

TALISMAN

Oulunsalo fiction, Pt. 2





Himalaja
The park with two hills

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First Words

A **Top 10** is a list compiled of objects (songs, movie scenes, albums, movies, composers, writers) possessive of same or similar specific characteristics. It moves in an order of preference from the largest digit to the smallest (**#1**). Said order can be determined by perceived quality of the object, lack of quality, age, or any other distinctive trait setting the objects apart.

A slide-show, blog-writeup, presentation or any other means of manifesting a Top 10, is designed to bring it into life, give it character. It lets the viewer in on the list-writers' views on a larger scale, but more importantly, it lets them in on his interests, feelings, and added reasoning or explanation behind rankings makes this work even more succinct.

Top 10, however, is merely a name; something instantly recognizable. Whether you call it a *list* or a *countdown*, it can mean many a thing. Its size - being a top 5, top 25 or top 200 - tends to vary, depending on how many objects the list maker feels obliged to let in, on the final result of the picking-process, and give a stage like a *top 10*. One amount for one category, let's say a Top 40 for a songs-list, *can* be too small. If objects are cut out to narrow the list down to the preconceived size, it can turn out to be not-worth-while to make a list that doesn't do justice to all objects deserving of a placement. It is the size of the list that needs to bend; not what you *know* you must add.

Similar to a novel, a lists fundamental mission is to set a *start* that is fitting. Lists flow the most naturally out of all

forms of art known to man, except for music. The first couple of placements only give you a hint of the idea, let you see what's going on, and can either hook you into following it for the rest of its duration, or let you know if it is worth observing. But regardless of both of those facts, it can't always necessarily fill you in on how's it all gonna *end*. It keeps constantly evolving, inevitably culminating - we can see the end coming, but at the same time, can't quite predict...



PLAY 1
HALF-CLOUDED

Chapter 1

Plot

"Get the fuck outta here", Tapani - *who was doing a little better by now* - said to his friend Samuli. It was the middle of May 2015, and any- and everyone could feel summer in the air.

Walking out of the local convenience-store by the name of *Siwa*, the guys headed to a little trail that leads one's way through a trail in between two big hills, both standing around fifteen-to-twenty meters tall. At the top of one hill, there was a rocket-shaped wooden structure, pointing at the sky. Samuli pulled on Tapani's sleeve, interrupting his little break from walking.

— Tapani, I love you, but let's be reasonable about this.

— *Asa Akira better than Diamond Foxxx?* Where's the reason in that? You *really* like watching a small-titted woman with a reasonable - and objectively nothing more than that - ass, practically *screaming* at you like she's losing her virginity to a stranger in an Indian train, and her home village's being destroyed at the same time?

— Have you not seen the *moves*, the versatility this oriental beauty possesses?

— Versatility shmersatility. If I may repeat myself: What *point* is there, for a woman to have *moves* or *versatility* instead of shape? Diamond's tits fell down here from heaven.

— Well first of all it's a sign of how much the counterpart is actually *in* the act. We both know porn is fundamentally just acting, but each of Asa's performances, she makes look

like the man - whoever it is - is doing her the worlds biggest favor by sticking his Junior up that wonderful vagina of hers. It's like her life is dependent on it, and her voice - while admittedly reaching something above an ideal level of decimals - is praising God in Heavens for it. For *dick*.

— She sounds like a pig giving birth.

— Well Diamond fucks selfishly as hell. That old cougar's way too hung up on who she is and what kind of a favor *she's* doing to the world by letting them see that kind of a body in action. You can tell by the way she always poses for the camera whenever she's facing it in a scene. I'd not feel good about myself as a man, if I was fucking a woman who pays more attention to the man behind the camera, than me.

— "OK I'll admit, there's a little truth in that", Tapani partly opted to Samuli's view. "The cougar-part. She's older, so I might be a little biased here. *Just a little*; I still think Asa's performances are way over-the-top."

— Diamond's well-preserved, too...

— "Unlike me." Tapani admitted. "*That* might also be a factor. A small one."

— "True, true..." Samuli responded.

— "So you also think I've not kept my looks well?" Tapani asked his friend.

— Well that was nicely nitpicked.

Tapani dug out his pack of cigarettes from the pocket of his jacket, and Samuli kept talking:

— But yeah, indeed, I won't deny Diamond also has a way of making me pulsate from time to time. It's just... it's just up to the *mood*. The way I would sum this up is: Diamond's a temporary stay, while Asa is a wife. A porn-wife. To me.

— "Fuck." Tapani muttered, having stopped listening to his friend talking a while ago.

