"You'll never get in," the Klokateer wheezed. "You'll die first." The man ripped out one of his eyeballs. The Klokateer just laughed, but for a whole other reason.

"Why are you laughing?"

"Because...I just swallowed...a...cyanide pill..." The last thing he saw was the look of rage on the silver face of his torturer.

The torturer yelled in frustration as he crushed the man's head with his bare hands and tossed his body onto a pile of corpses. "I can see why Master spoke highly of you." He tossed a butcher knife into the chest of the owner of the soft voice. He said nothing, not even as the figure pulled the knife out of the hole in their chest. The figure then saw the brace on the man's arm. "Did you get that from fighting the CFO?"

"Who are you?"

"Someone who works with the idiot who sent your brother to die."

"Tell Crozier I am done working for him."

The figure raised an eyebrow. "Do you still wish to kill Dethklok?"

"...more than ever."

"Then you're in luck. I happen to know someone who hates Dethklok as much as you. He too lost his brother to them."

The man with the silver face considered it, then replied, "Why are you telling me this?"

"Master commands it. Now, you'll find this kindred spirit at the sewage line. He's already begun to dig his way out. He will help you."

Then the man just walked past the figure and made a slow journey to Mordhaus.

(!)
Somewhere in Beaver Creek, Nebraska; far away from the silver faced man's hideout, a fourteen-year-old boy was about to make the biggest mistake of his life as he browsed through a pirated music website. "Cool! Dethklok MP3s!" A warning appeared on the screen. It said, "You are downloading this album illegally! The Consequences are grave!" But the boy scoffed, "Pfft, yeah, right! Click." The downloading began. "Oh, it's gonna take awhile. What should I do in the meantime? Oh, I guess I'll jack off."

(!)

What the stupid kid didn't know was that the download was sending a signal back to us in Mordhaus. "Sir," a Klokateer shouted. "We've got one!"

"All right," I said, arming myself with the blue whale tranquilizer. "Time to add a new face to the back of those milk cartons."

(!)

"Is this the place?" I asked a Klokateer.

"Yes."

"Okay. Men, women, fire the tear gas!"

The Klokateer squad tossed tear gas into the windows before another squad wearing gas masks burst in and attacked the parents of the perpetrator. "Area secured," one of them called out.

"All right, let's go!"

I ran up the stairs with more Klokateers behind me and kicked the bedroom door open. The kid was surprised to see us and let out a shriek as he was tasered. "Mommy!"

"Quiet, you!" I shouted and fired a blue whale tranquilizer right at him. He was out before the bag was placed on his head. We tossed his body in the back of the paddy wagon and drove back to Mordhaus.

"So," I said to the driver, like it was a normal day in the office. "Did you hear the new demos the boys are working on?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Apparently, they're going to burn it on a new CD format, but I haven't been told yet. I guess they want to surprise me."

The Klokateer just shrugged his shoulders.

(!)

What they didn't know was that the left eye was already watching them and was already on their way back to the tribunal.

(!)

The left eye saluted and presented their report. "Another kidnapping, sirs and madams. Dethklok's Klokateers took another youth attempting to illegally download pirated Dethklok music. I have also confirmed that the sources of these pirated albums are being tracked down as well."
Senator Stampingston nodded, "Thank you, agent. This confirms the latest rumors and reports of disappearances." He turned to the tribunal and began as always, "Gentlemen, Dethklok has taken the law into their own hands."

General Crozier was shocked. "Preposterous!"

"But they are within their rights, General," Vater Orlaag said.

"Indeed," the left eye said. "And the general populace knows it too. There are missing persons posters on milk cartons, phone poles, trees, post-it boards; they are slowly realizing the dangers of buying Dethklok's music illegally."

Senator Stampingston said, "World leaders are smart enough to know they need to keep Dethklok happy, and so they did just that."

An image of a legal clause appeared on the giant screen as Vater Orlaag said, "There is a purchase and thieving clause that was backed by the United Nations this year that allows Dethklok to act as a police force."

Crozier growled, "Just because the United Nations can be bought off doesn't mean it's right."

"It's not about right or wrong, General. At this point, it simply is."

Senator Stampingston continued as blueprints of Mordhaus (given to them courtesy of Dr. Rockso) appeared on the screen, "Gentlemen, we have reason to believe that Dethklok has a secret prison wing deep within the underbelly of Mordhaus, dedicated to incarcerating criminals of music and intellectual properties."

General Crozier added, "There are rumors that Dethklok has employed scientists to work as in-house developers in sound technology. This could be potentially dangerous."

(!)

After the meeting, the left eye met Mr. Selacia alone. "What is thy bidding, my master?"

"Did you send our former employee the message?"

"Yes, master. He's on his way to Mordhaus right now."

"Then the pieces are coming together."

"Any news on my compatriot?"

"No. He doesn't know yet."

"Good. I want to keep it that way for now."

(!)

Two Klokateers and I watched the kid we detained earlier being exposed to Dethklok music played at ear drum damaging volumes. "IT'S TOO LOUD!" he shouted over the noise.

"How about this?" asked the Klokateer behind the controls. And he cranked up the volume. Thank goodness the glass windows of the chamber we were in was sound proof.

"IT'S TOO LOUD!"
I tapped the other Klokateer's shoulder. "Hey, when you're done with him, throw him with Edgar Jomfru. He could use the company since his brother's brains splattered all over him."

"Yes, sir."

(!)

An elevator ride later, I met the band in the recording studio with Mr. Knubbler. They were playing the song being used to torture the boy down below. "Hey, is that the new demo?"

"Yep," Mr. Knubbler said before turning it off to face the band. "So, uh, that's just a rough mix of some of the stuff you've been working on."

The band made a collective "Eeehhh...

"Not too terribly wonderful, is it, now?" asked Skwisgaar. "Am I wrong?"

"No, no," said Murderface. "No, no, it's not. It's lacking."

"Lacking?" I asked. "Lacking what? It sounded fine to me."

"It's like it's...does it sound too confined?"

Everyone agreed with Nathan. "Too digital!" shouted Pickles.

Mr. Knubbler was confused. "Wait, what?"

"Sorry if we have very learned, sensitive, musical ears."

"Yeah, Toki is right. Sorry if we gots very good ears."

"Uhh, Murderface," Murderface corrected Skwisgaar. "That's... I'm Murderface. That's my voice."

"It sounds like microchips," said Toki.

"Yeah," agreed Nathan. "Pickles is right...you know, who is clearly the one who said that."

"I said that, not Pickle."

Nathan blinked in confusion. "Uh, That's a good Pickles impression, that's for sure. Right, Pickles?" The drummer said nothing. "I SAID RIGHT PICKLES!"

"Huh? Oh! It sounds like microchips in ones and zeros." Was it me or was Dethklok acting weirder than usual? I clapped my hands. They didn't respond to it. "Oh, my God!"

Mr. Knubbler knew what was going on too as he said, annoyed, "You guys are all fucking deaf, you know that? You can't tell the difference between anything!" They didn't respond. "Can you fucking hear me?!" No response. "CAN ANY OF YOU FUCKING HEAR ME?!" No response.

"Oh, this cannot be good," I said. "We may have to get them hearing aids."

"Hey!" Murderface shouted. "We're not old like my grandma! We can hear fine!"

"Oh, good," I muttered. "The hearing's back."
"Hmm, anyway," said Pickles. "We been working on some new technology to get back to analog."

"Yeah," Toki said. "Follows us."

(!)

Deep beneath Mordhaus, Dethklok, Mr. Knubbler and I met with the group of scientists who agreed to help us in making new Dethklok products to be made in both the music videos and concerts and to be sold to the public. We met with the two chief scientists, both bald men, but one was short and brown haired and the other was tall and silver haired.

"Hello everyone," the tall man said. "We've been working on several new prototypes: Hover drums, laser-string guitars, electronic STD radar navigational dildo helmets."

"Make sure no one shoves those things in vaginas and/or anuses," I reminded the scientists.

The short one said, "But what we're most proud of is the H-E-A-R-D."

"Hydro-electric," the short one began, but stopped. "Hydro. You say the next word," he said to the short one.

"Electric."

"Audio."

"Recreational. Device." He groaned, "Wait, we're supposed to say 'Device' together."

Oh, boy. This was going to take a while, wasn't it? "Please cut to the chase will you?"

"Fine," the short one said. "To put it plainly... we're recording on the purest analog format of all."

"Water," the tall one finished.

"And to which what, we will be soon recording an album on."

Mr. Knubbler's mechanical eyes widened, "That's impossible."

The two scientists chuckled, "Oh, dear. This is a laboratory, where the impossible becomes possible."

"It's our job to render... Oh, dear."

"You two forgot lines again?" I asked. They nodded.

(!)

Dethklok was in the middle of a large recording studio, with all sorts of devices were placed around them. "Check, check!" Nathan said into the microphone.

"Observe," the chief scientists said. "Begin."

"Check, check!" Nathan continued to say into the microphone. Nuclear power whirred on. "Check, check!" Electricity crackled. "Check, check, check!" Water began to boil in a giant tank.

*Cue Burn The Earth*

When the session was over, water poured out of the tank and into a vial. "And here it is. Within this
container is the track... Liquid Purity."

Mr. Knubbler pushed a button on it and the song played. "Wow! That's amazing."

"Yes."

Before the scientists left, I tapped them on the shoulders. "Hey, did the previous boys in the lab send you that Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake before they died while creating that giant drill stage?"

"Ah, yes," the short one said. "The mind control drug."

The tall one nodded, "Yes. We do have it. Why do you ask?"

"I was thinking," I said. "What if we use the stuff as a way to convert more people into Dethklok fans?"

"We were warned of the dangers of this drug," the short one said. "Insanity and erasure of the mind."

"But it also renders them a blank slate ready to be reprogrammed given a high enough dosage," I reminded them. "If we can find a way to make it less dangerous, we can use it to mind control Dethklok opposers and critics into fans. Besides, those fans are already insane. They sell their own organs just to buy tickets for concerts."

"We could find a way to tinker with it," the tall one said.

"But it will take a while," the short one finished.

"Do whatever it takes," I said. "But don't rush it or anything. I don't want the newly converted fans to wind up like Snakes n' Barrels, clawing their eyes out and throwing up acid blood."

"We shall make sure that doesn't happen," they both said. "Hey we got it right this time!"

(!)

One week later...

I added a new vial to the shelf of H-E-A-R-D recordings after putting the cork on it. The ones that actually were worthwhile anyway. I returned to the lab where the boys were recording more H-E-A-R-D sessions, only...they were drunk.

"What's this button do?" slurred Pickles.

"Guys, guys," said Mr. Knubbler. "I just transferred all the tracks, everything we've recorded so far onto water. Okay? It's all on water. So, maybe you guys should take five on the messing around, okay?"

"Hey," Murderface shouted. "hey, you take five. We're experimenting. It's creative."

"No it's not," I said. "It's being drunk."

"Hey, why don't you guys have a drink and relax? You ever think of that, you fucking tightwad?"

"Yeah," slurred Toki. "Tightwad!"

"Copycat."
Mr. Knubbler's eyes glowed red with anger. "Hey, what do you mean, me have a drink? I'm drunk all the time, thank you very much. Okay? Right now, I'm tripping balls, okay? I'm freaking the fuck out, okay? So don't worry about me, all right?"


The machinery whirred on. Then Nathan made this sound, "Pppbbbttt. Oh, ah, oh, la la la la la la." and he clapped his hands five times. "Play that back for me, Pickles."

Water filled the vial. The drummer pressed the button on it; the water played the sound of Nathan's silly noise. "You just simply can't get that kind of clarity," he said.

"Including now, you can't get that," Skwisgaar said, holding a bottle of vodka.

"It's actually clearer than when he did it," Murderface pointed out.

Nathan asked, "Hey you play that back for me one more time for me, Pickles? Just one more time, please?" Pickles pressed the vial's button again, playing the sound. "Yeah. I'd like to get a copy of that for myself, on water."

"Yeah," Murderface said. "Burn it on water."

Pickles slurred, "Really, really rare pioneering recording technology."

Toki agreed, "Yeah, we's forwarding progress. We should gets a reward."

I tapped my chin, "Hey, that's a good song title. 'Burn It On Water.' What do you think, Nathan?"

"Hey, I am the one who comes up with the song names. Not you."

Murderface coughed a little. Then muttered, "I'm gonna throw up." Then he gasped, "I'm gonna throw up! Record it! I gotta throw up!"

Pickles ordered a reluctant Knubbler, "Press record quickly, quickly!"

The machinery got to work fast and then, "BLEEEEAAARGH!" Murderface vomited.

"Oh, that's gonna sound good," Nathan said.

When Murderface heard his own vomiting sound coming from the vial, he nodded, wiping his chin. "I want a copy of this when he gets that done."

Skwisgaar agreed, "I want it for my own water collection."

"Well," I said. "I'm gonna go check on the prisoners if you guys don't need me."

"Yeah," Pickles said. "Just go. We got this."

(!)

"Water..."

"Spare us..."

"Oh...Ooh..."

"Help!"
I banged on the cells, "Shut up, prisoners!"

"Please let me go," a teenager cried. "I wanna go home to my mama!" I shot him with the blue whale tranquilizer.

"All right," I said. "Looks everyone is accounted for. Let's..." I stopped and turned to one cell in particular. It was empty and there was a hole in the wall. "Where's Edgar Jomfru?!"

"Heh, heh, heh," another prisoner chuckled. "He escaped. You'll never find him now." In frustration, I fired the tranquilizer at him as well.

"Attention all Dethklok employees," I said in my Dethphone. "We have two prisoners on the loose! Edgar Jomfru and some kid from Beaver Creek, Nebraska! Find them and bring them back!"

(!)

"What else can go wrong?!" I shouted as I went back to my room. I shouldn't have said that. I immediately noticed all the H-E-A-R-D vials were gone! "Oh, no, they didn't!" I ran straight to the lounge room where I found Mr. Knubbler shouting to a very drunk Dethklok, "What's going on?!" Then we saw them with the vials.

"You're drinking the tracks!" we both cried.

"No," I shouted. "You can't water the plants with the drum tracks!"

"You're replacing the water in the fish tank with the base tracks!" shouted Mr. Knubbler.

"You're making ramen noodles with Skwisgaar's solo!" we both shouted.

And apparently, they replaced the water in the hot tub with the recording of Nathan making silly noises.

(!)

I immediately reported what happened to Mr. Offdenson. "I don't know what is worse: the fact we have to make more H-E-A-R-D water vials or the fact that two prisoners escaped under our noses!"

"We can get more water recordings in no time," he assured me. "But the escape of Edgar Jomfru is most concerning."

"We will find him," I said. "He was willing to take down Dethklok for the sake of money."

"But now he has a new motivation to take us down: revenge."

"And you know what they say about vengeance," I said as I reloaded my tranquilizer gun. "It's best served cold. But in his case, it might be hot. Hellfire hot."

Chapter End Notes

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At Mordhaus, Mr. Offdenson and I weren't happy.

"This is why you need me around," I said to Dethklok after I tossed the newspaper. Apparently, during a Duncan Hills Coffee opening, Murderface decided to bring along his sawed off shotgun and he accidentally dropped it, making it go off. The Klokateers, thinking there was an assassin, opened fired on the fans. How many times had this happened now? I lost track after the third.

"What happened back there, huh?" demanded Mr. Offdenson. "What was that?"

"We don't know," said Pickles.

"We no means it," Toki whimpered. It was accidents. We're not at fault."

"Maybe it wouldn't have happened," I said. "If a certain bass player didn't bring his sawed off shotgun to gigs!"

"Hey!" Murderface growled. "I don't tell you what to do with your tranquilizer gun, so don't tell me what to do with my guns!"

Mr. Offdenson said, "It doesn't matter. Blood bath doesn't read well in print, all right? You know what I'm saying?"

"We can't do anything right!" Nathan yelled.

Mr. Offdenson ignored him. "Look, I've noticed you guys have been down and pouty lately. And I don't want to put you in harm's way anymore, so I've taken the liberty of hiring doubles to take over for your celebrity appearances." A door opened and five men stepped out. "Dethklok, meet Dethklok." The five men looked almost exactly like Dethklok, with a few key differences, but they weren't entirely noticeable.

Murderface was flabbergasted. "Let me see if I understand you correctly. You expect us to cut off our faces and then sew them on these regular jack offs and then resew them back on our own faces for the tour? You're a sick man."

Mr. Offdenson corrected him, "No, no, there will be no face cutting. Look at them. They already look like you."

"And they have been trained to know everything you know," I said. "Along with your talents. Again, there are some key differences, but we hope they are not noticeable."

Nathan raised an eyebrow. "Oh, I thought that was, like, a coincidence. That is coincidence."

"Listen," said Mr. Offdenson. "Great men throughout history have used doubles. Men who needed
to stay alive for the greater good of the people, like yourselves. Men like Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin..."

"Awesome!" exclaimed Nathan. "I'm Stalin. I call it."

"I'm Nixon." called out Pickles.

Skwisgaar raised a hand. "I wants to be Bill Cosby."

"No you don't," I said. "We don't need you to be wearing black face makeup. It's offensive."

"No, it doesn't work that way," said Mr. Offdenson. "We get doubles of you is what I'm saying."

Murderface got up to his own double. "Hold on. This guy does not look like me. He's hideous. He's grotesque. Look at him."

"Actually, Murderface, he..."

"Look at that head, that disgusting forehead, that stupid-shaped hair, beady eyes, like, stupid flat nose, wide hammer-ass, chicken-plucked legs idiot. You got to get your eyes checked, you piece of shit. The guy doesn't look like me!"

"Uh, William?" I asked. "Have you looked at yourself in the mirror lately?"

"No." I held up a conveniently placed mirror to his face. Murderface looked at his reflection, then at his double. Then he cried a little, "Oh, God. He looks just like me."

(!)

The Tribunal started their report. As usual, Senator Stampingston began. "Gentlemen, this latest Duncan Hills Coffee store opening has ended in a massacre. General Crozier?"

"Many innocents died. No report of any attempt on Dethklok's lives whatsoever."

"It means that Dethklok has greatly improved their security," said Vater Orlaag.

"It also means," the Left Eye said. "That they're growing in paranoia."

General Crozier continued, "Which is why they've employed doubles who work for us. These are some of our finest soldiers."

"More interesting," said Stampingston. "Is the union between Leonard Purcell and Dethklok."

Purcell was the CEO of Duncan Hills Coffee. "They've taken their business relationship to the next level and stand to monopolize all coffee shops on the planet."

"Purcell has purchased the island of Sumatra," Vater Orlaag said. "And Dethklok will meet him there and perform on top of a dormant volcano."

Crozier reported, "Our doubles will get close to Purcell and retrieve his secret business contracts which will no doubt help us to control his growing strength."

"And I'll be there," the Left Eye said. "Just in case anything goes wrong."

Mr. Selacia narrowed his eyes at Crozier. "Be careful, General. We are here to observe. Be careful."
Days later, the Left Eye bowed on one knee before Mr. Selacia in private. "What have you to report?"

"I do not believe the general's plan with the doubles will go well. Dethklok is getting too friendly with them. They're almost clingy."

"I am not surprised. They have no real friends outside their work force."

The Left Hand chuckled. "Actually, I don't think they have no friends at all."

Mr. Selacia tapped a finger on his chair. "You remember that your job is merely to observe, right? I don't want you to go through with Crozier's plans."

"Of course, Master. But what of the doubles?"

"They will play their part."

"Very well."

"You are dismissed."

"Yes, Master."

I found Dethklok chatting away with their doubles in the lounge room. "I see you're getting along well with your new friends," I nodded. "To be honest, I think this is the first time I've seen you happy."

"I know," Pickles said. "Isn't it great? Who would have thought our best friends would be us!"

"That's kind of egotistical, but still..."

Mr. Offdenson came into the room. "Uh, listen, I don't think it's a great idea for you guys to get too close to your doubles."

"Why can't we have friends all of the suddens," demanded Skwisgaar."

"Well, you just can't have them as your friends."

"Oh, he admits it, sees? He is a tyrants. He admits it."

"Do you understand the purpose of having a double?"

"Yeah, I'll take this one, guys," Nathan said, putting an arm around his double. "A double is like having the best friend you've ever had in your whole life. A double listens to you when no one in this crazy world will. A double is like having a child and watching him grow up and feeling that feeling of pride and unyielding trust that no one else can..."

"This is sad. And I really don't want to say it," I said, hesitantly before Mr. Offdenson nudged my shoulder. "But a double is someone who takes the bullet for you if there's an assassin."

Dethklok blinked, then said a collective, "What?"
Mr. Offdenson said bluntly, "It's true. They exist so that if someone tries to kill you they will be killed instead."

"Whoa, what?" asked a shocked Nathan. "I mean, just thinking of those us as dead, I mean...I'm gonna cry. I might seriously cry about that."

"That's why you don't get emotionally attached, Nathan."

"Hey, where'd my me go?" Nathan's double had disappeared.

When Nathan's double was sure he was alone, he met the Left Eye in private. "What do you have so far?"

The double said, "The band Dethklok will not give us a moment to ourselves. All they want to do is pal around."

"I told the general this already. He says keep playing the part and only drop your cover when the Duncan Hills CEO makes the exchange."

"Very well." Suddenly, they heard footsteps. "Shh! Someone's coming!" But the Left Eye was already gone. "Man, that guy is good."

Nathan opened the door. "Hey, me, we don't got a lot of time before you got to go! We've got to go pal around!"

"Do we really have to resign the doubles?" I asked, looking at the postcards Dethklok made. They included photos of them and their doubles at a malt shop, at a mini-golf course, at the beach, and at the Deth Limo when it was time for the doubles to go home.

"I'm sorry," Mr. Offdenson said. "But it's clear that they refuse to understand the concept of having a double. They're too close, not to mention they're not even rehearsing for concerts."

"But think about it," I said. "This is the first time Dethklok has had real friends. If you take that away from them, they'll go through another case of the blues, one that is probably worse than the last one."

"It's a risk we may have to take."

Dethklok were watching their doubles on the TV. Their smiles were wide. The reporter said, "Well, it's a great Duncan Hills Metal Day parade here today in Pasadena, California. Dethklok looks great. They're looking healthy. They're feeling good. It's a great day. Back to you." They switched off the TV.

Murderface dialed down on his dethphone, "Hey, we just saw you on TV at the parade! Hey, when you get back we're gonna have a surprise party for you."

Nathan reached out, "Give me the phone. Give me the phone. Give me the phone. Give me the phone. Give me the phone!"

"Hold on! Here's Nathan."
Murderface handed Nathan the phone. "Hi. We just saw you the parade! It was great!"

"I said that already!"

"Oh, yeah, we're having a party for you when you come back. It's gonna be awesome!"

"I said that already too!"

Pickles said. "Ask them if they want chocolate cake."

"I will. Hold on. Hold on."

Toki said, "Oh, we'll get the bounce house."

Swisgaar said, "Tell them about the balloons!"

Nathan said excitedly, "We're gonna have balloons!" Then he saw me and Mr. Offdenson. "We got to go. Goodbye." He hung up.

"How are your friends?" I asked.

"Never mind that," Mr. Offdenson said. "What are you, uh, doing, on the phone? You're supposed to be doing your jobs."

"Jobs? I play bass not to have a job," Murderface said.

"You're supposed to be preparing for the concert. Nathan, you're in charge here. How's rehearsal coming?"

"Oh, it's, um...uh... Uh...uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...Good."

"Um, guys," I said cautiously. "Mr. Offdenson told me to tell you that if you keep being friends with your doubles..." I turned to Mr. Offdenson. "Please, don't make me say it! I don't want to break their hearts!"

"Tell us what?" asked Pickles.

Mr. Offdenson nudged me. "Uh...tell you that...uh...if you don't keep up with the rehearsals, Mr. Offdenson will resign the doubles. You won't see them again."

Dethklok went silent. Then Murderface shouted, "No! You can't do that to us!"

"I'm sorry," Mr. Offdenson said. "But Wood is right. You have become too clingy with your doubles and it's interfering with band practice. I'm sorry. But you will have to say goodbye to your doubles if you don't make progress."

Dethklok ran outside to talk to themselves.

(!)

The band just stared out at the evening horizon before Nathan said, "You ever think of just, you know, giving it all up? You know?"

"You mean, like, killings yourself?" asked Skwisgaar.

"No. What? No, I mean, like, stopping being big, famous becoming a regular old jack off."
Murderface asked, "And then kill yourself?"

"No, no, it's stopping being famous... Yeah...I don't know, you can kill yourself if you want to."

"You know," said Pickles. "It would be great, you know, to walk down the street, not be bothered for once."

Toki asked, "Walks where?"

"I don't know. Walk down the street."

"To where?"

"To where... I don't know, walk to the store."

"Just buys it on the internet. Haves it delivered."

"I know I can buy it on the internet, but what if I want to walk to the park and look at some swans, you know?"

"Well, maybe you should have thought of that before you got famous."

"Toki's right."

Secretly, I watched from afar. I lowered my head in sadness. I had no idea they ever felt this way before. I always saw them as a bunch of talented, but stupid imbeciles who often turned up smelling of whiskey, but now I saw them in a different way. I saw a group of five men who had no idea what to do with themselves if they ever lost all that fame.

(!)

At Sumatra, a reporter did his job in front of a camera. A Dethklok banner was behind him. "We're here in Sumatra, a nation built on coffee. The Sumatrans, known as a nervous, edgy and dehydrated people seem to have a calm excitement tonight as they anticipate Dethklok's performance on Condor Mountain the world-famous dormant volcano where 10,000 baristas will be brewing the largest cup of coffee."

*Cue Volcano*

In the Dethcopter, while the real Dethklok performed their song on the coffee-brewing volcano, the Left Eye knocked out the Klokateers and met the doubles. "General Crozier sent me to help you get the briefcase containing Purcell's contracts." The doubles nodded.

The Skwisgaar double fired a grappling hook at the blimp where Purcell was and he, the Nathan double, the Pickles double and the Left Eye rode the cable across the gap and entered the blimp. Meanwhile, the Toki and Murderface doubles waited on the volcano for the briefcase to be dropped while at the same time, distracted the ignorant fans.

Back on the blimp, the Left Eye knocked out Purcell and handed the briefcase to the Skwisgaar double. Then they rappelled down the blimp and onto the ground. The Left Eye contacted General Crozier. "We've got the case."

"Good," he said. "Now meet the soldiers at the rendezvous point."

"Yes, sir." The Left Eye turned to the doubles. "We're out of here. But before we go, do you feel bad leaving Dethklok?"
"Of course not," the Murderface double said. "I mean, who would want to be friends with a bunch of stupid imbeciles who often turn up smelling of whiskey?"

"I feel you, buddy."

Suddenly, there was a loud rumbling sound and the group looked to the volcano in horror. Lava mixed with coffee was pouring down the sides of the volcano, melting anything that wasn't fast enough to get out of its path. The Left Eye took no chances and snatched the brief case from the Skwisgaar double and ran down to the rendezvous point just as the lava and coffee reached the doubles.

(!)

A news report aired moments after the eruption. "What was thought to be a dormant volcano erupted after 50,000 gallons of Duncan Hills coffee was brewed inside of it. Thousands of fans were incinerated. Rumors of Dethklok being burned alive were greatly exaggerated as the band escaped unharmed."

(!)

At an ER, Mr. Offdenson met with Dehtklok and what was left of the doubles in intensive care. "Well, I'm afraid it's time to say goodbye to your doubles."

Toki whined, "Why? They still alive."

"I know they are."

"Then why do we got to say goodbye to them?"

"Because, Pickles, they no longer look like you. That was the point. Their skin is burned, they don't even have features."

Skwisgaar said desperately, "What if we burned ourselves to looks like thems? Then maybes we coulds keep them."

Murderface in the same desperate tone said, "That would work! You know it would! Come on, let's burn ourselves!"

Mr. Offdenson was firm, however, "That is out of the question, Murderface."

"You're out of the question!"

"I'm afraid it's time for you to say goodbye to your doubles now."

"Let us do it," Nathan said sadly. "It's better if they hear it from us, because we're them, after all."

I patted Nathan's back. "I'm sorry. I would do anything to keep my friends too." I turned to leave with Mr. Offdenson but I stopped and asked the band, "Do you consider me a friend? And if not, would you?"

"Eh..."

I shrugged my shoulders. "I do."

(!)
At the tribunal's lair, the Left Eye presented the briefcase to them. "Mission accomplished."

"Excellent," General Crozier said. "Now that we have the contracts, we can take control of Dethklok's hold of the coffee industry." But when he opened the briefcase, he was shocked to find nothing but a pile of ashes. "What the hell?!"

The Left Eye was stunned. "They must have burned in the heat!"

Mr. Selacia made a hidden smile.

(!)

Dethklok met with their doubles at the malt shop. "Thanks for coming, us."

"You know, there's," Toki said. "There's never an easy ways to do this.

Skwisgaar nodded, "But, you know, sometimes you...we're out of options sometimes."

Pickles said, "You know business is not personal and in this case, it is, because it's us. You're us, and..."

Nathan's hands trembled. "I hate having to say this, but...

Murderface said, "Oh... Let me explain. I got a little smoother way of explaining it, here." He took out his sawed off shotgun and stroked it a little to calm himself. "Guys...it's...You see, the thing is that..." And he accidentally squeezed the trigger, putting the doubles out of their misery.

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendon Small and Adult Swim
"You ready ladies?" The new gig for Dethklok was to perform at a fashion show, showing off clothes that the band themselves designed. Some of the outfits were awesome, but then there were outfits that seemed rather strange, such as a costume that resembled what looked like a metal snowman and an outfit that looked like a corset version of an iron maiden. But the people loved it either way.

I noticed one of the girls had a large crocodile on a leash. "What's with the crocodile?"

"She's my pet," she said in a Nordic accent.

On stage, Nathan said the lyric, "Walk!" which was the cue for the ladies to take to the catwalk. Suddenly, the crocodile, provoked by the flashing bulbs of the photographers, bit her owner. In the struggle, one of the girl's spiked gauntlets flew off her arm and struck the stage, breaking a tank of electric eels. The eels not only electrocuted the photographers, they also short circuited the electric system that kept the polar bears in their cages. The bears attacked the photographers, the models and the audience.

News footage played, "This is only a portion of the footage that is now known as the Dethklok Dethfashion Bloodbath. Dethklok has made it clear that they now have a great interest in the fashion and clothing industry."

The footage cut to Nathan at a podium. "We want to make the most brutal clothing in recorded history. We plan on making clothes metal, literally and figuratively. That's all!"

The footage cut to an image of a German man wearing aristocratic clothing. The reporter said, "Dethklok has gone above and beyond to acquire the designer to realize their clothing line, Eric von Wiechlinghammer, convicted of brutally starving 57 fashion models to death. He's been vilified in the media even movies have been made."

The footage then cut to a movie about von Wiechlinghammer, the camera zooming in on the actor playing him. "The apocalypse is coming! We must stay underground until then, and no eating! We will fit into my skinny pants."

The footage cut back to the reporter, "Von Wiechlinghammer has been paroled alarming early from prison by the German government to work with Dethklok on their new clothing line."

The footage cut to Murderface at the podium. "Even though we are venturing into the world of fashion I assure you all, I am not gay."
The Tribunal started their meeting. Senator Stampingston began, "It appears as if Dethklok is entering the world of...fashion."

General Crozier said, "There's talk that they helped to release Eric von Wiechlinghammer, the notorious fashion murderer, from prison."

Vater Orlaag said, "Research shows that most fashion designers have either been brutally beaten or mentally abused as children. They dance on the brink of madness."

