

Ready to Fight

by Kat Gramm-Zlotnick

A teenage boy is dressed in an ugly green uniform, hand balled up in a fist, and his jaw is clenched. A worried young woman stands behind him, her face wet from sweat, her ponytail disheveled. As the boy walks down a dimly lit hallway, more lights switch on, and more people begin to appear. They are all boys, all unconscious. Their arms are spread wide, as are their legs, and some of them have bruises. Sometimes a bruise is splashed across a boy's nose; another bruise makes one's cheek look puffy and inflated. The teenage boy's eyes dance with an angry fire. Dead set in front of him, at the end of the hallway, is a short man, a smirk on his pale face.

The boy squeezes his right hand together into another fist, and he charges, trying to strike the short man. Missing, the short man kicks him in the back of the neck, sending the boy flying into a row of boxes in a corner.

In the other corner, a girl sits, her blue dress wrinkled. Her eyes are shut, and she looks like she is sleeping. Her face, pale and sweaty, is twisted and contorted, showing she may be having a nightmare. The teenage boy slowly rises out of the pile of boxes, wiping blood from his nose. Launching forward, he finally hits the man. Blood squirts out of the short man's lip, and he falls back, his back thudding against the concrete floor. He gets up slowly, as the boy had, and glares at him. The boy is now the one who is



Mauser

by Ben Dobrow

The recoil of the rifle shook my shoulder and rattled my bones. I worked the bolt and pushed a new round into the chamber. My dad had given me a Model 98, 8mm, 1937 German Mauser rifle, and we had taken it to the outdoor range for target practice. We had called all the gun shops in town, but only a shop called St. Nicholas's had 8mm surplus ammo that would work in my rifle. So we bought some. It was \$9.95 for 70 rounds compared to the \$24.95 for a box of 20 rounds of the hunting ammo that most stores carried. So after paying the range fee, we collected the rifle, the ammo, and the targets and set up.

After we called, "Line cold," we set up targets at 50 and 100 yards. We then took the rifle back and got out two bandoleers of 70 rounds each. I opened the pouch on one and pulled out a stripper clip with 5 rounds on it. Finally, I pushed it into the gun and closed the bolt. We called, "Line hot," and I took aim.

The bullet shot out of the barrel at 2500 feet per second. The grooves in the barrel of the rifle gave the bullet a clockwise spin to maximize accuracy and distance. So, mere milliseconds later, the copper-jacketed round tore through the paper, ripping a one-inch circle in the black disc of the target, and splashing into the sand backstop.

Seeing the dust cloud it raised up, I lowered my rifle and looked through the binoculars to see where it had hit. A smile spread across my face as I saw the tiny hole in the target 100 yards away.

