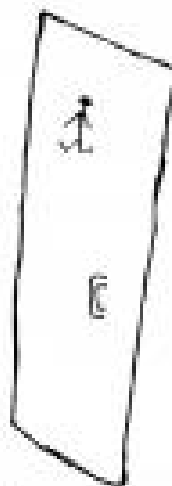


The Beet



Story by Slava Bukhryakov
Illustrated by Misha Manykin

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The Bet

Arthur and Slava studied together. Once they made a bet.

Arthur suggested it's too much bald, for Slava to have his head shaved, leaving only a swastika or hair on the back of his head. For this, Slava wanted Arthur to shave his eyebrows. Arthur agreed.

Slava's logic was simple. He could hide the swastika under a hat, and tell his friends it was just for fun.

And an Armenian would look more than funny without thick eyebrows. It was his worth seeing.

So they agreed.

All their other classmates tried to talk Slava out of it.

Your granddad fought against this! Will you really accept and wear the symbol of fascism on your head?

It's important how I take it, and I take it as a joke.

Slava lived in the dorm and in the evening, having explained this bit of fun, he tried to convince his roommates to shave this symbol in his hair.

They didn't share his happiness with this either, and again reminded him of their grandfathers who had spilled their blood for freedom from fascism.

It's important how I take it, and I take it as a joke.



In the end, his roommates fulfilled his request.



Slava took a picture of his head with the swastika using his phone and sent an MMS to his friend Arthur.

However, the next day, Arthur arrived at the institute with his thick eyebrows intact and unshaven.



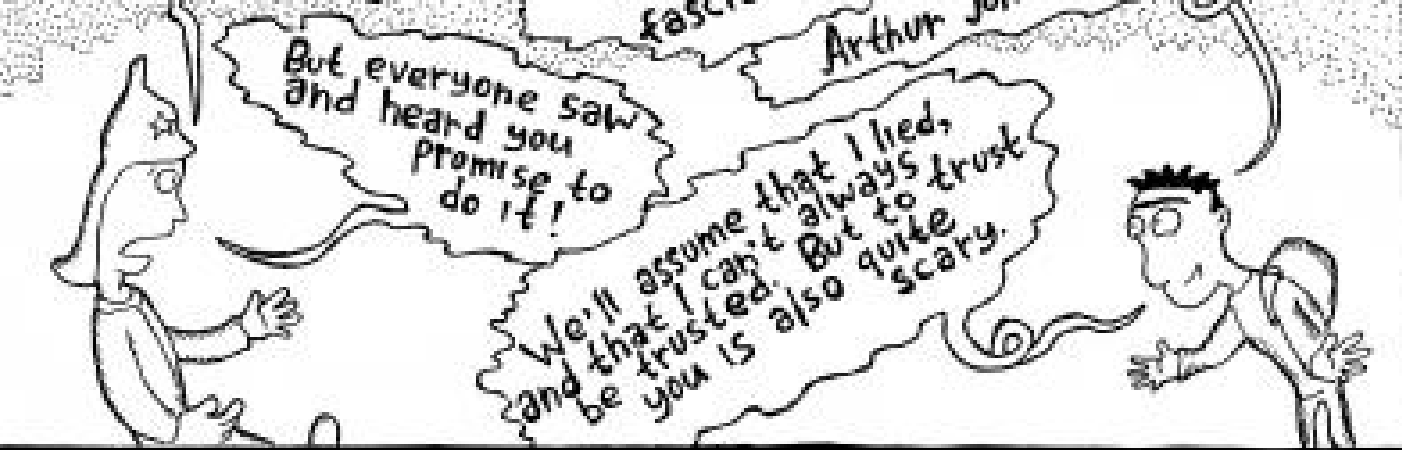
What is this?

Said Slava, outraged
We had an agreement!

Agreements with fascists aren't valid!
Arthur joked.

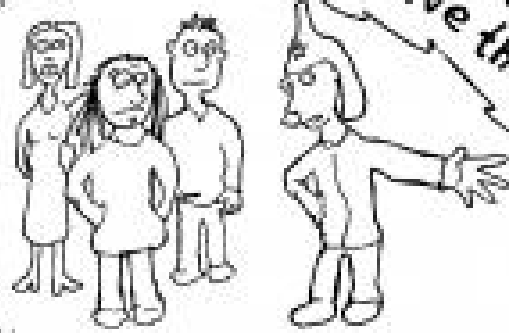
But everyone saw and heard you promise to do it!

We'll assume that I lied, and that I can't always trust be trusted. But to trust you is also quite scary.



Slava "worked him over" every day, encouraging every new witness to resolve this bet.

But Arthur always joked that he wasn't in a hurry to shave off his eyebrows.



Then one day Slava arrived at the institute with the straight razor, the same one that he was shaven with not long ago...

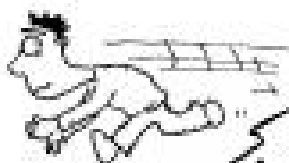


And he pounced on Arthur to administer justice himself.

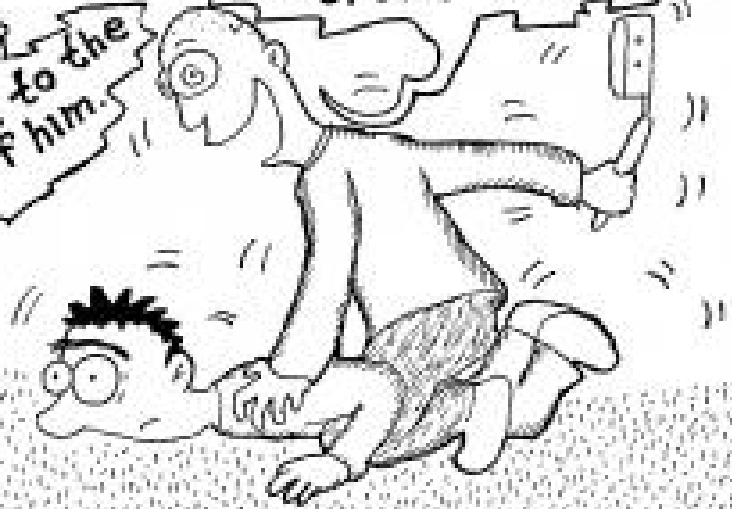


Arthur got frightened and tried to escape.

