

Story Synopsis: The Shooter

Jake is our hero, a rough man, unkempt and haggard walking into a clean new modernized sporting facility, the League of Shooters. Jake has a lot to prove to this assembly of the world's top shooters. He has been gone a long time, and, having once been crowned the top shooter in the league, Jake must start from the bottom to regain his esteemed position that he abandoned after his wife and daughter were killed in a tragic car accident.

Jake has spent years rebuilding himself physically after the accident. He dropped out of the competition circuit and cut himself off from all his old friends under the crushing weight of his guilt and misfortune. Finally trying to take back control in his life, he brings himself to the League of Shooters to sign up for the League competitions.

Jake starts the story by entering himself into the first level of the League's competition. At the League's office, he keeps to himself, avoiding the people milling about as they all sign up as well. At the sign up table, however, he sees an old pal, Rudy. Rudy hasn't seen Jake since the accident.



"I'm finally back Rudy, and this time, I'm here to take it all," he tells his old friend.

With that, we begin the competition. Jake steps on the the range and faces the first round of shooting, shaking off the rust and winning fairly easily. At this point, he has no choice but to start acknowledging his old friends and fellow competitors as they welcome him back and remark on his shooting. This is amidst snickers of the nay-sayers that still don't think much of Jake, and how badly he has fallen.

The second round of shooting is a bit tougher for Jake to make through, but his mastery on the gun range is clearly evident. This is the one place Jake feels himself. He feels the rush and forgets his pain. Here, Jake sees Emily, another old shooting buddy. She is very happy to see Jake again, but a bit surprised at how he has let himself go. She was always on his side. We see Jake has a human side to him, as he relaxes a bit with her and talks about the past, how he "let them down" and how feels like the accident was his fault. He was the only one to walk away, and he hasn't been able to reconcile why he lived. But all he could do now, "is come back and shoot. They would've wanted me to shoot."

"You're gonna have a tough time," warns Emily as she fills him in on the new regime at the League of Shooters. There was a coup after Jake left, and a new group took control of the League, phasing in their own rules and slowly disbanding some of the old vanguard members. Now, not only does Jake need to defeat his competition in the arena, but he must also fight an uphill battle against the larger political mechanism working to keep him from emerging victorious once again.

The third, quarter-final round is much more difficult than Jake remembers it. We see how Dead-Eye Jane's influence has taken hold and how the new competition rounds tend to favor the new-school of shooters. During this round of the competition, Jake meets Phil, an old Army buddy and fellow League shooter. Phil is old school. He is not as good as he used to be, but still pushes himself. He has been cast aside, and is all but kicked out of the League by Dead-Eye Jane, the president of the League ever since Jake left.

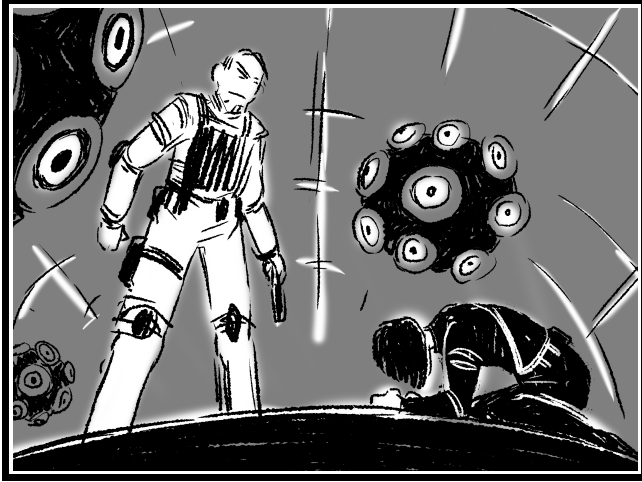
We find out from Phil how poorly Dead-Eye Jane has been treating the members as she has been scheming to secure her own power. Phil has a strong suspicion that Dead-Eye Jane has been rigging previous competitions at the League to benefit her and her cronies. "You gotta take her down a few notches, Jake. You've got to for us old timers," pleads Phil, "You're not the only one who's been knocked down." Jake struggles with the notion of taking on the League like this. All he wanted to do was come here and forget his past for as long as he could; pistol in hand, target out front.



Coming to the semi-finals, Jake now squares off with some of Dead-Eye's cohorts. Jake shoots against Dead-Eye's top lieutenant, Patrick. Patrick takes control of the round, edging out Jake in points. For the first time in the competition, it looks like Jake could lose. Then, Patrick plays mind games and taunts Jake to take advantage of his weakened position. He lets it slip that Dead-Eye was somehow involved in the car accident that killed Jake's family. And in his taunting, he tells Jake that even though Dead-Eye Jane didn't get Jake killed, she wound up crushing him, and that was even better to watch. "You're nothing, old man. Go lie down somewhere and die already so you can see your wife and kid in heaven. If they even let you in..."

Jake comes alive with anger. It's personal now. Jake must take out Dead-Eye Jane at all costs. With this as motivation, he makes a comeback and defeats Patrick in the last moments of the round.

We learn that Dead-Eye Jane has arranged for the final round to be a death match, knowing that Jake will be in the finals. In this round, shooters enter a large maze and shoot targets to knock them down as they negotiate obstacles. Since there are two players in the maze, the ammunition is set to be non-lethal rubber bullets.



Targets come in and get shot down, and as Jake comes around a corner, Jane creeps up on him to gun him down. Jake and Dead-Eye Jane finally have their moment of reckoning. They shoot it out in the middle of the maze, to the horror of the others in the League. Jake sees red and makes his move. However, once he begins firing, Jake finds that Jane has tampered with the weapons to fire live, lethal rounds as the competition progresses in the hopes of getting Jake in her sights and finishing him off for good. He shoots down Dead-Eye Jane in a hail of bullets. Jane is dead, and Jake is the victor. He stands over her, drops

his weapon, and the League celebrates as they crown him champion once more. They assure him that Jane's death is of her own making since she is the one who rigged live ammunition into this final round, a fitting end for a devious competitor. He remembers his family, whose death's he has avenged, and smiles as he lets go of the torment that has hung over him for so long.