

Dunes of sand kick up as heavy gusts of wind blow throughout the barren wasteland, not a single soul in sight for miles; Except for one. Deadeye pulls his scarf up, covering his mouth and nose from the violent whips of sand, having underestimated the weather. It seemed as though the route changed every time he used it, though he wasn't hindered by nature's forces. He glances up at the blistering sun, squinting as he faces the flare, the same flare that'd scorched the Earth into the barren deserts of the present, pulling down the brim of his hat. Averting his eyes back to what was in front of him, he notices something amid the heat waves, narrowing them in focus to make sure that he wasn't being made a fool by a mirage. Sure enough, a town was in sight, the bright neon signs contrasted by the angular, black buildings they were placed on being a dead giveaway. It wasn't there the last time, but that didn't matter too much. He pulls the strap hung across his torso, the longarm on his back responding to the action, ready for if things were to go awry. Making sure he had everything with him, he places a hand on the cylindrical container hanging at his side, the most important part of his journey.

Unsurprisingly, the streets were empty, ribbons of sand scattered along the paths, concealing them under the desert. The neon lights falling on his face causes Deadeye to smirk, amused that something almost always associated with nightlife was still beaming during a red-hot day in the desert. Even so, he couldn't complain much, given that things changed as time marched forward. His legs tired from hours of travel, he directs his attention to the local bar, deciding to take a quick break from his journey. He pushes open the doors, walking into the bustling locality, the sounds of hearty drinking and drunk comradery masking Deadeye's entry. He differed from the other patrons of the bar, mainly because his body was completely organic, the others having augmented their body in some way with technology, be it adding something over their eyes or even replacing entire limbs and organs with machinery. Seating himself at the counter, he beckons at the bartender, a burly fellow with an oversized left arm, an exposed cybernetic shell encasing it.

"Brandy," Deadeye says with a slight accent, holding up two fingers, raising the tender's eyebrow. It was quite uncommon for standard alcohol to be ordered. Well, don't just loll around...."

The barkeep frowns at the sass but listens anyway, a floating robot carrying the desired drink hovering over to the glass that'd appeared next to Deadeye, pouring in two hearty shots of the beverage. Raising the glass up in thanks, he's only able to take two sips before he notices the group formed around him, encasing him within the crowd.

"Can I help you, fellas?" he asks, taking another sip of his drink, his eyes fixed on the cyborgs surrounding him.

One of them steps forward, characterised by the white scar running across his face as well as his mechanical torso, circuits running through it as though it were his veins. "You're not from around here, are ya?"

"No, I'm *not*," Deadeye shrugs, drinking again. "Just making my way through, that's all."

"And what's *this*?" White Scar sneers, tapping the container hanging at Deadeye's side with two of his fingers.

Without hesitation, Deadeye pushes back the hulking brute with his free hand, finishing off his drink with a final sip. "*That* is none of your business."

“Like **hell** it isn’t!” he yells, lashing out with his trunk-like arms, an attack that Deadeye easily dodges, rolling tactically onto a knee as he glares up at his assailant, preparing himself for the brawl that was to come.

Deadeye bounds aside, grabbing the closest table and flipping it onto its side, sending poker chips and cards flying as he leans back on his new cover, barely shielding himself in time for the blasts of energy headed his way. Like the movies of old, it was a good old fashioned shootout at the bar. Luckily, just like the movies, Deadeye was ready. With seemingly the whole bar against him, he draws out two revolvers, polished to a shine, taking in a deep breath.

“Hand it over now and maybe we *won’t* fill you with lead!”

“How’s about I give you a taste of your own medicine?!” Deadeye shouts over the barrage behind him.

Though they had the numbers, he had the skill. With eagle-eyed precision, he takes a shot at the bartender’s tap, the bullet ricocheting off the metal and lodging itself into the cybernetics of one of the shooters, causing him to yelp in pain as his limb locks up, unable to move. White Scar looks in awe at the damage to his comrade, turning back in a heated anger.

“He’s using *old tech*!”

As the name suggested, old tech was slang used for technologies from the bygone era. Tech had progressed so far that old tech, due to its rarity, was harder to be resistant against for modern technologies, an advantage Deadeye knew of and was ready to exploit. Bolstering with confidence, he diverolls out of cover, firing his guns in a wild but precise manner, downing several in the gallery while still evading their fire. He rises up from cover, pulling the trigger of his revolvers, only to be met with the dreaded empty clicks. He was out of ammo. Always on the move, he flicks his guns’ chambers open, loading in the bullets unwaveringly, even as blasts of energy barely miss him. With bullets in the chamber, he re-enters his dance of gunfire, taking shots at critical points in his enemies, leaving them stunned and helpless in the bar brawl. Despite being the instigator of the commotion, White Scar knew that the odds were turned against him, turning his back and slipping by to the exit while he still had the chance.

“Going somewhere?”

He turns around, only to find the warm barrel of a revolver poking at his nose, Deadeye smiling smugly with a pile of defeated bodies behind him. In a fit of rage, he throws aside the gun pointed at him and jumps at the wanderer, though Deadeye remains calm, quickly drawing the rifle hanging on his back, slamming the butt of which into White Scar’s face, knocking out his metallic teeth.

