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The City Must Survive is my favorite song. As with other tracks in the Frostpunk OST by Piotr Musial, such as *The Darkest of Days*, *Are We Alone*, and *The Last Flame*; *The City Must Survive* is themed around the central aspects of the game, “If you already played the game then you know it is quite grim, it’s about difficult moral choices. It’s about desperation and sometimes even sacrifice. So it was very important for me to find a way to translate that into the music.” (Piotr Musial) Your city is the last city, the last vestige of humanity that still remains after the sudden frost began creeping over the world. While all the songs in the album reflect and represent their titles well, *The City Must Survive* does it the best and is my personal favorite.

I should mention that each song is played at certain parts throughout the story. For example *Are We Alone* is the song that plays when you first start the game. For *The City Must Survive*, it only plays near the very end of the game, after you have already established a decent and fairly self-sustaining city. It is at this point you learn of an enormous and deadly storm heading your way, so cold and fierce that no one can leave the city for fear of being frozen solid. You have to prepare food stores, stock up on coal, and recall any people you had exploring the wasteland. The mood that overtakes you as you enter into the final moments is that of cold desperation.

This song begins once the storm hits the city and countries for the week that it lasts in game. (Start the song here if you want to read my description alongside the music.) The song starts off with a tremendous thrum of trumpets that represent the power of The Generator at the

center of the city, but you can hear the violins in the background grow in speed and volume, representing the anxiety and fear that the upcoming storm is instilling in you. (0:00-0:20) Soon there are more intense violins in the front of the song, and after a clash of cymbals they fall silent, and you can only hear the whisper of the cold icy wind as it blows past, representing the precursor to the storm about to arrive. Suddenly the storm is upon you, as you hear it crash into the city, the violins in the front, taking full focus. (0:20-1:00)

However you can still hear in the background the trumpets of the generator working to fight against the cold. Both continually rise to face each other until they almost take turns in which is louder. The storm, growing in ferocity and bringing the temperature down, seeping cold into your very bones. The generator, roaring as more and more fuel is added to it, the steam straining against its steel vessel as it attempts to exert enough heat to match and overcome the force of nature it's tasked with fighting. (1:00-2:00)

Suddenly the wind is gone, the generating ticking softly as it is allowed a brief respite from outputting more than it was ever meant to, the wind almost nonexistent. However, this is only the eye of the storm, as you hear the wind and violins begin to pick up once more. (2:00-2:40)

They start increasing with a vengeance, and the generator begins to do the same. They exchange a back and forth of pure will, the great storm attempting to silence all life with its icy gale, and the generator responding in kind with its fiery roar. (2:40-3:50) Finally, it is over. Both the storm and the generator have quieted, and all that is to be heard is a few wisps of wind across the snowy landscape. You can almost imagine the sun beginning to peek through the clouds. (3:50-4:11)

The story that is told throughout this sign is always so motivational to me. You, and your city, are fighting against a force of nature. Normally people consider forces of nature something that you have to take. That nothing can be done about it, and some might just allow it to take you. This moment however, is not simply weathering a storm, but prevailing through a storm. Facing an unconquerable and indestructible enemy, there is nothing you can do to beat it. That is because you are looking at the wrong win conditions. When facing a problem so vast, so frightening that it feels like it is better to do nothing than it could ever be to even attempt to stand against it, the real key to winning is not defeating the enemy.

The real way to win is to still be standing when they are not, to outlast the storm. That is what makes this song so great to me. If I am ever feeling like I lack motivation, or that I cannot overcome a problem or task, I listen to this song. This song makes me feel as if I am facing this huge problem, and I feel it pushing against me, but in the end I win, I come out on top, and I am still standing. This is what makes the song good, that it has this uplifting and encouraging message within it, as well as the feeling that it stirs in me.

Works Cited

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