

The Fuse to My Bomb

I knew he was insane, even before my friends told me. Maybe that was what made me attracted to him, the fact that he was more twisted than a crazy-straw.

We hopped over the fence and quickly crossed the park, as silent as a pair of shadows. We ran down the deserted street, letting the moon light up the dark path. I didn't know where we were going, but Jason did, and that was alright by me. He told me that it was a surprise, that I'd know when we got there. By the time we had climbed the railing of an abandoned apartment complex and he called for a short rest, I was way too anxious to stop. I wanted to know, damn it!

I met Jason as he was indulging in his early morning pastime, which usually consisted of rolling bowling balls down the avenue (Rickson Avenue went up at a sharp incline for about fifty feet. You'd be hard-pressed to find a vehicle not suffering from severe blunt trauma). I remember that we just looked at each other for a little while, two wolves in a deserted city. I didn't know him and he didn't know me, and we both wondered who posed a bigger threat; who had the bigger gun, as it were. I think it was me who, after a bit of time and polite prodding, managed to convince him that I wasn't dangerous.

It took me a little while to notice that he was into me. I hadn't really "played the game" since that damn comet crashed into the planet a few years ago. People were picking up the pieces, but there were evidently some things they had forgotten, like politeness and compassion. Jason had both--admittedly in varying amounts. We flirted with each other for a little while, meeting at the top of Rickson Avenue and sharing a few laughs, maybe a drink or two if we could find one--or in Jason's case, make one. It was fun, and when we kissed for the first time, I knew where I had to be.

My friends didn't really think much of him. Well, no...that's not true; they thought quite a lot about him, but what they did think wasn't very nice. They complained about his spidery hair (the color of which he often changed every week or so, where he found the dye for it I have no idea), his anarchistic style of clothing, his poor manners (which were only really poor when my friends were around), and his light-switch personality. I didn't care what they think, I liked him enough to ignore his shortcomings, which in my mind weren't shortcomings at all. The only people that are more likely to survive an insane world are themselves insane.

The wind was cold and the night was bright. Jason took me by the hand and we ran the rest of the way up the railing of the building. My heart was throbbing in my ears--not so much because of the long run it took for us to get here, but more of the fact that I wanted to know what he was up to. There was a gleam in his eyes, a luminescent fire fueled by a furious passion. Whatever he wanted me to see, he was willing to go to some far-reaching lengths to make sure that I would see it.

We finally reached the top, huffing and panting. I was about to say something, but Jason put a long, dexterous finger to his lips, his eyes wide and filled with that fiery light. He took my hand again and led me to the edge, where I leaned over edge and peered down into the murkiness of

the alleyway. I saw a group of about twenty or so fierce-looking individuals, armed to the teeth with assault rifles, pistols, and knives, huddled together in a massive circle around a burning trashcan. Funnily enough, another group of equally armed scoundrels were amassed just around the corner.

Jason leaned over the edge beside me. His hair was black today, tinged with bright yellowy-green highlights, and as the wind blew it back out of his eyes, I saw the fire in them cloud over, repressed by something. I put a hand on his shoulder and whispered to him what was wrong.

He looked at me for a moment, then pointed to one of the gangs. "Look," he said, quietly and secretly. I did look, and I felt my pulse quicken when I saw Snowman.

Snowman was a tall, violent ferret with no other real name, at least one that didn't sound so damn stupid. They called him that because of his coal-black eyes and his emotionless stare, or maybe because he was so round and white that he kept being mistaken for a snowman...I don't know. I don't know and I don't care about his name. All I knew was hate for the fat bastard.

It started eight weeks ago, when I asked Jason to pick up some scrap metal for a project I was making. He wandered into their territory unknowingly and when a few of the members tried to throw him out, he proceeded to show them how stupid it was to mess with an unstable wolf. He did alright, I hear, but after the first two hit the ground, the whole street filled up with the scum of the Earth. They beat him up pretty badly, breaking his ribs and giving him a few shiners that wouldn't go away for two weeks. Apparently one of the gang saw him with me, so when they realized that he was gay, they really let him have it. They humiliated and abused him, verbally and sexually, and after they had their fun the Snowman stabbed him in the leg before dragging him to the outskirts of their self-proclaimed land.

Jason told me he had to drag himself to what nowadays passed for the hospital, a sort of makeshift relief center run by three or four doctors and about twelve nurses. The doctor told him that if the knife wound was less than an inch to the right, it would have punctured the femoral artery and he would have bled to death long before he got to them.

I heard most of this from a friend of mine and, later, from Jason himself.

Now, Jason stepped back from the ledge and put his hands on my hips, pulling away from the view down below. I straightened up, and as I looked into his eyes, that burning emotional fury filled his eyes again. He gave me a quick kiss on the cheek and winked at me. Whatever was brewing in his zany mind, it was making him playful. His hand went into the confines of his long coat and pulled out something small and round attached to a thick string...

A cherry bomb.

Now I knew what his plan was, and it made me grin from ear to ear. Such cunning and evil, the brilliant sort of "do-gooder" evil that I always loved him for, flowed out from his devilish smile and it made me want him more. I kissed him somewhat roughly on the lips, but he pulled away from me. He held up the little explosive with his middle and forefinger like it was a cigarette and spoke to me in a whisper.

"Got a light?"