He picks up his defeated opponent by his nape, his calm demeanor now carrying hints of anger. “If I ever see your *mangy* face again, **believe me**, our next encounter won’t be so *merciful*.”

Letting him slump onto the ground, Deadeye retrieves his firearm and casually walks over to the counter, slamming down a couple of notes and tokens, a payment for his drink and the troubles he'd caused the bar. He walks down the aisle of fallen bodies, the only sounds filling the bar were groans of pain from the fight and the soft clinking of Deadeye's guns and boots. Back outside, his legs are tired from all the walking and fighting he'd done throughout the day. His eyes wander for a moment before fixating on a horse, which like all people, was cybernetically augmented. Knowing it would make the remaining leg of his journey much easier, he hops onto it, patting it on its neck.

"Giddy-up now!"

Obediently, the horse neighs, kicking its front legs up before riding off into the desert sun, leaving the town behind in a cloud of sand.

They ride for hours on end, nothing surrounding them but an endless ocean of sand. Despite the emptiness, Deadeye still knew where he was going, for this was a path he'd taken several times in his life, more times than he could remember. He closes his eyes, accompanied by the sounds of galloping along sand and the desert heat. There was so much on his mind, so many things that should've been forgotten in the ages they belonged to. It's not long before his train of thought is interrupted by a loud rumble, the ground below shaking violently as sand starts to shift like the tides of a river, swirling beneath his horse's feet.

"Great..." he mutters to himself, drawing his longarm, knowing that his pistols wouldn't suffice for whatever the threat was.

Sand erupts from behind them, a blur towering over as it blocks out the sun, casting a much needed shade upon Deadeye. He frowns as the tower's appendages writhe, its contorted mandibles opening up to reveal a tunnel of fangs. The large mutant centipede was one of the many dangerous creatures that lived within the desert, the underground free from human interference, allowing them to thrive and evolve. Deadeye had hoped that he could finish his journey without a run-in with one of them, but that hope was far gone.

He whips the reins of the horse in haste, prompting it to increase its pace. "*Hyah!*"

Adjusting his position on his stead, he draws his rifle, pushing the bolt forward then down, priming the firearm. Steadying his aim, he fires directly at the beast's many eyes, each shot yielding a spurt of murky fluids, though it seemingly doesn't hold back the mutant. It lets out a horrible screech as it lunges into the air, its long body spreading out as it comes diving down, an uncharacteristic panic coming over Deadeye. Keeping his nerves in check, he takes one more shot, miniscule in damage, but it proves just enough to throw off the monster's trajectory, sending it burrowing down back into the sand. It wasn't over, however, as quakes continued beneath Deadeye. Realising what was to come, he jumps off his still galloping horse, rolling along the sand as it continues forward without him. As he'd expected, the centipede bursts out in front of the horse menacingly, coming down as it swallows it in one clean motion. The death of the animal didn't particularly hurt Deadeye, he was too old to care at this point. His fingers sunken in his pockets, he pulls out a bright

orange cartridge, a large sticker reading 'Bug Killer' slapped on the middle of it. It was his surefire way of bypassing the creature.

He loads in the magazine, slamming the bolt of his rifle down as he takes aim. "*Eat this!*"

Fire blooms from the barrel, bright streaks hitting the giant as it screeches in pain, flames catching on along its long body. Relentlessly firing his shots, the centipede is unable to cope with the quick and precise inflictions of pain, the life fading out of its many eyes as its body begins to go limp.

"Shit."

He dives over to the side as the titan collapses down, sending a tremor so strong it knocks Deadeye off his feet and into the coarse ground, clouds of sand blowing from the site of impact. As the dust settles, he groans, getting back on his feet, sand flowing off his body. His eyes widen, glancing over to his side before breathing a sigh of relief, the capsule still intact and surprisingly unscathed. Readjusting its position at his hip, he continues his journey through the desert, walking past the beast he'd fallen.

By the time the sun had turned orange and began its descent, Deadeye's pace had slowed, having finally arrived at his destination. Like the rest of the desert, the surroundings were bare, but oddly enough, it wasn't typical sand that bordered the area, rather it was a strange charcoal grey colour. He takes three steps forward, kneeling down and brushing aside the sand, revealing a withered marble slab, engraved with a symbol, one that he was so familiar with.

He reaches for the capsule hanging at his side, pressing down on a button. It hisses, releasing a puff of cold mist that instantly evaporates in the desert heat. "Sorry I took so long, kid."

His hand reaches into the capsule, the cool air a welcome change for his hands. Out of it, he pulls out a single flower, specked with a vibrant magenta and a bright yellow centre. It was something that was treasured among them. He lays it on the marble, knowing that once exposed to the climate, the plant would wilt within hours. He kneels in front of the resting place of the one he loved dearest, resting after a long day's journey.

"Happy Birthday," he smiles, a tinge of pain laced within the words.

Such was the life of an immortal, forced to wander the Earth alone for eternity.