"And they make profits with their madness," the Left Eye said. "And of course, the way of fashion going 'out of style' plays a role in those designers becoming depressed or try to keep up with the times. There had been numbers of fashion designers and companies dying out because they couldn't do just that."

Senator Stampingston said, "If Dethklok chooses what pants, shoes and shirts we wear, then God help us all."

Mr. Selacia said the final word, "Let the blackness that is the fashion industry take its intended path."

In the Dethcopter, Murderface grimaced at Pickles. "My God, how could you eat that?"

"What are you talking about, it's a hot dog."

"How could you even put that in your mouth?"

Pickles teased, "You trying to tell me you never had a hot dog?"

"No. Never, never. No way, I ain't putting anything shaped like that in my mouth."

"What about banana?" asked Toki.

"No!"

"What about sausage?" asked Nathan.

"No, not sausage."

"What about a sausage that was cut up in little pieces?" asked Skwisgaar.

Murderface looked uncomfortable. "Uh, no, 'cause it looks like a chopped-up cock."

Nathan asked the bassist. "What about like a sandwich?"

"A flat one?"

"Yeah."

Murderface nodded, "Yeah, a flat sandwich."

"So," I said. "You refuse to eat anything that looks like a penis."

"See," Murderface said. "He gets it!"
"Man," Pickles teased. "You think about penises in mouths all the time don't you?"

"Shut up! God!"

"Well, you do."

Murderface was frustrated. "Give me my wipes."

"Well, you did," continued Pickles. "You said 'penis' and 'mouth' about 100 times today.

"No," denied the bassist. 'Because it was like, 'Oh, you've never had a hot dog.' I just wanted to say, 'No,' and it would be fine, and then, 'What about this? What about that? That's like a dick. That's like a dick.' You guys do it all."

"He does have a point," I said.

"Wow, you really keep thinking about dick all day long," said Nathan.

"Yeah," said Toki. "You do keep bringing up the subject."

Murderface banged his fists on the table. "You bring it up! I just said I don't. No, I wanted it over. God."

Skwisgaar said, "I would eat the hot dogs." Everyone stared at him. "Just putting that out there."

(!)

Later, at von Weichlinghammer's home in Germany, Dethklok were given the clothes they designed and they put them on in the dressing room. They looked like something out of a BDSM shop. And they made the band look VERY uncomfortable. "Hey, am I going crazy," Pickles asked as he looked in the mirror. "Or are these clothes really tight? Like, extra-tight?"

"Yeah," Skwisgaar said. "It feels like I'm the sausage."

Murderface glared at him, "Aw, just stop with the innuendos, please."

"It wasn't... I just said...you leaps to a conclusions."

But Murderface did agree on one thing, "I do look tight in these clothes. These clothes are fucking uncomfortable."

Toki said proudly, "Well mines fit."

Murderface growled. "Oh Toki shut the..."

"Toki shut up," Skwisgaar interrupted.

Nathan fidgeted in his clothes. "Brutal. I can't even zip up these pants."

The fitters looked at the band. "Perhaps the measurements you sent were incorrect."

"They weren't incorrect," I said to them. "They lied about how fat they are. With the exception of Toki."

"Shut up, Wood," Nathan said.

Suddenly, the doors slammed open and von Weichlinghammer entered. "The boy is right. It does
appear that you've put on a little weight." That voice was creepy and deep.

"These clothes are brutal," complained Nathan.

The German designer looked at the band. "Oh, dear. Look at all of you," he tutted. "You're much heavier than I was led to believe you were. Is the boy right? You didn't lie on your measurement charts, did you?"

"What?" shrieked Murderface. "How dare you!"

Nathan nodded, "I am appalled that you would say such a thing." But then he came clean, "But yeah, we probably lied."

"I based the clothing on this picture in your last album," He held up a photograph of Dethklok's faces taped over the bodies of very muscular models. "You look completely different in person."

"Is it that obvious, Herr Weichlinghammer?" I asked.

Murderface turned red. "Well, I may have been slightly airbrushed."

Skwisgaar looked down in shame. "Yeah, my pecs needed a little girths. Whatevers."

Von Weichlinghammer crossed his arms. "I am disappointed in all of you."

"Evens Toki?" Toki asked.

Von Weichlinghammer ignored him. "You're all a bunch of liars, a bunch of fat liars. You'll have to lose weight. I cannot let these clothes out. It is a very...rare leather. Now be gone!"

(!)

Dethklok returned to Mordhaus, still wearing the clothes. Mr. Offdenson was called into the conference room, "You all wanted to see me?"

Nathan said, "I don't know how to say this so I'm just gonna say it. We are having a weight problem."

Pickles shuffled his feet. "Too fat to fit in our own clothing line."

Mr. Offdenson raised an eyebrow. "You all look exactly the same as usual."

Murderface was offended. "He's saying that we've always been this fat."

"I never used the word 'fat'."

"It gets inside your heads, guys," whispered Toki. "That's what he does."

"Look you called me in here for a reason, what do you want?"

Nathan cut to the chaise, "We need to lose weight, all right?"

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "Okay, fine, we'll get you on an exercise regimen, cut out fatty foods and sugar..." The band protested at this. "It's the only way to lose weight."

"I'd rather die than cut out sugar." Murderface shouted.

"You all feel this way?" asked Mr. Offdenson. There was a collective, "Yeah." "Well, uh, have fun
being fat. If you change your minds, I'll hire a personal trainer. I got stuff to do."

"Why not try liposuction?" I asked.

"What's that?" asked Nathan.

"It's where you surgically take all the fat out of your body. It can leave stretch marks, though."

"Wait," Murderface said. "Are you saying we can eat whatever we want and get fat whenever we want and just have it taken out of our bodies?"

"Well," I said, immediately regretting what I said. "Perhaps. Yes. You can, but I wouldn't waste so much money on that."

"Fuck that!" Murderface shouted. "Sign me up for liposuction!"

"Signs me ups too," Toki exclaimed.

"I's wants to gets the fats sucked out!" Skwisgaar said.

What have I done?

(!)

A month later, Dethklok watched a news repot on their newest fashion. "It's been quite a stunning month for the metal band, now fashion gurus Dethklok. After releasing their brutal clothing line to the public, stores immediately sold out and are eagerly awaiting more."

The TV switched off.

Nathan said, "Who has the remote? Put it on the Food Network. I'm starving."

Skwisgaar couldn't stand it. "Oh, what are we doing this for? We're just teasing our fucking selves."

Murderface said, "We've got to lose weight by now. Let's just go to the scale."

(!)

I measured their weight. "Oh, God. It says here you've all gained twenty pounds more before the liposuction!"

"Evens me?"

Murderface growled, "Oh, Toki, shut up."

"That's impossible," Nathan said to the doctor accompanying me.

He said, "Your one meal a day diet after the liposuction slowed down your metabolism to a grinding halt so your body held on to everything you gave it. Popsicles are just pure sugar."

"So," Skwisgaar complained. "They's pure great!"

"Look," I said. "They made you fat again. Whatever."

The doctor turned to William. "The only one I'm concerned about is you, Murderface. Your enamel on your teeth is disintegrating."

"That's probably 'cause I was hawking up my food."
"But then you would have lost weight."

"Well, I was hungry again. So I had to eat. What is with you, the Spanish Inquisition?"

"This is upsetting," Nathan said. "I think we should go have another secret meet-and-eat in the closet. Come on, guys."

"Secret meet-and-eat?" I thought. Hmm.

(!)

I pressed my ear up to the door. I heard them speaking. "Oh, I'm so ashamed of myself," Skwisgaar bemoaned. "Having to eat in the closet! I need a cupcakes to calms me down."

Toki made a noise of disgust. "What's am I sitting on?"

"Oh, those are my puke bags," Murderface said. "I honk in them and store them here on account of I'm ashamed and stuff."

Nathan said, "We should pick a different closet than Murderface's next time we have a meet-and-eat. Pickles, what are you doing over there?"

"I'm just locking the door. If someone finds us here, we're gonna get in trouble."

"Too late!" I shouted.

Everyone inside groaned. Nathan said, "This is pathetic. I mean... We're eating here like a bunch of scared, fat, hungry pigs."

"Yeah," Skwisgaar said. "It all started when Wiechlinghammer made the comment about us being fat. It's his fault!

Toki agreed, "You're right, it's Von Wiechlinghammer's fault."

"We got to let Von Wiechlinghammer go," Nathan said. "Feel bad doing it. He's such a good pal."

He quickly got over it. "Let's go do it."

There was a pause. Then I heard Murderface say, "What? Nothing. Big deal."

"What's going on in there?"

"Hot dog!" shouted Toki. Someone slapped him.

(!)

In Germany, I accompanied Dethklok as they pounded on Herr Weichlinghammer's door. His fitters stopped them. "We wish you had called," they said. "Now is bad time. Next time, please call. You mustn't disturb the master."

"Don't be a dick, be a dude. Let us in here," Pickles said. And they kicked down the door. What they saw horrified them: the source of the "special leather" for their clothing line. Herr Weichlinghammer was flaying people! He stopped what he was doing and looked at us. "What are you doing here?"

The band screamed! "No! Oh, my god! What a horrible... you're fired, by the way. Oh, god!"
Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendon Small and Adult Swim
Dethklok and I were in the lounge watching a very interesting documentary of a very special person. One that I wish Toki would never be friends with. The narrator showed images of that certain person. "He's a lunatic rebel with a hyperactive disorder and a license for rock with a permit to roll. His name is Dr. Rockso. He's the rock-'n'-roll clown, and he does cocaine. But who is the man behind the paint? He was the son of a physical therapist a young boy with a penchant for trouble named Leonard Rockstein." The documentary showed a picture of a boy with long blonde hair wearing overalls and a rainbow shirt before cutting to a newspaper. "One day while looking in the newspaper, Rockso spotted something. It seemed that Zazz Blammymatazz was looking for a singer."

Zazz Blammymatazz was a clown-themed glam rock band. The documentary cut to the former guitarist, Bink Bonk Blammymatazz, "He just had the attitude. He was like a firecracker in clown paint."

The narrator continued, "And they skyrocketed to fame almost immediately. The rock-'n'-roll clown was on top of the world."

Then Bink Bonk dropped the bombshell, "But he insisted that he get paid in cocaine."

The narrator continued, "Things went from bad to worse as Rockso's appetite for cocaine increased."

Then the documentary cut to audio file between Dr. Rockso and Bink Bonk. "Hey, which one of you punks stole Dr. Rockso's banana?"

"No one took your sandwich, man."

"I ain't talking about sandwich! Where's my banana? Where's all my bananas and my sandwiches?"

"Man, you're paranoid."

"Paranoid? I'll kill. I'll kill you." Then there were loud crashes as Dr. Rockso continued to scream unintelligibly. "Oh, there's my banana. Sorry."

The narrator continued, "Dr. Rockso was kicked out of Zazz Blammymatazz and after a short-lived solo career, Dr. Rockso began making money as a party clown for hire."

The documentary cut to footage of Murderface at a podium. "Yeah, as the Dethklok songwriter, I must say that it's hard to see a clown go bad like that That's a tough pill to swallow."

The narrator continued, "And Rockso continued to spiral even further when he became the subject of his own short-lived reality show."
"The documentary cut to footage of Dr. Rockso in night vision. "Oh, I'm a bad clown," he sobbed. "I'm a bad clown! I do cocaine!"

"A cocaine-raged Rockso broke into a top-secret police storage facility and stole over 1,000 pounds of cocaine. He escaped apprehension and is now one of the top 10 most wanted..." Nathan switched off the TV.

He grumbled, "Hmm. Rockso the fucking clown. Boy, I really hate that guy."

"Ja," Skwisgaar said. "I oughts to fuckings horsewhip him."

"Yeah, you know, he is a mess," Pickles said.

Toki defended him. "Oh, he's just misunderstood."

"Why do you keep defending that guy?" I asked him. "He's a criminal."

"Like I said in the thing," Murderface said. "It's sad."

"Yeah," said Nathan. Then he pointed out. "Uh, you know, you also said that you're the Dethklok songwriter."

"Did I? I don't remember."

"You're a bad liar, Murderface," I said.

"Yeah, you did and you've never written anything ever."

Murderface asked, "What about Planet Piss?"

"First of all, that's not Dethklok."

"Dude," Pickles said. "You never even completed one song."

"Well, that's not to say. I'm not capable of writing a song."

"In this case," Nathan said. "It is to say that you're not capable of wr..."

Murderface got angry. "But I could've written any Dethklok song! I could've written any of them!"

Nathan argued, "But you didn't write any... you didn't, though."

"But I could have!"

"But you didn't!"

"But I could have!"

"I could've invented, oh, yeah, the floor...you know, but I didn't."

"But that doesn't mean you shouldn't get credit for inventing the floor!"

"That should mean that I don't get credit for it!"

Murderface stood up. "Wait a minute! But about the bass lines? I write all the bass lines."

Skwisgaar shouted, "You didn't write no bass lines! I figures them out for you and shows them to
"I thought you were music dyslexic," I said.

Skwisgaar sunk into the hot tub in shame.

"You know what, I'd like to hear you try to write one song," said Nathan.

Murderface asked, "Would you like to hear me try to write one song, huh?"

"It has to be a complete song."

"You want me to write one complete song, huh?"

"Yeah."

"You got it!"

Pickles scoffed, "Yeah right, you're not gonna do it."

"Oh, yes, I will, because I have this, smartass!" He showed them a guide to song writing. "Ha ha!"

As I slept later that night, I felt someone nudge me awake. "Toki? What's up?"

"Help me wakes up Pickle. We need his help!"

"What? What is wrong?"

"It's Dr. Rockso. He needs help!"

Seriously? "Ugh. Fine. But only because I can't trust you with him."

At the tribunal, Senator Stampingston began his report, "It appears as if Dr. Rockso the rock-'n'-roll clown has gone missing."

Crozier said, "We used Dr. Rockso for a recon mission some time ago. Though his character is weak, he proved to be helpful in bringing back top-secret Dethklok information. Since then, we believe Dethklok to have shunned him."

"Where could he be now?"

Vater Orlaag pointed out, "Toki Wartooth's personal history shows that he has a strong trust for clowns." He showed an image of a young Toki sitting on John Wayne Gacey's knee. "And even though Dethklok no longer trusts Dr. Rockso, I believe they will reconnect."

Mr. Selacia had the final word. "Follow the clown. Follow the clown."

Toki and I shook Pickles awake.

"Toki, Wood, what are you doing in here?"
"Not my idea," I said.

"I need you to gives to me the rides," Toki said.

(!)

Toki, Pickles and I rode in the Dethcycle with Toki and I riding the side cars.

"Toki, you really need to get your driver's license, dude," Pickles said.

Toki shouted something incoherent before shouting, "But Is environmentally unconscious! Just drive!"

"Where are we going?"

"I said, just drive!"

We eventually found Dr. Rockso in a dark alley. He was covered in blood, dirt, cocaine, feces and his costume was torn. "Oh, hey, man, I said 20 for an H.J., not no measly 10." The person he was talking to drove away. "You b-beat it! Ca-ca-ca..." He broke down sobbing.

Toki, Pickles and I approached him. "Oh, wowee, Dr. Rockso," Toki said. "What's goings on? You looks terribles!"

The clown faced us. "I've ca-ca-confessions to make. I'm Dr. Rockso the rock-'n'- roll clown. I do cocaine."

"Uh...we know that," I said.

"Well, okay, this is a waste of time," Pickles said. "Come on, Wood. I'm gonna get going."

"But that ain't all. I also huff p-p-paint! And I do c-c-crystal meth, h- heroin, pain pills, oxy-co-co-contin. I do it all."

Pickles held his hands up. "Okay, okay, okay! Dude, what do you want from us?"

"Dr. Rockso's scared, and he needs your ca-ca-ca help."

(!)

Eventually, the three of us dragged Dr. Rockso into Mordhaus and into the kitchen. "Okay, here we are," I said. "How are you feeling, Rockstein?"

"Who that?" asked the clown.

"That was you before you became...this." I gestured to himself. "You were Leonard Rockstein. We saw it on the TV."

"Oh, right." He paused. Then suddenly he screamed, grabbed a knife and started banging his head with the handle. "Oh, ca-ca-ca my head! Get it out of my head!"

Toki was panicking. "Dr. Rockso has withdrawls! Whats do we do? Whats do we do?"

"I got it." And I fired my blue whale tranquilizer. He fell down in a heap.

"Ohh! You killed him."
"No I didn't! It's my blue whale tranquilizer gun, remember? I use it on you guys all the time!"

"Oh, yeah. I still remember when you used it on us at that bachelor's party," Toki said. "I can still see the visions."

"Yeah. It was a fun party," Pickles said. "The images were strange."

The clown babbled, "Oh, Dr. Rockso's partying right now, baby."

Just then, Skwisgaar, Nathan and Murderface came in. "Hey, what the fuck is he doing here?" Nathan demanded.

"I do cocaine," Dr. Rockso said. Then he suddenly said, "I can see the girls. They're all coming for me. I love them all."

I just blinked. "Okay."

(!)

We all had a meeting in the conference room. "Dr. Rockso is a criminal," Mr. Offdenson said. "He should not be here. I'm afraid I'm going to have to be firm on this one. Therefore, he must go."

"But he not so bads, guys," Toki defended. "Don't you get it's, it's the drugs?"

"I will contact the police, and we'll turn him in."

"Oh, wait. Give him one more chance to prove that he can be a better persons withouts the drugs. Then we can turns him in."

"As long as he goes to jail, Toki."

"Fine. Where is he now?"

"He's taking a little nap."

(!)

And by nap, he meant being hosed down with a fire hose to get the filth off of him and then tortured on the electric torture device used on Han Solo in Star Wars: The Empire Strikes back. "Aaaah! Oohhhhhhh!"

I entered the room. "Okay, he's had enough."

Then Mr. Offdenson entered "Oh, my gosh. What's going on here? Stop torturing him." He didn't really mean it.

Dr. Rockso whimpered, "Thank you. Thank you. You're an angel."

"Yes, yes. Yes, I am. There, there." Then he whispered to me, "Give him one more."

"Okay." ZAP!

"Ohhh!"

Mr. Offdenson said, "All right, all right. Well, here are your new clothes, Dr. Rockso. The boys are going out for some ice cream and hookers. Is that something you'd be interested in doing?"
"I don't know. I guess so."

(!)

He burst into a room. "Let's go get some hookers and ice ca-ca-ca-cream!" Then he realized there were no ice cream and hookers. "What's all this? Who dat?"

"I'm Dr. John Twinkletits." Dr. Twinkletits had new mechanical arms to replace the ones that had been ripped off by the yard wolves along with a new voice box, making his speech sound metallic. "And you know these people. They're here today because they feel like they're losing you. And they just love you to pieces."

"Uh, love might be a little strong," Nathan said.

"Y'all giving Dr. Rockso an intervention?" asked the clown.

"Just have a seat. We just want you to hear us out. Then you can do whatever you want." Dr. Rockso sat on the sofa with Dethklok. "Nathan, let's begin with you. Read your letter that you have prepared."

"Okay, um...Dr. Rockso, I hate you, and I think you should die. You are an idiot, and I hate your voice. There's no room on this paper to properly describe how much I hate you. Go die. There, is that good?"

Dr. Twinkletits frowned at him. "This intervention will not work unless you show support. Murderface, show some support."

"It's probably better if I put this in song and utilize my new book 'How to write a reggae smash hit.'" He took his new acoustic guitar and sang slowly, "Down the Caribbean way. Yeah, mon. Irie..." Then he stopped singing and smashed the guitar. "Aw, fuck this."

"Oh, man, that's bullshit," Dr. Rockso said. "Dr. Rockso don't need any of this."

"Quick, help him out," Dr. Twinkletits said. "He's hitting rock bottom or something. Toki, save him."

Toki read his letter, "'Dr. Rockso, you's my friend.'"

"Oh stop! I'll d-d-do it! I can't believe everybody loves Dr. Rockso so much." He put his arms around Toki and Nathan. "Y'all love Dr. Rockso?"

Nathan groaned, "Oh, boy."

Toki then said to the clown, "But you's gots to quits drugs. You reallys gots to reallys, reallys do it. Or we's be out of your life for goods."

Dr. Rockso looked down thoughtfully.

(!)

After a month of electric shock therapy and regular therapy, Dr. Rockso had traded his costume and clown makeup for a suit and tie and his hair color was back to blonde. He still had that annoying, high-pitched voice though. "Now you gots to turn yourself in, Dr. Rockso," Toki said.

"I know, but thanks for helping an old has-been clown get clean. And to show my thanks, I made you a balloon." He held up a balloon shaped like Toki's head.
"Oh, wowee! It looks just like me! Oh, Nathan, look!"

"Yeah, it's great," the vocalist said sarcastically.

"I could make you one," Leonard Rockstein suggested.

"Uh, yeah, go to jail now."

A group of news reporter gathered at the police station; a reporter said, "Amazing news today, as metal band Dethklok is shown having apprehended rock-'n'-roll clown Dr. Rockso. Dr. Rockso, are you guilty?"

Leonard Rockstein looked at the cameras and smiled. "All I know is this: my name is Dr. Rockso the rock-'n'-roll clown. And I used to do cocaine."

The band cheered, "Oh, yeah!"

"I am ca-ca-clean!" Then his nose bled. "Uh-oh." Then it fell off his face.
Dethklok and I flicked on the TV to watch Pickles' newest appearance on TV: a game show. Pickles was sitting at a podium with another contestant sitting at another one. "Welcome back to Cash-tastrophe," the announcer said. "The game where you win money or get killed with cash."

The TV host said, "If your celebrity-helper pal, Pickles can answer this final question correctly you will see $1 million dropped from our rafters and it will all be yours. However, if you answer wrong, you know... Killed with cash." I wondered if anyone actually volunteered willingly to participate in this game show.

Pickles, who had been drinking gain, slurred, "I'm really a little nervous. But, you know, my P.R. Lady says I should be doing this kind of stuff. But you know, whatever." Oh, yeah. The newest employee at Dethklok Industries: Ms. Bane. She was a cute strawberry blonde woman in a red dress that had recently became the drummer's PR manager. For some reason, part of her deal involved Pickles wearing a T shirt with an upside down ankh on it. I didn't trust that woman.

The TV host said, "So, for $1 million..."

Pickles slurred, "What is this show?"

"S- so, for $1 million or death, here's your question: What celestial body is no longer considered a planet?"

"Ooh, that's a tough question."

Skwisgaar said, "Ah, I thinks it's the suns!"

Murderface said, "It's a stupid question! It could be anything!"

Toki said, "Ah, Pickle don't look good. Pickle looks scared."

Ms. Bane said, "He's fine. This is outstanding exposure."

Nathan turned to the woman. "Who the hell is this lady?"

"That's Pickle's new P.R. lady," I said.

"She's not a groupie?"

"No."

"Never mind, then."

Back on the TV, the game show host said, "Okay, Pickles, time's up. What's your answer?"
"Man, I got to say that's a hard question, but here's the answer: the Earth." The audience groaned and booed at his stupidity. "The Earth is no longer considered a planet. "Am I... am I right?"

"No, I'm sorry," said the host. He turned to the contestant. "Your celebrity-helper pal didn't help you. The correct answer is Pluto."

"Pluto? Really?"

"Prepared to be killed with cash."

The contestant screamed as he was forced into a tube. "No, no!" He his next screams were that of agony and pain as piles of coins crushed him.

The P.R. lady smiled. "This is great exposure."

I didn't like this woman. She was eyeing the TV, or rather Pickles, with keen interest. (!)

The tribunal started their meeting, focusing on Dethklok's newest employee. "This is Liz Bane," Senator Stampingston said.

"Alias Liz Blackfin," General Crozier said.


"A religious radical from the '70s," Senator Stampingston said. "She's credited with starting dozens of cults."

"The biggest and most famous one she founded," the Left Eye said. "Was the Order of the Dybbuks. They believed they would achieve immortality by taking over the bodies of French people." The Left Eye then showed images of a bloody Paris on the screen. "In 1973, 28 Dybbuks walk into a crowded Parisian café on the Champs-Élysées. They pulled out ceremonial daggers and massacred a hundred French citizens."

"It was a bloodbath," General Crozier said.

"Yes," said Vater Orlaag. "And somehow Miss Bane was cleared of all charges."

"Given her connections," the Left Eye said. "It's no surprise. Bane is a powerful woman."

Vater Orlaag continued. "Then a few years ago, she started a public-relations firm called the Exodus P.R. Firm." He showed the image of the Exodus P.R. Firm's logo: an upside down ankh. General Crozier said, "Bane is concocting something beyond public relations."

Mr. Selacia stared at the photo of Liz Bane's mugshot. (!)

"What is thy bidding, my master?"

"Liz Bane. I want you to exterminate her."

"You agree with me then. She's clearly using Pickles' image to gather new members for her new cult."
"Exactly. Her death will benefit our cause. See to it that she doesn't survive."

"As you wish."

(!)

At the picnic grounds of Mordhaus, the other members of Dethklok were having a conversation with Mr. Offdenson.

"We want our own P.R. Person like Pickles has," Nathan said.

"But I am a P.R. Person." Mr. Offdenson said.

"But we want a real P.R. Person." said Murderface.

"I am a real P.R. Person."

"No, we wants a real P.R. Person." said Skwisgaar.

"I am a real P.R. Person." Mr. Offdenson was becoming clearly annoyed.

Then Pickles finally said what the others truly meant, "But we wants a lady!"

"I... Fine." He gave up.

"You could always do a sex change operation," I suggested.

Everyone made a face of disgust. "That is completely out of the question," Mr. Offdenson said.

(!)

Pickles arrived at a scheduled meet-and-greet at a movie theater with his P.R. Person. A female reporter said in front of a camera, "And look who's here. It's the guy who's everywhere now: Dethklok's drummer, Pickles, along with his publicist, Liz Bane." She held the microphone up to his face. "Your face is everywhere these days. People are calling you the most popular member of Dethklok. How does that make you feel?"

"Yeah, two words... drunk and horny."

(!)

The other members of Dethklok and I watched the interview in the lounge.

Murderface shook his head. "Pickles is out there having the time of his life. He's everywhere."

"I know, I know," said Mr. Offdenson. "They say there's no such thing as bad publicity but I happen to think you can do yourself a disservice."

"Something about Ms. Bane rubs me the wrong way," I said. "I don't know why."

"Dude," Skwisgaar said. "She's ams ways too olds for youse."

"Not that way, Skwisgaar."

(!)

Pickles was at an award show, wasted off his ass and giving out awards to...something. Ms. Bane
was nearby, watching the whole thing with a small smile. The drummer shouted, "And the winner goes to Cinnamon Buns'...starring Pickles, the drummer...directed by Vodka and Beer... And..." He passed out. But not before ripping off the trophy girl's dress off.

(!)

Dethklok and I were in the gaming room. While the others were sitting at the coffee table, Toki was playing the arcade shooter with me. I got to say, he's really good at this game. I've yet to beat his high score.

Murderface suggested, "Why don't we just start our own P.R.?

Skiwsgaar nodded, "Ja, all's it is is telling somebody something and that's what I does right now."

Nathan said, "Yeah, then we should do it... the three of us, right?"

"Yeah, let's do it," they said together.

"Uh, did you forget someone?" I asked.

Poor Toki said, "Yeah, how comes you don't ask me? The three? It's like the five of us."

"Four, Toki," I corrected. "I'm not interested in a P.R. right now."

"You're all the way over there," Nathan said. "You... we couldn't even see you."

"I just heards everything and I just wants to be a parts of it, too!"

"Toki, you're too lates," Skwisgaar said. "That's what you get for trying to play video games."

"I stands right here," shouted Toki. "And you just excludes me on purpose you know it."

Nathan said, "That's bad P.R. Right there."

"Or bullying," I said.

(!)

Pickles was now being interviewed at a daytime talk show: Chat With Paul And Paula. Paul was a fat man with silver hair and Paula was a skinny woman with blonde hair. "Now, we all know Dethklok's music," Paul said. "But we usually don't see you guys unless you're releasing a CD or you're on tour. Why the sudden change?"

Pickles was still plastered off his ass. "Well, I think, you know...that some people think that you can't be doing things...like that because, it's like...ohh, you're gonna say something that... You douche bag!"

"Let me ask you, what does the most successful drummer in history do to relax?" asked Paula

"That's a good question. Well, I think, you know...that some people think that you can't be doing things...like that because, it's like...ohh, you're gonna say something that... You douche bag!"

(!)

Pickles rewatched the footage on the TV in his limo with Ms. Bane. "So, that was okay... I mean...
"Right?"

"Okay?" asked the P.R. Lady. "It was great. Well, I thought you might be mad because...you know, I-I could tell a couple of times. I might have been slurring just a little bit. 'cause I had a drink beforehand."

Ms. Bane smiled wickedly. "You've been behind that drum kit for way too long, Pickles. This is your time. It's time for Pickles."

(!)

Meanwhile, I was in the conference room in Mordhaus, watching the other members of Dethklok setting up a P.R. plan. Or at least trying to set one up. Murderface was running the meeting. "Now, publicity is all about being seen."

Nathan interrupted, "Okay, okay, that's a good point because what I was gonna say is publicity is all about being seen."

"He just said that," I said.

"Yeah! I thought I was running this meeting! You just repeated!"

"Oh, I'm sorry. You're right... Please."

"We need to get our faces out to where everybody can see us."

"Likes Pickle on TV," said Skwisgaar.

"Exactly, but everybody goes on TV."

Nathan interrupted Murderface again, "Yeah, everyone goes on TV. Everyone does."

"Yeah, that's my point. Everybody goes on TV!"

"Everyone's already on there. Why would you want to do that?"

"Yes, okay. Go the other way."

"Yes, we need to go where..."

"Where nobody's gone yet."

Toki raised his hand. "Oh, radios!"

"Toki, get out of here," Nathan said. "You're not in the P.R. Club."

"It's the stupidest P.R. Club! It doesn't work!"

"You should have said Toki's not invited to his face," I said. "If that's what you meant."

Murderface had had enough. "Can you just... I'm running this meeting! We need to get seen somewhere that's not on TV." He threw his computer to the ground. "Fuck!"

(!)

The Dethklok Minute had picked up the news of the drummer's rising popularity. "Pickles the drummer's now the most in-demand celebrity alive and that's an amazing feat for Pickles but
almost a bigger feat for the Exodus P.R. Firm, now the world's largest. The remaining members of Dethklok are getting in on this action starting their own brutal P.R. Firm. Hey, good luck, boys. That's the Dethklok minute."

(!)

The other members of Dethklok stood at the front of a Juice Joint. "Now, store openings are always good exposure lots of press," Murderface said, looking over his plans.

Toki pressed his face up to the window. "Oh, I'm gonna get me a juice with carrots and grapes."

"Ohh, Toki."

"Are we supposed to send this press releases to the press," asked Nathan. "I mean, I think that's why they call it a press release. Am I right?"

"You mean you don't know?"

"No, I don't."

"You really don't know?"

Suddenly, a young boy walked up to the band. "Holy shit! You're Nathan Explosion!"

Murderface pushed him away. "Beat it, kid. He's not who you think I'm saying he isn't. It's not him, okay?"

"Yes he is," I said to him.

"Shut up!"

Too late. The kid was walking away, annoyed.

Nathan was confused. But I thought we were supposed to have exposure."

"Look, if word gets out that we're here the press will be all over us and that'll just defeat our purpose."

Skwisgaar finally spoke up, "Guys, I got an ideas. We should promote somewhere's else where likes where no one else promoteds before!"

"How are you going to do that?" I asked. "You don't even have anything to advertise your PR Firm."

