

Uncle Max

by Miguel Lasala

Before Uncle Max died of a heart attack, he had some words of advice for his only nephew and godson. Upon his death, as instructed, a package in brown paper arrived at Jeffery Glimson's house on a warm June afternoon.

Inside the package there was a hand written letter and a key to a safety deposit box.

The letter went as follows:

Dear Jefferson,

Don't be afraid to punch a man in the balls if the circumstances call for it. I spent too much time being timid myself, and god damn it, I didn't start living till I realized that everyone is out for themselves in the end.

Listen. Just ask yourself what your life is worth. If you don't care about being successful, then ignore me. Otherwise, pay attention. You want a girl, you want a girl that'll do anything you want and look good doing it? How about promotion? To hell with that, you want your own company? Prepare yourself now for it. Get vicious. Forget all the bullshit your mother taught you. Jesus, that save the world crap was dreamed up by a sadist. Life is a chess game. It's a fight. Always. You have to wake up early, you have to train your mind, you have to be strong. No matter what, don't be a pussy Jefferson. Don't let anyone get the better of you. And if the shit goes down, hit low and hard. The sons of bitches can go to hell. Fare is or faggots.

You see this key here. Take it and go to the bank and open the safety deposit box it belongs to. There you'll find everything you need to kick ass. You're smiling now. You think I'm full of shit. We'll go and get it and you'll see. If you fuck up this opportunity, you'll be breaking a long line of favors passed down for many generations. It

was almost too late for me when I got this little bit of information that I'm about to give to you. I was down on my luck. I was in debt. I didn't have a fucking clue what to do with myself. Now, as I sit here writing this, I have everything I've ever wanted. I'm a satisfied man. Go ahead and ask anyone if they're satisfied. You'll get some bullshit answers. Don't let that crap fool you. This is different. What I'm handing off to you is fucking gold. So put on some fucking presentable clothing and march down there and prepare yourself for what's coming to you.

Jefferson put the letter down and studied the key. It was for a safety deposit box in Manhattan at a bank that had failed long ago.

Uncle Max had been a wealthy man, but just before the war, he started to go crazy and buried everything he owned in his back yard. He said Neo-Nazis infiltrated the government and were poisoning everyone in sneaky ways. His paranoia intensified and he locked himself in his house. No one heard anything from him for years, and now he's dead.

Jefferson sat down in his living room and played with the key in his hand while his daughter shot toy cars across the hardwood floor. His wife joined him on the couch as the late afternoon sun cut through the room.

"What's all this, Jeff?"

"Uncle Max is dead," Jeffery said, "and it looks like he didn't leave us anything."

