

What a Well Made Bomb Can Do

"Hey kid, wanna make an easy buck?"

I saw him standing there just out of the light, in the cold, musty shade of a dilapidated Laundromat. He was a big snowshoe hare, his fur mottled like an abstract painting with brown, tan, and grey. He wore a pair of beat up tennis shoes, short sandy-colored khakis, a blue polo shirt, dark sunglasses, and a super creepy smile that said "yeah, I'm a pretentious jerk, and you wouldn't dare do a damn thing about it."

Funny thing is, I would dare. Oh yes, I wanted nothing more than to say something like "Hey asshole, you want a dagger in the loins?" but I knew that that wouldn't go down too well. I played that card before in a similar situation and ended up looking like I'd just lived through a George Romero movie (or maybe a Gwar concert).

That guy wanted a quick fight. This guy wanted a quick shag. Given the two options, I'd pick shag any day of the wily old week, but with this prick? Just looking at his face made me want to vomit right there in the street corner. I had a very important date with a very important person, and I was running late as it is...without this guy and his unwanted solicitations. I just ignored him and kept on walking, my boots scuffing the cracked blacktop and California Dreamin' sifting through my head.

"Hey! I'm talking to you, God damn it!" he shouted.

Ooh, touchy. I turned around and saw him slowly walking...stalking toward me. He had a bunch of rings on his left hand; they looked like the sort of rings you'd get by joining a college fraternity or something. His other hand was buried in the pockets of his khakis, probably fondling his dipstick.

"Piss off, loser," I said, flipping him the bird. "I've got places to be and I don't like being held up by twits, so beat your feet, man."

"Well, look at you tryin' to be all Lil' Billy Badass," he said, his voice filled with a dark mixture of condescension and contempt, the voice of someone who was always used to getting his way and no other way. He took out the hand he had in his shorts, bringing out something small and gold. After I heard the tight CLICK I finally noticed that it was a switchblade. I looked at my watch...I was already ten minutes late! I did not want to be playing this stupid game right now...

"Don't lie to yourself, kid. You know you want it up the ass. All you fuckin' fags got it in for the big cock, so just get on over here so I don't come over there and take it myself, eh?"

It wasn't that I was offended by the word; it's just that I couldn't bear to hear his stupid voice anymore. I pulled a gun out from under my jacket, pointed it at the twit--the decision I made to fire just above his head was a very, very quick one--and fired off a round. The bullet tore off a sizably decent chunk of rotten wood and drywall from the Laundromat. The hare stood stock

still, his eyes wide enough for me to see the slightly bloodshot whites of them. I fired again, into the air this time, and he ran faster than any self-conscious dirtball I've ever seen.

I always felt a rush of energy and authority whenever I pulled the trigger. And to think that Jason taught me how to fire it only a week ago!

I ran down the city street, breathing heavily, with sweat beginning to dot my face and run down through the grey fur. The sun was going down fast, and Jason told me to meet him at the old aquarium by eight o'clock. He had plans brewing, and I wanted to know what they were. When that wolf has some sort of scheme going on and he doesn't impulsively act on it, you can bet it's big.

By the time I got there, the last slice of the sun slipped silently over the dark horizon beyond the lake. I walked across the parking lot and stopped next large abandoned truck, heart pounding and chest heaving. I took a few deep breaths, checked my gun to see how many bullets I had, and continued walking to the aquarium entrance, feeling a chill gallop down my back.

As a general rule, I'm not afraid of fish or water. You can put me in a boat with a stick, some shoestrings, and a button or a pin, and I'll come back with a nice walleye pike or two, but...a few days ago, Jason found a book in a deserted building and he gave it to me as a present. It was a wonderful sentiment, but the book was an anthology of stories by H.P. Lovecraft, and after finishing that damn book, I've become afraid of any large body of water. My imagination can't stay put, and I start seeing the lake as a huge blue deathtrap just because of what my mind imagines is in there.

There is nothing scary or strange about an aquarium...when it's alive, that is. The first thing I noticed when I walked into the building was the stench. The smell of several hundred fish rotting for nearly a decade in their watery crypts is not a pleasant one. The second thing was the skeletons...all those damn skeletons...