"Does it matters?" asked Skwisgaar. "We's ams makings moneys by tellings peoples we have a PR Firm!"

"No, that doesn't work like that!"

"Yes it does. Shut up."

(!)

Wasted. Dethklok put giant signs with the words "Dethklok PR" in random spots all over the Earth. And in one case, they shot one outside of Earth's orbit!
"DK PR Promotes Nothing PR Firm To Nobody! Millions Lost in Short-Sighted Campaign!"
Those were the words printed on the headlines the following week.

Mr. Offdenson and I were angry.

"So," I said. "Have you been looking at the bills recently, boys?"

"Uh, no," Nathan said. "We don't normally look at those things. We usually let our people handle them."

"Well," Mr. Offdenson said. "I've, uh, been looking over your purchases since you started doing your own publicity. You've spent $17 million."

"So?" asked Murderface.

"I'm just saying I don't think it's the best use of your money. It hasn't increased sales whatsoever. Nice work, guys." And he walked off in a huff.

"What are we doing wrong?" asked Nathan. "I mean, look, Pickles is everywhere."

Skwisgaar added, "What's he got that we ain't got?"

"Brains," I said. "And the fact that he has someone to help him out with the money."

"Hey, guys."

"Hey, look, that's Pickles," said Skwisgaar. "Just likes on the magazine!"

"Hey, Pickles."

Toki said, "Yeah, you's the drummer, right?"

"Look, my hair's standing up on end," Murderface said.

Nathan nodded. "Yeah, he's shorter than I thought...wait a minute! I already know you."

"I got us a gig," Pickles said. "It's, uh, you know, a favor for my publicist. What do you think?"

"Oh, yeah, we'll do it."

"You bet!

"Oh, thanks, guys. Uh, I'll see ya... cool."

"Wait," I said. "Pickles, can I come with you? I want to meet Ms. Bane, talk about how we're going to plan the gig."

"Okay."

Ms. Bane's office.

"It's been so busy lately, Pickles," Ms. Bane said. "We haven't had a chance to really talk."
"Oh, hey, I got you a gift. It's a calendar." Pickles held the calendar up. "You know, it's that guy who gets those gray dogs and dresses them up in clothes, you know, humiliates them."

"You mean William Wegman," I said. "Yeah, I see those dogs in Sesame Street."

"That's very sweet, Pickles, however, I no longer have any use for Earth calendars." She took the gift anyway. "But never mind that. Thank you."

"Earth calendars?" Pickles and I said.

"I have a little something for you, too." She slid something across the desk. My eyes widened with horror. It was a $5 Hot Topic gift card. I looked up at her. "Where did you get that?"

"It doesn't matter," she said. Then she focused on Pickles. "You were a great find. Because of your popularity, we've recruited a lot of members... I mean clients."

Pickles stood up. "Okay, then. I'm gonna get going. I'll see you tonight at the show."

"Yes, tonight. Don't be late." He was about to leave when she stopped him. "Pickles."

"Yeah?"

"I'll see you tonight."

"Oka-a-y. Goodbye."

I was left alone with her. She said to me, "You can go too, you know."

"Not yet, Bane. I want to talk to you about our plans with the gig."

"I already took care of them. You don't need to worry about that."

"I know." I held up my Dethphone and showed her something that made her eyes widened. "I did some digging on your history and not only did I find out you're responsible for starting death cults, you also stole all your members' money after they died. And now, according to these plans, you're going to do it again, using Dethklok as your frontman for your new cult!" Ms. Bane said nothing. "Now, normally, I wouldn't mind all that, except for the one part of your plan: kill Dethklok." I pointed the blue whale tranquilizer dart gun at her forehead. "No one fucks with the bread and butter."

"Too bad no one's going to hear you expose my plans."

"And why's that?"

Ask a stupid question. Bane grabbed the tranquilizer just as I fired it and knocked it out of the way, leaving her unscathed. Then she grabbed both my arms and headbutted me, knocking me unconscious.

(!)

Bane dragged the young man into her closet. "Sorry kid, but you're not going to stop me."

(!)

At the concert, Dethklok looked on with raised eyebrows at the people wearing the white robes. Skwisgaar asked, "What do they gots there, grapes drink?"
Nathan nodded. "Yeah, they're drinking some fucking grape drink. It's awesome."

Murderface said, "That's pretty fancy grape drink."

"How come they gets to have grapes drink?" asked Toki.

"How come we can't have any grape drink?" asked Nathan. "That's not fucking fair."

Suddenly, Ms. Bane walked up. "Pickles, you're late. We have to hurry.

Pickles didn't seem to care. "Okay."

"Time is running out!"

"Okay."

"This is our destiny!"

"Okay. Hey, let's just play this show and get out of here. We got any songs with 'destiny' in the title?"

Nathan shrugged his shoulders. "Um, no, but I could stick it in. It's doesn't matter. No one can understand what I'm saying, anyway."

*Cue Comet Song*

(!)

Ms. Bane smiled wickedly as she packed up her suitcase full of money and walked to her car. By now, Dethklok along with all the poisoned members of her latest cult were about to be crushed by the comet's weight. Unfortunately, what she didn't plan on was the Dethklok PR sign in space breaking the comet and sending pieces of it all over the world. And one fragment was, to her horror, headed straight for her.

(!)

Somehow, Bane survived, but barely. Her legs were completely crushed, pinned under the destroyed car and comet fragment and she was forced to pull herself out from the wreckage. She crawled on her elbows and hands away from the burning ruin when she was stopped by a boot. "Please...help me..."

"I will." And the stranger shot her in the head. "It is done, master."

Chapter End Notes

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I was watching TV in my room. "Big Dethklok-related news today in Sydney, Australia. The head of Dethklok Australia was violently assassinated by a team of terrorists who are referring to themselves as the Revengencers. Dethklok had no comment." I switched it off.

I whistled. "That's the second Dethklok-related terrorist attack. I'm getting really concerned."

Suddenly, Nathan kicked my door down. "All right, you skinny piece of shit," he said. "Get your ass out of bed. We're going to Wisconsin!"

"Why?"

"Oh, Pickles' brother, Seth is getting married and he's invited us to play at his bachelor party."

Seth? Pickles' deadbeat, yet somehow the more loved, brother? The same Seth that was released from prison? "How is Pickles taking it?"

"Oh, he's fine. He's so speechless, he's excited."

I think he's speechless for a whole other reason.

(!)

It was no surprise the tribunal got their hands on the invitation after Pickles threw it away. Their eye took it and explained everything that was going on. As usual, Senator Stampingston began the meeting. "It appears as if Dethklok is participating in a wedding. General Crozier."

The general put up images of Seth's criminal history on the giant screen as he explained, "Pickles' brother, Seth was recently released from Wisconsin State Prison after serving eight months for driving intoxicated, selling fake cocaine to an undercover officer and beating a prostitute with a brick."

Vater Orlaag added, "Seth is a violent pathological liar and charlatan. I believe his reasons for marriage may simply be for a chance to reunite with his brother's wealth."

"And he's more loved by his parents more than they love Pickles," the left eye said. "No matter how rich and famous their second born son is, they prefer their firstborn deadbeat. Then again, it's not surprising. The firstborns were proven to be the more beloved throughout history no matter how successful the siblings that come after are."

Stampingston introduced their new expert, "Gentlemen, our wedding expert, Dr. Milminaman-lanilim-swinwamly. Dr. Milminaman-lanilim-swinwamly?"

"Where do you find these guys?" the left eye asked.
The expert was a man with a bowl cut and an elderly feminine face. He spoke with a lisp, "Gentlemen, the American wedding is a dark and fearful sham. The event itself is designed to incite anger and drain loved ones of patience, support, and money. Most marriages fail miserably in two years. Others end in murder-suicides. A small percentage of them end with a term we like to call 'livable hatred'.

Vater Orlaag agreed, "Marriage has always been a black and repugnant sore on human living."

The expert continued, "Since the early 1900s, marriage has been spun by the vendors and marketers. The people that find it the most attractive are wedding planners, CratenBarrel, and the various religious organizations."

General Crozier stated, "Dethklok should be kept as far away from the institution of marriage as possible. Marriage is suffering enough."

As always, Mr. Selacia had the final word. "We mustn't intervene, General. We will allow Dethklok to experience the blackness."

(!)

The left eye met Mr. Selacia in private, bending on one knee. "What is thy bidding, my master?"

"I want you to keep an eye on Dethklok. Pickles especially. His bottled hatred of his brother may cause chaos. He'll do anything to get him off his back."

"And that is a bad thing why? Seth is a loser, but is more loved by his parents. However, this is mostly out of pity and they spoil him rotten."

"I didn't say it was a bad thing. I just want to know what that chaos could cause should Pickles finally rid himself of the parasite that has been draining him even before he announced his marriage."

"If it's chaos you want, I could hack into Seth's funds and leave him with nothing. He'll be begging for Pickles' for support."

"No. Attend the wedding. Do not do anything. Just watch."

"Yes, master."

(!)

In Tomahawk, Wisconsin, the band and I were ridding the Dethbus to that bastard's bachelor party. Pickles said nothing the entire trip. He just stared out into space. I had never seen him like this. I patted his back. "Do you need anything?" I asked. "You want a soda? Would you like me to shoot Seth with my blue whale tranquilizer?" He said nothing. "Ah, screw it, I tried."

Murderface said, "Well, normally I dread an event like this, but seeing how knotted up it's gotten you, Pickles, I'm sure I will enjoy it."

"Yeah, it's fun to watch somebody go through family hell," Nathan said.

"You think it's funny to watch your bandmate go through this," I asked incredulously.

"It's nots justs Pickles," Swkisgaar said. "Weddings are only good for two things: tax breaks and adultery. That's what I say."
Sweet, naive Toki added, "And kissings and huggings. And opens bars."

"Yeah, but, Toki, remember, takes it easy. Last time, I was in charge of yous all night. And yous was a sloppys mess!"

"Hey you don'ts gots to worry about olds Toki."

Nathan said, "Don't take this the wrong way, Pickles, but your... your brother's kind of, um...kind of a weird greedy dick, you know?"

Pickles said nothing.

"Oh, I think he knows," I said. "He's just too afraid of his own family to say it out loud."

(!)

We arrived at Pickles' childhood home and met his family in the attic. "Look, Pickles," Pickles' mother said. "Look how great your brother's doing."

Pickles was confused. "Oh, where am I looking?"

"Look at his house room."

"Well, you converted the attic."

"Look, he has an all-in-one fax machine. He's a professional. Go give him a hug."

How could this woman love this loser?! The two brothers hugged. Then Seth leaned into Pickles' ear. "Feels good, doesn't it? Fucking hugging your own brother? Being close to his fucking face like this. You got a couple of bones to fucking procure some fucking four fucking guys? I meant to restock the mini fridge. You know, run out of time."

Pickles was uncomfortable. "Whoa, uh, yeah, here's, uh..."

Seth glared at him. "Give me two, you know, five hundie. You know, maybe, you know...I don't want to sell this short, you hear?" Then he said out loud, "I got fucking Dethklok in my fucking house room! Ha! Fucking Mitch and Bobby aren't gonna fucking believe this. I'm fucking excited about you guys throwing me a bachelor party, fucks! Oh, and by the way, this is little Amber, the love of my fucking heart." He gestured to the woman next to her. "Isn't she an angel? Turn around. Turn around."

The woman obeyed.

(!)

"Boy, there's nothing like love, is there?" Nathan asked when we went to the strip club with Seth. The leech was stealing his brother's money again and was spending it on women giving him lap dances. And his soon-to-be-wife was aware of it as well!

Toki agreed with Nathan, "Oh, no, it's great."

Murderface nodded, "He's really gonna be a good husband."

Pickles was, understandably, the only one concerned. "Should I be worried? I mean, he looks like he's drinking. He said he's not drinking anymore."

"Uh," I said. "He lied."
Murderface didn't seem so agreeable. "I'm sure he's true to his word."

Nathan nodded as he eyed Seth slurping down vodka after vodka. "He's having a lot of alcohol, but that doesn't mean he's off the wagon."

Toki turned his attention to two very ugly men in very shabby clothes. "And who are those goofballs?"

Pickles explained, "Oh, those are Seth's pals, you know? A couple of high-school dropouts who scam on teenage chicks and steal and run crystal-meth houses. You know, beat up kids, rob, lie, possibly kill."

"Why don't you have the balls to sever ties with this guy?" I asked the poor drummer.

"I...I can't..."

Murderface didn't see the big deal. "Awesome!"

Then the two losers came to Pickles. "Let's go, rich bitch!"

"Hey throw down some fucking cash."

"We're getting Seth a fucking lap dance."

"Yeah, rich bitch."

Then the drunk husband-to-be jumped onto the stage and grabbed a microphone. "Yeah! Ladies and gentlemen, mmm! I want to invite you to Check out my brother Pickles. And Dethklok."

The rest of his speech was just drunk gibberish. Pickles didn't respond. Not even when the two skimpy dancers danced for him.

"Hey, Pickle!" called out Skiwsgaar. "Trys not to get hepatitis C's from thats!" Then he admitted, "Hey, those girls are pretty skankys."

Nathan said, "Yeah, those girls are... I'd do them."

"Yes, I'd do thems, too."

Pickles looked like he wanted to run away. "Should we call it a night?"

But the drunk sod wasn't done with him. "Oh, no, you fucking don't! I just fucking ordered shots."

(!)

The Next Day...at a buffet...

Pickles' family were called in to have a family reunion at a local eatery with Dethklok. Pickles' eyes had bags under them. It was pretty clear he did not sleep at all last night.

Pickles' mother called out, "Everybody, can we have your attention? Sethy wants to say something."

Seth said, "I just want to make a little speech, you know."

"All right, Seth!" his loser friends cheered.

Seth ignored them. "A wedding-rehearsal dinner. Anyway, here goes. My big brother got
everything in life, and I got shit. Everything was handed to him on a fucking silver platter. Things
are gonna be fucking different." Seth revealed his true colors, that again, nobody took notice. "I got
my fucking shit together now. I got a fucking wife and a fucking mouth to feed on the way so it
makes me fucking responsible, you know." His eyes narrowed on Pickles. "And I got... I also got
several business endeavors...you know, coming up with Dethklok. It's all good, you know. It's all
good. I just can't wait to see what fucking Dethklok got me for a wedding gift. Thank you!"

(!)

Pickles ran out of the buffet and into an alley. Unfortunately, his way out was blocked by a fence.
"He's trying to escape," shouted Nathan. "Get him!"

Pickles squirmed to get out of Nathan's grasp. "No! No!"

"What, are you gonna run away and leave us here?"

"I didn't know! I didn't know it was gonna be like this! I didn't know! I didn't know!"

Murderface punched the drummer. "A wedding! A family wedding!"

"Stop hitting me!"

"Can't help it!"

"Did you hear that speech? Everybody's on his side." Pickles couldn't take it anymore. "They...
Let's leave. Let's leave now. Let's go! Let's go!"

I couldn't take it anymore. I grabbed the drummer by the neck and kicked him in the penis. Hard.
"SHUT THE FUCK UP, PICKLES! WHEN DID YOU TRADE YOUR DICK FOR A PUSSY?!"

"I'm sorry," he panted. "Did you hear him talking about Dethklok business endeavors?" I kicked
him again.

"SHUT UP!" I calmed down a little. "Is that why you're so afraid of that loser brother of yours?
Because everyone takes his side? Because they pity him?!" He stopped and looked at me. "You
heard me! They're not doing this out of affection! They're doing it because they pity him! They
know who the real god is and it's you! Why do you think Seth keeps asking you for money? He
knows you don't need him, he needs you!"

Speak of the Devil, Seth came out. "Hey, Pickles! I need your, you know, credit card for a second."
Pickles tried to flee, but Nathan stopped him.

(!)

The bastard got married at church.

(!)

The boys and I were at a soirée. Skwisgaar looked around at the people. "Heh, the Midwest. Whoa.
A bunch of Swedes came here over 200 years ago and got fat and ugly. I loves it."

"Oh, you know it! Fats and ugly!" Poor Toki. He was wasted!

"Dude," I said. "You're drunk."

"Is not drunk," he muttered. "Youse drunk! Do I tell you hows drunks you ares?"
Skwisgaar seemed to agree with me. "Takes it easy on the sauce."

"Oh, yous takes it easy on the sauce. You're nots the boss of me. I gonna go gets another. You wants one?"

"Yeah."

Meanwhile, Murderface and Nathan were talking with one of the partiers. "Hey, hey. You know, there something I've always wanted to know. You're musicians. You can help me out. Uh, what's the difference between the guitar and the bass guitar?" They didn't know how to answer that.

Meanwhile, Toki got in another drunk conversation with a woman. "Me gonna do solo albums. All Toki. Gonna be called 'Toki is the king!' Hold on. Mmm. Oh, I gonna throws up. Throws up and takes a nap." And he vomited all over his shirt. "Good nights!" He passed out.

Meanwhile, Murderface and Nathan's conversation with the man became one sided as he didn't give them a chance to speak. "I got a niece. She's thinking of going to art school. What do you think? Is that something you think that might help out at all? You guys got that long hair. My mom had long hair. Does the stretch pants hurt when you sing? You know what I'd like to learn? To play the piano without a color chart. Blue, orange, green. Blue, blue. Blue, orange."

Murderface saw a life saver. "Oh, look, it's Shit Face and Dildo Licker."

"Oh, thank god," Nathan said in relief as he and Murderface walked over to Seth's loser friends. "What's up, dildos?"

"Hey, Shit Face!"

Shit Face said, "Hey, we're almost out of fucking alcohol!"

Dildo Licker said, "Yeah, it's all gone."

"Oh, you want to talk to Pickles right over there," Nathan said.

The two bums swiped the passed out drummer's wallet. Poor Pickles. He downed five kegs of absinthe when he got here. He truly was afraid of his own family. It seemed my words of wisdom were not enough to help him stand up to Seth.

(!)

Eventually, Dethklok took to the stage.

Pickles' mother said, "All right, quiet down, everybody. I guess Pickles' band is gonna play."

*Cue Life Sentence*

When the song was over, Seth took to the stage and snatched the microphone. "Well, this is the big fucking moment. The big fucking gift from Dethklok. Wonder what it's gonna be, you know? Should I open it? I think it's gonna be fucking sweet!"

A drunk Toki said, "Opens it!"

"All right here goes nothing." He unwrapped the present and pulled out a blender. He didn't look happy. "What the fuck is this, what the fuck is this?! You penny-pinching assholes!"

Toki drunkenly said, "It's what you registered for at CratenBarrels!"
Seth threw it to the ground and smashed it. Then he glared at the drummer. "Pickles! You piece of shit! How dare you come and ruin my wedding?"

Pickles had had enough. "All right, that's it! I'm gonna kill you!" Finally, the drummer grabbed his brother by the throat, strangled him then proceeded to beat the crap out of him.

Aah! Aah!

Nathan said, "This is great. This is some good drama."

Murderface nodded. "You can't pay for this shit."

"No, you can't. It just simply is."

"It's like an eclipse or something. You got to be there."

"Just, you got to be there."

The fighting stopped when the cops arrived.

(!)

On the dethbus...

No charges were filed against Pickles because...well...he's in Dethklok. Pickles felt uncomfortable with his bandmates staring at him. "Will you guys quit staring at me, please?"

"I've never seen so much blood at a wedding," complimented Murderface. "Awesome."

"Man, you really beat up your brother," said Nathan. "That was pretty cool."

Pickles still felt down. "But, dude, I feel bad for him."

"But you just beat him up. It was awesome."

"Why would I...I don't know why. I feel bad for him. I hate it."

"Then keep hating him," I said. "Cut off all ties with that toxic leech, feeding off your blood."

Skwisgaar gave some advice, "Oh, but it's nots supposed to make sense for, you sees, we are aimless hate-filled animals scampering away into the nights."

"That's right," Toki agreed. "For, you see, that's whats families is. Peoples whats you hates."

Pickles thought it over, then said, "Yeah, I guess you're right."

Suddenly, a hologram of Mr. Offdenson appeared. "You, uh, wanted to see me."

The drummer said, "Look, I feel bad about this whole thing. Can't we just give my brother a job and just get him off..."

Murderface groaned, "Oh, y-you really you really want that guy working for us? There's got to be a better way to solve it."

Mr. Offdenson had some good news. "Well, actually, Pickles, if you want to involve your brother in the Dethklok company there may be a job opening. A very dangerous job opening very far away. But if you were okay with this, he could be placed in charge of Dethklok Australia."
Mr. Offdenson's plan backfired. Seth paid Australia's entire police force to become his and his family's bodyguards, meaning there was no law left in the entire continent anymore, so there was chaos everywhere. Except for where Seth and his family was. That's why I decided to pay him a visit in his office. I waited for the sod to come to return and I didn't have to wait long. When he came in, he took one look at me and said, "Who the fuck are you?" A shot from my blue whale tranquilizer shut him up.

"That's for Pickles, you greedy bastard."

Chapter End Notes

Adult Swim and Brendon Small
Dethklok eventually found me in Bane's closet. AFTER 3 FUCKING DAYS OF LOOKING! They didn't even realize I was gone until Mr. Offdenson told them and even then, they didn't bother to start looking until he pestered them to do it. I was pissed to say the least. I didn't speak to them for a whole week. Then, a week later, Nathan came to my room. "Hey, douchebag."

"Don't talk to me, Tonto."

"Look, I thought of something that might cheer you up. Come on."

(!)

He took me to the lounge room where everyone was watching TV. It was some sort of special featuring a tribe of people. "A documentary?"

"It's a special one," Nathan said.

"The Yaneemango Indians live in the most remote parts of the Amazon jungle."

"What are we watching here?" asked Pickles.

"Why are we watching this?" asked Murderface.

Nathan shouted, "I'm watching it!

"Change the channel!"

"Pickles, play it!"

"Yeah, I will."

But he fumbled. "No, no, that's rewind!" Toki shouted. "That's too fars! Play it!"

Skwisgaar scoffed, "Looks at them. They can't even sneak Spenglish."

Nathan got pissed, "You guys, shut up and get out of here. You know? Get out! This is interesting to me, so leave it! I'm one-fourth Yaneemango."

"You are?" I asked.

"Yeah. My grandfather was a Yaneemango chief."

"Cool."

Then Pickles heard something that tickled his fancy. "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait! What did
that guy say? Rewind. Play."

The narrator said, "The Yaneemango use a hallucinogenic drug called Yopo.

"Yopo? Am I saying that right... Yopo?"

"...through the nasal cavities by means of a long pipe."

Pickles was excited. "Dude, that's awesome! I've never heard of that. I got to try that stuff."

"You really don't," Swkisgaar said.

The narrator continued, "The Yaneemango achieve a trancelike state to communicate with the spirit world with drumbeats. We wondered how the Yaneemango would react to hearing the world's most popular art form, Dethklok." He played the Duncan Hills Coffee Jingle. The Yaneemango started to dance to the beat of the song.

(!)

The documentary seemed to work because I had completely gotten over Dethklok forgetting me for three days. I, like the rest of Dethklok, were in the library studying the Yaneemango. Or at least, the Yopo.

"Dude, there's so much information about this drug, Yopo," Pickles said. "Dude, it says in here that the people who take it turn into their ancient animal form. Dude, that's...that's pretty metal."

"It almost sounds like the visions you get whenever you get shot by the blue whale tranquilizer," I said.

Murderface leaned over his shoulders. "Oh, that's awesome. Let me s... Hey, Pickle, what would I turn into?"

"It says," I read. "That the spirit animal you turn into is based off of your traits."

"Really? So, what do you think I would turn into?"

Then I gagged, "Your breath smells."

"What? No, what would I turn into?

Even Pickles could smell it. "Okay, just back off. Stop breathing over my shoulder."

But Murderface persisted. "Just tell me what animal I would turn into and I'll leave you alone, but make it really cool."

"Get out of here! I can't stop breathing out of my nose."

"Let's look at some other books."

(!)

I found Toki and Skwisgaar reading books on the Brazilian rain forest.

Skwisgaar in particular found something interesting, "Oh! Oh, this here says that the Paos Ferro's woods in the Brazilians forest is what's yous could totally makes guitars out of. I'm totally going to do that."
"Oh, I'm totally goings to do thats, too."

"Tokis, why's yous gots to copies me all the times?"

"I don'ts copies yous all the times."

"Oh, yes, you does."

"Why can't not I have one thing that am mine's?"

I shook my head. Idiots.

(!)

Then I found Nathan reading a book on his ancestry. "What are you reading?"

"My family history. It's so brutal."

Then Murderface looked over Nathan's shoulder. "Hey, bud, what do you got going on there?"

"Nothing, just... Hey, why don't you brush your teeth, man, stop breathing in people's faces?"

"I ain't brushing my teeth in the library. That's ridiculous."

Nathan ignored him. "I'm just reading about my grandmother. It's pretty brutal. It's a diary of her trip to the Amazon."

"Really?" I asked. "Let me see. 'We were shipwrecked late last night. Most of our crew was crushed by the rocks. The rest were speared and eaten by the Yaneemango.' Brutal," I said, before continuing to read. "'My beloved Walter still, as far as I know, is alive. Day 13... I have fallen in lust with Oto. We are powerful together.' So did that mean Nathan is of Yaneemango royalty? I wanted to know more. "'Day 24... After eating with the Yaneemango, I notice Walter's pocket watch in my soup. I realized I had eaten the soup of my beloved husband.' Oh, that's brutal."

Murderface whistled. "Ate her husband in a soup?"

Pickles nodded, "Boy, that's totally cannibal corpse."

Nathan made it clear, "We're going to the Amazon."

(!)

The Left Eye bowed before Mr. Selacia and Vater Orlaag. "What is thy bidding, my master?"

"Dethklok has discovered Nathan's heritage," Orlaag said. "They're going on a trip to the Amazon to learn more of his Yaneemango lineage."

"Why does this concern you?"

"It's not just us that are concerned. The general is concerned as well."

"General Crozier is weak and stupid. He thinks he can solve the problems Dethklok causes by shooting them in the head."

"But remember," Mr. Selacia said. "It was I who gave him a new perspective of Dethklok. He knows now not to destroy them. Yet."
"I am still confused," the Left Eye said. "What is in that jungle that is so worrisome."

"A relic that's connected to Nathan's lineage," Vater Orlaag said. "We want you to retrieve it."

The sound of footsteps interrupted their conversation. "He's here," the Left Eye said.

Vater Orlaag looked on. "General Crozier, thank you for coming."

"What's this all about? Like you, we are very concerned about this Amazon trip and we feel we need someone on the ground to take action in case something out of the ordinary occurs."

General Crozier nodded, "I can have my men mobilized in 24 hours."

"We already have my best soldiers set to accompany you."

General Crozier narrowed his eyes at Vater Orlaag. "With all due respect, I would prefer to use mine."

Vater Orlaag smiled. "Surely you understand the importance of keeping an eye on you, too, General Crozier." He gestured to the Left Eye. "And our best agent will accompany you as well."

General Crozier stared at the Left Eye. "Just keep out of my way if I order it."

"Of course, General."

Mr. Selacia had the final word. "Prepare to leave at once."

(!)

At the Marduk's outdoor store, Dethklok and I were picking out the camping equipment needed for the trip. I already bought the compasses, backpacks, machetes, axes, matches, lighters, canteens, bug repellent, the works. I stopped at the cashier where Toki and Swisgaar were copying each other. Honestly, I couldn't tell who was copying who.

Skwisgaar said, "Gives to me this waterproofs guitars trunks and makes sures it can floats."

Toki said, "And gives to me waterproof guitars which shoots out bugs repellant."

"Gives to me magic gloves whats can makes my hands fly."

"Oh, gives to me opposites werewolves that turns to humans when the moons comes out."

Gives to me the swords that glows that shows me which way that is north."

"Oh, gives to me a battle-axe which shows me which way south."

Swisgaar got annoyed, "Stops copies me."

Toki got annoyed, "You stops copy me."

"Stops copies me."

"You stops copies me."

"Stop copies me."

I lost track of who was copying who.
Pickles was talking to Mr. Offdenson and an accompanying Klokateer. "Oh, oh, wait, and get some bait," the drummer said. "You get pretty big fish down there. Better get some big worms and get... you know what? Get snakes. Snakes are the biggest worms out there."

Mr. Offdenson said dryly, "I'm sure there'll be plenty of snakes down there. It's the Amazon."

"There you go penny-pinching again."

Swisgaar and Toki were still going at it. "Stops copies me. Stops copies me. Stops copies me."

"That's it." A shot from the blue whale tranquilizer shut them both up.

Meanwhile, Murderface was chatting with Nathan...with his mouth stuffed with food. "Oh, this is...this is just awesome! A choice assortment of jerky, sweet-bean spice..."

Nathan backed away in disgust. "What the... Close your fucking mouth when you talk, please."

"Fine, I'll starve! Then I'll be eaten by crocodiles..."

"I can't even understand you, you little jerk."

"Fuck you! You understand that?"

Mr. Offdenson walked up to Nathan, "Maybe an entire expedition isn't worth it. Couldn't we just send them some hoodies."

"It's always hoodies with you," the singer said. "Will you... will you just pay the bill?"

"Stops copies me." I thought I shot Toki with the tranq. I shot him again just to be sure.

We took the entire Deth air fleet to accompany us with the trip to the Amazon. We weren't taking any chances. Dethklok was about to go to a place where anyone unexperienced could die. And given that Dethklok's never been to the jungle, they definitely needed the help.

In the Dethcopter, Dethklok was at the banquet table with Jean Pierre serving them. Murderface was reading a book on Amazonian animals. "Did you know there's an Amazonian catfish that can swim up your pee and lay eggs in your ding dong?"

"Yeah," I said. "It's called the Candiru. And if there's a video of a guy getting a candiru out of his urethra."

Pickles' face turned green, "Okay, that's it. I'm done eating, all right? Just... Ugh! It's gross!"

Murderface scoffed, "You can mock me, but watch out when you pee!"

"Just back off a little, all right? This a horrible combination of beef-jerky breath and repulsive information, okay? I'm not interested."
"Fine, but you've been warned."
"You've been warned, Pickles!"

My Dethphone rang. "Hello?"

"We're almost ready," the head of the Deth air fleet said.
"Okay, ready the guns."

(!)

I peered out the window, observing the Deth air fleet. That's when I noticed a carrier that was not one our own. "Deth One, do you see that?"

"Yeah. That's not supposed to be there!"

The air fleet fired the carrier down, forcing whoever was in them to fly out in parachutes and land in safety. I thought I saw someone oddly familiar with the soldiers. I shrugged my shoulders. Then I turned on my phone. "All clear to fire!"

"Clear landing zone."

The Deth air fleet rained down bombs, bullets and napalm all over the area. When they stopped to reload, now was my chance to jump onto the Dethboat and hold on for dear life. When the Deth air fleet was done destroying the area, I gave the signal. "Release Deth boat."

"Release Deth boat!"

The Deth boat landed in the water with such a force, I nearly bit my tongue off.

(!)

Somewhere in the jungle, the Left Eye helped General Crozier and the soldiers that survived the destruction off their parachutes and down into the jungle floor. "Still think your best soldiers can handle it?" the Left Eye asked.

"Shut up. Now, don't forget this is my mission as well. Don't you go doing whatever you want to without my permission, understand, kid?"

"I am no kid, but I understand."

(!)

For three days, the Deth boat traversed through the rivers of the Amazon, the crew searching for signs of the tribe that connected Dethklok in various ways. Nathan preferred to stand in the crow's nest, his hair blowing in the wind. I guess that's the only reason he preferred to stay up there. As for me, I would occasionally help out a Klokateer here or there if they were in trouble, but so far, nothing disastrous happened surprisingly. Strangely, though, I couldn't help but feel like we were being followed.

