

To Mix a Cocktail  
By Cameron Tobin

It's been a hell of a week. Two exams, an essay, and an archery tournament all in the span of six days. I could use a drink.

*No. We deserve a drink. Crack open the liquor cabinet and let's mix up a storm! Make it dry for me, will you? A hard week deserves a hard drink.*

*But... aren't sweets best for celebrations? Maybe we could do something with a little extra simple? But not too much or you'll be asking for a headache.*

*Yes! A confection like no other! Let us mix something for the brothers! Something unique for the meek! All to celebrate the week!*

*Can ye knock it off with the bloody rhymes, mate? Just gimme some o' tha' liquid courage! Straight from the tit o' the ol' bottle, I say!*

Shut up guys, I hear you all loud and clear. I'll play bartender like I always do and mix something good for me, me, me, me, me, and me. Let's start with the sweet. Coffee and orange goes surprisingly well, so let's go with an ounce of Mr. Black and a half ounce of Orange Curaçao.

*I hope that's not too much... Remember the last time you had too much sugar in a drink? It didn't go well if you can't recall.*

*Ach! You're remindin' me o' that bloody failure ya made last week! Shitty thing, that was.*

It was the start of something delicious! I'll admit, I used too much absinthe and vodka wasn't a good choice, but I was onto something. Here I'll make it up to you. I'll crack open the new bottle of Monkey Shoulder and add an ounce of scotch to this one, yeah? I think the smokiness will come together nicely.

*Now we're talkin'! Jus' gimme the whole bottle! No need for your fancy bartendin' shite!*

*But where's the bitter? Smoke, sweet, sure it's getting better.*

It's not exactly bitter, but I think it'll complement the flavors well. It starts with abs- and ends with—

*Not the absinthe again. You know just how quick that stuff takes over a drink!*

I'm only adding a dash of it to the tin. Okay—two dashes—but it won't be bad. You have to trust yourself once in a while.

*I don't mind the hard stuff, but I hope you know what you're doing.*

Don't I always? I'll test the taste real quick... Yeah, needs a smidge of simple. I always forget Mr. Black isn't nearly as sweet as Kahlua. Here, a quarter ounce of my two-to-one demerara syrup to mellow the bite of it all down some.

*I hope you know what you're doing with all that sugar...*

Alright! Let's crack some ice and stir. I always love cracking these big cubes of ice into a shaker tin, the hard ice clanging into the metal. Crack three of these big cubes into the tin and stir until the ice falls into the drink. Now for the big question: On the rocks or up?

*Up! We don't need more water in the drink. It'll throw the good hard flavors off.*

No ice it is, then. I'll strain it into a chilled lowball glass, and... I think I will garnish it with an orange peel, twisted to expose the oils into a match's little flame over the drink.

*There's no need to impress those who regress.*

*What's that even supposed to mean?*

*Don't look at me, mate.*

And I'll drop the peel into the drink: Voila!

*Looks like a drink to me. Give us a taste, yeah?*

Well... the ratios need some work, but it's a lot better than my last attempt. Smokey coffee goodness with a touch of orange and black licorice notes from the absinthe. I imagine this is what a morning in the trenches tasted like.

*How would you know?*

I don't, just fantasy. The smoke comes from all the fire and bombs around you. Coffee and orange, your morning breakfast. The absinthe... I'm not sure. But, it's my idea of what war might taste like.

I think I'll call this one... Entrenched Sunrise.

*How poetic, mate. Can we get drunk now?*