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## Again Tomorrow

### Description

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#### 1. The border patrol agent

It was one of those beautiful autumn days. Work was going well. The new agreement for the operational plan was passed and we were all hyped after months of preparation to protect with greater intensity and renewed protocols the European borders. A lot of money had been spent for the whole programme and we were wishing that soon, some way, somehow, this money would reach our pockets too. Our commander, he was telling us often that the keyword was synergy. And it had stuck in my head the last few days along with code of conduct that was my gospel.

The room where I stayed didn't have any luxuries, but this bothered me little. The passion for the job was that big that every small difficulty was brushed aside. Other young agents like me would for sure nag about it. Besides, it was a small barren islet, shoved into the hinterland of the Aegean, where nothing never happened. During the summer, dryness and heat and in the winter, nothing but wind and rain. It didn't have its own water, it didn't have any passable bars for a drink, and the people, not more than a hundred in total, are on average fifty years old and above. If one thinks thoroughly about it, it was pure misery.

We had a strong team and with my mates the border patrol officers, we were bound together by the common ideals and common goals of order and security. The other thing that united us was alcohol and solitude. At night when we weren't on patrol we were gathering at the houses of the local police and drank flat out telling stories about our service at school, about birds, football, the situation at the island and the various small gossip, and so time was passing and we were having some fun.

Our commander must be an amateur of Greek mythology and most likely it is from there that he got the inspiration for the name of the mission. Mythology is not so much my thing. I just remember that a guy named Ulysses went on a trip with a boat and went through a bunch of troubles, but heroically managed to return home; from there we have the expression 'It was an Odyssey' or something like it.

There are times that I too feel like a hero: when those evenings that I return at my room, some of the island residents applaud us in the street because they recognise our work, our hard work, our Odyssey! These are the good times of our job that fill you with satisfaction to the bone.

There are of course other brilliant and interesting things. For example, during a noon patrol, this by the way should stay between us because our superior has put an absolute gag order regarding it, we ran into a dingy boat with around fifty illegals screaming in frenzy for help, hoping that we will take them ashore. As I report it back to the operations centre,

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they informed us that we must make them return from where they came from, at all costs. It is then that we finally started getting into some action because due to boredom and the slight wave we had almost fallen asleep onboard the boat.

They all looked to me like wild animals, with their eyes and teeth bulging out their faces, each on top the other pleading with us to save them. Surely more than half of them were proper savages! One of them spoke some English and he had the nerve to tell us that it is our obligation to take them ashore. T??? will tell US, , what we have to do... Can you believe it!

We started shooting at the sea to scare them and have them change course, but nothing. The filthy mutts wouldn't back down and all this while I had the officer on (top of )me wanting me at every move to report back, I was hammered.

Done with the sweet talk, I thought to myself, we have to impose ourselves more assertively or else we won't come out clean. The adrenaline was rising, their screams had started getting on our nerves along with the sun that was beating us down straight on the head. We let them approach our boat and with a swift swerve by George we punctured their dinghy. There, you should have seen cries and panic!

'Get on our boat you asshole wanking Muslims!', we were shouting at them. They were trampling each other so that all made it onboard and didn't stay behind, while they were trembling and stinking like pigs. 'Water! Water!' were shouting like crows those scraggies, bursting our eardrums, but after some smacking and thumping, they shut their mouths and the thirst went away.

We started asking for their papers and whatever they had on them: money, things of value and such sort. Some were playing the tough guys and were resisting, and so since they were asking for it, the guns were drawn against their foreheads and were now emptying everything willingly. It is what the law says, we are not some sort of thieves. All this was George's cup of tea, he felt as if he was in a movie. It was such a fuss about the boat that if any of the women happened to bump into us we groped a titty or two as if by mistake to spice things up a bit. Some started to screech once more, but afresh with the gun they were shutting up. The fuckers, they wanted to keep the money! Some had on them more than what I make in a year. What are they on about wanting to let them keep it. It is what the law says. We are not stealing. . .

We threw them in an other dinghy and like that sent them back where they came from, towards the coast, executing eventually with great success the orders of our superior. Where we found it don't ask now, tricks of the trade. . .

All this was such a great satisfaction and it showed well that at times of difficulty we became all one and we acted like that with synergy. In any case, there wasn't enough space in the island for them. One way or another we have a lot of them everywhere around. Enough, how many more! And here and there it is not that much of a crime to launch such operations. Besides we didn't drown any of them, we save them.

