

Not So Nice Dreams by Bruce Hall

As Bones sat finishing the last bits of his final meal, he reflected on his life and how he had come to this point. He was scheduled to be put to death by lethal injection at 12:01, a mere 30 minutes from now. He cursed his luck under his breath thinking about his birthdate, also 30 minutes away. He would be dead and forty in a half an hour.

It had all started on another birthday 10 years before. He had been talked into a bank robbery by his good friend Lobo. It sounded like the perfect heist, even though Bones knew it was wrong. Lobo had told him about the small town bank 20 miles away. It was full of cash and had no security guard.

Life had gone to crap for Bones and he felt like there was nothing to lose now. In just a short time, he had lost his business, his woman and the ancient farmhouse that his great uncle had left him. Bad luck just seemed to follow him every where.

The day of the heist, he woke up with a sick feeling in his stomach, but he told himself that it was just the alcohol from the night before.

The bank opened at 8:00, and they walked inside as soon as the teller unlocked the front door. Bones was sweating heavily as they made their way inside and ordered everyone on the floor. The old colt 45 he carried wasn't even loaded. He wouldn't need to fire it any way. Everything was going as planned. The two tellers were on the floor and the bank manager was stuffing cash in the bag Lobo was holding. Bones was watching the tellers and the door when an old man in uniform walked in the door, pulled a pistol and started shooting. Bones shouted a warning to Lobo, but it was too late. He watched in disbelief as Lobo fell backward and rolled to the floor, unmoving. Suddenly the old man turned his gun on Bones and started firing.

A slug ripped into Bones arm and he dived behind the counter. Reflexes took over from his Army training and he pulled the clip from his pocket, stuffed it into his gun and worked the action. Bones looked up in time to see the old guard coming around the end of the counter. His gun trained on Bones head. There was a deafening roar, and the world turned black.

When Bones woke up his head was on fire. Opening his eyes made the pain even worse. He was cuffed to a hospital bed and later a cop told him what had happened. It seems both men had fired simultaneously and the off duty security guard was dead, as was Lobo. So, a robbery and Bones would wear an ugly scar on his head for life. Murder charge complete with guilty verdicts, here he was on death row.

As Bones finished the cold Budweiser that was part of his last meal, he thought about how perfect his life had been just one year before that black day at the bank.

He had owned a little tire store in the small north woods town, where he had lived for the previous 5 years. His great uncle, a bachelor farmer had left him an old farmhouse on a hill overlooking Rust Lake. Not long after moving to Rust Lake he had met the girl of his dreams, a tall dark haired beauty with green eyes that could look right through you.

Bones had pulled up to the Rust Lake Saloon on his old Shovelhead and walked through the front door only to see her behind the bar looking at him with a slight smile. Right then he knew he must have this woman.

Angel was her name and it wasn't long before the two of them were inseperatable. Within 6 months she had moved into the old farmhouse, and his life was perfect. The bliss lasted only a few months more.

Late one night he awoke to a pounding on his door. The Deputy told how she was killed on her way home from the bar. It seems a bunch of kids had stolen a car and had lost control on a tight curve, just two miles down the road. Angel never had a chance as the two cars collided on the curve. The Deputy said she never suffered and that she died instantly. The next few days were a blur as he grieved and laid her to rest.

After Angel died, Bones was like a man possessed. He drank whiskey like it was water. He was mean and would fight for any reason. Riding the Shovelhead like a mad man. He had neglected the tire store and soon the bank took it along with the house. Bones drifted around and worked only enough to buy more whiskey and some gas for his bike. He soon fell in with a bad crowd including Lobo. He and Lobo drank, fought and rode together for awhile when Lobo suddenly mentioned the bank job. In the drunkenness Bones thought this might be a good thing. He would take the banks money west to start a new life.

A loud noise shook him back into reality as the cell door was opened. The guard said, "Let's go Bones."

He was numb as the guards escorted him down the hall. A prison Chaplain following behind, praying for his soul. They strapped him in the chair as on lookers watched though the one way glass. Next a hood was placed over his head and the warden leaned close to his hear and said, "Happy Birthday".

Bones was sweating profusely as he felt the needle go deep in his arm, and the world went black.

Soft lips pressed against his as his eyes slowly opened. "Good morning birthday boy" Angel said. Did you have that prison dream again last night?

Yeah, I sure did Bones lamented. It was more real than ever. As Bones looked around the bedroom, he smiled to himself. You know hon, I'm the luckiest man alive! I have you, this house my business, a faithful old scooter and good friends too. Speaking of which, you better get dressed before Lobo gets here, she said.

By the way, would you stop at the bank on your way out of town? The mortgage is due today. Bones gave a slight shudder as he thought about the nightmare. I'm not going into any bank on my birthday!

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