— What is it?

Samuli and Tapani looked at each other. Tapani quit flapping the hem of his jacket.

— "I'm out." Tapani complained.

Samuli looked at his friend, first quiet, at a loss, then, like hit with a lightning from the clear sky, he realized what was going on and had an idea in that head of his. The moment it dawned upon him, was visible.

— "Steal a pack." He said.

— "What." Tapani said like he wasn't even considering to entertain the thought.

— Because guess what I heard? This was an interesting story; I was supposed to tell you this one a while ago but I forgot.

— What is it?

— This one gypsy... No, *gypsy's* a bad word--

— "You're in adult company, Samuli." Tapani interrupted. "I can *handle* bad words."

— Either way, this Romanian boy, who lived next door to me years ago, told me this story. A *true story*, that took place in this store.

— Well how did it go?

— He had this habit of always bragging, to me, about all the stupid shit his brothers and cousins pulled. Even if I didn't ask, he'd tell me. He told me one day, that in this *Siwa*, one of his cousins from Sweden - this outrageously big, broad-shouldered guy I actually *saw live* once - *stole* a pack of cigarettes from here, back when the law would allow stores to keep cigarettes on display and you didn't have to crack secret codes and shit to find your brand from the shelf. The way he did it was *fucking ace*: he just waited in the line until all other customers ahead of him got their groceries, paid, and left. He then walked up to the tobacco-shelf when it was his turn, and, standing there, ready to pay for his purchases, he *took* one pack outta there, and put the shit in his pocket. He did all this while the lady at the register just looked, and then he just looked at her intimidatingly, into her *soul*. Through her eyes.

— "...And?" Tapani asked. "What then?"

— And that's it. He left. With the pack.

— Fuck you. Of *course* the register-lady called security.

—No, she didn't. He *never* heard about that shit afterwards; just got himself a free pack of cigarettes, and went on his way. The look in his eyes was deep and dark enough.

— "Okay" Tapani said. "But that doesn't matter. I haven't even gotten around to express to you yet how fucking air-headed this idea of yours is. I haven't picked the right words to illustrate it to you."

— "How?" Samuli asked, semi-dumbfounded by the doubt. "It could work."

— *How?* Do you listen to yourself when you talk? They don't *have* their cigarettes on display. So I couldn't *do* the same shit, even if I *looked* intimidating enough. Which I don't.

— *So what* they don't have it on display? It took just as much balls from the gypsy to do it, as it would take you.

— Well the difference between me and him is, I don't have a whole clan of armed and dangerous goons on call, ready to come roll on anybody that talks back to me.

— "Yeah you do." Samuli corrected.

—...Well *be that as it may*, that lady at the register doesn't *know* that. I don't *look* like that. Matter of fact, I can't even believe I'm dignifying this bullshit proposition with an answer.

— You're a shouldered guy.

— Well thanks, but--

Tapani shook his head, and turned back to the actual subject:

— No! You're not talking me into this and attacking me from that self-esteem angle. And stop pulling those fast ones on me.

— "All the while you've entertained my idea, you haven't even asked me about *what if I get caught?*" Samuli pointed out.

— I'm not afraid of cops.

— Yea you are. Pussy.

— You're a pussy. And I can as easily just drive two miles to Kapteeni and get a withdrawal for some cigarette-money.

—It'll take you less time to just walk up in that store and tell the lady, "Listen here, you're giving me a pack of cigarettes right now and I'm not paying you a fucking thing, okay?"

—You're a fucking moron.

Tapani threw his unlit cigarette in the ground, as well as the empty pack from his other hand, and started walking back inside the store.

—"Wait, you're doing it?" Samuli asked his determined friend.

— "Yeah I'm doing it." Tapani said while on his way.

Samuli looked, dumbfounded, as Tapani quickly slid into the store through the sliding doors that were opening up for him while taking the steps.

Chapter 2

Sitting in a Car

THE NEXT DAY:

Samuli's car was standing at the parking lot of the Oulu police station. Tapani jumped inside. Skipping the minutes of silence otherwise-inevitable, Samuli took it upon himself to immediately ignite some conversation:

- That didn't go too well.
- "No, it did not." Tapani affirmed.

Aside from the Velvet Underground song *Sunday Morning* on the radio, there was only silence following the first two respective *lines*. They went along, might've nodded their heads to the song once or twice, but besides that, nothing.

Until:

— "Last summer was fucking crazy." Tapani spoke. "I don't want another crazy summer. I still have no idea how I had *the time to* be depressed all summer long."

— I feel you. Thank God you're feeling better now.