In the island there were those well-known filthy Antifa of all sorts that

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accused us, arbitrarily so, that the sea had become a grave because of us. But in the end, we were just doing our jobs for the common good, for the good of Europe.

## 2. The industrialist's wife

My husband hated autumn. He was catching a bunch of colds and he was constantly irritable. Especially now that the new virus was spreading like a scourge and had caused a pandemonium globally, he was terrified. Consequently he made me hate it too, even if in reality I liked it because I saw it as a new beginning.

We sat at the dinner table where Sophia had prepared dinner as always at eight. My husband liked a lot to eat with the TV on, watching, as almost always, the news. By habit I liked it too, even though I would prefer to eat in peace because I stressed with all these things happening around the world: they burdened my being. Besides, my dietician had told me that I should not distract my attention during a meal with other things and especially television or telephone because he said digestion is disturbed; but my husband was not deterred by such things.

Tonight things were dramatic. The dead from the virus increased globally and likewise unemployment; the doctors pleaded that we stay in our houses as too was the Prime Minister, while the fires burn uncontrollably interminable expanses of land in San Francisco; floods killed a number of people in Nigeria; the environmental organisations say that the animal species are in danger of extinction; the provocations of Turkey in the Aegean escalated, while a reception centre of immigrants caught on a huge fire and people found themselves on the street. Scenes of horror! I could not eat in peace and what's more, I had my husband that was making remarks for every single thing.

He liked pronouncing himself on everything, and if we are to be just, for a businessman of his stature it was normal. My friends were speaking highly of him for his reasonable and profound positions; and I can say that I was in agreement with them, irrespective of the fact that I would sometimes have preferred if he were to show some interest in the things I like too and not only in stocks, contracts, work and politics.

Often times he was telling me that most of the issues are complex and tough, and there are not simple solutions, but with commitment and sacrifice, determination and will all obstacles can be overcome. He was right and I was seeing it now in practice. Whereas they were all saying that this was a tragic period and that the economy is in crisis, our business was going better than ever! Our sales had exploded since everyone had thrown themselves into eating; and the furlough state benefits in combination with the funding and tax exemptions put us on the winning side. While on top of that the harvesting of tomato that was just now finishing was done in a terrifically competitive price, since a new batch of African immigrants had arrived and the two euros per crate that we offered seemed paradise to them! We had of course a surplus of worries and difficulties but the government was by our side and as such we felt some relief in combination with the stocks climbing all around.

Anyhow, this tragedy with the immigrants had turned my husbanded

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apoplectic. 'It is an actual humanitarian crisis', he said. 'But on the other hand where in Europe can we put them all? There are not a lot of jobs now, the economy is in crisis, not to talk of the fact that some of them are terrorists, while others will surely carry a number of diseases. They arrive here and they do not seem to be able to integrate into our democracy; they do, in a pig-headed way, what they want. And the heads of state what can they do?', he continues. 'It is a difficult circumstance that does not allow for easy solutions or miracles. The only thing certain', he said sipping some wine, 'is that there must be solidarity between the countries and an equal sharing of responsibilities. It is only so that we will see a bright day. Besides, we should not forget, that we have toiled a lot us Europeans to fund the refugee policies. In reality they should be a little bit grateful to them all and instead of putting fires they should thank us for our generosity.' How could I disagree with such reasonable words of his. Despite all this, seeing these images with entire families on the road without food and water, I was somewhat moved.

I turned off the TV and I asked Sophia to bring to my husband a coffee with a little bit of his favourite dessert, just so that it lifts his spirits, even though the doctor had proscribed it. Every now and then a sweet transgression is good for our life

### 3. The refugee

I felt the cold alloy of the gun touching menacingly my brow and the greasy hands of the rascal frisking my clothes and my body, grabbing violently the few money I had collected for the trip. And I stood there, petrified, attempting to dispel every fear, fixing my eyes towards the horizon that was slowly filling with the sun, in this cold autumn day.

I had traversed countless miles of land, sometimes by feet and sometimes by bus and in spite of all the obstacles, the hardship and the torturing, I was determined not to back down. It was my second attempt to leave and I now knew better the tricks and the traps; even though the path ahead was filled with new perils. If I stayed more I would lose my mind. I couldn't bare it any longer, this was not life. . .

