

# ONE DAY ON THE NET

*Author McWriter*

SQT

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Author McWriter - Put notes, acknowledgement, byline, whatever here.

foo

bar

baz

~,^>

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```
SQT_Publishing{  
  https://sqt.wtf  
  gemini://sqt.wtf  
  https://sqt.computer/zine  
  publisher->email = root@sqt.computer }
```

14 November 2022

## Somewhere, XXI century.

In front of a computer like most nights, awash in boredom. He had been to all corners of the net he could find, he had read all the recommended books, heard all the crazy ideas, and learned all he could from the digital. Despite the infinite size of the net, he had ran up against its every boundary. A terminal bell called for his attention. Someone had spoken to him through the networks of IRC. Someone known only as Meph had asked "Rotwang, would you like to build a nuke?" Taken aback by the request Rotwang could only stare, then smile at the chance to learn something new. "Yes, I desire to know the unknowable and to discover power unsought." Meph replied "I have that which you seek and much more." Reading this, Rotwang couldn't help but ask "Who are you?" Receiving the response "That which hates." Confused, Rotwang ran a */whois* on Meph, but received no information of value. Seeing this Rotwang got a tad nervous about the whole interaction. As he turned off his computer and went to sleep he dreamt of power and knowledge.

Woken by his alarm he was filled with dread. Off to school, a place that only reminds him he is different. Suffering beatings by those stronger than him, Rotwang claims not to mind the first hand lesson on the metaphysics of power. Really a cope for his pain. Grabbing his headphones and underpants he winced at the bruises on his stomach left from the beating the day before. Dressing himself to his loud, angry music he prayed for the strength to endure and the cybernetics to defeat. Draped in a thick black jacket, a gift from his father, he walked out the door readying himself for the beating of the day. Wishing for a nuke to wipe out the world.

Onto the bus a place he dreaded for the smells were wild and deadly, the spacing inhumane. He knew from experience, on a rainy day such as today the ride would last only thirteen minutes and forty-one seconds. Rotwang had been on the bus for a while. His interactions with the humans are painful. He is hated and he hates them. Glares are cast at his short and slender frame. Small, but smart, he would do anyone's homework if he was given enough of a threat to care. Approaching the school his eyes watered his body shook.

He walked towards the school slowly as if spending more time walking meant something would save him. No matter how much you attempt to avoid pain, it is always near. He was grabbed from behind and knew there was no use struggling. Practically lifted by his neck all he could do was fight for breath. "You have my homework shit stain." With his neck almost crushed he wheezed out a yes with the life seeping out of him. Death was his friend the corners of his eyes darkening, his mind sluggish. Rotwang hoped for his end. Then he was dropped with a sensation as sudden as his accosting. He was set free to lie on the floor coughing and crying wishing he could've died then and there. He looked up and saw a teacher with fear in her eyes looking at the giant who had gripped his neck. The giant laughed everyone knew he wouldn't be in any trouble. If he had, Rotwang might have been a happy person, a joyful person a normal person. Sometimes you can cry until there's nothing wet in you. You can scream and curse to where your throat rebels and ruptures. He was suddenly picked up by the teacher. "What did you do to make him mad?" Rotwang knew how this would go. If he was silent, they would check the cameras to find he did nothing wrong, and let him go to walk the halls waiting to get attacked again. What a thing to live in fear.

Most of the day went by without incident. Rotwang watched his back to avoid the giant at all times. His efforts didn't prevent him being found at lunch and dragged away to be beaten as the teacher's intervention in the morning had prevented giant recovering his homework. He was beaten, he was broken, he could feel his bones creak and his flesh bleed. He pleaded for death or at least tried such through the puke and the blood. He knew the end would not come if he didn't seek his own death. After the beating the giant left. Rotwang was alone, a mess of blood and tears. Just then he was messaged on IRC by the same figure as last night. "Rotwang would you like to build a nuke?" Fueled by the purest emotion he had ever known he had only one option for an answer. "Yes, I need to know." That is when the beginning of the end was started by one digital avatar and a helpless broken boy.

Eventually Rotwang made it home, avoiding speaking to his parents about the beating he had taken that day. They would take the matter to the school and only make things worse. Covered in bruises his shower stung so much he cried. Rotwang couldn't help but to weep aloud. Back on his computer he saw Meph had left him the items he needed. Shocked to see plans no more complex than an IED, with nuclear material from smoke detectors. Rotwang set to work right away. Knowing the end he sought was right

around the corner, 3teeth blasting on his stereo, Rotwang built all he could with the materials he had available. Tomorrow he will salvage as many smoke detectors as he can. Until then he could only thank the stranger known as Meph for their kindness. Knowing Meph would all die if they near him, Rotwang wondered what their motives were, if there were any.

His craft nearly assembled over the weekend Rotwang could only wonder why he had made it. What had he gained by making a nuke? Was the fun of making the nuke the only gift he was given? Was he a fool for listening to strangers from the internet? Were the feds on his ass already? His mind raced with fear as Rotwang realized the only person he could speak to was Meph. "Now what?" The strangest reply he ever heard; "Do as thy will." Placing the nearly finished bomb in his closet Rotwang felt as if he had wasted a weekend. Every new week he was back to where he started the last.

It was a Sunday night, that meant football. Rotwang hated football, and wished lobotomies for the giants who played the sport. All he ever cared to know about football was the brain injury stats. The sport was all he could hear in the house. His father had the TV blasting so loud Rotwang couldn't hear his own mind over the cheers and screams. An eye watering yell came from downstairs "TOUCHDOWN!" This sound was enough to make Rotwang cry, his hands went to his ears by instinct. The noise would drive him crazy if he went on like this. "A nuke could fix this." Meph spoke as if he knew Rotwang's thoughts. Too distraught to interact with his machine, Rotwang sat in a corner and waited for the game to end.

In school he was beaten but this time there was hope. "A nuke could fix this." Echoed in his head all day. Beaten and bruised he knew what he had to do. He had found the answer to his problems and he could end all the problems of others. Existence is pain, and Rotwang found the cure. Next weekend he would finish the job and gather the radiological materials for his charge.

Day after day he was beaten in school. His father yelled at the TV during his football games. Instead of sorrow, this week Rotwang felt pure and simple hatred. He spoke with his only friends, the people inside the computer. People across the world connected by the network. A realization hit hard, these are Rotwang's only friends. His radiologic scrap ready he set about his labor. Finally, staring at his weapon as Meph prodded him forward. Rotwang screamed his heart out till his throat couldn't make sounds anymore, and his lungs could barely wheeze. He was on the edge of perfection, the edge of omnicide, crippled by his isolation. Rotwang pressed the button.

Nothing, Meph had lied to him.

Taken advantage, he felt like a fool. His pride stained. "I," Rotwang whispered, "Was ready to die to-day." The attempted murder of every person a boy knows is not a burden any child should bear. He tried to live normally for a few days, taking his beatings sure they were deserved. Rotwang listened to his fathers screams at the TV gripping his ears at every yell, fighting to hold back tears. This was his life. Meph had ran away from him never to be seen again. On his 4th day he couldn't take it.