

Wagner's Ride of the Valkyries

He's down to his underwear.

The wall, made of brick and of cold feels good against his back. Taped on the wall above his shoulder is an outdated photo of his niece on her tricycle, looking down at the ground and smiling.

His arms hang loose, and his eyes are closed. Deep breaths.

There's a classical song he thinks of at these moments, and he's promised himself to learn its name and the master behind it. He's somewhat of an artist himself; his fists are the brush and the world his canvas.

This will be the most human connection he's had in a while, and a smile comes across his lips.

The brute squad enters the hallway and stops in front of the metal door. They send six. Any more won't fit into the cell. The younger ones, with gym muscles and no families kid themselves into thinking they want to lead. Experience will help them learn their truth.

Amped up and ready for war, they are nothing to what his old man could do. And did.

He smells a hint of nutmeg. Mace.

On a good day, he can't even explain his actions. It's certainly nothing personal. Even when it is, it isn't.

They peek through the bean slot before opening the door. He comes alive with his dukes up and brings the fight to them.

His niece, still on her tricycle in the picture, smiles at a happier time, oblivious to the melee below.