

HERO

BY

Richard F. Russell

Wordmstr007@gmail.com

910-285-3321

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FADE IN:

INT BAR - NIGHT

Half full, a watering hole for blue collar people, men and women who work, drink, sleep, and work some more. On a stool, smoking, CORY, 30, dirty fingernails and lank hair. He sips a beer and watches the mandatory baseball game.

He frowns as KYLE slides onto the next stool. Clean, neat, yuppyish, 30, he looks out of place. Yet, he launches the conversation.

KYLE
This seat taken?

Cory shrugs.

KYLE
Great. Who's playing?

CORY
Orioles and Yanks.

KYLE
Who do you like?

CORY
Yanks are ahead.

The Bartender arrives.

KYLE
(to bartender)
Whatever light beer you have...and
one for my friend here.

Cory hardly qualifies as a friend, but he won't pass up a free beer. He empties his mug and pushes it to the bartender.

KYLE
Come here often?

Cory looks as if he's about to punch Kyle.

KYLE

Oh, wait, I didn't mean it like that. I was wondering what might be good...on the menu. My girlfriend will be here in thirty minutes, so I thought maybe you might recommend something.

CORY

The ribs ain't bad most nights, and you can't miss with the burgers. Steer clear of the meatloaf. It ain't worth eating.

KYLE

That's good to know, good to know. How are the steaks? She likes them rare.

CORY

On the thin side. Order the ribeye.

The bartender arrives with the beers. Kyle hoists his in a toast.

KYLE

Cheers.

They toast and drink, Cory much faster than Kyle who drums his fingers on the bar. Cory frowns, and Kyle forces a little laugh.

KYLE

Sorry. I'm a little nervous. You see, this is a big date.

He grins and pulls a velvet ring box from his pocket.

KYLE

A very big night. With any luck, I'll be engaged and laid by midnight.

CORY

Good for you.

KYLE

Thanks, thanks a lot. She's perfect, and I mean perfect. Pretty, smart, fit, good job, she's exactly what a man wants. And tonight is my chance to seal the deal. You know what I mean? Seal the deal. If I do it right, I seal the deal.

Cory looks as bored as he feels.

CORY

Great.

KYLE

You got a girl?

CORY

Had one. Things didn't work out.

KYLE

Oh, man, I'm sorry. That's rough. Amy isn't my first either--just my last.

Kyle laughs, but Cory doesn't.

KYLE

Hell, where are my manners?
(holds out hand)
Kyle here.

CORY

Cory.

They shake. Kyle grabs his beer and takes a long pull.

KYLE

God, that tastes good.

Kyle waves his almost empty mug at the bartender and signals for two more.

KYLE

So, Cory, got any words of wisdom for someone about to pop the question?

CORY

Don't talk too much.

Kyle laughs.

KYLE

That's good, good. Like I can keep from talking, right? I'm soo nervous. God, I've never done this before.

The bartender delivers beers. Cory grabs his as if it might run away.

KYLE

What makes it tough is that her father thinks I'm a wimp. He's a former NFL tackle, real big guy who wants a jock for a son-in-law, like I could play football. He hunts too, a gun nut. Wants to take me out to bag ducks or geese or rabbits or deer, anything that moves. I'm not into hunting, so he keeps telling Amy to find herself a real man. I'm a real man. I'm just not a Neanderthal like Mr. NFL.

CORY

Dads never think you're good enough. Trust me, I know.

KYLE

How do you prove you're good enough?

Cory shrugs.

KYLE

Look, I read about this thing on the Internet. A guy like me, in my predicament, wanted to look like a hero. So, he hired a guy to start a fight. Then, he cleans the guy's clock, right there in front of his girlfriend. Chased the guy

away, and she bought it, thought
her date was a regular James Bond.

Cory studies Kyle a long moment.

CORY

You're looking for someone to let
you win a fight?

KYLE

Yeah, well, yeah, something like
that. You think that's a good
idea?

CORY

Pretty desperate if you ask me.

KYLE

Very desperate.

(laughs)

I'm so pathetic. You probably
think I'm a dweeb or something.
But I thought it was so doable
when I read about it. How hard
could it be to pay someone to take
a dive?

Cory drains a glass and starts on the other.

CORY

How much would you pay?

KYLE

You know someone?

CORY

Maybe. How much?

KYLE

Well, I wouldn't expect anyone to
do it for less than two hundred.

Cory's eyebrows rise.

KYLE

And if he does it the way I want,
I'm willing to kick in another
hundred.

CORY

Three hundred to fake a fight?

KYLE

Well, it's a little more complicated than that.

CORY

How complicated?

Kyle leans closer and lowers his voice.

KYLE

I was thinking of something a little more...courageous.

(beat)

Here it is. We walk out of here, and you mug us.

CORY

Mug?

KYLE

Stop us and demand money, jewelry. I give you everything, but when I get to the ring box, I throw it at you, distracting you. Then, I grab your gun, knock you to the ground, and you run away.

Kyle beams.

CORY

Sorry, I don't have a gun.

Kyle produces a fanny pack and lays it on the bar.

KYLE

Saturday night special. Not loaded. Plus your first hundred. The rest I'll leave in an envelope with the bartender.

Cory studies the game.

KYLE

Come on, man, do me a favor. She'll go crazy for it.

CORY
Four hundred.

Kyle frowns and shrugs.

KYLE
Hell yes, four it is. Damn!
(slaps Cory's back)
Damn! That's terrific!
WHOOOOEEEEEE!

Cory shakes his head and sips.

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

Cory leans against the wall, smoking. He unzips the fanny pack and pulls out a small revolver. Looks at it before he shoves it into his pants. He then takes out a hundred dollar bill and pockets it, grinning.

Crossing the alleyway come Kyle and AMY, as pretty as Kyle described her, wearing a skirt. Cory tosses away the fanny pack and his cigarette. Pushes off the wall.

EXT SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Cory and Amy stop in front a jewelry store, a metal grate protecting a window full of jewelry.

KYLE
Like diamonds?

AMY
What girl doesn't?

In the window, Cory's reflection.

CORY
Turn around.

They hesitate.

CORY
DAMNIT! TURN AROUND!

Kyle and Amy face Cory.

CORY
(waving gun)
Give it up.

AMY
Kyle?

CORY
Shut up and throw your purse over
here.

Amy tosses her purse.

CORY
(to Kyle)
Wallet, watch, what's in your
pockets.

Kyle takes off his watch and tosses it. Cory catches.

CORY
Come on, come on.

Kyle tosses over his wallet and produces the velvet box.
He stares at it.

CORY
Don't make me use this.

Kyle throws the box high in the air. Cory looks up to
catch it.

BAM BAM BAM

The bullets slam into Cory whose face shows utter surprise
before it goes slack.

BAM BAM

Cory collapses on the sidewalk.

By the window, Amy holds a small automatic. Kyle gapes at
the blood on Cory's chest.

KYLE
You...you shot him?

AMY
I killed the sonofabitch.

AMY
(grabbing her purse)
Get your things.

KYLE
What?

AMY
I don't want to be here when the
police arrive. Pick up your
stuff!

Kyle can't move. She looks back at him and shakes her head.

AMY
Jesus, get a grip.

She shoves the pistol into a holster on her thigh and grabs his wallet and watch.

AMY
What's wrong with you. Come on!

Her foot hits the velvet case. She picks it up and opens it. Then, she smiles and closes it.

AMY
We'll talk about this later.

She grabs his arm and tugs him down the sidewalk.

AMY
He got what he deserved. Come on.

As they hurry down the sidewalk, Kyle turns his head one last time to view the dead Cory.

FADE OUT.