— Riku's still gone and I moved in with you, you and your wife welcomed new *members to the family*. All of this in one year. I can't help but feel like someone or something's kicking in the gear and my life is catching new wind under its wings. How is Markus, by the way?

— He's loud. *Really* loud. At night he's loud, at day he's tired from being loud.

— Tiia's been amazing to me, Samuli. You're really lucky for snagging that one.

— "Those therapy-sessions seem to be breathing new life into your lungs, too." Samuli reminded.

— God, I feel like I haven't stopped living the fuck outta life ever since that day when... when *you know what* happened.

— "Indeed I do." Samuli quietly replied, while reaching to the utility box and grabbing a cigarette from an opened pack in there.

— Samuli...

— What?

— You know what I'm about to say.

— I was supposed to kick this habit when I had the baby?

— That.

— Well a lot of things were supposed to happen.

— Okay, Riku.

Samuli looked his friend in the eyes. *Are you serious?* It was silent for a second, until Tapani followed his natural inclination to ask:

— Are you still bothered by his thing? Riku's?

— How can I not be? The guy just up and disappeared. No one's heard a *peep* from him *or* Pasi in *a year*. They just vanished.

— I'm gonna just straight-up ask: do you think he's dead?

— ...Do you want me to be honest?

— No. I want you to fill my head with dirty lies. I get a kick out of it.

— "Your sarcasm is losing its' punch already and it's not even noon." Samuli replied, annoyed.

— What do you think has happened?

— "I *think* - and this is not due to personal bias, or wishful thinking, at least not as much as you might think - that Riku came out on top." Samuli was confident. "He has the skillset, the instinct to kill."

— Who's to say Pasi doesn't? Or didn't?

— He was insecure.

— Based on what?

— Every time him and Rene popped up out of nowhere on us last summer, he was the loud one. *Loudest one in the*

room is the weakest, as the saying goes. And besides, sometimes it seemed like Rene genuinely didn't even like the guy.

— Were they appointed to run the Oulunsalo-operation together by the Russian? Or were they friends before, like us?

— ...You know what? I don't have the vaguest idea.

— You never asked?

— "Never." Samuli confirmed.

— Weren't we going to meet Rene at the office today?

— Where do you think we were driving?

— I thought we were going home.

— No. We're meeting Rene, doing some pre-calculation for tomorrow's cargo. Also, we gotta send a pack to the post-boy in your old neighborhood.

— "Viktor was his name, wasn't it?" Tapani made sure.

— Yeah. Viktor... *Viktor Whatever*. His last name is Whatever now.

With a little hint of laughter, Tapani continued:

— Who's dropping the re-up?

— You.

— Me? Why me?

— Because I just called it. *I call not delivering the re-up!*

There.

— One day, Samuli. One day I *will*.

— You will what?

— You'll see.

— I *wish* you would.

Tapani and Samuli traded playfully threatening looks.

— "No, but really", Samuli continued. "We're doing some division, someone drops a re-up to Viktor, and then we're going home. That's today for us. Oh, and first we eat, of course."

— So we *are* driving home, currently, at this moment?

— Yes.

— I've missed Markus, Samuli. Is that okay for a middle-age guy, to be missing a baby all day while he's being held for petty larceny?

—"You want him? 'Cause you can have him." Samuli said, joking, but with his grim inflection distantly flirting with seriousness.

— I don't understand how someone with *that* kinda a sense of humor can bag on *my* sarcasm. *Both* you and Tiia. You guys never get enough.

— We know how to have a good time.

— You know how to give me a fucking headache.

— I thought you just said Tiia's been great to you.

— "She is. I'm grateful." Tapani switched tones to a more serious one. "She understands my grievances. We relate to each other. Truth be told, I would be awkward having this kind of a platonic relationship with any other woman, than the girlfriend of my best friend."

— She's got a nice ass though; admit it.

— What?

— Say Tiia has a nice ass.

— Why? What's in it to you? What--

— "You're ducking the question - you agree with me." Samuli interrupted.

— No. I'm sick of your jokes, you're making me uncomfortable you sick fuck.

— I'm not gonna believe you're being sincere unless you admit you've oggled at that ass at least once. Don't be afraid; it's only natural.

— "No." Tapani insisted. "Even if I did agree with you - which I never said I did or didn't, by the way - I won't say it. If I did, you'd have that to use against me forever."

— Fair enough.

—Yeah. Let's drop this subject.

The space inside the car fell tacit... until:

— "Besides", Tapani said. "I've seen better. It's *good at best*. Good on a good day."