(!)

On the fourth day, I found myself, leaning over the railing, whistling a little tune. Then I heard Murderface say, "That's it, just get some of the good jungle air. Ahh, wind just whistling through."
"You're relaxed, aren't you... WHOA!" I gasped and nearly fell off when I turned and saw Murderface naked and reclining on a chair, his gnarled, callused penis out in the open.

"What?" he asked.

"Nothing," I lied. "But why are you naked?"

"What? I like to feel the jungle breeze. What? Are you coming on to me?"

"No. Not even if I were gay. Which I'm not."

"Good. I am not gay either."

I shuddered, focusing my eyes on his and not his groin area and decided to change topics for my sake. "Can I ask you something?"

"What?"

"Have you thought on what your spirit animal is if you try the Yopo?"

"I won't know if I try it, because everyone else won't tell me!"

Then Skwisgaar arrived on deck with a tray of sandwiches. "Hey, I makes everyone sandwiches." And then he saw Murderface's crotch. "Pbht! Ohh, Murderface!"

Then Pickles came up on deck. "What's going... ohh, man! Murderface, what is wrong with you?"

Murderface raised an eyebrow and scoffed. "Oh, my god. You are so repressed!"

"It's got nothing to do with repressed!"

Skwisgaar said, "Hey, how about this? I solve the problems." And he threw the sandwich down to emphasize his words, "Put your shirts backs on!

Pickles pointed, "Look at your wiener."

"What?" asked Murderface.

"It's disgusting. You know, it's all gnarled. It looks like you stuck it in a hornet's nest or something."

Murderface got offended. "I happen to play bass with it! It's callous buildup! What is this? It's like Amazon boat church or something!" He stood up. "Can I please just take a leak before I pull my shorts up? Can I do that?"

"Fine, go ahead, but just promise to never do that again."

The bassist walked over to the side of the deck and proceeded to drain the lizard. "Ahh!"

The drummer and blonde guitarist groaned in disgust. "Oh, now I can see your ass," Pickles groaned in disgust. "Disgusting! It looks like cottage cheese!"

"Just let me do this," Skwisgaar said. "Quick questions... do you shave yours ass 'cause there's lots of stubbles goings on there."

"Uh, quick answer, fuck you!" taunted Murderface.
"Work out or something. Look at your ass."

Suddenly, I shouted, "WAIT! Murderface, don't piss off the ship!"

"Oh, you got a problem, too?"

"Yeah! Did you forget about the catfish that swim up your pee and into your penis?"

Murderface's eyes widened. "Oh, shit." He suddenly began to scream and fell on his back, writhing in pain. I blinked. "I'll alert the medical team."

(!)

Eventually, the boat came to a halt. Nathan asked one of the Klokateers what was going on. "I'm sorry, master," he said. "But this river is too narrow to boat over. I'm afraid we're going to have to abandon the gear and..."

Nathan said, "No, we're not gonna abandon the gear. We'll pull the boat over that mountain."

"We won't have to," I said. "The boat is amphibious. It can ride on land."

"Cool," he said.

(!)

It was relatively easy getting up to the mountaintop. The part that was hard for everyone however, was going down. Especially since this boat had no seat belts, no restraining devices, and no safety harnesses. We all went down the mountain like a log jammer ride, screaming all the way down. When the boat crashed, we all went flying. But that wasn't the worst of it. The worst of it was when we were surrounded by the natives we were searching for. Nathan felt like he belonged. "My people."

For some reason, they lowered their spears when they saw the mountain behind us.

(!)

The Left Eye snapped the picture of the mountain, carved in Dethklok's image. Who knows how long that mountain sculpture has been there?

(!)

The Yaneemango escorted us to their village where there was meat on the fire and people banging drums. Dethklok and I looked around, nervous.

"Hey, what do you think they plan on doing with us," asked Pickles.

"Hopefully they will rapes us with thems womens," Skwisgaar said.

"How can you think of women in a time like this," I snarled at him.

"What if they kills us," Toki asked.

"Doesn't anyone want to know how I'm doing," asked Murderface. Then he shouted, "Don't kill me! L- I'm pregnant with parasites! I have to live! They depend on me."

Skwisgaar said, "They can't kills me because there are little goofball dildos dependencies on me to
plays the billions more notes on the guitars."

Toki said, "And they can't kills me, neither 'cause I gots a millions little goofball dildos..."

At this point, Skwisgaar got annoyed. "You know what? Go ahead and kills me."

"Go aheads and kills me, too."

"I says it first, and yous repeats it after me!"

"Stops copies me!"

"I says it first, and you repeats me!"

"Stops copies me!"

"Stops copies me!"

"Stops copies me!"

"Stops copies me!"

"Would you both shut up?!" I screamed.

Two tribesman spoke to each other.

(!)

"Get ready," General Crozier whispered. "Something's about to happen."

(!)

What Pickles saw the Yaneemango carrying made him excited. "Oh! Oh, dude! They're getting Yopo!" Indeed, the tribes people were carrying bowls and long pipes. "Dude, if we're gonna die, we're gonna die high! Yopo! Yopo!" And the tribesmen blew yellow dust into our faces.

*Cue Bloodlines*

Words cannot describe the drug trip. This was far, FAR more intense than the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. I could see colors, swirls of volcanos, heads that were hearts, and hands were feet, outward was up and reality blended, time was nought and space blended. And I could see the spirit animals of Dethklok: Murderface being turned into a tiger, Pickles being turned into an octopus, Skwisgaar being turned into an owl, Toki being turned into a rabbit and Nathan being turned into an alligator. And they were all sitting on thrones of bodies.

(!)

"I wonder what they're seeing," the Left Eye said.

"Who cares," General Crozier said. "Just find what you're looking for so we can report..." He didn't get a chance to finish his sentence. The Yaneemango found him, the Left Eye and the other soldiers and sprayed their faces with Yopo as well. What the general saw frightened him: Cardinal Ravenswood, rotting, eyeless and with his intestines wrapped around his throat. "Beware," he croaked. "General. General Crozier...you are dead."

(!)

The Left Eye was the only one unaffected. Mainly due to the fact that they kept their mouth shut
and did not breathe through their nose. In response, they slaughtered the surrounding Yaneemango and walked toward the village. No one stopped them, due to being tripped out on Yopo. Finally, the Left Eye found the chief's hut and found the treasure. "I've got it, Vater Orlaag," they said in their communicator.

"Excellent. Return it to the base. Where is General Crozier."

"He's...on a trip so to speak."

"Then drag him back here if you have to."

"As you wish, Vater." They hung up. Then they walked by the Dethklok special effects manager, still tripping balls. They laughed then pushed him backward. "Stupid kid."

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Brendon Small and Adult Swim
"You know," I said to Nathan one day in the lounge. "I didn't think your stupidity would get you in trouble with politics again."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"This." I switched on the TV. A reporter said, "A political crisis looms in Florida as Governor Kip Slaughter is on the ropes after making disparaging remarks against Nathan Explosion."

The feed then cut to footage of the Floridian governor. "State holidays are not given out for nothing. This Nathan Explosion is a rock musician not a politician or war hero. Any proposal for any state holiday concerning this man will be vetoed by me, I assure you. I believe Nathan Explosion is a disgrace to the great state of Florida."

The fans reacted with what you expected: they formed a mob, ganged up on him and hung him upside down before they proceeded to beat him up with fists and anything they can get their hands on.

"Hey, Nate," said Pickles. "They're gonna kill that Governor on account of what he said about you."

"Goods," said Skwisgaar.

"Man," I said, wincing at the footage. "Even his own daughter's attacking him. And spitting on him."

Nathan didn't care. "Man, I love chips."

Mr. Offdenson said, "The President would appreciate it if you could say something on national TV to save the Governor from having his head chopped off by your rabid fans." But Nathan didn't say anything. Not even when the fans brought out the axes and machetes. "It would only take a second and it would be a great political move."

"I'm eating chips!"

"It will only take a second."

Nathan conceded. "God. All right."

"And please, don't say anything that will make them even more crazy," I said.

"I won't, mom!"

"Oy..."
At the Dethklok podium, Nathan fumbled with his words. "What am I supposed to be saying? Hey, what am I supposed to be saying?" I whispered in his ear. Then he said. "Oh, right, right, right... the Governor. The Governor...he said that I shouldn't have a holiday or something. Fuck him, right? Fuck that guy."

I put my hand to my forehead. "Oh, you boob."

When we returned to Mordhaus, I looked at the newspaper. "Congratulations, big mouth. Your little 'fuck you' comment has riled the fans to decapitate the governor, write the word 'Dildo!' on his forehead and dismember his body."

"It gets worse," Mr. Offdenson said as he turned on the TV.

A reporter said, "Riots and violence have hampered the special election due to the murder of Governor Kip Slaughter. Gangs of rabid fans are insisting on Nathan Explosion for Governor."

I blinked. "No. They can't be serious."

Mr. Offdenson frowned at Nathan. "The, uh, Governor was murdered because of your remarks."

Nathan shrugged his shoulders. "I didn't tell those guys to kill him. Our fans, you know, they're... they are crazy."

"So you admit it," I said.

"Hey, I've been saying that for a long time, Wood."

"And loyal," said Pickles. "Don't forget loyal."

"Yeah," said Murderface to Mr. Offdenson. "Why don't you take our side ever?"

Toki nodded. "Yeah, what about our feelings?"

"So you feel bad about the Governor being ripped apart?" asked Mr. Offdenson.

Skwisgaar shook his head. "No, we don't, but we feels bad about having to plays in humidity, 'cause you know it gets real balmy down there."

"Yeah, it's hard to plays when your hands sweat," Toki said.

I couldn't help it. I giggled at that.

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "All right. Well, you guys know that Florida is in a violent state of anarchy. Any concerns?" No one said a thing. Not even me. Sad, I know. "No? None? You, uh, still on that, uh, potato-chip kick, huh?" he asked Nathan. "Still just eating them potato chips. All right."

"Why don't you tell him the part that everyone's really crazy over," I said. "Or at least crazier than normal."

Mr. Offdenson sighed. "Well, uh, for the record, I tried." He switched on the TV to various news reports.
"...landslide write-in victory. Nathan Explosion is the Governor of Florida."

"Nathan Explosion... the next Governor of Florida!"

"Nathan Explosion... Governor of Florida!"

Nathan just stared at the news reports, still eating his potato chips. I said to him, "You weren't even on the ballot and they still chose you."

(!)

The tribunal started their meeting the second the announcement reached the news at Washington DC. "Gentlemen, it appears that Nathan Explosion will be the Governor of Florida," Senator Stampingston said.

"This is an outrage! How can we stop this?"

"Consider what the people would do, General Crozier," Vater Orlaag said.

"I feel we should go to purple alert," Senator Stampingston said.

An alarm and a flashing purple light started. No one said a thing. They just blinked a couple times. "Uh..." said the Left Eye. "Are we going to do something about this?"

"What can we do?" asked Vater Orlaag. "He's become a man in politics. And he has an army of a thousand fans."

"Still, the most important thing about celebrity politicians is that the people don't care about the important topics, just the celebrity politician's past accomplishments. In the eyes of fans, political elections involving celebrities are just popularity contests. Just look at governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger." (He was still governor when Metalocalypse was around.)

"Who cares about California," General Crozier said. "And while you have a point, Schwarzenegger is not as big as Dethklok. He doesn't have fans who commit ritual suicide."

"You see, Left Eye," Vater Orlaag said. "Dethklok's popularity is so powerful that it wipes the other celebrity politicians off the map. In the end, with Nathan as governor, all important matters will be forgotten."

The Left Eye nodded. "Especially with Nathan's inexperience in the world of politics."

(!)

When we arrived in Florida after days of traveling, the populace was ecstatic to see us. The same could not be said for Nathan. "Can you imagine being Governor of that?" He pointed to the fans outside. "I'd have to live in Florida."

"I wouldn't tell that angry mob that you don't want to be Governor," Mr. Offdenson warned. "You know, uh, what they did to the last Governor."

Nathan got worried, "Fuck, I'm fucked aren't I?"

"Yes, you are." I said.

Toki was smiling. "Congratulations. You's gonna be the real cool Governor."
"Oh, fuck that, Toki," Nathan growled.

Pickles agreed, "Yeah, Toki. Don't be stupid. Being Governor's totally lame."

Murderface slurred, "We don't fill out paperwork and fill out Governor forms and wear suits and ties like dildos. No offense."

"None taken," said Mr. Offdenson

"Yeah, Toki. You sees, you's a stupid," said Skwisgaar."

"I'm nots takes all that! You could be a real cool Governor what cares about peoples and does things to make stuffs better instead of complains about everything."

"Complaining's cool!" Murderface shouted.

"Complaining's totally awesome!" Pickles shouted.

I leaned in to Nathan, "You know, being Governor has its advantages. You'd be quite powerful."

"Oh, really?" he asked, an eyebrow raised.

"Wood, please don't encourage him," Mr. Offdenson said.

"Too late."

Nathan stood up. "And I could just put all my friends in charge of everything and just rape and pillage the economy and line my pockets with money and go mad with power?"

Mr. Offdenson said, "You actually could do that, you know...technically."

Murderface raised his hand. "I want to be in charge of the National Guard."

"Alright, you got it," Nathan said.

"I wants to help people," said Toki.

"You got it!"

"I need a secretary," Murderface said.

"You got it!"

"I want to be ambassador to China," Pickles said.

"You got it."

Skwisgaar just scoffed, "I wants no part of this deomcrats governments!"

"Oh, really?" I asked with a smirk. "Dude, Skwisgaar, do you know that Florida has the highest population of old ladies and retirement homes?" Skwisgaar stopped playing his guitar. "That's right. You could be in charge of old lady sex."

Skwisgaar stood up. "Then I wills be in charge of that, thens old ladies!"

"You got it!" shouted Nathan.
I smirked as Nathan walked to a podium with a Florida state flag behind him as he prepared his speech. Next to me, Mr. Offdenson said, "Did you really have to encourage him?"

"You would have done the same."

"...True."

Nathan said into the microphone, "I swear to govern the fuck out of this piece-of-shit state. Now let me hear your guns!"

Boom, boom, boom, boom!

And boy were there changes. The state flag was changed from white to black and the seal was changed to that of an image of Florida in the shape of a pistol, people of all ages were allowed to have guns, highway names were changed, and police vehicles were given an upgrade.

As part of Nathan's cabinet, Toki kept his promise to help people...sort of. "Now I reallys gonna makes everything right and do something good for people. But first I gots to get this office in order." He called to his assistant and pointed at a coffee mug. "Moves that over there. Not... Not there. No, moves it there. No... There."

The following week, the newspaper headlines read, "Murderface calls out to the National Guard to 'Blow shit up!'"

At the same time, magazines came with a new article: "Pickles! Florida's new ambassador to China!"

"As ambassador to China, welcome to my country. And this is how we do it," Pickles said to the Chinese delegates as he got lap dances from the girls in the strip club. The delegates were very pleased.

Another magazine article was soon printed: "Over 60! The older the berry the sweeter the juice! Skwisgaar sexes up the GMILFS!"

Somewhere in a private sex room, Skwisgaar was surrounded by dozens of naked old women. "Hellos, Ethel. Hellos, Rose. Can I buy us a cup of Metamucil?"

Nathan said at the podium, "And I promise every Floridian that you will all be rich because we're
gonna print some more money! Why didn't anybody ever think of this before?"

"New Florida currency worthless!" That was on the front page of every newspaper. And it got worse as the months rolled by. "Nathan Explosion destroys millions of Florida jobs! 'Working sucks,' says Explosion." "Crime up 20,000 percent!"

Even after all that, Toki still didn't get the cup were he wanted it to be. The poor assistant was at wits' end. "Not... Not there," Toki said. "No, moves it there. No... There. Not there... There. No... There. Jumps out the window! Find me a paper clip! You do what I say, or I haves you all killed! Now shit your pants!"

"Toki, your boner is showing," Nathan said offscreen.

Mr. Offdenson was reading the newspaper in the only safe place in Florida: the Dethbus.

"Alligator attacks on the rise. Dead bodies everywhere.' Nice one, Nathan."

Suddenly, the door opened and Wood slammed the door behind him. He panted heavily as he slid against the door and said, "I almost died out there! I can't even go to Blockbusters anymore without getting attacked by kids with guns or alligators anymore!"

I growled at Mr. Offdenson, "It's your fault! Why didn't you stop Nathan?!!"

"My fault? Who was it that told Nathan that he could be powerful if he took the job? Besides, I did try to give him advice, but you know how he is."

"And now," I growled. "Washington DC's considering calling Florida a no man's land. Whose dumb idea was it to have that moron be a governor anyway?" A rock bounced off the bullet proof window. "Oh, right."

Another news article was printed, "Anarchy! Police leave Florida! 20,000 percent crime rate!"

The following article was one of the worst: "School burns! Morgues overflow with dead bodies. Dethklok fans cause mayhem again. Possible links to the Florida school fires."

Pickles and the Chinese delegates were having their own problems. "Dude, Chen Lu... dude, don't worry. Don't worry. She just O.D.'d, okay? She just O.D.'d. She'll be fine. Just leave her here." And then he screamed, "Chen Lu! Help me out! Oh, my god. Oh, my god. Oh, my god. She's dead."

I fled to Nathan's new mansion as a group of rowdy thugs chased me down in a stolen cop car. I leaped over the walls and jumped through a window.
"Hey!" Nathan shouted. "I just paid for that window!"

"Forget the window," I shouted back. "It's hell out there! There are now no law enforcements! People and animals are killing each other! The economy is down the toilet! You drove Florida into chaos! Look!" I flipped on the TV.

A news reporter shouted over the loud rain, "There's no cops! There's nothing to... freaks are running around. They're shooting people!"

Just then, Pickles and the Chinese delegates entered the office. "Nathan. Nathan, we, uh...we, uh, got ourselves into a little...situation with a...lady."

"What lady situation?" I asked.

One of the Chinese delegates said something, but...I don't understand Chinese.

Just then, Toki and Skwisgaar entered the office. "It's crazy out there," the former cried. "Everyone goes nuts. It's anarchy. There's no police."

"There are no police," Skwisgaar said.

As if to prove their point, a hail of bullets flew into the room and hit the Chinese delegates.

Even Nathan saw that there was a problem. "Guys, guys, this, uh... This does not look good. This does not look good for, uh, my, uh, administration. I, uh... where'd I put those chips?"

"FORGET THE STUPID CHIPS!" I shouted. "You've got a much bigger problem to worry about!"

"I'll solve it! Trust me, I can handle this!"

(!)

*Cue Impeach God*

"Dethklok To Play Benefit Concert! Florida in ruin!" That's what the newspapers said the following week.

(!)

During the concert, rain began to pelt down hard on the fans. Thunder and lightning struck. But those were nothing compared to what came next: rising waters and waves came crashing toward the shore.

"It's a hurricane!" Someone shouted.

(!)

At a weather lab...

Nathan ordered, "Give me the weather bur... Bureau... Bur-eau."

A little nerdy man said, "But that's where we are, sir."

"Excellent. Outstanding. Good." He coughed before saying, "I command you to destroy the hurricane."
"Yeah," said Toki. "Use your weather-controlling machines."

The scientist said, "People can't destroy hurricanes, sir."

Nathan thought, then said, "All right, uh... knock it off course. Do that."

"I'm afraid that's impossible, sir."

"Damn it! We've tried everything."

"Not everything," said Murderface. Everyone looked at him. "Well, not everything, I mean...I mean, not literally everything."

"Okay, well, I didn't mean literally everything."

"Well, you said literally everything."

"Have you used the Emergency Broadcasting System?" suggested Mr. Offdenson.

Toki groaned, "I hates that thing... the 'be-e-e-e-e-e-e-ep.'"

Nathan said, "Oh, yeah. 'Be-e-e-e-e-e-e-ep.' No. No way."

Pickles mimicked the robot voice that came with the EBS, "This has been a message from Emergency Broadcast System."

Then the scientist dropped the bomb, "All emergency systems have been looted and destroyed, sir."

"They stole the beep?" asked Toki. "How'd they steal the beep?"

"People are so low," Murderface muttered.

"I'd steal that," Pickles said.

Nathan demanded, "What the fuck do you guys even do here?"

The scientist said, "We name the hurricane, sir."

"You name the hurricane?" Pickles asked incredulously. "That's your job?"

"What should we name this one?"

"Name the hurricane," Nathan pondered. "Um... Uh...How about, uh, Scrambles? Scrambles the, uh, The Death Dealer."

"Well, if it makes you feel any better," I said. "I used Dethklok's own sound system to alert the people to evacuate beforehand."

"Good for you," Nathan said.

(!)

"Scrambles the Death Dealer hits Florida! Get ready to die!" That was the headline the following day.

(!)
Nathan stood at the podium. Only one person was left at the meeting now: an old woman in a motorized scooter. "My lips are chapped," he said. "I don't even care. I just love eating chips." Then he remembered he was making a speech, "Oh, uh, I am confident that I have left Florida...in a much better place than, uh, where I found it. Oh you know what? Fuck it. I'm gonna get the fuck out of here. My back's killing me."

(!)

The people of Florida didn't care that they lost their homes, their money, and the lives of loved ones. They all agreed on one thing: Nathan Explosion was the "best governor Florida ever had".

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Adult Swim and Brendon Small
Murderface stood on stage in the middle of the race track in front of thousands of screaming fans. The announcer shouted, "Ladies and gentlemen, here to play the National Anthem, friend of NASCAR, William Murderface!"

Murderface said in the microphone, "It is an honor to be here! You are all my children. Get ready for our nation's National Anthem..." He dropped his pants. "...played with my cock."

(!)

At Mordhaus, Pickles, Nathan, Mr. Offdenson and I watched the TV, keeping our promise to see Murderface perform. "I don't know what's more shocking," I said. "The fact that Murderface is a business partner with NASCAR or the fact that they let him play the bass with his penis uncensored."

Pickles cringed at the sight of Murderface's gnarled, callused penis. "Aw, that's just gross. Nobody needs to see that. And how many more times do I have to hear the national anthem, you know?"

I rolled my eyes. "Dude, you guys promised you'd watch Murderface perform at the NASCAR track."

"Yeah," said Nathan. "We told Murderface we'd watch."

Suddenly, the feed was interrupted by a live police chase of...

"Oh, my god, what the hell are Toki and Skwisgaar doing?!" I shouted.

The two guitarists were in a drunken police chase, and they were randomly shooting at the police chopper. I face palmed.

(!)

After Mr. Offdenson paid bail, he was not happy. He dragged them back to Mordhaus, still drunk, and gave them a very stern talking to. Needless to say, it was effective; Toki and Skwisgaar sobered up, but their legal troubles were far from over.

(!)

When I realized Murderface was nowhere to be found, I tracked him to his room. "William? Are you okay in there? You've been in there for three days." No answer. I knocked on the door. He did not respond. Cautiously, I opened the door. I found the bassist with his face in his hands. "William? What's wrong?"

"Turn on the TV."
I switched on the TV. The Dethklok Minute host said, "Well, it seems that Toki Wartooth and Skwisgaar Skwigelf have gotten themselves into some legal hot water. Local law enforcement had this to say."

The police chief said, "You know, we were prepared to hunt down and shoot...and kill these people, but then we found out it was Dethklok...so, uh... you know, that changes things."

The Dethklok Minute host was back. "Wow, the courts have agreed to find them not guilty as long as Toki and Skwisgaar go to driving school and get their licenses. And they've got to do some community service. I wonder what that's gonna be." He paused before resuming, "In other news, Murderface's national anthem bass solo for NASCAR was preempted. Tough luck, Murderface."

I switched off the TV.

Murderface wasn't happy at all. "Why do I get preempted? You know why? 'Cause I'm just a stupid bass player. Why don't I just play behind the bass amps. Maybe that would be good. Then album sales would go up." He walked over to a mirror and said sadly, "Who am I fooling? I don't deserve the spotlight. I thought I could maybe, just once... Just once...be in the spotlight. That's all I want. Just once."

"What about Planet Piss?" I asked.

Murderface glared at me. "And how many sales have I made so far? None."

"Well, if you released it..."

"Bitch, don't tell me what to do!" I recoiled from him as he shouted. Then he sighed. "Why don't I get some appreciation for once?"

I tapped my chin. "Well, there is that charity event..."

"Pass."

I blinked. "Why don't you do something about it in your name?"

"In my name..."

I decided to leave him to his thoughts.

(!)

I found the boys and Mr. Offdenson in the lounge. "What's up, Toki and Skwisgaar?"

The two guitarists were frowning as the latter said, "We's gots to plans this wholes charity's events things now and do's a lives televised concerts!"

Toki said, "Yeah, community service sucks!"

"And thens we gots to do it on top of this! It's toos much works!"

"Maybe I can help out," I said. "Murderface has been in his room for the last three days sulking about the preemption of his NASCAR bass solo. Maybe you can let him produce your public-service charity event? Everyone wins that way: Murderface gets the spotlight and everyone is happy."

"And thens we don'ts gots to do it?" I nodded. "Fines!"
Mr. Offdenson turned to the singer and the drummer. "Uh, Nathan, Pickles, want to weigh in on this stuff? Lot of stuff going on over here. Just kind of not paying attention over there?"

"Nope."

"Nope."

"Okay then," I said. "Nathan, you drop of Skwisgaar and Toki back to driving school, I'll help Murderface with the project."

"Fine."

(!)

I found Murderface still in his room. "Good news, Murderface. Your chance in the spotlight has come. You're in charge of the charity and you get to come up with how it is run. Go crazy."

"I'm in charge of everything?" he asked, unsure.

"Yes."

"No producers?"

"No."

Murderface inhaled, exhaled, then stood up from his bed. "Leave me. I must brainstorm in solitude."

(!)

Hours later, Murderface called us all into the conference room, ready to explain his plan. "Oh, see, it's like a NASCAR-type theatrical hybrid event with cars!"

"So it's a car race," said Mr. Offdenson.

"Yeah, it'll be awesome," said Murderface.

"I'm confused. You want to do a car race?"

"Yes! But, no. Not just a car race a car event. It's like Medieval Times."

"Okay, so there's like jousting and horses..."

"No! No! Well, maybe! Maybe! Guys, help me out."

"So, you want a NASCAR-type jousting event or something like that?" I asked, confused.

"That's exactly what I'm talking about," Murderface said. "Wood gets it! He gets a treat!"

"What does this have to do with Dethklok," asked Mr. Offdenson.

"We are Dethklok! I'm in Dethklok!"

Nathan spoke up, "I'm Nathan Explosion from Dethklok."

Pickles spoke up, "I'm Pickles the drummer from Dethklok! It's me telling it to you."
"Right, I know that," Mr. Offdenson said. "What does this have to do with the music, though?"

"Who cares about what it has to do with the band and the music," Murderface shouted.

"Your audience cares."

"Fuck the audience! Fuck them!"

"Are you guys on board with this idea, really?" Mr. Offdenson asked.

I shrugged my shoulders. "Eh, I could take it or leave it."

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "Good day, then." He left.

"Fine," Murderface shouted. "Mother fucking fine! It's my time to shine, and you're jealous! Nothing can keep me back from producing the best NASCAR theatrical hybrid event the world's ever seen!"

"I'm helping you with this, Murderface. I promise you this will be a success."

"You guaran-god-damned-tee it will be a success! You get another treat!"

I narrowed my eyes. "Do you think I'm a dog?"

(!)

After their espionage message was complete, the Left Eye presented the information to the Tribunal. Their meeting began soon afterwards.

As always, Senator Stampingston began the meeting, "Gentlemen, it appears as if Dethklok is sponsoring their own NASCAR-type theatrical hybrid event."

"And the special effects manager is helping him with the plans," the Left Eye said.

Senator Stampingston introduced a very familiar man to the Tribunal, "If you'd please turn your attention to our Murderface expert, Dr. Gibbetz."

The short, flat topped man was back. And he had a lot to say like before. "Gentlemen, the ego of the bass player is fragile. His emotional insecurity is triggered by the perception that he is unloved, inadequate, and worthless. Just look at William Murderface. Frightened, scared, hate-filled...the perfect specimen of devolution. Cro-magnon brow, distended jaw, clammy hands, buckled stomach, back pimplage, hitchhiker thumbs, hammer assed, fallen arches, chicken-plucked legs, sandpapery eczema-styled skin, dry, unkempt triangle hair. This creature, devolved, swirling in a mass of self-hatred bubbling inside, this pathetic insecurity will cause him to want to be in control. Of course, this will be overridden by his dominant laziness, lack of concentration, and possible bipolar disorder which should make for a most disastrous NASCAR-type theatrical hybrid event."

(!)

Mr. Offdenson met with me in my office. "So, Wood, how's your project with William?"

I groaned. "Honestly, I hate it. Murderface keeps changing the plans every five minutes and..." I choked a sob. "It's a mess! I can't keep up with him and his demand to be in control!"

"I'm not surprised."
"Help me, Mr. Offdenson."

"I'll try."

(!)

The two of us found Murderface in his room, doing nothing but stab his table.

"Murderface," called out Mr. Offdenson.

"Oh, hi!" said Murderface.

"What are you doing in here?"

"Just getting my work done."

"'Getting your work done.' What work are you doing right now?"

"Uh, yeah, for the show, everything."

"You know what I think?" I asked. "You don't know what you're doing. You're rejecting my ideas. You're thinking you're in control when in reality, YOU'RE NOT!"

"Oh, no," Murderface said. "Not true."

"You're very late approving all the production design," pointed out Mr. Offdenson.

"Yeah."

"Okay, you have to do that."

"Yeah."

"And you've looked at the schedule?"

"Yeah."

"Okay, and what..."

"Fine."

"You approved the schedule..."

"Approved."

I sighed. I'm going to have to be the one to do all this alone. "Just a reminder," I said. "You have a press conference in five minutes with the Associated Press, all right? You know who that is?"

"Yeah."

"All those people out there are confused with our...I mean, your ideas and they want you to set them straight."

"Yeah. Straight."

"And you'll remember to do the insurance?" asked Mr. Offdenson.
"Got it."
"Should do that now."
"Yeah, I'll do it now."
"We'll do it right after the press conference."
"Right after the press conference."
"Okay."
"Okay."
"I did my job."
"Okay."

I inhaled. "So, Murderface, would you like some cue cards in case you forget your lines?"
"Sure. Whatever."

(!)

At the auditorium, Murderface peeked his head out from the curtain and gasped at how many people there were. "Oh, I-I can't go out there! I've never been in charge before! Look, I'm nervous."
"Did you remember to bring the cue cards?" I asked.
"I...I...I forgot! I am going to look like an idiot out there! Oh, I'm so nervous! Oh, god."
"Relax," said Pickles. "You know what? Hey, take one of these." He took a white pill from his pocket. "It's a special pill... slows down your heart."
"My heart's too fast, huh?" The bassist swallowed the pill.
"No! Don't take it!" I shouted. "You're not used to drugs like Pickles is!"
"Don't tell me what I can't take."

Nathan warned the drummer, "I think Wood is right. You shouldn't have done that. He's gonna get all weird and slurry and slow."

Pickles shook his head. "No, no, no he's not. It's got a little bit of speed with angel dust to counteract the low with a hint of coke and a splash of shits and giggles, you know, whatever. You feel better?"

By the time Murderface found the courage to walk to the microphone, he was reduced to a babbling idiot.

"Wait, I don't understand," said one of the interviewers. "This is supposed to be, what...a NASCAR-type theatrical hybrid event?" Murderface babbled in response.

"You think you maybe gave him too much pills?" asked Nathan offstage.

