

A Two-Man Job

Between drinking and fighting, some patrons in the local watering-hole preferred the later. It made snatching that bottle of rum all the more easier for Graves. He wasn't here for the drunken fist fight circus that seemed to be the night's entertainment, nor was he for the drinks actually. Bilgewater had better places with finer alcohol and prettier company for that, but since he was stuck here on business, might as well enjoy the place's albeit mediocre perks.

With one eye on the brawl, he dragged a chair in front of the fireplace. The warmth seeping into his bones and chasing away the unrelenting dampness of Bilgewater's rainy days, was a welcome feeling as he sat down and propped his feet up on the hearth, booted toes edging dangerously close to the fire. With a content sigh, he laid his shotgun down on the floor and took a couple of swigs from the bottle. All in all, things could be worse!

The raucous of the drunken crowd was a welcoming sound, lulling him into a false sense of familiarity and comfort. In places like these, it's the silence you had to be weary of, but given the loud cheers, things were going pretty well! Maybe not for Fate though, whoever was the chap he had tried to con tonight, he was giving him a good one.

Graves grinned wildly at that thought. Partners or not, seeing Fate take a few punches was fine entertainment. Even though they had worked out that whole betrayal and Twisted Fate leaving him to rot in jail thing, Graves wasn't over enjoying a little payback. After all, the business they had to conduct could wait until a few more bruises. All the time Graves needed to indulge himself with his favorite foible.

Letting himself sink in the chair, he took out a cigar from his inner jacket pocket. Religiously, he brought it to his lips, already savoring in his mind the delicious and heading first whiff of fine tobacco. A smile of anticipation on his face, he grabbed his lighter. As the flame was about to light the tip and as Graves was about to take his first puff, a card flew in front of his eyes, chopping his cigar in half.

A low growl came past his lips, and it's with a menacing stare that he laid his eyes on the culprit.

"Sorry" mouthed Fate in his direction when he caught Grave's threatening stare. An apology soon forgotten as he dove in front of yet another punch that the giant thug was throwing at him.

A frown of discontent plastered on his face, Graves picked up the card that stole half of his moment of indulgence. A three of clubs, really? Fate could have at least had the decency to put a damper on his fun with the beginning of a winning hand! With a huff of disdain, he threw the card into the fire, enjoying seeing that nasty piece of paper burn to ashes.

Still, he had half a cigar left and he would savor every inch of it! Until that was done, Fate could very well be gathering his teeth with broken fingers, he wouldn't care!

Once again, Graves grabbed his lighter and approached it from the tip of his cigar. This time, nothing prevented him from achieving his goal and he took a well-deserved first puff. Eyes half closed, he savored the tingling feeling of his toes unfreezing by the fire and the strong smell of smoke tobacco filling his lungs.

He was about to take another puff when Twisted Fate, ejected from the fight by a nice punch, came crashing into his chair. Graves caught himself in time to avoid being jostled into the fire, but his prized cigar wasn't so lucky.

Smoke could've well been coming out of Graves' ears as the last piece of his cigar went up into flames.

"All right pretty face, it's between you and me now!" He said as he stood up and grabbed Fate by the collar.

"Hold on, I am not finished with him yet."

Graves threw a glance in the direction of the street thug that Twisted Fate was fighting. "You had your chance." He said, his gaze turning back to Fate. "Now, it's my turn."

With one swift move he grabbed his shotgun and the crowd held its breath.

"Lights out!"

One loud bang later and Graves was passing through the doors, Fate in tow, leaving behind a tavern filled with a thick and dark smoke.

"You had to go for the cigar!" he said to Fate, the pair walking away as if nothing happened.

"Had to piss you off to make it believable. You're not that good an actor!"

Graves rolled his eyes, mumbling in his beard something inappropriate about con artists and their inflated ego.

"You got it I hope?" he asked once his muted rant was over.

"Who do you take me for? Some common street performer?" Fate answered as he took out a key from his pocket and threw it to Graves. "The guy has no idea I took it. Too busy taking bets on the fight."

Graves took some time to inspect the key before passing it back to Fate. It was the real deal.

"All right, let's do this, partner."