"Bitch, now I'm going to shave your eyebrows off!!!"



...but Slava threw him to the ground and sat on top of him.



Slavik, stop!
You're out of your
mind!

yelled his friends
standing nearby

Shut up, all of you!
I am the übermensch!
The highest race!

Arthur covered his face,
so his eyebrows couldn't
be shaved.

Now I'm going to
slice you into pieces,
you non-Russian
wog!!!

yelled Slava

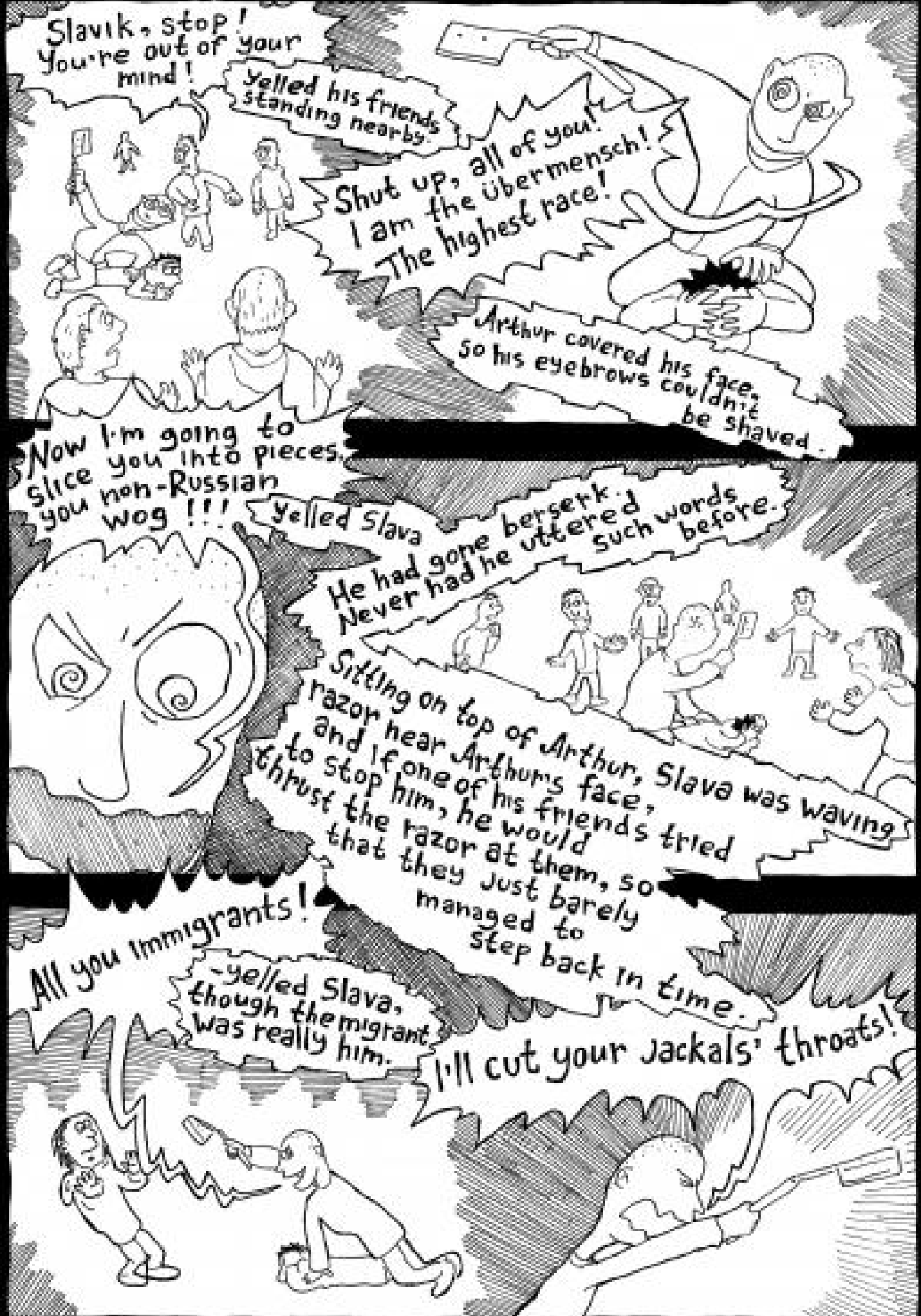
He had gone berserk.
Never had he uttered
such words
before.

Sitting on top of Arthur, Slava was waving
razor near Arthur's face,
and if one of his friends tried
to stop him, he would
thrust the razor at them, so
they just barely
managed to
step back in time.

All you immigrants!

yelled Slava,
though the migrant
was really him.

I'll cut your jackals' throats!



And then he suddenly stopped.



What am I saying?

And doing?

His eyes froze with fear.

Slava jumped off Arthur and abruptly stood up.

Sorry, Arthur! This swastika has power over me...

He turned the hand with the razor to his own head, and in front of everyone...



quickly, clumsily, shaved the swastika off his head.

In a second he finally came to his senses.

He didn't experiment with his appearance and didn't make foolish bets anymore.



So much for "just a joke"!