"He only took ONE," I pointed out.
"Yeah, no, it's what I take if I have to do a thing," said Pickles.

"Huh, guess he just can't handle the pressure," Nathan said. "Kind of feel bad for him. He's kind of bit off more than he can chew, but, uh...let's see if we can go make him shit his pants."

"Yeah, okay."

"And Dethklok... what's their involvement?" asked the same interviewer to Murderface. He gibbered away again. Then he collapsed.

"I've got to save his ass!" I ran to the stage and took the microphone. "Uh...hi. I'm Thomas Wood, special effects manager for Dethklok and Murderface's partner in the NASCAR-type theatrical hybrid event. And to answer your question, there will be jousting race cars, dragons, wizards, and other fantasy crap. And as for Dethklok's involvement, they will provide the soundtrack for the event. Does this answer your question?"

"Uh...yes. But what about..."

"No more questions," I said, dragging Murderface offstage. "Because he's not going to be able to."

(!)

The following morning, the newspaper headline read, "Brutal Press Meltdown! Peasant employee takes over Murderface's interview! Can Murderface pull off the Biggest Racing Event in history?"

(!)

Hours later, after reading the newspaper, I found Toki and Skwisgaar moping in the lounge. "Hey guys, how was the driving test?"

"Don'ts talks to us about it," Toki said.

"Yeahs, don'ts." said Skwisgaar.

"Okay, what's up with you?"

"They failed the driving test," Mr. Offdenson said, coming into the room.

"Don't feel bad, I felt the same way when I started driving," I said.

"They failed because they didn't even get on the road," Mr. Offdenson said.

I couldn't believe it. "You idiots didn't even DRIVE ANYWHERE AT ALL?!!"

"Great," Skwisgaar said, feeling worse. "We supposed to drives the double-necks guit-cars at Murderface's shows tomorrows nights but we's too damned scareds."

"Scareds likes little chicken," Toki said.

"You won't be doing the driving," I said.

"Huh?" the two guitarists said.

"Yeah, I hired drivers to be in the event. All you and the other members are doing will just play the soundtrack. Well, except for Murderface." The poor bassist still hadn't recovered from his high of the drug and was still babbling away in his room.
The NASCAR race track was given an entire makeover in the following days. It now resembled a "Welcome to the first ever hybrid theatrical tournament produced under the supervision and guidance of William Murderface!"

*Cue Race to Death*

A wizard walked into the middle of the stage and shouted into the microphone, "1 Kriillion hex-cades ago, in an ancient, faraway netherverse dwelled an ancient alien civilization devoted to making steel beasts with wheels of fire and engines like pulsing devil hearts! What were these hell contraptions?" The spotlights shined on vehicles that looked like mixtures of monster trucks and chariots. Each of them came with different colors, sizes and weapons. "They were gods! Tomnathan Falconcrammer from the Black team. Uno von Galaxor from the Purple team! Hans Engineheart from the Yellow team! And Maxazillion Wheelblazer from the Green team! Gentlemen, start your engines!"

The race was going well until Murderface, still in his high state, scooted his butt across the track like a dog on a carpet. This caused one of the drivers to veer off course and crash into the audience. Meanwhile, Toki and Skwisgaar were in a double-necked guitar themed race car. They were to jump over a ramp and onto another ramp to safety, but they overshot their jump and ended up crashing into a mechanical dragon's eye. The dragon malfunctioned and breathed fire into the audience.

Murderface was back on the stage, his pants dropped to his ankles and still babbling away like an idiot.

"This event's a total catastrophe," Nathan said. Then he said to Pickles, "We should get him shit to his pants."

"Shit your pants!" called out Pickles.

Murderface babbled, "Shit my pants!"

Still, the event was pretty successful despite the carnage. There was still the trouble with Skwisgaar and Toki failing to pass the driver's ed class. They will need to get over their irrational fear of the road. But that's another story. This was Murderface's moment of glory...even if he was too stoned off his ass to realize it.

"I say we did well, don't you think, Mr. Offdenson?" I asked the CFO.

"No we didn't."

"No, we did not."

The next morning, Murderface awoke with the words, "Oh, God, I'm coming down!"
The Revengencers

Chapter Notes

Copyright: Adult Swim and Dethklok

"Having a hard time waking up in the morning? Try our new Dethklok Norwegian blackened blood coffee. Served in special collector's skull mugs. Only $14."

I switched off the TV and placed another tack on the map. I surveyed it, keeping a close eye on the particular area covered in tacks. "These aren't random terrorist attacks. These are coordinated, planned."

Mr. Offdenson suddenly came into my room. "Wood? What are you doing?"

"Mapping out the Revengencers' attacks in the past months. So far, they've attacked Dethklok merchandise stores, Duncan Hills Coffee shops and music shops that contain Dethklok albums in the mid-western states. I'm trying to figure out how they're connected."

"You might want to add another tack to that map. Another attack has been reported."

I turned to face him. "When?"

"Now."

(!)

I switched on the TV following the investigation. The Duncan Hills Coffee spokesman was at a podium being interviewed, "The odds of another natural-gas explosion are so remote that you have a better chance of being killed by a bee sting inside the belly of a whale. So come on down to Duncan Hills and try a new Dethklok Norwegian blackened blood coffee. It's totally safe, totally safe."

I switched off the TV. "That gas leak cover up is not going to fool everyone forever, Mr. Offdenson. These people must be stopped. If only we knew who they are."

"You can stop with the drama, we both know who it is."

"But it won't do any good without evidence."

Mr. Offdenson gave me an envelope. "I know. That's why I got these still images from the security footage of the last attack."

I took the photos out and my eyes widened. "I was right." I tossed the photos of Edgar Jomfru, the boy wearing the face of Eric Jomfru and the man with the silver face to the ground and turned to the Klokateers that accompanied Mr. Offdenson. "Find them. Kill them."

(!)
The Tribunal began their meeting as soon as the reports began. "Gentlemen," Senator Stampingston said, "As you know these bombings are deliberate and not accidental. We've got to find out who it is."

"I already know," the Left Eye said. "I've been trailing a van that has been reported in each bombing for some time now. It was recently spotted at the recent attack." The Left Eye put images on the screen. "These three individuals were seen leaving and returning to the van. One of them is former Dethklok super fan and webmaster Edgar Jomfru."

"And the suspect who planted the bombs?" asked Senator Stampingston.

"A young boy from Nebraska wearing the face of Eric Jomfru as a mask. He was reported missing after he attempted to buy pirated Dethklok music."

Vater Orlaag said, "The Jomfru brothers have been missing since International Fan Day. It's been rumored that they were being held prisoner in Mordhaus."

General Crozier said, "We believe that Edgar Jomfru is the brains behind the anti-Dethklok terrorist organization known as the Revengencers."

"And the gentleman with the silver face?"

"He's the brother of a man we sent in to infiltrate Mordhaus some time ago." Ah yes, Agent 216, the man who got impaled in the mouth by a diamond-encrusted codpiece. "If he wants Dethklok dead, I'm sure he can make it happen."

(!)

The Left Eye bowed on one knee before Mr. Selacia in private. "What is thy bidding, my Master?"

"The man with the silver face. You know where he is?"

"Unfortunately, no. I've lost contact with him after leading him to Edgar Jomfru."

"He will kill Dethklok given the chance. You must not allow him to succeed."

"It's all right. I know where the Revengencers are going to strike next."

Mr. Selacia raised an eyebrow. "You do?"

His Left Eye nodded. "The band is building and funding a hospital for Revengencer victims. Of course, they're covering it up and the people are gullible enough to believe them."

"Find this hospital. Kill the Revengencers, but the one with the silver face must live. He has his own role to play."

"Yes, Master."

(!)

The boys, Mr. Offdenson and I watched a video in the conference room. It depicted a man with no legs and in a wheelchair. "The victims of these Duncan Hills coffee natural-gas-coincidence explosions need your help," he said. "Even I had my legs blown off when several pieces of shrapnel..." Mr. Offdenson switched off the video.

"All right," he said. "So, you all know that we are in the middle of building a hospital for the
victims of this public-relations disaster."


"Pandering!" shouted Murderface.

"It's not 'pandering'," I said. "It's a hospital for the people who got blown up."

"Hell, that's not our fault," said Skwisgaar. "We didn't do that."

"Well, they are your fans, and they, uh, have been badly injured and some of them killed, uh, trying to buy your collectible coffee cups," pointed out Mr. Offdenson. "Maybe you could show a little compassion."

"Compassion?" said Murderface, flabbergasted.

"Oh, no, no, no, no," protested Nathan as he took out a tea set and sipped some tea. "I got no sympathy for anyone. I got one of these darn summer colds. I mean, where's my benefit concert? I mean, is there anything worse?"

"See, that's something we have compassion for is summer colds," Murderface said. "You can... you can relate to... See...you can't relate to your arms being blown off. You can't."

"Dudes," I said. "Being blown up is worse than a stupid cold."

The other band members seemed disagree with me. "Oh, come on," said Skwisgaar. "When did yous comes so carings about stuffs? Does your drunks or something?"

"No, I'm not drunk," I said.

"We're just, uh," said Mr. Offdenson. "Trying to, you know, repair your image."

"Repair our image with healthcare," said Murderface.

Toki said, "Why we gots to spends our hardened-earned money on medical stuffs for people's..."

The rest of the guitarist's rant was drowned out by Nathan's groan, "Oh, god, this mother fucking eye-gouging, cock sucking, mother fucking summer cold. It's driving me crazy over here."

Murderface inched away from him, "Stay away from me 'cause I can feel my throat getting scratchy. I don't want to get sick."

"Yeah, colds," Pickles said. "They're hard to get rid of. They don't go away."

"I was gonna say that's psychosomaticals," Toki said. "But I thinks my throats gets scratchy, too."

"Want some orange juice?" I asked.

Then Murderface started sneezing. "Ah, shit! Oh I'm sneezing. Oh, fuck!" I handed him a tissue. "Thanks."

(!)

In a butcher shop in the middle of nowhere, three individuals planned their vengeance against the godlike death metal band. The fat one in the electric wheelchair, Edgar Jomfru, sipped a goblet of wine being filled by the teenager wearing his brother, Eric's face. Edgar said, "These are the
moments that define us." He noticed his other business partner, the man with the silver face, obsessively stabbing pictures of the Dethklok CFO and special effects manager. "You seem preoccupied. What bothers you?"

"This man," the man with the silver face said. "He must be killed and made an example of in front of the world. I will crucify him. And the boy is growing in power as well. He is developing skills that made him survive even the most deadly assassinations. I fear he will hinder our plans as well."

"The boy is mine," Edgar said. "Remember that. As for their CFO, be patient. We must strike at the right time or we can risk losing everything." He paused when the masked teenager didn't move. "Excuse me. I need to get by you." The teenager moved out of the way. "Do you want a burrito, also?" The boy shook his head. "No? Two burritos for me." Edgar then joined the silver faced man's side.

"If we kill them," he said. "They will have no one to hide behind."

Edgar nodded as he said, "And when Dethklok plays at the hospital, we will be there and we will take them down!"

(!)

I found Dethklok in the med lab, all of them complaining about their colds and saying they're dying to the doctor. "For the last time, you idiots, it's just a cold! You're not dying! Just take some vitamin C and perhaps some chicken soup!"

"Indeed, we are dying," Nathan said. "I really don't feel great."

"Did you ever have colds before?" asked the doctor incredulously.

"Can't you gives us injections?" asked Murderface.

"Come on, use your fancy degrees, asshole!" said Pickles.

"Take it easy, all right?" said the doctor. "No drinking, no partying. Give me that cigar." He snatched it out of Pickles' lip. "Just take it easy. Go to the sauna, sweat it out, and relax, okay? Take it easy. Idiots."

"I didn't know we had a sauna," I said.

(!)

I downloaded the latest music video onto my flashdrive when I returned to my office and resumed my special effects work. "Now I better deliver this to Mr. Offdenson." I exited the office when I felt I should check up on the boys. "Now where was that sauna again?"

(!)

It took a while, and a couple of times getting lost, but after asking for some directions, I was able to find the sauna door. For some reason, a Klokateer stood outside with jars of leeches and buckets of blood next to him. "What's all this?" I asked.

"The Lords are using medical techniques from the Middle Ages to cure themselves of their colds, sir."

I was shocked. I looked at the buckets. They looked half full! I tore the door open and gasped at
the sight of Dethklok, nearly passed out, pale and covered in leeches. Beside them were buckets which their slit arms were bleeding into. "Would someones stops the bloods drainings out of me?" Toki mumbled over and over again.

"GET THEM TO THE HOSPITAL STAT!" I ordered the Klokateer.

(!)

Mr. Offdenson oversaw the procedure of Dethklok getting their blood back. "Uh, you guys ready to do the concert?" he asked.

"Keep them away from anything sharp," I warned him.

(!)

That night, at St. Necrophagist Hospital, the Klokateers were hired to keep a VERY close eye on Dethklok to keep them away from any medical tools. We didn't want them draining their blood again. Currently, the band were talking to the patients...along with what was left of them. Nathan tapped a patient's shoulder. "Hey. Hey. Hey, wake up," he said. "Somebody's talking to you, and it's me. It's Nathan Explosion at a hospital. I'm making a public appearance." The patient didn't respond. "Hey, wake up!" The patient woke up then. "Oh, look, look, look, look. Hey, hey, I don't think this show's gonna be very good that we're gonna do, 'cause I don't feel good. I got a summer cold."

"And you've lost blood," I reminded him.

"Shut up, Wood." The patient closed his eyes. "Okay, you go back to sleep now."

Toki was talking to a young child. "Was you a little girls or little boy?"

(!)

The next patient was clearly a girl. The singer said to her, "Hi. I'm Nathan Explosion from Dethklok. It's really good. Thanks for buying our records." He paused. "Hey, I don't think this show's gonna be very good."

"Dude, it's a free show," reminded Pickles. "What do you want? Us to feel great about it?"

"Well, uh, regardless," Mr. Offdenson said. "You guys do have to go onstage."

(!)

After setting up the stage, the four of the band members prepared themselves while Nathan made his announcement to the patients. "Hey. Hey, you. Hey, listen, it's gonna be a bad show. I got a cold, so does Pickles, so does Skwisgaar...so does Murderface, and, uh... And, uh... We don't even want to be here."

"Tell them just to lower their expectations," said Pickles.

"It's not gonna be great," said Nathan.

"Let's cut the set list in half," said Murderface.

"I should just do one song," Nathan decided. "Ready?"

*Cue Pull The Plug*
While the band played, I glanced out the window and saw a very familiar van. The van seen in the reported terrorist...I mean, gas leak explosions. I nudged Mr. Offdenson and pointed him out the window. "Hide," he ordered.

I nodded, and hid amongst the patients.

In the crowd, Edgar Jomfru silently pulled out a sniper rifle and carefully aimed it at Dethklok.

One armless patient saw what was happening and shouted, "What are you doing?"

"Revengeance."

The armless patient shouted, "No way. They're trying to kill Dethklok!"

Upon hearing this, all the patients grabbed Edgar and tossed him out of the wheel chair. They advanced toward him, moaning and groaning like zombies while Edgar tried to crawl away.

"Get away," Edgar pleaded as the patients surrounded him like zombies. "Why should you care about this? They made you this way. They turned you into monsters!"

The armless patient shouted, "Fuck you, fat ass!" before biting into Edgar's nose.

"No!"

At that point, a smoke bomb was tossed into the crowd. Distracted by the commotion, Mr. Offdenson failed to notice one Klokateer behind him tear off his hood and reveal himself to be the man with the silver face. The silver-faced man punched him a few times and tossed him out the window. But Mr. Offdenson landed on his feet.

(!)

The man with the silver face felt a sudden pain in his back. He turned around and saw the special effects manager standing behind him with a syringe. He threw some punches, but the special effects manager dodged every single blow. The special effects manager stabbed him again, this time in the stomach. But this did not slow him down. The silver-faced man grabbed him by the throat and slowly started to strangle him.

The special effects manager choked and gasped as he struggled to break free. What happened next? Karma perhaps? Or perhaps fortune was in his favor? Or perhaps God was by his side in that one brief moment? Whatever the reason, Wood grabbed a bottle of acid that rolled to his side and smashed it in the assassin's face.

As the killer screamed in pain, Wood used this opportunity to point his blue whale tranquilizer dart gun point blank...only to pass out when he felt the butt of a gun knock him out.

(!)

He awoke the next morning in the Mordhaus med lab with Mr. Offdenson standing over me. "What hit me?" I asked, groaning and clutching my head.

"The butt of a rifle. Courtesy of Edgar Jomfru."

"Damn it. He got away...he and the other Revengencers."

Mr. Offdenson frowned at me. "You disobeyed me. I warned you not to fight that silver-faced man. Consider this your punishment for not listening to me."
"I'll be careful next time."

"Pull another stunt like this again, and there won't be a next time. You'll be fired."

I just lied back down into the bed. "What about Dethklok? I don't care if I get fired. I just want to know if they're safe."

"It's all right. They're fine. They gave you this." He placed a Dethklok skull mug on the bedside table. He turned to leave. "By the way, I've put the new schedule for the music videos next to your bed. Be sure to get to work on them as soon as you come out of the hospital."

"Yes, sir." As he left, I sighed. Lesson learned. No more doing any dangerous crap behind Mr. Offdenson's back. EVER.

Chapter End Notes

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It was my last day in the hospital and thank goodness. I was able to finish my work by having my computer next to my bed, but it was rather uncomfortable lying in this hospital bed. With nothing else to do, I decided to watch some TV. It was a Dethklok news show hosted by a woman newscaster. She said, "It's time to check in on the boys in the band to see who's dating who. They're living the charmed life with a new girl for each day of the week. But will these bad boys of metal ever settle down? Maybe not." Then the hostess showed images of a VERY familiar woman. A woman who was currently lying in a coma. "Remember 'Natebecca'" asked the hostess. "It was the storybook romance that took a turn for the tragic when actress/model Rebecca Nightrod fell down several flights of stairs and landed herself in a coma." I chuckled at that. "But Nathan Explosion stayed by her side through it all until it became clear to the public that it was over." What? "Rebecca Nightrod, still in a coma was spotted in public canoodling with billionaire hotel heir Walt Perkins. Explosion was out of the picture and left behind."

I'm gonna kill her.

(!)

After I was discharged from the hospital, I immediately looked all over Mordhaus to find Nathan in an attempt to cheer him up. It was raining that day, so the weather seemed to match Nathan's mood: gloomier than usual. Eventually, I found him playing golf. In the rain. And he wasn't really playing golf, he was just swinging the club at the balls in anger. The other members of the band were watching nearby, cold, wet and shivering.

"You're better off without her, bro," Murderface said.

"Yeah, dude," said Pickles. "We can hang out like we used to, you know?"

"You don't get it," groaned Nathan. "She was the ultimate girlfriend."

"Dude, she was in a coma," Pickles said.

"You were just infatuated with her unconsciousness," said Murderface.

"That can't last forevers," said Skwisgaar.

"Come on, don't leave us hanging out here," said Pickles. "It's freezing!"

"Would you like me to kill her?" I asked Nathan. "Would that make you happy?"

Nathan stopped swinging. "Guys, I been thinking." He paused. "I think it's time I started dating again."

(!)
The next morning, we were in the diner eating breakfast. Toki was reading the newspaper regarding the latest news on Rebecca and for once, I agreed with him when he said, "Slut!"

"Toki!" Murderface chided him.

"She's slut. Look at her."

"Take it easy, man," the bassist said. "You don't call women bad words, man. That's women. You got to respect them."

I frowned at him. "Why the sudden change in heart, William?"

"What?"

"You're a classic woman hater. Come to think of it, you're a man hater as well."

"Well, that's disappointing, Wood, that you would just blindly label a person. That's, uh, that's just pretty disappointing."

"Dude, you label people all the time!"

"He's right," Skwisgaar said. "You are the one that walks around talkings about how they ams, I don't know, poisonous serpents with tits."

"Yeah? So?" asked Murderface.

"What do you mean 'yeah? So?'", asked Pickles. "You said that about women. Now you're defending them a lot."

"Okay, fine, look," Murderface said, waving his hands defensively. "Oh, boy, you guys. I may have said a couple kooky things about the ladies...but that was before, man. You got to defend their honor, you know? Like a hero."

"And?" I asked.

"And what?"

"And then what happens next?"

"Well, you know, just...Well, then they sleep with you."

"AHA! I KNEW IT! This is just a stupid ploy to get women to have sex with you! You don't care at all! Classic Murderface."

"Shut up! I DO care! I can prove it!"

Suddenly, Nathan entered the kitchen. "Hey, guys. You know I've decided to start dating and I'll probably be bringing some girls back here, so, uh, I'd really like it if you guys made a point to not fuck that up for me. There. I feel better having said that."

"Please pick the right woman next time," I warned him. "You don't want another abusive harpy in your life like what happened with Rebec...sorry."

"Whatever." And he left.

"What does that mean," asked Pickles. "I mean, how do we fuck anything up?"
"Do you want a short list or a long one?" I asked.

"If anything, we make it better," said Murderface.

"We makes it better," agreed Toki.

Pickles then thought out loud, "Maybe we come off, you know, like rock stars around people and maybe we could just be a little bit nicer."

"We can't helps it," Toki said. "We are rock stars."

"What am I gonna do, stand there like a cigar-store Indian," demanded Murderface. "I got to be charming! I can't help it!"

"Okay," said Pickles. "I mean, like, let's support him. I guess that's what I'm saying."

"I thought Nathan made it perfectly clear," I said. "Don't help him, don't support him, don't fuck him up."

"Oh comes ons," said Toki. "How does we fucks him up?"

"You know what? I will give you the long list."

(!)

The Tribunal started their meeting as soon as Nathan started his Internet dating profile. "Gentlemen," said Senator Stampingston. "Nathan Explosion is now officially single."

General Crozier reported, "This information has only recently reached the female public, and already women around the world are in a state of chaos."

"And now these women are doing everything that they can to get Nathan Explosion's attention," said Vater Orlaag.

"However," said the Left Eye. "There is one group of women that deserve the most attention. They call themselves Succuboso Explosion, led by Lavona Succuboso." The Left Eye showed an image of an Eastern European woman with long black hair and wearing a black body suit. "She and her followers devote themselves to capturing Nathan Explosion, breeding with him and giving birth to an army of all-powerful warrior children."

"We believe that she will surface on the night of the next Dethklok concert," said General Crozier. "I believe that Lavona has the power to rid the world of Nathan Explosion."

"And we can't let that happen."

(!)

I was in the lounge, reading one of my books. At the same time, the other members of Dethklok (minus Nathan) were playing Scrabble.


"I am going. Hold on. I am thinking. Uh, okay. Is this a word? Q- U-h-z-k?"

"Quhzk," said Toki. "That's what the duck says."
"No it's not...sort of," I said.

Pickles shrugged his shoulders. "All right, whatever. 's 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10...52 points. 52 points... that's good."

Suddenly, the door opened, and Nathan and a woman with light brown hair, wearing a teal shirt and carrying a purse entered the room.

"Okay, guys, Nathan's here with a girl," I said. "So, remember, don't fuck this up, okay?"

"What are you talking about," said Pickles. "We're here to help him get through this, all right?"

"Don't worry," said Murderface. "I won't do the hero thing 'cause we don't want her to focus on me."

"Have you idiots not paid attention to anything I just said?!"

"Uh, hey, guys, this is, um, Rachel," Nathan introduced the woman. "Uh, we're just gonna hang out. I was gonna show her stuff, uh, in my room."

"Oh, well, that's interesting," said the drummer. "Rachel? I'm Pickles. Sorry that Nathan is so rude. Hello."

"Hi," said Rachel, shaking his hand.

"Oh, my god. You have got soft hands."

"Shut up," I said through gritted teeth.

Then Skwisgaar came to her. "Aw, looks at you. You likes the prettiest little porcelains doll. Could you gets any cuter? I don't think so."

"Please, shut up," I begged.

And then it was Murderface's turn. "Let me just put this out here. If anybody says one thing to you...I will crush their skull! My hands are lethal weapons!"

Nathan started dragging Rachel away as he said, "Okay, guys. Enough, all right? Okay, we're gonna split, so, uh..." Unfortunately, Toki blocked him.

"Holds on, holds on," he said. "We never gets to meets anybodys ups here. Always working. Don't you wants to meet us, Rachel?"

"I would like to meet you guys," Rachel said cheerfully. "I've heard so much about all of you."

"I am afraid thats it's all true," said Skwisgaar. "Takes us in to the police officers."

"We are guilty as charged," said Pickles.


"Sorry. I'm sorry. That's Pickles and Murderface and... you get the idea. They all have names and everything. What are you guys doing over there?"

I said, "They were playing Scrabble, but..."
"Yes, ams playings the Scrabbles," said Toki. "Would yous likes to play a game with us?"

"She doesn't want to play with you guys!" Nathan shouted.

"Nathan." Pickles scolded.

"Nathans," scolded Skwisgaar. "You don't raise your voice to your best friends."

"Guys," the singer said. "I just want to go upstairs and...you know, hang out."

Murderface narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean 'hang out'?"

"I mean, you know...hang out... you know, sitting."

"You can sit down here. What are you trying..."

"I'm just saying...maybe it would be a little bit more intimate...and quiet over there, you know?"

"We are your friends," said Skwisgaar. "We can't be intimates and quiets here?"

"Yeah, we can be really quiet," Pickles agreed.

"Yeah, we can play Scrabble silently," Murderface said.

"Nathan, you know how quiet we can be."

"Yeah, so, if you want us to be quiet, we'll just be quiet."

Nathan had had enough. "All right! One game! Fine!"

(!)

In an unknown location, Lavono Succuboso delivered her speech to her army of Amazons. "Soon, my sisters," she said in a thick Eastern accent. "We will have what we need to begin our own colony of Explosionites. We are the vessels that hold the future."

"We are the vessels that hold the future."

Succuboso walked over to a dummy that resembled Dethklok's singer and caressed it. "And you, Nathan. Beautiful Nathan. You will provide the seed that will go inside of each us. We will build powerful warriors with your help." She turned to one of her followers. "Test the loin extractor."

The woman held up a device that looked like a cross between a tazer and a milking machine and fired at the dummy's crotch. Succuboso smiled wickedly as the device pumped the dummy's crotch and at the same time, electrocuted it. They were ready.

(!)

I stood by Nathan as we watched Rachel play Scrabble with the other members of Dethklok. "Is it me or did they just steal her from you?"

"Yeah, it is."

They had been playing for hours. And the worst part was, she actually liked hanging out with them.

"I'm going to bed," Nathan said as he walked away.
"Okay, see ya," said Murderface.

"Uh, I'll call you, or call me. Ugh."

(!)

Some time later, I joined Dethklok at a bar. It was my job to make sure they didn't get too drunk. For some strange reason, Nathan was drinking by himself.

"I liked Rachel. She's fun," said Pickles.

"Sweet kid," agreed Murderface.

"I'm gonna texts Rachels just to say hi," said Toki. Do you wants me to say hi from you guys, too?" They said yes. "Send."

"Oh, check it out over there," Murderface said as he pointed to two beautiful girls across the bar. "Guys, watch and learn." As soon as the bassist started walking over to them, the woman looked as though they wanted to run away, but it was too late. "Don't mind me, patrolling these parts here...making sure it's safe for your kind. You know... women. Yeah, well, it seems... seems pretty safe. But I'm sure someone's gonna shoot their mouth off and then you'll see what's up!"

"Way to turn on the charm, William!" I shouted.

"Shut up! You're killing the vibe!"

"Hey, what's going on," said Toki, walking over to him. "You need some help or something?"

"Nothing!" shouted Murderface. "Get out of here! I'm defending them. I'm keeping them safe."

"From whos? No one's here to be mean to them."

Then Skwisgaar walked over to him. "Yeah, what bars do you hangs out at where girls needs their honors constantly defended, you know? The Double Deuce froms Road House?"

"Oh, my god," the women exclaimed. "You're Skwisgaar Skwigelf!"

"Oh, I know you. Yous are the two beautifuls ladies at the bars, right?"

"That's enough, Skwisgaar," Murderface said. "Can't you see I was here first?"

"Sorry, ladies. Murderface has laid claims to yous."

"No!" one of the women shouted. "He hates women!"

"Who said that?" demanded Murderface. "Anyone that says anything negative towards a woman I will beat the shit out of them."

"We said that," the second of the two women said. "What are you gonna do about it?"

"Uh..."

"Wait a minute," the first woman said. "Aren't you the bass player? Why are we even talking to you? Shouldn't you be, like.. unloading equipment or something? Don't you need to put some water bottles on the stage? Don't you have to, like, steam their costumes?"
"I love how bass players just pretend they're working as hard onstage as the other bandmates," the second woman said.

Each sentence made Murderface even more heartbroken. "Bass is the foundation of the band!" he shouted.

"Why don't you make like a bass guitar and be inaudible?"

Ouch. I cringed throughout the whole thing.

(!)

The next day, Murderface was still upset. "Don't feel bad, William," I said as he and I walked to the lounge. "I'm sure there's a girl out there who's just as ugly as you and loves the bass."

"You're not helping."

"Sorry."

(!)

At the lounge, the bandmates were minding their own business when Nathan came in with a red-haired woman wearing a red dress and skirt. "Uh..." I said. "Who is this?"

"Uh, hey, guys," said Nathan. "This is Amanda. That's Pickles, Toki, and Skwisgaar, and, uh, Murderface."

"Hey!" said an angry voice. It was Rachel.

"What the hell is she doing here," asked Nathan.

"We invited her here," I said. "We thought it might be nice for you to go on a second date with her."

"Great," Nathan said. "That's not weird or anything. I mean, here I am on another date...and there's the old one."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing "The old one"? I walked to Nathan and grabbed him by the arm and dragged him into the hall. "Come here, you."

(!)

"What are you doing?"

"Nothing. What? I'm on a date."

"Just like that? What about Rachel?"

"What about her? I went on a date with her."

"So, that's it? Are you breaking up with Rachel?"

"I was never in a relationship with Rachel."

"And now what?" said Pickles, who was walking with Toki, having heard everything. "We can't do anything with her?"
"We're taking a Chinese-cooking class together," said Toki.

"Why did you do that?" shouted Nathan.

"Because she's wonderful," said Toki.

"Because she's a wonderful lady, dude, okay," said Pickles. "Why can we see that and you can't?"

"I'll tell you why," I said. "It's because Nathan only sees woman as something to be used for a one night stand!"

The vocalist shouted, "Get out of my life!"

"Fine," I said. "But let me tell you something: Maybe the others were right. You DO need help."

Nathan went through two other women, all of them became fast friends with the other band members along with Amanda and Rachel. Nathan, however, was alone.

Mr. Offdenson found Nathan in the conference room alone. "Hey, uh, Nathan, I understand you're experiencing a little bit of girl trouble. Just wanted to lend you a shoulder to...uh, you know, to...you seem like you're okay." Nathan said nothing. "For the record, I tried."

The other band members had a meeting with the four women Nathan dated in the lounge.

"Okay, you are all beautiful," Pickles said. "You're beautiful, wonderful ladies with personalities, style, sophistication. And we're talking about a guy who doesn't know what he wants. You guys are too good for him."

"He doesn't know what he wants," said Pickles.

"Does he want this," Pickles gestured to a blonde-haired woman. "He doesn't know. Does he want that?"

"He gots problems, yeah."

"Maybe the problem is you guys?" I asked. "I mean he did say he didn't want your help."

Just then, Nathan came in. "What the fuck is happening here? Everyone leave now. Get out of here!"

