

1

The Ford Expenditure is a full-size SUV built by the Ford Motor Company. Introduced in 1944 as a replacement for the Ford Blowout, it was previously slotted between the smaller Ford Exclusion and the larger Ford Fucking Ridiculous. As of the 1945 model year, it is Ford's largest and last truck-based, off-road and tow capable SUV. All Expenditures were originally built in Wayne, Michigan. In 1945, Ford plans to shift its current, second generation model production to Louisville, Kentucky.

The vehicle is a piece of junk. Barely able to propel itself down the road.

Those who can't, do.

My reading is interrupted by the entrance of a tour group. I conceal the advance marketing materials under a folder and pretend to be looking at porn.

Once the new hires are gone, I return to spellchecking.

2

Things here have slowed down since we pushed out the Expenditure.

I float around the test site, offering myself for odd jobs.

Alarms are still respected. Once or twice a week, we hit the deck until the shift captain tells us we can lift up our heads.

In my boredom I begin to break the rules. Nothing serious. I avoid reprimand by carefully allotting each transgression. Measured action is invisible to bureaucracy. Too fine a resolution.

Besides, my wanderings are directionless.

Piro's quarters are in the new hangar off the south end of the runway.

My next move is obvious.

3

Baja Piotr.

Not even locked. Pass my hand in front of the door and it opens all by itself.

Getting into my own quarters is more difficult.

Clothing is strewn around the hangar. Not what I expected. Piotr doesn't seem to own a chest of drawers.

Shower needs cleaning. What is this? Horse shampoo? Note: the hair is not a wig.

Closet full of nightgowns.

Were he to appear here, now, Piotr would laugh at my confusion. Then he would fire two rounds into my face. Three into my chest.

I would drop to the floor.

Wait.

Hangar is changing shape.

4

The craft is huge, pink. Impeccably styled.

A great, blushing triangle appearing out from underneath a simple black tarp.

My hand trails along her hull as I take in the smooth, glossy surface of her exterior. Feeling. No seams are evident.

Does this thing fly?

Piotr has never mentioned her.

I'm into her hold, now, working my way towards the bridge. The craft seems a lot larger on the inside. The length of this corridor makes no sense. I'm out of breath.

An elevator. I'm not even on the right deck.

Wait. She jumped. Slipped on the floor.

Bridge is deserted. Lights out. If this is what he's been hiding, these past months, I'm impressed. Was the craft built here, or flown in? What's her range? Armaments?

Also, who wrote the dash 1?

5

No. I know better than this. I'm out of the craft and out of the hangar, making like nothing's happened. Want a cigarette? Sure. Catch the final score? Yes, ten to six. Pacing, quickly, in a straight line. The sand is cold.

Calm down.

How to erase the logs? Piotr will know. Will he talk? Or just shoot?

Sorry to bring this to you.

6

Piotr doesn't smoke.

Why is he smoking?

Nana says to take it easy.

Slake will clean up my mess.

NOTES