Everywhere death, wreckage and hunger, and much as the days and years were passing, I didn't seem to be getting used to it. Even the animals were abandoning our lands since the earth too had become that much inhospitable. What can you do; I was trying to get by but I couldn't find a solution. I didn't know what to do, who to speak to without being grassed or sent to prison. I didn't join the army. I didn't want to kill other people, but neither to become a lackey of any organisation; and so I lived constantly in fear, every day roaming about hunted like an animal. I worked rarely with my father at some farms at a neighbouring village picking potatoes for a few dollars per day. It wasn't one bit enough for us to eat, and my little sister needed care. My poor mum prayed every night for my brother that had disappeared since some months now, but my dad and I knew that it was most likely pointless to hope that he was alive.

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I imagined that on the shore across there was some salvation. That there was a peaceful world, a world where all people are free and have the right to dream, or at least this is what I liked to hope for. After all, it would be definitely better than in this hell.

My uncle in Germany, after years, managed to find a good job in construction and I wanted to go look for him so that he could help me to make some money and bring my family with me so that they can finally live with some dignity. He had told me that there in Germany they gave jobs and papers. A lot of boys in my age had made careers in factories, farms or wherever else it happened. These thoughts were giving me courage and were keeping me alive.

So once they had taken it all from me now, they gave me a strong kick and they put me on the tub of a boat. Luckily I had thought to sew in the soles of my shoes some very few back-up money and I felt some sort of satisfaction but also relief that they had missed it.

On the boat utter chaos. With difficulty could one distinguish a body from the next, since, literally, it was as if we were all thrown in a funnel forming a uniform mass of meat. Everyone was trampled over and shouted to grab a good spot and avoid the cargo hold, because we knew all well that down there it was another hell. The smuggler swore against everyone and started threatening that he will throw us off if we will not comply. And so with this remark and his gun raised in the air, we were scared and we all sat quickly wherever. I, fortunately, was left on the top.

An hour they said would last the journey. We didn't have the slightest clue of where we were to arrive but we couldn't care less. It was enough that it was away from these shores. The boat was slowly moving away and I had a sense of sorrow leaving behind the side of the land where my parents were. I was filled with fear and hope at the same time.

We started chatting with the men that were sitting next to me to brush aside the anxiety for a bit, trying not to make dark thoughts. They were good guys. They had, them too, a bunch of stories from their trip here. They had, as we all did, a bunch of wishes and dreams for the new beginning. We got caught with football and the clubs and we arranged a small match upon arriving so that we celebrate. It seemed that this would be a quiet journey and so we loosened ourselves up for a while.

Time was going by and still to arrive. In the distance, land was at last discernible! We were glimpsing worryingly, while the sea suddenly started to become rough. We were all freezing now. Our clothes were glued on us along with the salt, and on the boat worry and uneasiness prevailed. We didn't have water so that we didn't weigh heavy; the babies were crying, the pregnant women were hurting and vomiting and those down there in hell itself, crying that it reeks diesel, that one of them had fainted and that they couldn't last longer because their skin was burning. 'Are we there yet? Are we?' I could hardly hold myself from vomiting and my head was ready to explode. And on with the cursing and kicks from the smugglers to calm us down and more and more of us were becoming enraged against them and bickered, until the guns and the sticks were drawn and then again silence.

Suddenly the engine stopped working and the waves had now taken over our crumbling boat. Lifeboats nowhere to be seen and I didn't know at all how to swim; for sure I wasn't the only one. We were all breathing heavy because we knew well that the sea beneath our feet was full of dead bodies.

Some were shouting to send out a distress call, but the smugglers didn't want to take the risk and so they ignored them. There were some ships near by, but we couldn't approach them. We were all screaming and shouting in desperation for help, but nothing was happening. Now we didn't pretend that we were calm, we were all panic-stricken. The waves began to get rougher and water was coming into our boat menacingly. 'We are sinking!', shouted the guy next to me and before we realised the boat capsized and everything got suddenly dark.

I felt the water filling my guts, the salt burning my lungs, my body weighing heavy and reaching the seabed, expecting that the waves maybe take me out with the others on some beach, along with the algae and the trash, and to be shoved in to the ground, without a name, in a foreign land, unknown among unknowns, betrayed among innocent.

Twenty-two years of life now, drowned in a few minutes and that was all. The end.

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