Living with Jason has given me, shall we say, a kind of dulling of sentimentality. Things that seem morbid to most "normal" people are things that Jason finds really quite endearing. My level of morbidity tolerance is a lot lower than his, of course, but still it's an eerie thought. Nevertheless, the sight of all those skeletons in that aquarium, the new and the ancient (I guess they're all ancient now), makes Alice Cooper's theatre of death look like a flower exhibition.

I wandered through a corridor, staring through the thick glass plating at an ancient specimen. The nameplate below was tarnished and blurred into obscurity. Its teeth were large and many. I continued onward, deciding that it would be better for me and my sanity to ignore the exhibits.

My boot landed on something small and cylindrical, throwing my feet out from beneath. I landed hard on the cold cement floor, knocking the wind out of my chest and forcing flashing little stars in my eyes. I got up, painfully, and after I managed to catch my breath, I looked at my feet and saw a tooth that had been yellowed with age. Looking up, I saw an enormous skeletal thing that looked like the bastard lovechild between a snake, a shark, and a crocodile. I guess one of its teeth fell out...but how would that be possible?

I won't lie, I started to get nervous. Pushing myself up, I brushed myself off, sniffed (Damn that awful smell!) and continued walking. Eventually I came to a grand hall where exhibits were encased in airtight glass boxes secured at waist level...Still no sign of Jason.

I coughed and sniffed, and walked over to a one of the cases. I stared at the little squid-like thing for a bit when I felt a strong pair of hands grab my shoulders and pull me away from the case. I tried to flail my arms, but the fiend held my arms close at my hips. I growled, trying to sound more dangerous than I really was, when my captor spoke.

"Who loves ya, baby?"

It was a familiar voice, one that was a blessing in this fishy mausoleum. He quickly spun me around and before I could glare at him, Jason planted a big, wet kiss on my lips. He smiled at me and for all it was worth, I love the guy, but...what a fucking mean thing to do!

"Damn it, Jason! You nearly gave me a heart attack!" I said, grabbing at my pounding chest. He chuckled lightly and put his arm around my shoulder, pulling me close to him. I didn't resist, but instead of putting my arm around his waist I planted my hands firmly in the pockets of my jacket. Damn cute bastard...

He led me to a high window that overlooked the lake, which appeared black now beneath the night sky. There was no moon tonight; it was hidden behind thick clouds. I asked Jason why he wanted to meet in such a worthless dump like this and not in someplace more...inviting, like a coffee shop. He smiled and pointed out the window. I looked and saw a large factory on the other side of the lake. Several yellowish lights burned like candles in the dark, and...wait a minute...lights?

Electricity?

So the idiots in the U.P. actually managed to get their act together. The U.P. stood for Universal Power, a resurrected company run by an ego-maniacal Scrooge wannabe; his goal was to bring the power back on, "get the machine running," as it were. Universal Power would restore electricity to the city, then the state, then...well, that's the universal part. Get the power grid back on-line, then restore power to the factories; find people to work in those factories, and distribute the product to the rest of the world, gaining power and sway over everybody else, crushing any opposition until they controlled the whole area. Do the same thing in the next state, and repeat.

Who would be at the helm of this mighty machine, you may ask? Mr. Scrooge, naturally.

And we simply just can't have that now, can we?

"I've got a plan I think you might enjoy," Jason said, his tail wagging anxiously. I raised an eyebrow, daring him to go on. He put a hand in his pocket and pulled out something small and black with little orange plastic legs. It looked like a billiards ball had mated with a duck.

"What the hell is that?" I asked him.

"This, my dear, is a very well-made bomb."

I looked at him, seeing that little batch of crazy-fire flaring up in his eyes. I've learned to respect that fire, and, like most fires, to treat it with special care. I took the little object from his hand, feeling its weight (about the same as a billiards ball, actually) and flexing the little duck-like feet.

"Where did you get this thing?"

"I made it."

I stared at him, truly dumbfounded. Jason never really showed much interest in making explosives--usually his main concern was in their functioning and use. He was grinning widely, quite delighted at my surprise. I was proud of him surely, but it was still such a weird little thing. He explained to me how it worked (press the little button at the top and it'll begin walking forward to the target, simultaneously setting off the timer fuse) and showed me the little smiley face he drew on it. It really did look kinda funny, so I laughed. Then he explained his plans for Universal Power, and I laughed even harder.