I did, and he knew I did. I took out a little lighter (urban camouflage, bought when the design was cool, if it was ever cool) from my jacket and flicked it open, cupping my hand to the flame to make sure the wind wouldn't take it and the scum down below wouldn't see us. I lit the dark green fuse and it began sputtering away in the dark, hissing like a fiery rattlesnake. Jason flung it over the side. I watched it tumble down, the fuse glimmering silently as it fell. Jason quickly grabbed me and pulled me down under cover of the low wall of the ledge. We put our arms around each other as we waited for our little harbinger of destruction to go off.

It didn't take too long. I scarcely drew in a breath when I heard a loud PUH-KOW! The sound resonated off the buildings, making a cool wobbly sound effect. There was shouting, a lot of shouting, and then the steady surge of gunfire. Shouts of rage and pain competed in decibel strength with the rapid machine-gun fire and the heavy, cannon-like burst of shotguns.

Jason and I sat down on the concrete with our backs to the ledge, listening to the sounds of karmic retribution. Suddenly I felt Jason take my hand; we looked at each other and smiled.

"Happy anniversary," the wolf said, grinning like a delighted child. I stared at him wild-eyed, feeling a coldness creep over me. I completely forgot that it was our anniversary! I felt like so stupid, like falling down on your face during a big basketball game. How could I be such a fucking idiot!

I was about to say some sort of lame excuse, but when I opened my mouth Jason gave me another quick peck on the cheek and pulled out something I hadn't seen before. Well, to be truthful, I had seen it before, but for a long time...not in this day and age.

It was a cassette player, black and bulky, with large switch-like buttons. He pressed down on a button, sending the cover flying open. I watched transfixed, mesmerized, as he once again reached into his coat and pulled out a cassette, put it in, and pressed PLAY. I stared at the dusty and dated contraption, waiting.

Suddenly the music began, and I gave Jason the biggest smile I could muster. He was playing our song; he was playing *Some Folks* by Alice Cooper. The music flowed out of the old machine like a rich river of retro goodness, and I let myself give in to the gruffly lilting rhythm, ignoring now the sounds of ultra-violence happening down below.

Jason stood up, careful to keep away from the ledge where a bullet ricocheted and screamed off into the night. He held out his hand to me, his face as kind and compassionate as you would ever find in a luxurious oil painting...only much more realistic. I took his hand, he pulled me up onto my feet, and we began a strange, awkwardly vaudevillian shuffle/tango that basically showed off the dancing prowess of two completely left-footed wolves. I tried moving my hips and tail in tempo with the trumpet section; I never was much of a dancer. Jason sang his favorite parts of the song, snarling and growling in imitation of our favorite singer.

"I just can't live without it, I'm not a man at all--it makes my skin crawl.....Baby! Baby! Come on and save me now..."

We kept dancing until the song was over, and then we continued to dance until the sounds of murder and destruction below ebbed into a series of isolated shots that grew more and more silent. We danced for the rest of the music on the album, and then stopped. He pulled me into a massive bear-hug and told me he loved me. I told him I loved him, too. We held each other for a few long minutes, and then drew back, still holding each other's hands. We stayed that way as we stepped lightly down the staircase, avoiding the rusted and broken bits.

We jumped over the side, landing on the cracked sidewalk together. I put my hands into the pockets of my jacket and started walking away, but Jason grabbed my shoulder and told me to wait a minute. We started walking down the alleyway, turning our heads this way and that in case there were any survivors of the carnage we caused. We couldn't see any scum, but that didn't make the trashcan clean.

Bodies littered the thin little street, lying face up and face down in a myriad of positions like a morbid gangster exhibition. At first it made me sick, but now I understand that it was necessary--essential, even. I stepped closer to Jason as we walked down the alley.

Then we heard a loud crash, and a series of thick, wet coughing and spluttering. We walked a little bit further, keeping our eyes on the shadows. "Be careful," I told Jason. He acknowledged with a flicking of his ears. Then we saw him...

He was on his back, his massive girth riddled with bullet holes. The thick brow above his beady black eyes was drawn up in fear, shock, and hate. Bloody fur littered the area around him, and I saw his tail lying somewhere in the gutter. Quite fitting, if you ask me.

The Snowman looked at us and growled, snarling and sputtering as red spittle drenched his bare chest. I looked at Jason, and that glint in his eye burned with a savage lust for vengeance. It was Jason's fight, it always had been, but when a bunch of douchebag brotherfuckers mess with the guy I love, you can bet your ass that I want a piece of the action, too.

I left Jason to stand there, glaring at the white ferret. I was scrounging for something long and heavy, but not too thick, something nice and blunt. Then I found it--a wooden baseball bat, chipped in a few places, but still very sturdy, very...useful. I turned back and presented the object to Jason, my gift to him.

"Happy anniversary, hon," I said. The wolf took the bat, gave me a quick peck--this time on the lips--and turned back to the ferret, a wicked little smile dancing on his muzzle. He took a step forward, positioned himself like a golfer taking aim, and swung. He swung many, many...many times.

We left the alleyway later that night, arm in arm. I put my head on his shoulder as we headed back to our little cabin, our own little slice of nuclear heaven. We walked through the park, watching the stars glint warmly in the sky as the wind ushered us onward.

"So..." I said, "What should we do for next year's anniversary?"

I looked up and saw Jason staring at the tall trees that filled the park, that familiar gleam of mischievous fire blazing in his eyes. He smiled at me, kissed me, and said "I think I've got some ideas."

He really is the fuse to my bomb.