"Sames times tomorrows, ladies," Skwisgaar said to the leaving women.

"Do you know what you are," shouted Nathan. "You're a bunch of cock blockers!"

"Yeah, you're right," said Murderface, taking Nathan's side. "They don't want us to get any of that sweet poontang!"

"I have to agree with them," I said. "You guys steal every single girlfriend Nathan brought. Look, you want to meet girls? Go out and meet them."

"Yeah," Nathan said. "Don't take mine!"
"Tell 'em, big guy," Murderface said.

"Okay. All right," he said, feeling awkward about Murderface until he got serious again. "Look, tomorrow night is our first concert since...since I broke up with... Rebecca. But there are gonna be a lot of nice young ladies...there who will really want to you-know-what. If you stop that from happening, I will actually kill you."

"Yeah... dead."

I face-palmed. "Murderface, stop pretending like you care."

"Shut up. When was the last time you ever had a girl?"

"Never, because I am too involved in special effects or risking my balls to save your asses!"

Murderface got in my face. "Oh, you think you're better than us? Well, I'd like to see you get a girl, and have just ONE date with her!"

"Maybe I will! And you're not keeping her!"

"Fine!"

*Cue Klokbloked song*

While the band played their songs at the concert, I decided to put my money where my mouth was and ask a girl out. Any girl. I inhaled, put on whatever charm I had and tapped a random girl on the shoulder. She was pretty. Blonde and blue eyed and skinny. Not as skinny as a bone, mind you, but was skinny enough to be healthy. I stuttered. "Hi."

The woman didn't look interested in me. "Hi."

I scratched the back of my head. "Yeah, my...my name is Thomas Wood...and...uh..."

"Everyone knows you. You're the guy with the tranquilizer dart. You're like, Dethklok's bodyguard or something."

So she did know me? Well, that's one positive. "Well, technically I am their special effects manager. I'm the guy who designs everything: the stage, the props, where the speakers should be, where the lights should focus on. It's not as easy as it sounds."

My charm was interrupted when I saw a group of women wearing black body suits walk toward the stage. I saw one of them was carrying a gun-like device resembling a combination of a taser and a milking machine. I watched as the leader of the group, an Eastern European woman with long black hair, leap over a pair of two Klokateers and aim the gun right at Nathan's crotch. She fired.

"Nathan, look out," shouted Murderface. He jumped in front of the pump's way, and the device got caught in the bass instead.

"N-o-o-o-o!" shouted the woman as she was electrocuted. There was a small explosion and when it was over, the device in her hands was destroyed and she was sent flying into the crowd. Show time. (!)

Lavona Succuboso groaned as she came to. It was then she realized someone was looming over her. It was the Dethklok special effects manager. He was aiming his blue whale tranquilizer dart gun right at her. "You will not stop us," she said. "The Explosionites we will give birth to will rule
the world. You and all your kind will be their slaves! We will give birth to demigods!"

"Not happening," he said. Before he could fire the dart gun, one of the Explosion Succuboso girls kicked him in the balls, then grabbed him by the shoulders and threw him into the crowd. That gave Lavona and the other girls to make a hasty retreat.

(!)

"Damn it," I groaned. "Another crazy git ran away!" To make matters worse, the girl I was talking to was already lost in the crowd. Murderface is not going to let me live it down.

(!)

Nathan was amazed with Murderface's sacrifice. "Wow. I never actually knew that a cock block could save your life. Thank you, Murderface."

"That's okay, man," Murderface said. "I'm a hero. I'm a real hero!"

Well, at least Murderface became the hero he always wanted to be. Sort of.

(!)

I locked myself in my office as soon as we got back to Mordhaus. I couldn't stand to hear one more word out of Murderface's bragging mouth. I slumped in my chair and sighed and stuck my hands in my pockets. It was then I realized something was in my left pocket. It was a piece of paper. Written on it was a phone number and the words, "Please call me when you're not busy or saving Dethklok's lives. Sibyl." I smiled. I dialed down the number on my Dethphone and waited for it to ring. Then I heard someone on the other line say, "Hello?"

"Hello, Sibyl? It's me, Thomas Wood."

"FUCK!" I heard Murderface say on the other side of the door.

Chapter End Notes

Copyright: Dethklok and Adult Swim
Charles Foster Offdenson stood at the podium of the theater in Mordhaus. Before him was a crowd of thousands of men and women. "Welcome, all of you to the initiation of the Klokateers," he said to the microphone. "These following weeks will be the most difficult weeks of your lives. Some of you will be maimed, most of you killed. For those of you who survive, you'll go on to obtain the sacred branding of the gear. But until then, you're all, uh, worthless scum. So, um, roll the, uh, video."

The screen behind him played a video of an animated version of the Dethklok logo. "Hey, folks, it's me...Facebones! Now we've gotten through all the boring stuff let's have some fun! Now let's pair up into groups of two people and fight to the death with your bare fists."

(!)

Mr. Offdenson arrived at the meeting room at the same time I did. "Uh, sorry I'm late. I was addressing the new Klokateers... Potential..."

"You mean dog meat," I said with a chuckle. "It's kind of fun watching them getting killed in those Japanese game show-styled death traps."

"Hey. Hey. Hey!"

"Yes," Mr. Offdenson asked Murderface."

"Give me $50,000."

"Well, uh, what do you need it for?"

"For fucking Doritos! What difference does it make?"

"A lot," I said bluntly.

Mr. Offdenson said, "Well, you've, uh...been given your $100,000 allowance for the week..."

"So what? Give me my fucking money, man!" Murderface ignored Mr. Offdenson. "Cough it up. Aw man fuck that! Why can't I have my ing money?"

Fed up, Mr. Offdenson got to the point. "All of you are wasting money by not having finished this record. That's a big deal, guys. You're doing anything but recording."

Nathan thought what he said and asked, "So what, by sitting here, we're wasting money?"

"Yes," Mr. Offdenson and I said at once.

"We should be saving money by not doing anything not wasting it."
"Are you sure you know what you're talking about," asked Pickles.

"Yes, I do know what I'm talking about," Mr. Offdenson said. "You are killing your own business."

"You're boring me to death with business! God!" Murderface complained.

"Well, this isn't boring to me, guys, all right? I want you all to listen up," Mr. Offdenson said with more authority. "This is important stuff, all right? If you continue to not record, your money... your money... will continue to dwindle."

"Two points for you," I said, impressed.

"How do you know that?" asked Nathan.

"How do I know?" Mr. Offdenson said incredulously. "Because it's my job to know. I work with money. It's my job."

Pickles eyed the CFO suspiciously. "How long have you known that our money is dwindling? I mean, you... it sounds like you're keeping stuff from us."

"Yeah, he's keepings it froms us," Skwisgaar said.

"It's very suspicious," agreed Murderface.

"No, I'm not. I'm telling you about it right now...that's what I'm doing."

"Yeah, but how long have you known about the stuff that we don't know about that you're starting to tell us about?" Nathan asked.

"Look, I try to keep you guys in the loop with the business side many times, but..."

"But what?" asked Murderface.

"BUT YOU IDIOTS HAVE THE ATTENTION SPAN OF A COCKROACH!" I shouted at the top of my lungs. "That's what!"

Everyone was silent. Then Pickles broke the silence and said, "Dude, you don't have to shout, we're not deaf."

"Yeah, Wood, we're nots a bunch of old fats who needs the hearings aids," Skwisgaar said.

"I can hear perfectly fine," Murderface said.

"And you just proved my point," I said, pinching the bridge of my nose. "You guys have the attention span of a cockroach."

"Okay," Mr. Offdenson said. "Please, no more insults, Mr. Wood. I'm going to attempt again right now, to explain all of the Dethklok business, the budgets, the timelines, the..."

"Just one second."

"Nathan?"

"Yes. Hold on. Just gonna text a joke real quick."

Mr. Offdenson was losing his patience. "Do you guys want to know about your business or not?"
"Of course," Murderface shouted. "We're not incapable of understanding things! Who... who are you texting, Nathan?"

"Guys, seriously, I'm not going to waste my time if you don't..."

"Oh, come ons," insisted Skwisgaar. " Tells us to us that crap that you was gonna says about that borings craps, because we, uh...we wants to know... That." And then he fell asleep.

At this point, I gave up. "I give up," I said, waving my hand in the air. "I gotta work on my drug."

"Yeah, you work on it," I heard Mr. Offdenson say as I closed the door.

(!)

It took some time to find the prison wing. I walked down the halls of cells, ignoring all the pleas and cries from the inmates as I walked to solitary confinement, carrying a glass of modified Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake in one hand and a music player in another.

(!)

I stood in front of a man bound to a chair. He had short grey hair and wearing thick glasses and a prison jumpsuit. "Alfred Balmer," I said. "Notorious child killer and cannibal. You're probably wondering why you're here."

"No, and I don't give a fuck!"

"Well, you're here because you said and I quote, 'Dethklok is fucking scum. It's repulsive to the fucking ear. That's what it is.' End quote."

"Yeah, so what if I did? You're gonna lock me up for my opinion?"

"No. You're here to take part in a little experiment. Would you like some water?" I handed the cup to him. "I know you've been here for days without anything to drink." He looked at it suspiciously. "It's not poison. I would have killed you already if it were." The baby eater didn't respond. He just looked at the water suspiciously.

"All right," he finally said. "I'll fucking take your water." He took the glass and guzzled the whole thing before smashing it against the wall. "Fucking happy?!"

"Yes. Here. Listen to this." I placed the music player in front of him and turned on Go Forth And Die. "Enjoy." I left and slammed the door.

(!)

In the control room, I met two scientist Klokateers. "Well?" I asked them. "How's the drug?"

"The effects took place the instant you left the jail cell," one of them said. "Look." He pressed a button and showed footage of Balmer screaming in ecstasy. "I love it! Play me more! I want Dethklok! Give me more! I want more! GIVE ME MORE!" He pressed his face to the camera and laughed maniacally.

"Happy customer," I sang. "And he's not clawing his eyes out and throwing up acid blood, either. Those boys in the lab really did wonders on this stuff."

"By the way," the second scientist said. "Did you hear about Dethklok hiring another financial manager?"
"Wait, what? Who?"

(!)

The tribunal started their meeting. "His name is Melmort Fjordslord and now he's working for Dethklok," said Senator Stampingston.

"The very act of hiring another managerial figure could set off an internal fire that could manifest itself by stepping on toes," said Vater Orlaag.

"A new managerial member could easily redirect their power in any way that he sees fit," said General Crozier.

The Left Eye nodded in agreement.

(!)

Dethklok introduced their new financial manager to Mr. Offdenson and I. The man had long dark hair with a yellow streak and wore a black suit with a red undershirt. "This is Melmort," Nathan introduced. "He's gonna be helping us with the business so we can learn the business."

Melmort and Mr. Offdenson looked at each other. "How do you do," the former asked. The latter just nodded. "Look, the, uh, health inspector's here to survey the Klokateers' quarters. You may as well join him. And, uh, you, Melmort, show them how to fill out a status report of what we need fixed down there. You too, Mr. Wood."

I knew what he really meant. Keep an eye on him.

(!)

"All right, listen up," shouted the health inspector as soon as we all went to the Klokateer living quarters. "First things first! The conditions down here are repugnant! It's infested with rats, molds...and some strain of flesh-eating virus."

"Pretty metal," Nathan and Murderface said.

"Oh, is it? Your staff is dying down here. Is that metal?"

"I hate to say it, but yeah," Murderface said.

"Yeah, not to be contradictory, but it's very metal," agreed Murderface.

The health inspector couldn't believe his ears. "Is it metal to have your drains clogged with dead rotting employees?"

Nathan and Murderface paused. "Yeah. It is, actually," Nathan said."

"Metal," said Murderface.

"Is it metal to have easily avoidable work-related accidents the cause of death?"

"Yeah. Again, metal."

"Is it metal for none of you to care at all?"
"Look," I said. "People in Mordhaus die every day. After you see one death, you kind of get used to it. We have a policy here. If you see a dead body, don't freak out and ring your Deth Bell." I took out a little bell and rung it.

The health inspector looked at us as if we were crazy. And we were. "Well...I guess I, uh, didn't know all that stuff was metal. Anyway, follow me."

We followed him, but Melmort stopped the boys. "Hey, let him keep going." He took out a joint and smoked it. "That's it. Mmm."

Pickles eyed it. "Is that a joint?"

"You want to hit that shit? I would if I wasn't already hitting it." He took another drag. "A bad mother fucker. Oh, how fucking bad I am. I just don't care. Listen, you guys want to know how businesses run, right?" He took another drag. "Well, I'll tell you. Here's the secret to business. It's all bull shit." He smoked his weed again. "Oh shit. As long as I'm here, man, you guys can do whatever the fuck it is you want to do."

I said nothing. But I listened. Mr. Offdenson would NOT approve this guy. I got to warn him. "Hey, what about you," Melmort said, snapping me out of my train of thoughts. "Want a drag?"

"I've had enough experience with drugs. You can thank Pickles and his Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake for that."

"Oh, come on," the drummer laughed. "It was just one puny lick!" The other members laughed.

"Yeah, and I still have nightmares!"

"Pussy!" shouted Murderface.

(!)

"We got a problem," I said to Mr. Offdenson as soon as I stepped into his office. "You were right to be wary of him. That 'financial adviser' is just tricking the boys to waste even more money by making them do...well, whatever they want. Parties, women, parties, bars, more women and parties."

"I figured as much when I got these in the mail," he said as he placed a mountain of bills on his desk. "It's a whole month's worth."

"But it's been three days," I pointed out.

"Exactly."

"Oh, my god, we're going to be bankrupt with this guy around!"

"Did you ever think of trying to stop them?"

I spluttered incredulously. "Have you seen how big those guys are? No way am I stopping them!"

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. In stepped Melmort. "Hi, can I have a little talk with you?"

Mr. Offdenson stared at him. "Suuurrrre." He gestured him to sit down. The sleaze did. He eyed a pair of swords hanging on the wall. "Hey, I see you fence."
"Yes, I, uh, fenced in college. Cigar? Brandy?" Melmort shrugged and took both offers. "Just wanted to have a little chat, see how things are going. Getting along with the boys, are you?" Melmort frowned at Mr. Offdenson when he said that. "They seem to like you. That's good. I like it when they're happy. I've grown quite accustomed to working with Dethklok, and, uh...you'd probably have to kill me to get them away from me."

"Wait, what?" I asked, flabbergasted.

"It's a rule of nature," my boss explained. "When two males want territory, they fight until one of them either dies or backs down." He drank some of his own brandy. "This is good brandy. This is really good. Really good brandy."

"Mr. Offdenson," I protested. "You can't be serious!"

"No, he is," Melmort said, picking one of the swords from the wall. "Those boys like me. They let me do whatever they want. I let them have something you never let them have: fun."

"And waste their money," I pointed out. "They may want you. But they don't need you. They need Mr. Offdenson, a more responsible adult, not some frat boy wearing a suit."

"Doesn't matter. There's not enough room for two financial managers here in Mordhaus." He tossed the other sword to Mr. Offdenson. He took it without hesitation. He turned to me and said, "Mr. Wood, please brand the new recruits."

"But..."

"Do as I say," he said sternly.

I sighed. "Yes, sir."

(!)

At the picnic ground, I stood before a crowd of thousands of people, all of them wearing the Klokateer hoods. These were to be the new recruits and they knew they were ready and willing to die for their band, their gods. Dethklok. In my hand was a branding iron shaped like a clock gear. On the stage was Dethklok, ready to perform the orientation song.

"Prepare for the branding of the gear," announced Nathan.

*Cue The Gears*

"Bring up the first victim!" I shouted. The first recruit was a Spanish woman in her late twenties. She stood before me and knelt down. I pressed the brand into the back of her neck and she let out a scream. When it was over, she stood up and walked off.

"Next!" I shouted.

The next recruit was an Asian man in his early thirties. I pressed the band into his neck and he let out a scream. He then joined the woman off stage.

"Next!"

The next recruit was a Caucasian man in his early twenties. The grounds soon became full of the sound of the hissing sound of the brand pressing against bare flesh and me shouting, "Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next! Next!
I was finishing filing the approval paperwork when Mr. Offdenson came into the office. "So, how did it go?" he asked.

"I gotta say, I suddenly have a hankering for pork."

"Why is that?" he asked as he took out a handkerchief.

"Because I got close to burning flesh to realize that it smells just like pork."

"Ew."

"Yeah." I turned to face him. His clothes were disheveled, his hair was messy and he was wiping blood off his sword. "So, how did it go?"

"Melmort wouldn't back down."

That was all I needed to hear. No one messes with Mr. Offdenson's bread and butter.
"FIRE!" At my command, the band began firing their guns at various recording equipment, instruments and speakers at the gun/golf course. It had been a long day of sessions and I felt they needed a break. And everyone was having a good time blowing shit up at the gun/golf course. And for some reason throwing firecrackers at each other.

"Don't give Murderface any firecrackers," Nathan whispered. "We just have to hold them."

"Hey, can I have a firecracker?" the bassist asked, clearly not hearing what the singer said.

"You know what?" said Pickles. "I think there's some over there."

Murderface bent over to look for the firecrackers. "Where? I don't see any. There's no firecrackers." Pickles put a lit firecracker in Murderface's butt crack. POP! "Aaah! That fucking hurts."

"They're down there somewhere. Just keep looking," insisted Nathan.

"All right." POP! "Aaah! You mother fucking did it again!"

"Murderface," I said.

"What, Wood?"

"You've got to find these firecrackers. They're down there in the sand trap." Idiot.

"The sand trap? Why would there be firecrackers there?"

"Just humor me."

"Okay, fine." He bent over into the sand trap. POP! "Oh, you motherer, ow, that fucking hurt!"

Suddenly, Toki's phone rang. "Hellos? ... Okay." He hung up. "Well, my dad's gots cancer! He's almost dead."

The firecracker I wanted to put down Murderface's pants went off in my hand. "OW!" Thank god I didn't lose any fingers.

(!)

We were in the dining room talking about Toki's...er...problem with his father. "Yeah, he was just, like staring at his shoes and all mumblings. I tries to cheers him up. But fuck him."

"Sounds like he's taking it pretty well," I said.

"Oh, that poor little fucker..." Nathan said. He paused, eating his food. "This is delicious. What is this, crab dip?"
"You know, Toki's kind of in a fragile state of mind right now," said Mr. Offdenson. "He could really use your support."

"Ah, don't let him fool you," said Murderface nonchalantly. "He's tough as nails."

Pickles agreed, "Come on, you don't think Toki is gonna freak out or anything, you know, like do something...should we hide the guns?"

"Well, I wouldn't go that far," Mr. Offdenson said. "I think he's just a little sad."

"He's gonna kill himself?" asked Murderface

"No, I mean he might kill us." said Pickles.

"He's the one to do that. He's a strange... I don't trust him."

"He's fucked in the head," said Nathan.

"He's fucked in the head," said Murdurface. "I don't trust him, and...

Suddenly Toki walked into the kitchen. "Hello."

"Aah," screamed Nathan. "Don't fucking do that to me."

"Gots to go to Norway now, sees my dad die. Sees ya."

"Sees ya laters, Toki," Skwisgaar said. "Haves a great times."

"Oh, yeah, and say hi to your dad from us," Pickles said. "I mean, if he doesn't die before you get there. Well, you know, say hi to his corpse, I guess. You know, I don't know."

"Yeah, no matter what happens, say hi," said Nathan.

"Dude," I said, annoyed. "You guys are not helping.

"You alls invited to comes to Norways with me and you know, just be pals," Toki offered.

"Oh, that would be great, but...you know, we got to do the record," Pickles said, looking for a way to get out.

"Aw, the album," Murderface said, nodding his head. "Got to work. Got to get to work."

Skwisgaar said, "It's gonna be twice as hard without you, so...

"I understands," Toki said sadly. He left the room.

"Toki, wait!" I shouted.

Mr. Offdenson said, "Well, since you can't go to Norway because you got to work on the album, let's just work on that album." No one moved a muscle. "Come on, guys. In the recording room, chop-chop. Recording room. Come on, come on. Every one of you, come on. Chop-chop, let's go. Recording room, let's go. Recording room, let's go. Let's go. Come on, let's get it moving."

"Are you trying to do reverse psychology?" I asked.

"Shh!"
The band didn't leave for Norway. Instead, they went to the arcade to play some games. "You know somethings? You gots a hearts of ice," Skwisgaar said, glaring at Mr. Offdenson. "You have a heart of ice. How are we supposed to records when our brother suffers so badly?"

"He doesn't get it," muttered Murderface.

"Once again, if you're here, you're working on the record," Mr. Offdenson said.

"Hey, I'm gonna go support Toki. I can't work on the album. I'm not cruel."

"That's...surprisingly thoughtful of you, Murderface," I said. "You normally care about yourself."

"What?! I can be selfless! I can think of others!"

"No. Damn it, we should all go," Nathan said.

Pickles randomly threw a firecracker at Murderface. "Ow! Mother fucking firecracker!"

"Murderface, watch your language!" shouted Nathan.

"We're talking about Toki here!" scolded Pickles.

"You still have more of those things?" I asked the drummer.

Mr. Offdenson shrugged his shoulders. "Fine. Fine. You know, just don't go crazy, okay? Don't... whatever. Save your receipts."

The tribunal started their meeting as soon as word reached social media. "Gentlemen, Toki Wartooth's father is on his deathbed," said Senator Stampingston. "Our psychological death expert, Dr. Ralphus Galkinsmelter."

The death expert was a man with a brown suit and brown hair and matching facial hair. He spoke like a poet being overdramatic. "Toki Wartooth has become a messenger of death. Everything he touches with his love will die for he brings death with him like a blackened cloud hovering in the cold night sky." Everyone raised an eyebrow. "Like the Grim Reaper himself, his guitar is his scythe. He cascades through the open window of your child's cradle to suck the very life from your baby's breath."

"What a load of horse shit."

"How dare you, General!" exclaimed Dr. Galkinsmelter. "You're like a withering toad, eating flies on your lily pad."

"Dr. Galkinsmelter, please behave yourself," shouted Senator Stampingston. "What does this all mean?"

"Toki has suppressed his feelings for his father," the Left Eye said. "The years of abuse will come back to haunt him. His father may even ask to be forgiven."

"Not possible," Dr. Galkinsmelter said. "His death may ignite long-dormant emotions. He will spin out of control into a vortex of madness. He will bring death to us all! He will bring death to us all. Thank you."
The Left Eye held up a picture of Toki as a young boy with his mother and father. They all had blank stares on their faces. The Left Eye said, "It's up to you now, Toki, whether you will forgive your father or not."

(!)

Hours later, we were all in the Deth Copter, heading for Lillehammer, Norway. We were in the bowling alley and it was Murderface's turn.

"You know, I actually am looking forward to going to Norway," Nathan said.

"You are?" I asked, surprised.

"It is the birthplace of black metal. It's gonna be fun. I mean, besides your dad's dying slowly from cancer," he said to an unresponsive Toki. "How you doing with that, by the way?" Toki said nothing. He just stared out into space.

"Like I said, he's taking it pretty well."

"Seems like it, Wood," said Nathan.

"My dad's dead," Murderface said. "He killed my mom, and then he killed himself. Didn't affect me at all. It's part of life."

"How's it gonna affect you," asked Pickles. "You were just a baby, little baby."

"I was never a baby. I had to become a man right there," Murderface argued.

"You're still a baby right now," Nathan said.

"A baby with a man's heart. I'm a warrior."

"You wet your pants when Dr. Twinkletits brought it up," I said. The bassist shushed me immediately.

"My dad is just like a 'stare and say nothing' weirdo," Pickles said. "And if he died, well, you know, what do you do?"

"I actually get along with my dad," said Nathan. "You know, we drink a lot of beer, and we go hunting. If he died, whoa, that would be fucked up."

"I thought your dad hated you for having to spend his free time with your mother and spend his beer money on little kid's clothes," I said.

"We patched up," Nathan said. "But, hey, it's your dad that's gonna die," he nudged Toki's shoulder. "My dad's safe." Toki said nothing. "All right, everyone shut up, all right. This is about Toki right now, okay? Murderface, hold on to this for a second." He handed the bassist a lit firecracker. "Now, what I'm saying is..."

POP! "Aah!"

"I'm sorry. I could not resist."

"That was good," chuckled Pickles. "We talked about doing that for a while."

"That's my bass-playing hand!" screamed Murderface.
"Uh oh, there goes the band," Pickles said, rolling his eyes.

( )

When we arrived in snowy Norway, we traded the Deth Copter for a snowmobile version of the Dethcycle. "Toki, I don't know where to go," Nathan said. "Where's your dad's house?"

"Well, it's outside the town," Toki said. "It's complicated."

"I want to get this crap over with," Murderface said. "Come on."

"Yeah, let's get it over so we can have fun and goof off," suggested Pickles. Toki seemed to agree. "Let's just go into town and go shoppings first."

"All right, we're going shopping," Nathan said.

( )

We arrived at Lillehammer, specifically, at an old timey village. There were plenty of shops and stores that you would find your grandma and grandpa running.

"Hey, where are all the black-metal guys around here," asked Nathan. "I don't see any."

"Oh, there's ones," Toki pointed to a little boy wearing a death metal winter coat.

"He looks like Boo Berry from the cereal," Pickles said.

"Aw, yeah, he's a Norwegian Boo Berry," said Murderface.

Pickles asked Toki, "Hey, shouldn't we go to your family's house and you know, well, check in?"

"We don't needs to do that now," Toki said. "We got still so much mores to see. Behold, there's the first blacks-metal record shops thats starts it all."

"Is that a smoked-fish place?" asked Nathan.

"No, next to it, rights there."

"Oh, the ski shop?" asked Pickles.

"No, there." Toki pointed to a shop with a skull sign that said, "Drep Du Selv". I don't know Norwegian so don't ask what that means.

( )

Inside the shop there were very strange electric guitars, speakers, costumes that were clearly inspired by paganism and drums that seemed to be made of animal parts. The speakers were playing some sort of Norwegian death metal song, but I couldn't understand what it was saying. "This is my old friend Ronk Snogge," Toki introduced the cashier. The man looked like a KISS cosplayer.

"Well, if it isn't the commercially successful Toki Wartooth," he said bitterly.

"This guy seems like an asshole," Nathan said.

"I am a pagan trapped in the conservative hell that is Norway."
"Yeah, what the fuck are you listening to," Pickles asked, pointing to the speakers.

"This is a demo tape from my band, Hestkuk which means a horse's dick. Do you like it?"

"I don't know. It's okay."

"Then I hate it."

"Hey, where's the Dethklok albums?" asked Nathan.

Ronk shook his head. "I don't sell them. Too digital."

"We record our songs on water now," I said.

"Really?"

"I got a sample right here," I said. I placed a vial of water on the register. "It's a recording of Laser Cannon Deth Sentence."

"Eh, I'll think about it."

"Well, it's nice to see you, but we got to..." Pickles tried to say before Toki interrupted him, "No, let's listens to more demo tapes, right?"

Okay...

(!)

Next, Toki dragged us to a fancy restaurant.

"So, what are we doing in here, Toki?" asked Nathan.

"Oh, 'cause you gots to try these krumkakes with lingonberries."

"They're real brutal. This is a real brutal place." He said it with dry sarcasm.

Murderface looked at a travel guide. "Hey, did you know that Norway has the lowest murder rate in the whole world? The lowest in the world!"

"Wait a minute," Nathan exclaimed. "You mean the murder rate in Canada is higher than Norway?"

"Yeah."

I threw my krumkakes out the window. "That's it!" I grabbed the guitarist by the collar of his shirt. "Toki, what is your problem?! You're clearly stalling for time! What are you so afraid of? That your dad's not going to say I'm sorry for abusing you? For crying out loud, the man is on his deathbed! I'm sure if you give him a chance -"

He pushed me off of him and shouted, "Is not scared of him not saying sorries! Because I'm the one who won't says sorries!"

"What?"

"Yous puts up with beatings, and slappings and the beings put in the punishment hole and then talk to me about sorries! I won'ts go in theeres. I won'ts go in theeres! I won'ts go! I won'ts go!" He ran out
the restaurant, crying his eyes out.

"Fine, go," I shouted. "Run from all your problems, you stupid little boy!"

"Great. Way to go, Murderface," Nathan shouted. Pickles threw another firecracker at him. POP! "Ow!"

* Cue Why Is Everything So Hard For Toki *

Toki thought of everything that had happened to him as he walked down the forest path, all the times his father traumatized him. The times he put him through backbreaking labor, the times he whipped him, the time he walked in on his father and mother having sex. And yet, he remembered something Wood said to him, "You're the biggest child in this room! You sleep with a teddy bear, you boob! Face it, the reason why you connect with kids so much is because deep down, underneath all that bitterness and brutality, you're a kid! You're scared of your own parents for Christ's sake! That's how much of a child you are!"

Then remembered his response, "Then I don't wants to be a kids anymore!" That's right. He wasn't a kid. Not anymore. It was time to be a man.

"Tims not afrails anymore."

* ! *

We took to Deth Snowmobile into the forest, following Toki's trail. "Toki," we called out. "Toki, come home." Just then, we found Toki standing in the middle of the forest. He had a new look of confidence and bravery on his face.

* ! *

We drove to Toki's childhood home. "Seem like you've really grown up out there in the snow," Nathan said.

"Yeah, I take back what I said about you being a kid," I said.

"Now let's go insides to sees my father die," Toki said.

Murderface suddenly raised his hand. "I think I'm just gonna wait here."

"Why aren't you going in?" I asked.

"Ixnay on the cancer-ay contagious-ay."

I blinked. "Why are you speaking Pig Latin?"

"I don't want to catch cancer!"

Pickles agreed with him, "You know what? Cancer may be contagious. You know, I'm just putting that out there. So I'll wait here right before I freeze to death...then I'll go inside, okay?"

Everyone agreed with him. "That's a good plan," said Nathan. "Toki, you take care of it. I mean, it's your deal anyway."

While Toki went inside, Pickles threw a firecracker at Murderface. POP! "OW!"
Pickles was about to throw one last firecracker when I snatched it and tossed it to Murderface, unlit that is. "Would you stop that!"

"Party pooper."

Suddenly, Toki came out with the old, decrepit man that was his father in his arms. "My father's last request is to see the house what he was born in. We don't have much time. Let's go!"

(!)

"Hurry! He's coughing ups blood!" We drove until we reached an old house on the top of a hill in the middle of a frozen lake. "We'll have to continues on foots."

"We're good right here," I said.

(!)

Toki climbed up the stairs to the dying old man's house. When he reached the front door, he said to him, "Father, I forgives everythings you ever dones to me. Now rest in pe..." And then he slipped on the ice. "Oh! Oh!" His father slid down the hill and out onto the ice. Before anyone could make a move, the ice broke and he fell in the cold water.

Toki freaked out and tried to break the ice. "Oh, nos! Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh, no! Oh! Aah! Oh, father. This is horrible. Aah! Aah! Oh, he sinks into the darkness! Aah! Father! Aah! Aah! Aah! Aah! Father!"

Pow! A dart broke through the ice and struck the old man in the neck. His eyes widened, rolled up the back of his head and he exhaled his last breath.

Toki turned around to see Wood holding the smoking blue whale tranquilizer dart gun. "You bastards! You killeds him!"

(!)

I held my hands up. "I didn't want to see him die a slow death! I'm sorry."

"You killed him! I'll kills you!" He charged at me but I fired the dart gun at him. He fell down and landed face first into the snow.

"Incoming!" shouted Murderface. He threw the last firecracker at Pickles, but he missed and it flew into the snowy hill. The tiny explosion caused an avalanche and buried Toki's father's house.