So we stood there staring out the window at the factory in the distance, training our eyes on any entrance points we'd strike first. We planned it out a little further, but Jason's plans often ran the route of crossing the bridge when we came to it. They've always been successful that way, so I didn't question it.

"It's turning out to be one hell of a night, Jason," I said, stretching my arms above my head, listening to my joints pop. I heard Jason say "Mm-Hmm," beside me. I began to yawn--suddenly I heard a quick woosh sound, and I yelped loudly as Jason's hand slapped me roughly on the butt, sending a shockwave of pain, surprise, and (strangely enough) lust through me.

I looked at him in surprise; he tilted his head and rolled his eyes over to another window, where a dusty moth-eaten couch stood below it. Then he grinned and took my hand, leading us over there. No way... he couldn't be serious, could he? In this place, where the smell alone was enough for a boner-kill?

"Are you serious?" I asked him.

"Why not?"

"Because this place is a graveyard and it stinks and it's creepy and I don't like it so let's just get the hell out of here first before we do anything!"

"Oh, come on," he said, taking his little PET (Personal Explosive Thingy) from me and putting it back into the deep regions of his coat. "All you have to do is relax, hon. I'll do all the work, just you wait."

He took my jacket off and placed it delicately on the arm of the couch. Then he sat down, spread his legs, and lightly tapped the bit of couch in front of him. I grinned nervously--I really didn't want to do anything, this place was just too damn disgusting and creepy--and sat down in

his lap. He started massaging my shoulders, and I closed my eyes as I felt his fingers knead my back into something that felt like a warm, jellified substance. It felt great, feeling all of your problems rubbed out of your body.

It would have been better, though, if it wasn't for that damn smell...

One of his hands slid down my back and over my belly, slipping up under my torn T-shirt. He put his head over my shoulder and I felt his other hand begin to creep sneakily over my thigh. I felt his hot breath on my neck--the smell of chai tea and cinnamon wafted through the air in front of me, but it was only momentary--and his hand slowly edge downward to cup my crotch gently, putting on more pressure as I sighed. I'm pretty sure I was relaxed for the most part.

It was nice, but it would have been better if we were in a different place. As gentle and generous as the wolf was, I couldn't really get myself in the mood. Could you in such a decrepit hell-hole? I stopped him just as he was putting his fingers to the zipper on my pants, telling him that it wasn't really working.

"There's no chance of it happening here, is there?" he asked, sounding sad. Just then I heard the timbers of the building's foundation creak weakly, and something skittering quickly along the concrete floor.

"Nope," I said.

We packed up our things and headed out of the aquarium. I was glad to be out of there, and I showed it by kissing Jason and putting my arm around his waist as we strolled through the dark. About twenty minutes later, we walked over an old car wreck and found ourselves stepping into The Little Shop of Bothers, an old bar & grill that was run by a short and ill-tempered shrew. She was always angry at something or another, but DAMN if she can't make the best stew I've ever tasted. Jason and I took our seats at a table overlooking the lake (and the factory, which was about a quarter of a mile away). A slim, well-endowed vixen wearing too-tight clothing and a long ponytail took our orders. She tried to flirt with me, but I didn't play along; I was too hungry to bother. Besides, Jason would probably throw a hissy-fit and fly off the handle. He's tough, my Jason, but he can be a goofy bugger every now and then.

We ate what we could, saving up our energy for what we had to do. We paid for our meals, thanked the shrew, and walked out into the night again. I looked at my watch...it was just about midnight. Jason walked away for a little bit to talk to a group of skunk punks. I waited, wondering what he was doing. When he came back he told me that he was getting a bit of info about our target: armed guards stalked the entrance, deterring anybody that came close; the only way to get in was a hatch on the side of the factory that faced the lake; the ventilation system is a good make-out place. We walked closer to the factory, getting within view of the guards. Jason and I stepped into the shadows of an alleyway, we kissed, and I said, "Let's do it."

That was how we started one of our chaotic, "doin' good for no one" missions. No fanfare, no big speech to get us ready to go or anything...just a simple "let's do it" will suffice.

The plan was for me to take the little bomb and set it off at the top of a stairwell on the highest floor while Jason distracted the guards down below. The bomb would travel all the way to the central control room with about seven seconds to spare. By that time, Jason and I would be slipping through the ventilation shafts like super sneaky aliens. After that...pop goes the weasel!

The night felt like it was ours as we quick-stepped it to the factory, sticking to the alleys. Soon, we came to the building; it rose up like a large, thick cupcake, with windows on all sides except the one facing the lake. Bright yellow lights blared from them, making it seem like the cupcake was stuck with hundreds of candles. When we got to the windowless side of the building, Jason and I parted with a hug and we headed off to do our parts. I shimmied my way up a drainpipe that ran down from the top of the building to a hole in the ground. It was slow-going, but it was all for a good cause...Honestly.

When I got to the roof, I went to one of the skylight and looked down. On floor-level, a row of top-like generators were whirring away like psychotic bees. Guards armed with high-caliber rifles were skulking around, walking about the place in predictable directions. Above them was a staircase, their corners devoid of light. Suddenly I realized how the bastards figured it all out; water from the lake went into through an intake below the surface, snaking through a pipe that lead beneath the building, driving the turbines, powering the generators. And after that...the water ran into a little river at the edge of the city, which was in turn fed by the lake itself. They had a powerful, virtually endless resource in their palms.

Too bad it had to go.

I took out a small knife and slid it under the skylight, slowly jacking it up. I tried to go as fast as I could, but the knife was small and kind of rusted--if the damn thing snaps on me, I wouldn't doubt the guards down below would hear it.

But it didn't snap. The window eased up about an inch and I pulled it the rest of the way up. Making sure nobody was about on the staircase, I sneaky-snuck my way down soundlessly. From here I could see the control room; it was conveniently doorless, but there was no way I'd be able to get to it without being seen by the pricks down below. I watched the guards down below and waited for them to move. All I had to do was get to the middle of the staircase, send the dinky little explosive on its first mission, and jump into the vents. How hard could it be?

I stayed low to the bars of the staircase, trying to stay in the shadows. I took the bomb out from under my jacket and looked at it for a couple seconds. It was odd, yeah, but I thought it was kind of cute, and I felt a tinge of sadness in what I had to do with it. I kissed its dark metal surface, placed it on the floor, and pressed the little button on top. I heard a click, the steady scratching of an internal timer, and it began walking slowly and awkwardly toward the control room.

I gave a quick salute and whispered "Good luck to ya, soldier," in my best Sean Connery impersonation.

I was about to turn around when I felt a hand clamp down on my muzzle and a strong weight push me down against the staircase. At first I was too shocked to move, but I fought back as best as I could, as best as his damn body would allow. I didn't want to cry out in case the ones below would hear me; the jerk on top of me would probably give me away in any case. I struggled a bit more when I heard him whisper in my ear.

"Hey, who loves ya, baby?"

He took his hand away from my mouth and the first thing I said was "Damn it, Jason!" as quietly as my anger would allow. I felt him push off of me, letting me breathe. I turned my head and saw him grinning down at me with his smuggest smile. He was wearing one of the guard's uniforms; I suppose it was safe to assume he got passed the guards at the entrance. But...

"Did you follow me here?" I asked, making sure the aggravation was evident in my voice. He flicked his grey ears and nodded his head so fast he looked like he was driving a truck through a swamp.

"Surprised?" he said.

"Yes, you crazy fucker."

"Aah, speaking of which..."

I felt something bluntly obvious poking against my backside, and when I felt the wolf steady himself above me and begin to rub himself against my back, I flicked my tail in agitation against his nose.

"Jason, we don't have the time for this..."

"Yes, we do..."

I growled and tried to shove him off, but he anchored himself to the stairs to the point where I couldn't even budge; I could only feel his heat on top of me...and the sight of the guards down below. I was afraid that they'd notice; I don't really know what their policies are on finding two guys making out in their secret installation, but I'm sure it isn't good. Still, I couldn't help but feel a slight yet powerful twinge of lust from some deep, hidden area of my mind. This was way too dangerous, and it was turning me on something fierce.

I pushed my backside up against him, feeling him press his hips faster. I felt him lean down against my back, and his hot breath filled my ear as he sighed passionately. Blood rushed to my cheeks and my groin as Jason's breath started coming in short gasps...no, it doesn't take very long for him. He was going fast and strong, and in a moment I heard a BANG!