"So," I said, kneeling in front of Toki. "That went pretty well, don't you think?" Toki groaned in response. "I gotta say, you're taking this pretty well."
"WHAT THE FUCK?!" Screamed Pickles. He was in the lounge with the rest of the band and he was very, very pissed. The others didn't seem to care.

"What is it now?" I asked.

"Look at this crap!"

He pointed to the TV. It was showing a report on Snakes n' Barrels. "They were the kings of an era. We've already seen where they were after. We didn't know where they were, but where are they now now? Just when everyone thought Snakes n' Barrels were done for good, they reunited. But tragedy would intervene." The documentary cut to footage of Snakes n' Barrels writhing on the ground, screaming in insanity. Then it showed a newspaper; on the headlines it read, "Snakes N' Barrels Overdose! Unknown Drug Kills Reunion Tour!" Thankfully, Pickles' tolerance to all drugs and alcohol made him immune to it. I felt bad for the others, but there was one silver lining: they gave me the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake.

The mind control drug not only gave me nightmares for months now after giving it one puny lick, but it also gave me the idea of using it to turn Dethklok haters into fans. After multiple trials and experimentations (and a lot of brains being turned into goo), we made a version of the drug that turns people into insane Dethklok fans. Perhaps even more insane than the normal ones. Still, it proved to be successful as Dethklok record sales went up through the roof.

"Until now now," continued the documentary. It then showed images of Pickles' old band wearing new clothes and looking thinner and healthier. Snizzy Snazz Bullets even had a wig to hide his scarred scalp. "Snakes n' Barrels is back again! Antonio 'Tony' DeMarco Thunderbottom, Sammy 'Candy Nose' Twinskins, Snizzy Snazz Bullets and dynamic new front man Rikki Kixx are back to kick your ass into sobriety!"

The documentary showed footage of a man with short red deadlocks and wearing an orange shirt with a dragon pattern on it. "I met these guys at their absolute worst," he said. "And pulled them out of the dark and got them clean at my Rikki Kixx 'Kikkin' It' rehab center. And we just hit it off, and the next thing I knew, I was their new singer. It was magical."

The documentary showed Kixx with Snakes n' Barrels' rehab. "Rikki Kixx has taken in many ex-rockers and helped them get off drugs and alcohol."

"The key to getting sober and living clean," Kixx stated. "Is identifying the problem. And that problem was Pickles."

I got mad after he said that. "Snakes n' Barrels weren't forced by Pickles to make those life destroying choices, you asshole!"

"Dude, you're talking to a TV," Nathan said.
"And this month, for the first time ever," the documentary said. "The new energized and sober Snakes n' Barrels will headline the Rikki Kixx 'Sobertown U.S.A. No Drugs Allowed Sober Rock 'n' Roll Show,' hosted by Leonard Rockstein formerly known as Dr. Rockzo, the rock 'n' roll clown. All proceeds to go to the Rikki Kixx 'Kikkin' It' rehab center."

It cut back to Kixx shouting, "We're bringing sober back, and we're taking names! Sober is the future of rock 'n' roll!" Pickles threw a beer bottle at the TV in anger.

(!)

Pickles went right up to Mr. Offdenson to complain. "How did this happen? That's my fucking band out there, and they're sober?"

"Well, Pickles, I hate to tell you but you don't actually own the name Snakes n' Barrels," Mr. Offdenson said.

"Why not?" The drummer swatted a lamp off the CFO's desk. "How did you let that happen?" Typical Dethklok blame the closest person they can find.

"Well, the band existed before you got there and I didn't represent you then. I can assure you it wouldn't have happened had I..."

"FUCK THAT! They're sober!" Pickles smashed another lamp.

"Could you please stop breaking my good lamps? Break those." He pointed to a whole bunch of lamps on shelves. "They're from IKEA."

"What, these ones? Uh, yeah."

"You really got a lot of lamps in here."

"Well, lighting is important. It creates a nice atmos..." Mr. Offdenson didn't finish his sentence as Pickles started smashing the lamps.

"Aah! The whole thing that gets me is that they got a new singer. Who the is that dildo? He's like a cheap crappy knockoff, you know? And he changed them. It's like those guys are brainwashed! If I could just talk to them..."

"Well, you can't, Pickles. You see, they have a restraining order against you."

Pickles was furious. First some sober idiot took away his old friends and now he made them cut all ties with him?! "A restraining order?" He smashed more lamps. "Fucking sneaky sober sucker!"

"Can we get some more lamps in here, please, Mr. Wood?" Mr. Offdenson said to his communicator.

"Depends on what kind," the special effects manager said.

"The cheap ones."

"Coming right up."

"Thank you."

(!)
In Dethklok's lab, I hung up the phone. "Where does he get the money to find those lamps?" Oh, well, back to business. I carefully placed one drop of modified Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake into a bottle of water. I tightened the cap over it and placed it in the pack of other bottles. I surveyed his work. Hundreds upon hundreds of rows of water bottles, all spiked with the powerful mind control drug. "Do you have the list," I said to a nearby Klokateer.

"Yeah, got it." The Klokateer held up a clipboard with a list of names on it.

"Excellent. Now, take a team, place all these," I gestured to the bottles. "In every refrigerator in every store and house. Everyone must become Dethklok fans. Even at the risk of having them claw their eyes out and throw up acid blood."

"Right away, sir." He left with the clipboard, leaving me alone with the shipments. I turned to leave when Mr. Offdenson came into the room.

"Oh, so there you are. I was coming to tell you that the band is packing up to get ready to go to LA to reunite with Snakes n' Barrels again again."

"I tried calling them to tell them Pickles is coming, but it just keeps playing that stupid 'The number you are trying to reach is no longer in service.' message crap."

"That's because Snakes n' Barrels changed their number. Rikki Kixx called Pickles the reason they became addicts so he made them cut off all ties as part of their rehabilitation."

"Oh. Well, in that case, that might be a good idea. We can make it a surprise!" I chuckled. "I mean, what we're doing is totally illegal, but that's not stopped us before right?"

Mr. Offdenson looked at the bottles of Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake being placed in crates before being delivered via the Deth Copter. "So I see. You realize that there are other, more safer ways of getting people to like Dethklok? Ways that don't involve drugging people with a mind control serum? A serum that you drank? That still gives you nightmares? I can count the number of times you wake up screaming."

I turned to face him and smiled. "Yeah, but this way's quicker. And besides, aren't these fans already crazy? No one will tell the difference between a stupid fan and a drugged hater. Who's gonna know?"

Mr. Offdenson didn't respond. "By the way, Murderface asked me who the owner of Planet Piss's rights are," he said as we walked to the elevator to take us to the Deth Bus.

"Doesn't Murderface own the rights? He came up with it."

"Well, he just wanted to make sure. That and he wanted some merch for Planet Piss like T shirts."

"Uh, huh."

"By the way, the lamps?"

"They'll be here. They'll be here. Eventually. That's what the lamp factory said."

(!)

The Tribunal began their meeting immediately as soon as the reunion was announced world wide. "Gentlemen, Snakes n' Barrels is reuniting again, again, without Pickles," Senator Stampingston said. "Some time ago, we attempted to control Pickles and Snakes n' Barrels with a top-secret
experimental drug called Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. Pickles' tolerance to the
drug rendered our plan useless."

"It was a total fiasco," said Vater Orlaag.

"Here to explain more is Dr. Amomolith Chesterfield."

The man in the brown suit and slick black hair had returned. "My drug, Totally Awesome Sweet
Alabama Liquid Snake worked on the rest of Snakes n’ Barrels and left them blank slates ready to
be reprogrammed. Unfortunately, the first person they encountered was Rikki Kixx."

"And he used his sober influence to cut himself in on the rights to Snakes n’ Barrels," said Senator
Stampingston.

"It gets worse, I'm afraid," the Left Eye said. "The special effects manager for Dethklok got his
hands on a sample of your drug that was given to him thanks to Pickles. After that, he repurposed it
to turn Dethklok critics and haters into fans."

"Oh, that is not good," Dr. Chesterfield said.

"Why?"

"My drug is still alive in the systems of the now-sober members of Snakes n’ Barrels. I, however,
have a grave warning. There is a long-term side effect, a terrible and destructive side effect. With
enough stimulus the drug living in their fat cells will ignite."

"Spontaneous human combustion," said Senator Stampingston gravely.

"Not quite." The doctor then showed a grisly image. "Blue phosphorous snakes will shoot forth
from the orifices of the users and they will go mad with rage."

"All of their orifices?" asked Vater Orlaag.

The doctor paused. "I'm afraid so."

"What kind of stimulus can cause this," asked General Crozier.

Dr. Chesterfield counted his fingers. "Bright lights, loud sounds, pyrotechnics."

"In other words," the Left Eye said. "A concert."

"This Rikki Kixx 'Sobertown U.S.A. No Drugs Allowed Sober Rock 'n' Roll Show,' hosted by
Leonard Rockstein could be a disaster," said Senator Stampingston.

Dr. Chesterfield said gravely. "Let's hope that I'm wrong, gentlemen. Let's hope that I am wrong."

Before the Tribunal concluded their meeting, Dr. Chesterfield turned to the Left Eye. "Before you
go, I have a mission for you."

"What is it?"

"I want you to bring me a sample of the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake Dethklok
is using to convert critics into fans. I might be able to repurpose it for our cause. That and I want to
see how and why Dethklok's version doesn't have the side effect I just mentioned. That shouldn't
be a problem for you, would it?"
The Left Eye smiled. "No."

(!)

At a Sobertown USA convention, Dr. Rockso...I mean, Leonard Rockstein stood before a crowd of people as he made his speech. "I have clarity now, and that's an amazing thing I tell you. And the key to getting clean is killing that part of you that was hurting you. You got to kill that part of yourself." His voice suddenly became dark. "And for me, it was that clown. That fucking, damn fucking clown. The clown had to go down. Leonard Rockstein didn't like to do drugs. Leonard Rockstein's a nice guy with aspirations. Leonard Rockstein's going to Devry, learning how to be an I.T. Tech, getting his shit together. Not the clown." He became psychotic. "T- t-the clown loved cocaine. T- t-the clown loved stealing and hurtin' his friends. The clown did it all. But I wrestled that clown. I wrestled that clown and broke his fucking face! And I said, 'Clown, get out! Get out, clown! Get out!'" The crowd cheered as he finished his story and calmed down. "Anyway, I've been sober for about two months, give or take. Thank you!" He walked off the podium and Kixx took his place.

"Yes! Clap for him!" he shouted. "Clap for him, my children of sobriety! Show him your love! Now, as you know, the concert is coming up tomorrow and you will be tempted by drugs and alcohol! But we must be strong, children. We are powerful, and we have the power to make rock 'n' roll sober forever!" The people cheered again. He held up a gift basket. "Now let's pass that fucking basket around."

(!)

On the way to California, Toki decided to play a little prank on Murderface (who was currently passed out). He logged into Murderface's computer and did a little changes to the Planet Piss URL. "Oh, theres. Nows I'ms the owners of the Planets Piss domain."

"Yeah, that's prettys goods," Skwisgaar said. "You ams the owners of all the Planets Piss out there."

"Yeah and dot ENG and dot U.K." saïd Nathan.

"Dots everythings! I owns it all! I loves it!" Toki laughed.

"I didn't know you knew computer stuff, Toki," I said. "But aren't you worried that Murderface will be pissed when he finds out what you did?"

"He wills has to catch me fist."

"Heys, I gots a really goods ideas!" exclaimed Skwisgaar. "Does anybodies of yous knows anythings about webs designs?"

"I just installeds a ripped versions of the Dreamweavers," said Toki.

"This is gonna be good," laughed Nathan.

"Oh, no. What are you gonna do?" I asked nervously.

"Watch this." My eyes widened when I saw what Toki did to the Planet Piss site.

(!)

In the basement of Rikki Kixx's rehab center, a servant approached Rikki with a clipboard.
"Master, I have the numbers for the sobriety concert ticket presales."

"Oh, yes? Well, don't just stand there! Tell me, you fucking twit!"

"The concert has sold out."

Kixx stood up from his seat. "This deserves a toast! Get me a bottle of the, uh..." He stopped and punched a wall. "NO!"

The servant backed away. "M- master?"

"NO! Oh, god damn it!" Kixx threw his chair into a mirror. "Damn you, sobriety, you horrid fucking monster!"

The servant was becoming scared. "Master, what are you saying?"

Kixx looked at him with rage. "What am I saying?! Don't you fucking get it?! Sobriety is a constant hell. Don't you think I'd be drinking if I could? But I can't! You know why I can't? Because my fucking liver is shot. I can't because the fucking cops make me do periodical drug tests! I can't because I'm the fucking spokesperson for a FUCKING REHAB CENTER!" He paused to catch his breath. "I'm fucking fucked."

The servant stuttered, "B-B-But then why are you helping people kick drugs and alcohol?"

"Why? You want to know why? Because if I have to be sober then I'll make everybody sober and they'll have to live in the hell on Earth that I do."

"No! It's not true."

"Yes! So now you know. Now you fucking know! And you'll do well to keep your filthy mouth shut about it. Keep your mouth shut, or we'll lose everything."

The servant slowly walked back to the door. "Of course, master. Of course. You can trust me. I- I won't tell anyone."

"That's right. You won't..." Before the servant could run away, Kixx grabbed him by the throat and began to strangle him. "DIE YOU PIECE OF SHIT!" The servant attempted to break free, but it was no good. He couldn't escape Kixx's vice-like grip. His face turned from white to blue to purple and blood began to come out of his mouth. And then Kixx grabbed him by the head and twisted it, snapping his neck. "That's right. You. Won't."

(1)

At last, the Dethbus stopped. "My lords, we are in L.A.," a Klokateer said.

"Wowee," said Toki. "Whats is L.A.?"

"Home of the weird," I said.

"It's more than that," Pickles said. "It's the home of rock. Come on, I'll show you!"

And thus, he began our Dethbus tour of Los Angeles.

He took us to a run down gentlemen's club. "This place used to be Dr. Thong's Honey Pit, right here. This place was packed with cream-of-the-crop scumbag rock royalty shooting fucking dope and getting lap dances."
"But, Pickles," Murderface said. "The guys in glam rock seem like long-haired pussies with makeup on and tight pants, you know?"

"And I'm not saying they weren't, Murderface," said Pickles. "But even the super-poser glam rock pussies understood the rock 'n' roll fundamentals of drugs and alcohol."

"And of course, there was the women," I said. "You could see their camel toes, their clothes were so tight."

"Oh, yeah, thems am some pretty hot skanks I'd likes to takes a crack at," said Skwisgaar.

"You know it," said Nathan.

"Oh, hey, check this guy out," Pickles said, taking out a picture from his pocket. "I used to pal around with this guy all the time!" It was a picture of a sickly-looking man surrounded by shocked women.

"Oh, who's thats guy?" asked Toki.

"That's Timmy Razzle of the band Razzle Sticks."

"What, so he's gonna have a gang bang and stuff, and he can't get it up?" asked Murderface.

"Well, kind of," Pickles said, putting the photo back. "He's dead."

"That's pretty good."

Pickles shrugged. "Yeah, he O.D.'ed. I don't know. Whatever." He took out another photo of an Ozzy Osbourne lookalike. "Look, there's Andy Smacks. Okay, this is a classic drug story. You know, you think you're doing coke? You're not. You're doing angel dust." He chuckled, "Whole shitload of angel dust. Anyway, he shot some cops, challenged a professional prize fighter to a bareknuckle match and won! And still had the energy to burn. I don't know." He then took out his Dethphone and played a video. "And then... wait, wait, wait, wait, wait... Check this out. Look. And there he goes off the Capitol Records building. Whoo!"

Toki was excited. "Wowee! Whats a ways to go! Splats!

"Oh, no, Toki," Pickles said, shaking his head. "He lived."

Toki said, "Oh, that's brutal!"

"That's awesome," exclaimed Murderface.

Then Pickles took us to an alley with a dumpster in it. It was empty and it looked like nobody had used it in a long time, not even to put garbage in it.

"Why'd you bring us to this place?" I asked Pickles.

"Okay, here's the dumpster where Suzzie Fat Tits and the Razor Clan used to live and practice. Man, they threw some good parties."

"I hope they afforded tetanus shots," I said.

"Wow! Four hot sluts living in garbage?" exclaimed Murderface.

"That sounds pretty goods," said Skwisgaar.
Murderface nodded. "Called 'being professional'."

"This is where I saw Frankie Switchblade of the band Super Destroyer Fuck Machine blowing a guy. Right there." He pointed to a specific spot next to the dumpster.

"Oh! No way!"

"That guy was me."

Nathan looked at the drummer wide eyed. "Oh, Pickles."

Then the drummer laughed. "Naw, I'm just kidding! But you guys get my point about the whole rock 'n' roll thing, right?"

(!)

We rented a hotel and were enjoying the pleasures of women and alcohol in the penthouse. "Hollywood Fucking bullshit. Fucking L.A." Nathan mumbled.

"This is one fucked up town," Toki said.

"I would kill myself if I lived here."

"I wonder if absolutely everyones heres is stupids."

"Every single resident!" shouted Murderface.

"Yeah, and every TV network out here is a piece of shit right, guys?" asked Nathan.

"Got that right."

"That's right," said Pickles. "And more importantly, if you didn't contract an STD or OD'd in the city, then you didn't exist! Think about it, all of you."

"I'm thinking about it," said Murderface.

"Me's too!" said Skwisgaar.

"And sex scandal. Don't forget the sex scandals," I pointed out.

"Exactly!" shouted Pickles. "Drugs and alcohol are slowly being phased out of the music we love and we're in a fucked up state of the world if our biggest lunatic drug idol is fucking Peter O'Toole!"

"He can fuck me under the table," Murderface said, drunk off his ass.

"That guy could party," agreed Nathan.

Pickles continued his rant, "I need all your guys help to get in the show tonight. We have a responsibility a fucking responsibility to change this.

"What's wrongs with beings sobers?" asked Toki. "Sobers peoples are peoples, too!"

I grabbed him by the shirt and lifted him up. "You take that back or I'll toss you off the penthouse roof! And unlike Randy Smacks, I don't think you will make it. You dig?"

He lowered himself down and said, "Fine. I will gos with you to the shows and enjoys myselfs but
I won'ts help!" He raised his hand to prove his point and accidentally spilled Murderface's soda.

"Fuck, Toki! You klutz! I got soda on my shorts!"

"What? You get soda on your shorts?" asked Nathan.

"Fuck yeah! Look at it!"

"Looks like you takes a leaks on yourselves," laughed Skwisgaar.

"I fucking wish it was piss, but it's fucking soda. That's fucking sticky!"

"Guys, we got to go," insisted Pickles. "The concert's the only place I can talk to Snakes n' Barrels. Let's go!

"I got to go back to the bus and change my shorts," said Murderface. "Thanks a lot, Toki!"

"Well, fine. We'll see you there!"

(!)

At the concert, we all came in disguise. We knew the guards banned us from coming in, but Pickles was a man on a mission. We snuck past a security guard who was beating a patron. "Hey, get this guy outta here! Look, he tried to bring in a bag of drugs: coke, heroin, a cherry pie with pot in it. Get the hell out of here, you piece of shit. I'll take this and destroy it later on."

(!)

In the auditorium, we snuck past the crowd to get closer to the stage. The announcer shouted, "Please welcome your host! You know him as Dr. Rockso, the rock 'n' roll clown but now he's clean and sober! Ladies and gentlemen...Leonard Rockstein!"

The former rock 'n' roll clown walked onto the stage and took the microphone. "And thank you! Oh, wow. It is great to be here, and it's great to be sober! With sobriety, we are strong! You know what? Let's just take over rock 'n' roll with sobriety! Let's do that. Let's just do that." The crowd cheered.

Toki cheered the loudest. "Oh, good jobs, Rocksos! Sees? Sobers is cools!" I still couldn't believe he was in contact with this idiot.

"Wow! Wow," exclaimed Rockstein. "You guys really know how to rock sober style! Wow! Huh, this is actually my first time being on stage sober. Yoo-hoo! I ka ka ka ka see you, b-baby! I do cocaine. I really do cocaine. It's, uh... Really good to be back on the..." Rockstein suddenly became a little afraid of something. Something only he can see. "On...you want to do this sweet cocaine, baby? Uh... Uh...you want it, baby. Come on. You know you want it, don't you?"

Rockstein began swatting at the air, trying to keep a straight face. "Get out of here! Get out of here, man! I'm fine. I'm fine. Ohhhhh! Okay, I'm fine. I'm fine. Just get out. I mean, I'm here. I'm sober. Oh. Get out of here, man! Oh! Out! Oh, no! Ohh!"

Offstage, Kixx shouted, "Hey, what the hell is going on? Introduce the opening band!"

"Oh, right, right. Welcome... welcome your opening band...Manhattan Sidewinder. I- I'm okay. I'm okay." The former rock 'n' roll clown ran off stage, still shouting at...something.

Still in disguise, we went to the backstage only to be stopped by a bodyguard.

"Hey, buddy, nobody gets by without a backstage pass."

"Oh, you want $10,000?" Pickles handed him the money.

"Go on through."


In Snakes n' Barrels dressing room, we found the band making last minute preparations. Pickles tore off his disguise. "Guys, wait!"

"Hey, it's Pickles!" Sammy greeted.

"Hey, man, what's up?" Tony asked.

Pickles was right. They didn't even sound right. "What's up?" he asked. "You guys restarted the fucking band without me! What the is that all about? Fucking Rikki Kixx?"

"We got sober, and Rikki kind of approached us and, well I mean, it just kind of happened," explained Sammy.

"What?" I exclaimed, tearing off my disguise. "What the hell?! Why didn't at least call Pickles the second you got out of the rehab center?"

"Rikki said we have to get rid of everything that made us addicts," Snizzy said. "And Pickles was the everything."

"I don't - Snizzy! Don't you even remember me? You offered me rhythm guitar lessons when you caught me with your gu-girdle-itar!"

"Oh, I got rid of that ratty thing."

"Wait, what?"

"It's great man," he said, ignoring me. "It's awesome. You know, not doing any drugs, being sober."

"Saving money. So amazing," said Tony. "It's like a whole new level. My hat fits a lot better now."

"Not drinking, having fun. Just... it's great."

Pickles shouted at the Snakes n' Barrels bassist, "Dude, Tony, we've been fucking friends forever. How could you do this to me? How could you do this?"

"He's got a point there," I said.

"You can't go out there," Pickles continued. "With that dumb fucking jackoff. He just wants money. He doesn't care. He doesn't care not like how I do about you!"

Suddenly, Kixx came into the dressing room with the bodyguard. "I believe that I do. I do care."

"YOU!" I shouted. "You did this to them! You did this! You knew about this, somehow did you!" I reached into my pocket and took out a vial of the modified Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. "You want to know the real reason you became sober?" I asked Snakes n' Barrels.\n
"It's because that drug that landed you in the rehab center was a mind control drug! It made you obey Kixx because you were programmed to do whatever he said!"

Kixx, the bodyguard and Snakes n' Barrels laughed.

"Oh, you don't believe me? Here." I popped the cork off with my teeth. "Here. You guys are gonna get so high that your minds are gonna blow chunks to outer space and to the Milky Way. And what better way to celebrate the reunion than with a good old-fashioned Milky Way chunk-blow?"

"Get that fucking thing away from me," Kixx shouted, backing away from me with his hands in front of him.

"What's wrong?" I teased. "Let's get high!" I charged at him and tried to shove the bottle into his mouth, but he overpowered me and knocked the bottle out of my hand. Unfortunately, a good portion of it splashed into my face. "Ugh! AUUUGH! It's in my mouth! It burns! Get it out! Get it out!"

"Get those pieces of shit out of here!" Kixx shouted to the bodyguard.

The bodyguard lifted me and Pickles off the ground. "No! You may be sober, but you're still a stupid, ugly, dildo idiot scumbag! Get off me! Didn't I just give you $10,000? No!"

(!)

Meanwhile, Dr. Rockso ran far from the stage, only to run into the room where all the confiscated drugs and alcohol were stashed. He eyed the bags of cocaine and began sweating.

(!)

While Toki was dealing with probably the most obnoxious fan he had ever met and while Skwisgaar and Nathan tried in vain to look for alcohol in a Sobertown USA concert, Murderface was cleaning his pants in the Deth Bus. "Fucking Toki. Now my shorts smell like soda. I should bill him. What a stupid klutz. Guess I'll get out of here. Oh." He saw his computer sitting on the coffee table. "Oh, well, maybe I'll check my myspace."

Then he remembered Mr. Offdenson advising him to register Planet Piss.

"Yeah, right. It won't take long. I should." He opened his computer and tried to log on but... "What? All the Planet Piss domain names are taken?" To his horror, the Planet Piss website had been turned into a bestiality website! "God, no! Who did this?" He got his answer when he saw the new owner of the URL. "Toki, I'll kill you!"

(!)

Back at the concert, Snakes n' Barrels began to play Water Horsey Blues. In the audience, Toki was starting to lose his patience with the obnoxious fan.

Murderface pushed his way through the crowd, intending to give the brown haired guitarist the beating of a lifetime. "Toki, I'll kill you, mother fucker."

(!)

Back with Leonard Rockstein, he heard the voice in his head again. He was trying to fight it, but he was losing. Badly. "I smell that sweet stuff. I smell that sweet stuff, baby. Yeah, baby, I took it all. Oh, baby."
As the guard shoved us to a holding cell, I began to feel...strange. "Pickles, my head hurts."

When the song was over, something strange happened to Tony, Sammy and Snizzy. Their eyes glowed blue and all of a sudden, blue phosphorous snakes shot out of all their orifices and flew out into the audience, making a chain reaction. Everyone the snakes touched, began to experience frightening hallucinations.

Meanwhile, Toki had lost it with the annoying fan. "Oh, that's it! That's it, you mother fucker. I'm kicking your ass, you loud, stupid asshole." He grabbed the fan by the face and slammed his face into his knees three times. "That's right! I'll kill you! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!"

Dr. Rockso shoved his face into cocaine and pot-laced pie and began snorting them and eating them, laughing like a madman. "Oh, god. Get some. Go get some. Oh, baby, you can't hold me back. Ka-ka-ka! Yeah! I'm alive!" A female dancer, attracted by the sound, came in to see what was wrong. She let out a scream when she saw Rockso devouring the drugs. She screamed even louder when the clown ripped off her black catsuit.

In the holding cell the guard told us to stay. Yeah right. Pickles and I broke free, ran onto the stage and confronted Kixx. "What the hell is going on?" the singer screamed at the chaos.

Pickles ignored him and charged at him and began punching him in the face. "You're gonna get your fucking ass kicked, you fucking sober douchebag!"

"Save some for-" I said, but then all of a sudden, a blue bolt of electricity shot at me.

"AAAAAAUUUUUUUUGGGHHHHH!" screamed Thomas. Electricity shot out of every orifice in his body and connected to the other hallucinations in the crowd. In the crowd's minds, there were zombie fetuses, demon rabbits, blue octopuses with snakes for tentacles and small, dancing Dr. Rock sos. Suddenly, when Wood became connected, all the hallucinations melted away. The people in the crowd could see five figures rise out of the ground. The figures were giant versions of Dethklok wearing armor from ancient times.

"What the fuck is going on?!" someone in the crowd screamed.

Then, a sixth man rose. A man with long silver hair and a silver beard. He raised his hand and clenched his fist. Half the crowd's heads exploded. "Be blind." Then the other half's eyes exploded and their own intestines began popping out of their mouths and strangled them.

In reality, everyone was screaming in insanity and writhing on the ground, clawing their eyes out and throwing up acid blood. The only people who weren't affected were the members of Dethklok. Murderface pushed past a horrified Skwisgaar and Nathan and shouted, "There you are, you
scumbag!

He turned and glared at Murderface. "And what's the fuck do you want, mother fucker?!"

Murderface blinked. "What's up, bro? What's happening, huh?"

Suddenly, the stage exploded and an old friend appeared. Leonard Rockstein was wearing a woman's black cat suit, a cop's combo cap and his face and hair was smeared in cocaine and pot-laced cherry pie. He screamed, "I'M B-B-B-B-BACK, BABY! MY NAME'S DR. ROCKSO THE ROCK 'N' ROLL CLOWN AND I DO COCAINE!"

As soon as he said the word "cocaine" everyone immediately relapsed and started breaking into stores to steal and consume as much alcoholic beverages they could find. Later, the hospital had over two hundred cases of alcohol poisoning and failed livers.

(!)

Backstage, a gloved hand picked up the bottle of Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake. "There's not much left," the figure said to a communicator.

"It will be enough," they heard Dr. Chesterfield say. "Bring it to me."

"Understood."

(!)

Ugh...what happened...what...was...where am I... My eyes slowly fluttered open and I slowly got up, rubbing my sore head. "What...where am I?" I looked around. I was at some sort of auditorium. Oh, yeah. That's right. The Sobertown USA No Drugs Allowed Rock 'n' Roll Show. We were gonna look for Pickles' band. "Pickles?" I called out. "Did you find...oh!" I gasped in horror. There on the floor was the twitching body of Rikki Kixx. His face had completely covered in cuts and bruises and blood was oozing out of his eyes, nose and mouth.

"Whoa," I chuckled. "Pickles fucked you up. Heh, heh. Oh, god, my head!" I gripped my temples and tried to ignore the pounding headache as I tried to recall what happened last night.

Ignoring the bodies in the audience, I slowly walked out the auditorium, humming a little song as I did. Soon the humming became singing.

*Cue Gloomy Sunday*

I found the band in the Deth Bus. Toki was sitting in a chair far from the other members with a look of rage on his face. Murderface, Nathan and Skwisgaar were huddled together in a chair looking at him with horror. Pickles came up to me and said, "Dude, where have you been? You just missed kicking the crap out of that Rikki Cocks."

I slowly turned to face him. "Snakes n' Barrels?"

"Eh, I don't know what happened to him. By the time Kixx stopped moving...and screaming, I noticed that they just disappeared. Don't know what happened."

I sighed. "Whatever. Just don't talk to me for a while. I got a major headache."

"Hangover?" asked Pickles.
"I guess..." Everything became black.

(!)

Pickles looked down at the passed out kid and shrugged his shoulders. "Well I have had enough of shitty L.A. Who wants to go home?" Nathan, Murderface and Skwisgaar were too frightened to respond and Toki just snorted at him in anger. "So, that's a yes? Okay."
"Your drug," the Left Eye said, handing over the near empty vial to Dr. Chesterfield. The scientist looked it over and said, "There's barely anything left."

"The special effects manager tried to feed it to Rikki Kixx but Kixx fought him off."

The drug specialist looked at the vial again. "Well, I suppose it's better than nothing. But that's not the only reason why I'm here. General Crozier asked me to tell you that you have another mission. Events similar to the Sobertown USA No Drugs Allowed Rock n' Roll Show hosted by Leonard Rockstein have been appearing in places all over the country."

The Left Eye raised an eyebrow. "What's the connection?"

"Frat parties, night clubs, siestas, bar mitzvahs. Any place that has bright lights, loud sounds and pyrotechnics."

"The general believes Dethklok is selling their version of your drug to the general populace."

"And it is turning people into rabid Dethklok fans. Specifically, anyone who dislikes or criticizes them as you said."

"So, what does he want me to do about it?"

"There's a truck delivering shipments of Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake to a wedding in Baltimore. You must stop the shipment before anymore of the drug is distributed. It could be traced back to us."

"If the Master commands..."

"The Master approved it."

"Very well."

(!)

On the TV, a news report started. "The world is still waiting. Where is the new Dethklok album? There have been many delays, and the fans are restless. Some fans have threatened to detonate a stolen nuclear device if they don't hear word of a new album soon. The tension is thick, and the world could erupt into violence at any time." The reporter showed an image of Mount Rushmore with the presidents' faces defaced with death metal makeup and the word "When?" written on George Washington's face. The reporter continued, "Dethklok has promised a deadline. God help us all if they fail to meet it."

(!)
At Mordhaus, Pickles was doing a drummer session with Knubbler, with the rest of Dethklok and myself watching.

"Okay. Ready?" asked Knubbler. "We're gonna roll on this one, okay?"

An exhausted Pickles looked aghast. "You weren't recording on that one?"

"No, we had a little buzz, so just hold on. Okay, we're ready now, go!"

"What the fuck, hold on..." He panted. "I got to catch my breath. Just get it right, okay?" He did his session again when Nathan interrupted him.

"Hey, can I stop you right there? Do you think you could just do it a little better, you know? Just... I don't know...something sounds a little weird to me. I can't put my finger on it."

Pickles got angry. "How about I do this... I'll smash your face?"

"Maybe that's what it is. You have to think about smashing faces. It'll sound better. Do it again. Go."

That's when Pickles saw Jean Pierre bring in plates of food to us. "Are you guys eating out there? Am I smelling French toast?"

"No. No," I lied. Badly. "Just get the drums right, and we'll bring you out in a while."

"But, yeah, it is French toast," Nathan confirmed. "It's really good."

"Just go," I said. "We're rolling."

Pickles barely even played when Knubbler said, "Wait, hold on. Stop, stop, stop."

"What? What the fuck."

"I'm gonna check the mic placement, okay," Knubbler said, stepping into the booth.

The drummer pointed his sticks at him. "Hey, seriously, if you don't get this one right...I swear to god I'll kill you. Now your life is at stake."

"Hey, Pickles. Nobody else is complaining like this, just you."

"Get the fuck out of here."

(!)

Later, Knubbler and I did a guitar session with Skwisgaar. "That buzz is still going," I said. "It's just like Pickles' drum session."

"Yeah," said Skwisgaar. "It's ain't my pedals or my amps or my guitars or nothings."

"Do a little experiment for me, will you," Knubbler said. "Give that guitar to your guitar tech right there." He called in for a Klokateer to go into the sound booth with Skwisgaar.

The blond guitarist handed him his instrument. "Okays, but I don't see the poi..." He stopped when he heard something. "It stops buzzings once I gives it to this guy."

"No more buzz, huh," I asked. Intrigued, I asked, "Do me a favor just touch it, okay?"
"With what do you want me to touch the guitars?"

"How about with your finger, stupid?"

"Yeah, okay. No needs to names calls." He touched the guitar and the buzzing sound came back. When he took his finger off, the buzzing stopped. On, buzz. Off, no buzz. "Hey! It ams buzzes when I points on it with my fingers."

"Yeah, okay," Knubbler said, starting to see the problem. "Now put the guitar back on. Do a little jump in the air for me, okay?"

Skwisgaar obeyed him. "It ams not buzz as longs as I ams in the airs...I think so."

"Yeah, okay. Put the guitar down. Come on out."

(!)

Once Swisgaar was outside the booth, Knubbler said, "You know, I've read about this kind of thing happening."

"How?" I asked.

"Usually happens when you use old equipment or if you abuse it for too long. Which is what happened to the current equipment we have."

I was not surprised, given the many drunken rampages that happened in the recording studio. "How the fucks am I supposed to records this now," asked Skwisgaar. "I'm fucked, right?"

"Not necessarily. I have an idea."

"What's the idea?" I asked. When Knubbler explained his plan, I didn't know what to say until I found the right words. "You're joking, right?"

"No I am not."

"Wouldn't it be easier if we used a wind tunnel or something?"

"Nah, the wind tunnel will blow Skwisgaar's skin off like the last guy that used it. We have to use my plan."

"Fine."

(!)

Our next session was with Nathan...who for some reason was wearing a suit of armor. The clanking sound it made blocked out his voice.

"Stop, stop, stop," Knubbler shouted.

"What's the problem now," Nathan asked, lifting his visor. "What's going on out there?"

"It's just a little on the clanky side, okay?"

"So? Can't you dial the clankiness out?"

"I'm trying," Knubbler responded sarcastically. "I'm doing everything I can."
"Hey, while you're at it," I said to Nathan as he walked out of the booth. "How about you take off that Medieval armor, okay?"

"I think we should try a couple more things, you know?"

"If you just, maybe didn't shake around the mace as much, you know," asked Knubbler.

"It's a morning star," the singer said, lifting up the weapon. "And you already know how I feel about that."

"Nathan."

"Just consider my earlier idea. That's all I'm saying."

"Put the whole band in armor?"

"Put the whole band in armor."

Skwisgaar came into the room, carrying his still buzzing guitar. "Hey, Knubblers ams we gonna doings this or what?"

"Oh, yeah," I said. "Time to go."

"Hey, sorry guys, wrap for the day," Knubbler called out to the other band members. "Cutting you loose. We'll be back." The band thought they were going to get food and made suggestions until he clarified, "Uh, guys, we're not going out to get food."

"Why not?" demanded Murderface.

"We ams goings to record my guitar parts. And it may be the most dangerous things I ams evers done."

"Thens whys you dos it?" asked Toki.

"Because I ams a tones chaser."

"That'd be funny if he said he was a squirrel chaser," said Nathan. "That'd be better, you know?"


"Yeah, I know."

(!)

Turns out Knubbler's plan was for Skwisgaar to sky dive out the Deth Copter. "Now, you jump out," he shouted over the loud wind. "And I'm gonna play the track and we'll be rolling, okay? So stay focused and don't forget to pull the rip chord when you level off. You got it?"

Skwisgaar shouted, "Uh-huh!"

"You ready?"

"Let's do this!" I booted him out the Deth Copter. "Aah!"

(!)

Several minutes later, Skwisgaar's guitar session was played in a HERD vial and the sound came
more clear with no buzzing. I gave a thumbs up to Knubbler and the guitarist. "We're good!"

"Yay!"

(!)

Back at the recording studio, Knubbler, Skwisgaar and I were reviewing the recording sessions."

"Hey, Knubblers, Woods. Still jazzed about hows great that recordings went, huh? Hey, you minds playing me some of those tracks."

Suddenly, Toki came into the room. He had a look of panic on his face. "Why dos that? Hey, let's all gets lunch... my treats! Let's gets out of this stuffy place! Let's just gets out of this room! Come on! Gos! Go!"

I gave him the stink eye. "Okay, Toki, what did you do this time." The second guitarist made a whimper. My eyes widened. "Oh, no, you didn't!" I ran to the control panel and turned on the recordings. Oh, my god, what was that horrible racket?!

"Whats the fucks is thats sounds?" shouted Skwisgaar. "Something is wrongs here! Isolates my guitar track." I did so. That was not the record we made on the HERD earlier.

Toki yelled, "I'm sorrys! It's my faults! I fucked its all up. Don't kicks me out of the band! I do anythings! I sucks your cock." He bent down, but I grabbed him by the shoulder and tossed him into a wall.

"Toki, pull yourself together!" I shouted.

"Skwisgaar, I should have backed those sessions up," Knubbler said in a guilty tone. "I mean I really should have."

I gave him the stink eye too. "You what."

"Don't look at me like that! Oh Skwisgaar, you know what this means, right?"

I groaned. I spoke in my Dethphone, "Pilot, start up the Dethcopter again."

(!)

Later that evening, Mr. Offdenson called me, Skwisgaar, Toki and Nathan in for a meeting. Apparently Murderface and Toki had a surprise for us. "Uh, guys, Murderface and Toki are waiting for you to meet them, they want to pitch their song to you. Even if you don't like it, say something nice, okay?"

"Whatever," was all Nathan said.

(!)

Toki and Murderface met us in the dining hall. They were carrying a big boom box and a CD made out of HEARD. "So, you guys are good?"

"Yeah," said Nathan.

"You got your coffee?"

"Yeah," said Pickles.
"Oh, thanks for the cups of coffee," Skwisgaar said.

"Oh, my pleasure. My pleasure." Murderface turned to the second guitarist. "Toki, offer them the hot towels."

"But they didn't... Am you guys want the hot towels?"

"No, we're good. Let's do this," said Nathan. "

"We're just about done with the record. We just want to get back to it, so, come on, just play it," said Pickles.

"I just want to make everything perfect," said Murderface. "I want you to be comfortable."

"It's fucking fine. Press play," growled Nathan.

"You don't have to be rude. I mean, you're not rude. Look, now I'm gonna play you this song that I wrote...Toki helped...And it would be great if you guys could keep your comments to yourself, just keep quiet while we play it and then not interject."

"What's would we interject about," Skwisgaar asked, losing his patience.

"Man, just can it! So I can play you something that'll blow your mind, all right. Something that I'm real..."

"What's it called?" I asked.

It's called 'Takin' it Easy.'

"'Takin', like with an apostrophe?" asked Pickles.

"Yeah."

"Instead of 'taking'."

"I said," Murderface shouted. "Can the interjections till after!"

"GO ON! GET ON WITH IT! MY BEER'S GETTING COLD!"

"Shut the fuck up, Wood and listen!"

*Cue Takin' It Easy*

When the song was finished, no one said a word. Then Nathan said, "Great, guys." There was no gratitude in his voice.

"Yeah, you guys really nailed it." There was none in Pickles' either.

"You want to hear it again?" Murderface asked eagerly.

"No, I mean, uh..." Nathan didn't know what to say to sound so offensive. At first anyway.

"Okay, guys," the bassist said with a happy smile. "You obviously like it. So let's just cut the shit man. Is this thing going on the record or what?"

"No."
Murderface's smile vanished. "What? What the fuck do you mean, 'no'?"

"It don't sounds like a Dethkloks songs," Skwisgaar said. "I mean, it's great stuffs but..."

Murderface exclaimed. "Aha! They said it's great! Are you hearing this, Toki? This is your opening fucking track, you deaf monkey pieces of shit."

"I liked it," I said.

"You see?!"

"Let's just quit while we're ahead," Toki said delicately.

"Oh shit, you're fucking bailing on me, too? Fine!"

"No, but if you screams at thems, thens you blows it! We can still talks them into it!"

"Uh, no, you can't," said Nathan.

"Fuck all of you," Murderface screamed. "Yeah, you heard me! Fuck you, fuck you, and fuck you! What are you doing, Pickles? Are you filming me with your fucking camera phone?! You mother fucker!"

"Yeah, I'm sorry. I'll put that away. It's not appropriate."

"So, wait. Just so I understand," Murderface asked. "You're all passing on 'Takin' it Easy'?"

"Pretty much," I said.

"I can't even begin to believe that. Well fuck all of you. I'm keeping that song for Planet Piss."

"So I'm in Planet Piss now?" Toki asked hopefully.

"No, fuck you! You're not in Planet Piss, you fucking greedy asshole! No!"

"I'll fucking sues you, Murderface, that's mine!" Toki grabbed the rack of hot towels.

The bassist held his hands up. "What are you fucking doing? Are you gonna throw a basket of hot towels at me?"

"Yes, I'm gonna throws a basket of hot towels at you! Well, I don't think you should!"

"Why not?"

"Because those towels are really hot! Don't fucking throw hot towels, you lunatic!"

(!)

Somewhere on the road to Maryland, a truck carrying bottles of water randomly exploded. The pieces of the driver rained down along with the melted bottles. A lone figure carrying a rocket launcher stepped out from behind a line of trees. They nodded. No more evidence. Suddenly, a piece of paper floated down in front of them. They grabbed it and took a look at it. It was a list of names, no doubt the people the bottles were supposed to go to. Then the figure noticed something odd about it.

(!)
Another report was airing. "Millions of Dethklok fans have gathered around Mordhaus. They are waiting for the chimney smoke to turn from white to black. This will mean the new album is complete."

(Is)

"Is it done?" asked General Crozier when the Left Eye returned. He was waiting with Vater Orlag and Master Selacia.

"Yes. And I think you should take a look at this mailing list."

Crozier and looked it over. "Why are there crossed out Dethklok logos next to some of these names?"

"That's something I don't know."

The general looked at the names in confusion and intrigue. What was so special about these particular names? And why were they marked with crossed out Dethklok logos?
"Did you find the connection with those names?" General Crozier asked the Left Eye. The "favored" agent was sitting in front of a computer with the list of the names with the crossed out Dethklok logos next them.

"I can't really say for sure," the Left Eye said. "They haven't met in person before. In fact, the only time they're ever speaking to each other is when they are on online forums and chat websites."

"That's not good enough, kid."

"I know. Let me try something else." The Left Eye typed on the keyboard. "The special effects manager specifically sent these bottles of modified Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake to people who hate Dethklok, right? So let's see if they've ever been to Dethklok fan sites to send negative comments." They pressed the enter key. "Bingo. Now let's see..." Their eyes scrolled down the list of websites the people on the list went to. "Hmm. That's odd."

"What is it?"

"According to this, the most frequent website these people been to in the past year was diefordethklokdotcom."

"That's impossible. The site shut down after the Jomfru brothers were kidnapped during Dethklok Fan Day."

The agent's eyes widened. "That's it! That's the connection!"

Crozier's raised an eyebrow. "What is it?"

"That's how the Revengencers have been getting new members recently! Edgar Jomfru is recruiting former members of his and his brother's website!"

"But how is that possible? If the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake is being sent to potential Revengencer recruits' houses, how is Edgar convincing them to come to their side?"

"Not Edgar. The brother of Agent 216."

"The man with the silver face?" The Left Eye nodded. General Crozier sighed and closed his eyes for a second. "Knowing his knowledge of every torture method, he no doubt has the potential to break the ones who took the Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake."

"Break them enough to form an army of Dethklok hating terrorists."

(!)

A news bulletin appeared on various television sets. "Paranoia runs rampant in the Midwest as
gangs destroy a truck terminal because of rumors of Dethklok's new album being stored in the warehouse."

The channel changed and showed a female reporter with a picture of General Crozier. "There's a brand new head of the military who has vowed to fight terrorism on the home front."

Then the channel changed to the Dethklok Minute. "Wow! Dethklok is certainly throwing a major record release party for the new CD! And 40,000 lucky fans are going to see a special Dethklok performance in a undisclosed location."

"Wood! You got to look at this!" Nathan suddenly grabbed me and pulled me into the living room.

"Nathan, what the fuck? I'm busy planning the..."

"Shut up and look at this!"

He shoved his computer in my face and showed a video of a man performing a felatio on...himself. My eyebrows raised. "Wow."

"Wow? That's all you can say?"

"I know," Pickles said. "It's impossible, it should! But there it is!"

"And it's not CGI's," Skwisgaar said. "It's fuckings real!"

Toki was on the ground, babbling nonsense. I looked at the cup he was holding. "Are you drinking straight vodka?"

"Shut ups!"

Suddenly, Murderface ran into the room carrying a clipboard. "Fire drill! Drop what your doing and find a way out! That's right, save your lives!" No one budged. "No time to grab your belongings your life is on the line here! Come on, fire drill! Let's go! Keep moving!" No one still budged. "What? Ah, you're just looking at me! Fire drill!"

"What are you doing?" asked Nathan.

Murderface shook his head and sighed. "I'm doing a fire drill:.

"Why are you sighing and shaking your head?"

"Huh. You ask why. It's because all of you are dead right now, okay? You're all being burned by fire And I'm sad, that you're dead. And I'm disappointed in all of you for not listening to me, your fire chief. Because I could've..."

"Fire chief?" asked Pickles.

Murderface corrected himself, "Band fire chief. And yes you - we had fucking a election! Gah!"

"You was serious abouts dat?" Toki asked, still plastered off his ass.

"Serious about fire safety? Of course I'm serious! And I fucking beat you all. You all voted for me, it was a clean sweep!"
"You were the only one that ran if I'm not mistaken," Nathan said to the bassist.

"So? Still a clean sweep. Any day of the week. Any political correspondent guy will tell you that. I won. Clean sweep."

"Not an impressive one."

"Yes it is! Listen. Let's just stay on course here. I'm talking about saving your lives!" No one responded. "Yeah, yeah. Now I got your attention. I hear something about sucking your own cock?"

"Why do you care?" I asked. "This is the fist time you're concerned about fire safety."

"I care! I care about you!"

"No you don't. You just care about yourself."

"Look! I have a fire escape route planned out!" He showed the plans on the clipboard. "Says so right here!"

"I don't believe you."

"Fine! Don't believe me! Burn for all I care!"

"Okay."

(!)

"You called, my Master?" The Left Eye asked, bowing before Vater Orlag and Selacia.

"Crozier is now chief of all military operations," said Vater Orlag.

"And our influence will soon be his," Selacia said.

"We are entering a dangerous time, master."

"The balance is shifting, Vader Orlag. It is to be expected."

"How shall we proceed with General Crozier?"

"Soon enough I will 'enlighten' him."

"And Dethklok?"

"The time will come. The time will come. We will ship out soon."

"And the Revengencers?" the Left Eye asked.

Selacia chuckled. "Let them play their little game. Soon, their part in this play will seem so small."

"And the man with the silver face?"

Selacia made a knowing look. "He has a part to play as large as Dethklok's."

"And the Right Eye? What of my sibling?"

"You will reunite."
We were at the conference hall after Mr. Offdenson called us in. "Alright, we got a lot of stuff to cover today. Number one... the exclusive concert. Number two... CD release party here at Mordhaus. But mostly I want to talk to you guys about security, alright? First of all, you guys..."

"Hey, hey check this out," Nathan called out. "Check what I figured out how to do today in the shower." Suddenly, he changed his pitch to a higher one, sounding like Toki. "Hey guys, what's going on?" Everyone exclaimed in surprise, impressed. Well, everyone except Mr. Offdenson and I. "I did it with my voice! I invented it."

"No you didn't," Pickles said. "It's called mimicry."

Skwisgaar nodded. "Mimickskries."

"Imickskrels!" shouted a drunk Toki. "Lunchables."

"Not to brag or nothing," said Pickles. "But I can make totally make my voice sound like a trumpet."

"Bullshit!" shouted Murderface.

"Check this out." Pickles did an impersonation of a trumpet, making a tuneless song.

"Holy shit."

"Hey, that's pretty good trumpet playin'," Nathan said, still impersonating Toki.

Toki shouted in a drunk manner, "Lms a trumpets! I ams a trumpets!"

Nathan stopped impersonating. "Uh yeah, Toki. That's pretty good." He didn't mean it.

"Everyone's good to continue then?" asked Mr. Offdenson.

"Yeah, go on," Murderface said.

"Alright..."

"Downer."

"Look," I said. "We're just concerned with security. Especially with all the recent Klokateer kidnappings and murders."

"Which reminds me," Murderface stood up. "I should take this time to let all of you know that I'm stepping down as band fire chief." Everyone groaned. "I will take this time right now to listen to reason should any of you reconsider this position that you've forced me into."

"No, thanks."

"Oh, ha ha! That's high voice!" Toki laughed at Nathan.

"Moving right along..." Mr. Offdenson said, but Nathan interrupted him and said, "Hey. Hey, listen. Actually I would like to get serious for a moment, okay? If I could?"

"Very well."
"I, uh, I think it would be n the band's best interest to hire a Buddhist yoga instructor guy."

"Dude," Pickles said. "Oh yeah! Yes, I second that."

"Oh really," said Mr. Offdenson. "What? Because you guys are interested in yoga or spiritual guidance?"

"No because..."

"Yes!" Nathan shouted over Skwisgaar. "Yes! We want spiritual thing. Is that really the reason? Yup, right guys?"

"I thought we..." Murderface said. Then he and the rest of Dethklok said, "Ohhhhhh! Right."

"I'm sorry. I don't understand," asked Mr. Offdenson. "Why do you need this?"

"Oh, God," I said, pinching the bridge of my nose. "Please don't tell me this is about the video of the guy giving himself a blow job, is it?"

Dethklok immediately denied it.

"No, we ams nots thinking about thats," Skwisgaar said.

"Yeah, we just want to reach things a little bit better," Nathan said.

"We aren't thinking about it at all," Pickles said.

"You were the one thinking about it!" shouted Murderface. "You're so weird, you know?"

"No I wasn't," I said, tired of the blame game.

"Yes you were," Toki said. "You were thinking...thinkings...thinkings...what was he thinking abouts agains?" He passed out.

"So what was you thinking?" asked Skwisgaar.

"It's a video," I said before Murderface shouted, "AHA! You were thinking it!"

"Not that video, you idiot! It's a video of a girl with a tongue like an anteater's eating out another girl." Everyone was silent.

"Uh...meeting adjourned," said Mr. Offdenson. I gave him a look. "I'm not gonna look at that video. In fact, I have important stuff that I want to talk to you about."

(!)

The Tribunal was having another meeting. But this one was with representatives of the United Nations. "Dethklok is still the most popular force on Earth," a female expert said. "They are now the 7th largest economy in the world. We believe that the world is now completely dependent upon Dethklok. The new album will be a great relief to the depressed nations of the world. Safe distribution of this album is critical to these nations. Dethklok threat assessment: Dethklok has enormous reverence from billions of fans. But there is a major concern: The Revengencers. The Revengencers' numbers are growing. The rumors of kidnapping recruits off the streets and controlling their minds are true. They have developed a way of controlling people's minds using Dethklok's own music. We believe that they control hundreds possibly thousands of mindless slave-soldiers."
"It gets worse," the Left Eye said. "They have developed a powerful new weapon that uses sound waves." The Left Eye showed an image of the weapon. "They're planning on attacking Mordhaus on the release date of the album."

The United Nations representatives began arguing and expressing their concern. It was true. The world had grown too dependent on Dethklok. If anything bad were to happen to them, it would be a second Great Depression. "The Gentlemen please," Senator Stampingston shouted. "Order! Order!"

"I understand your concern over this heinous terrorist organization," General Crozier said. "I give you my personal oath that I will stop. The Revengencers or die trying."

The Left Eye looked at the general without turning their head and smiled with a knowing smile.

(!)

Somewhere deep in the forest, Edgar Jomfru sat before a mass of people with blank expressions. Beside him was the man with the silver face and the boy wearing Eric Jomfru's face as a mask. "There was a time," he said. "A time when I was a different person. A time when myself and my brother's credo was to die for Dethklok. Things have changed. I am reborn. We are all reborn. We were the fans we still have the power!" He laughed, "Die for Dethklok. It's time for Dethklok to die for us!" He unveiled a large round sphere with green glowing lights and speakers attached to it.

(!)

"Mr. Offdenson," I said as we reached his office. "Why did you drag me from my work? I have to work on the release party."

"There is going to be some changes." He handed me some blueprints. "I know the scientists down below have been making some new weapons for the security team. I want you to tell them to make them."

I looked the plans over. "When do you want them done?"

"Immediately."

"Immediately?! This could take months to make! We don't have time!"

"There's a supercomputer that will build these gadgets with just a click of its gears. See to it that it's done."

"Okay..." I looked at them again then at my boss. "Mr. Offdenson?"

"Hmm?"

"Why are you in a rush to make these?"

"I have a feeling something bad is about to happen."

"The Revengencers?" We hadn't heard from them for some time now.

"I know they will make a comeback. And I believe they're going to attack the release party. Which is why I want this done right away."

"Understood." I turned to leave when Mr. Offdenson put a hand on my shoulder.

"And one last thing. If we are attacked and we run into the man with the silver face, run. Don't run
until I tell you it's safe."

"But...what about Dethklok?"

"They'll be fine. They always are."

"With you around," I pointed out. "Without you, they're just a bunch of stupid imbeciles who often turn up smelling of whiskey and can't take responsibility for their actions or take care of themselves."

Mr. Offdenson chuckled. "It's better than turning up stinking of poppers. But I don't see them that way. I see them as...children. Children with a musical talent. Children who need a father figure. Children who are lost without me."

"Okay, you lost me there," I said, holding up my hand. "You would actually consider someone as ugly and repugnant as William Murderface to be a child figure?"

"It's better than thinking they are a bunch of imbeciles. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to ready the troops."

(!)

In his lair, Edgar Jomfru heard the clacking sounds of high-heels approaching him. He didn't even turn to face the owner of the shoes as he said, "You've considered my proposition?"

"Yes I have," said a Eastern European female voice.

"Your alliance would mean much to us. You bring forth great cunning and strength."

"And you could get me close to Explosion."

"And after you've had your way with him?"

Lavona Succuboso smiled. "You may do as you wish."

(!)

"Test Mordhaus defense systems," Mr. Offdenson said to the head of Dethklok security.

"Systems engaged." A forcefield formed around Mordhaus. "System functioning at 1000/0 sir."

"Very good. Flightklok Captain 408?" The captain saluted. "Do you have your flight trajectory post concert?"

"Yes, sir. Very good then. You all have the dossiers on the people of interest?"

"Sir, yes we do," a Klokateer soldier said.

"Any luck finding him?"

"Regretfully no, sir."

Mr. Offdenson took a photo of the man with the silver face out of his pocket and narrowed his eyes at it. "Where are you, you crafty son of a bitch? Where are you?" He put the photo away and turned to an army of heavily armed Klokateers. These were the elite guard, handpicked specifically by Mr. Offdenson himself. "Should anything go wrong whatsoever, I'm looking to you. You are
the best soldiers we have. This will no doubt be the most dangerous night in your life and Dethklok's life. Protect yourselves...protect Mordhaus...and most of all...protect Dethklok."

The elite guard saluted. "Yes, sir!"

"Sir, the shuttles are ready to take you and the band to the performance rendezvous," a Klokateer engineer said.

"Let's make sure this record drops the way that it should. Without a fucking fucking hitch. Fall out."

(!)

I placed the last of the blue prints into the 3D printer. "Mr. Offdenson wants these done immediately, understood?"

"Yes," said the Klokateer scientists.

"Good. Call me if anything else goes wrong." I left the lab and took the elevator. The boys were expected to be in the great hall waiting for Mr. Offdenson to arrive. And...they weren't here. "Where the hell?" I marched up to Nathan's room and saw...the most disturbing thing I ever saw. Nathan was curled inward, groaning like he was in pain!

"Nathan! What the bloody hell are you doing?!"

"Trying to suck..."

"You know what? I don't want to know. Where's everybody else?"

(!)

At the Helipad, Mr. Offdenson was getting off the Dethcopter. "Alright, it's time to go. Wait, where are they? I called them an hour ago."

"Right here."

Mr. Offdenson looked up.

(!)

I carted the band forward on a cart, ignoring their moans of pain and Toki's drunken gibberish. "They were trying to suck their own dicks. Except for Toki. He was drinking straight vodka again."

Mr. Offdenson pinched the bridge of his nose. "Get us a chiropractor on the Dethcopter, A.S.A.P. And get some B12 shots, and make some black coffee. Guys?"

"Yeah?" asked Dethklok.

"Let's make it happen."

(!)

The news spread around the world. "It's the night before the official release of Dethklok's highly anticipated new album. Major cities around the world are throwing their own Dethklok parties. This day has officially passed New Year's in popularity."
"And even more exciting and decadent, will be the Dethklok CD release party held at Dethklok's multi compound fortress home Mordhaus."

"40,000 lucky fans are being brought to an undisclosed location for an intimate exclusive 'private' performance. Fans and journalists have scoured the Earth to find these Dethklok concert grounds. The world is left wondering "where will this concert be?"

(*Cue Black Fire Upon Us*)

Somewhere in the middle of the Arizona deserts, the 40,000 fans that were given the exclusive invitation gathered for their gods' next performance. Suddenly, five spheres of plexiglass burst from the ground, trapped them and lifted them up into the sky. Then a count down began. When it reached zero, a rocket burst from the ground. The rocket flew up into the sky, then stopped about 40,000 feet up into the air. The rocket transformed into a giant stage and out came Dethklok...

Dethklok returned to Mordhaus to be greeted by thousands of guests consisting of fans, political figures, military personal, and world leaders. Nathan grumbled, "Oh great, another douche bag industry party."

"Guys, stick around," said Mr. Offdenson. "There's a bunch of people I wanna introduce you to. Try not to get too wasted."

"C'mon dats not fair," complained Pickles. "It's a party!"

"How about just pace yourselves. Not like your buddy over there." Mr. Offdenson pointed to Toki who was still drunk.

While everyone mingled with the party goers, clearly bored out of their wits, I decided to hit the buffet table. Suddenly, my right eye became irritated, like something got lodged into it. I tried to ignore it when suddenly the light went out. I thought it was part of the show until I felt the building rumble and the alarms started blaring. Defense center. Now!

I found Mr. Offdenson in the defense center almost immediately. "Boys," I shouted. "What's going on?"

"That's what I want to know," Mr. Offdenson said with urgency.

"We just got hit by some huge force, we don't know what it is," a Klokateer said.

"And the shields?"

"They're down."

"That's impossible," I said frantically. "Those shields are impenetrable!"

"They're using some kind of sound based weaponry to damage our shield generators." the Klokateer said.

"We've got another problem," another Klokateer said, monitoring Mordhaus' perimeters. "We've
"We need to take that thing out." Mr. Offdenson turned to me. "You and a team get on Dethklok the guests to safety and you have the Dethsoldiers meet me in front of the alpha hatch in five."

(!)

The Klokateers and I rushed for the dining hall where Dethklok was when suddenly, my right eye became hurt again. It became too much. I collapsed onto the floor and put my right hand over my aching eye. "What is it?" a Klokateer asked. He bent over to help, but I pushed him away.

"Forget about me! Get Dethklok to safety! I'll catch up!"

"Y...Yes, sir!" And he ran off.

I picked myself up and followed, ignoring the pain in my eye. Suddenly, a pair of hands grabbed me and tossed me out the window. I screamed all the way down until I landed on the ground. "FUCK! My leg!" Yep. My right leg was definitely broken. I wasn't giving up yet, though. Ignoring the pain in my leg and my eye, I crawled on the ground toward the dining hall. "Gotta get to...Dethklok...stop Revengencers."

Suddenly, a boot pressed itself on my leg, making me scream. "You're not going anywhere," I heard the voice say. It sounded robotic. Did this guy have a voice modifier? I turned around to face him. It was a figure wearing a gas mask and black armor.

"You're with them. The Revengencers," I groaned.

"Those petty children? Hardly. No, they're our pawns in a much, much bigger game."

I glared at the man...woman...I couldn't really tell what gender they were and frankly, I didn't care.

"I am going to show you something. That you need to know." The man's left eye glowed and...fire. Bodies raining down. Stacking on top of each other. Forming thrones. Five gods are sitting on them. The thrones are screaming. Then a sixth god rose. A man with long silver hair and a silver beard. He reached for his own eyes and plucked them from their sockets. From the eyes came two babies.

"STOP IT!" I fired the blue whale tranquilizer in the man's eye, making him scream. He's distracted. Got to...get away... Save Dethklok...

(!)

Meanwhile, the man with the silver face had turned Mr. Offdenson's face into a pulpy mess, but he didn't kill him. Yet. "I want you to stay alive," he growled as he carved Mr. Offdenson's left cheek with a knife. "I want you to stay alive while I torture you. I want you to feel the pain." He suddenly felt something grab his left ankle. He looked down to see the special effects manager grabbing onto him. Irritated he stomped on his head until he let go. "Now, where were we, my prey?"
Before he could resume torturing him, he was knocked unconscious by something hard and heavy.

Nathan, holding onto a burning log, panted. "That's my bread and butter you're fucking with."

(!)

Smoke. Fire. Bodies. Thrones. Gods. The end of the world. And a new one born from metal. It's all I can see now. All I can see now. The Metalocalypse.

End of Book 1.

End Notes

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