A bullet whizzed past my ear, and I heard the guards down below shouting something to each other. I felt that heat leave my back, replaced by cold, and I growled low in my throat. Every goddamn time...It's always one thing or another.

"Ok, time to book it!" he shouted.

"Wait a minute, Jason..."

"We don't have time, babe!"

"Yes, we do! We've still got like a minute!"

He grabbed my hand and I ran with him to the ventilation shaft; he kicked in the flimsy aluminum screen and stepped back, ushering me forward. I dove into the darkness, fueled by my rage and anger (and, dare I say, sexual deprivation). It was hot and it was a tight fit, but I was thin enough--just enough--to lean down and run down the shaft, with Jason right behind me. Jason took out a flashlight and shined our way forward.

Another shaft opened up in front of us, heading down to the lower floor. I jumped, and soon we were hurdling our way through the labyrinth of vents like b-movie spiders.

We came to another filtration screen; I kicked damn thing out of my way and jumped back out into the city night again, landing on the blacktop. Jason landed beside me, and we sprinted to the nearest abandoned building. We heard a bunch of shouting behind us and some gunfire, but no grandiose explosion like Jason promised. I tapped him on the shoulder and shouted at him as the wind whistled in my ears.

"When's that little thing of yours gonna go off--"

Just then it happened, an enormous KER-WHAM that made the ground tremble beneath my feet. Jason and I turned around and saw fire leaping out of the building and smoke rising up to meet the stars...but it was on the wrong side. A huge chunk was blown out of the structure on the side opposite of where we planned it to be. Water from the lake was pouring into the remnants of the building to fill the lost space.

"I don't get it," I said. "What happened?"

"Hmmm," Jason mumbled, stroking the fur on his chin quizzically. "I think the bomb must've fallen over the edge of the railing right after we left. It must've struck one of the generators and blew a hole out of that side, allowing water from the lake to enter and jam everything up."

Brilliant deduction, Holmes.

We watched the building burn a little while longer before we started the walk back to The Little Shop of Bothers. It had been a long night, and I was ready for one more snack before hitting the sack. The stars were bright in the sky tonight; I suppose that's how the sky gets when there aren't any factories or industries to burden it down with smog or other toxic crap. People do a fair job of that anyway without having to do it on an industrial scale.

I heard Jason snickering beside me. I looked at him and gave him a playful shove in the shoulder, asking him what was up.

"Even when things don't go according to plan, stuff just happens to go our way! Haven't you noticed that? I don't think I put near as much explosive in that little thing as what we saw. "

"Right," I nodded in agreement. I unzipped my jacket and let the cold night air ruffle my T-shirt. "Whatever you used, it sure packed one hell of a punch."

"Mm-Hmm," he mumbled casually. I caught him staring at an odd angle at me, and when he grabbed my arm and led me into the ruins of an old used-car dealership, I let myself go limp at his side.

"Now," he said, looking directly into my eyes. "Let me show you what a well-made bomb can do."

We lay down on the hood of a disheveled red cavalier, him lying on top of me with my knees gently rubbing his sides. He took off my jacket and placed it delicately over the side of the vehicle. We touched each other's bodies and kissed for a while, and when I saw that gleam light up his eyes, I reached down and unzipped his pants and--

"Hey, fags, get a damn room, would ya!?"

Jason and I looked up--I saw him upside down, but I recognized him just the same. It was that damn hare, the same damn hare from yesterday afternoon. He was standing in the doorway of the dealership in his sandy khakis and polo shirt, the mottled grey, tan, and brown fur silhouetted against the light of our burning handiwork. Rage and hatred exploded in my brain, my head filled with visions of frightfully dark things.

"Where's my gun!?" I shouted. Jason cocked his head and gave me an odd look.

"Well, I was reaching for it when we were interrupt--"

"Not that one! The real one!"

I grabbed my jacket, fumbling for the cold chunk of steel and hard redwood. I found it, cocked it, and shot the pretentious bastard's right ear off. He ran off into the night, screaming bloody murder.

"Where the fuck were we?" I asked, putting my gun back into the holster.

"Fucking?"

"Oh, yeah. Commence!"

I hate being interrupted. I just...fucking...hate it.