

THE FINAL CURSE OF THE BLUE SMOKE

By

The Dealer

Inspired by several fairy tales but with reference to the 'Blue
Light'

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EXT. LAS VEGAS - STRIP - NIGHT

SUPER: Las Vegas

Behind the infamous Las Vegas road sign lies the chaotic 'Vegas' back drop of glitzy hotels and neon signs.

Along the strip, car horns blare, street revellers shout, and hawkers go about their business. Usual mayhem.

We head away from the strip into a filthy--

ALLEYWAY

--alongside a second rate casino. A failing neon light casts an eerie blue haze across the sad scene.

A door flies open and BOUNCERS throw DOYLE, 35, on to the street. The door slams behind.

DOYLE

And fuck you!

Doyle gingerly gets to his feet, made harder because one arm hangs limp. He checks that the contents of a side pocket haven't fallen out.

Satisfied, he shuffles down the alley dragging a weaker leg. He stops at the end - where to go?

Cast upon the alley wall, a small SHADOW approaches.

OTTO (O.S.)

Lost it all, I assume?

Doyle spins, and in the process produces a small gun from his pocket. Facing the gun is a smart looking dwarf, OTTO, 40, trimmed beard, combed hair, and a red coat with hood.

OTTO

Woah there, solider! I'm a lover not a fighter.

DOYLE

Well I ain't fucking you, if that's what you want?

Otto chuckles as he waves away the thought.

OTTO

Glad to hear it. Bit reckless with the cards weren't you.

DOYLE

What the fuck!? You've been--

OTTO

It's OK Doyle, I'm a friend. Let me explain. I track down and help injured war vets, like you, when the system lets them down. When it's had its feast and spits you out all alone.

This touches a nerve in Doyle. He considers the dwarf.

DOYLE

You know my name? Why?

OTTO

'cos life spat me out as well. My body doesn't fit in, never has. I suppose I've always felt like a protector, no, a blood brother, to those who were cast out. A source in the army feeds me names. I can help you, if you want. Your choice.

Otto steps closer, nods toward Doyle's limp arm.

OTTO

May I? Just to confirm.

Doyle agrees and puts his gun away. Otto touches the arm. He seems pleased.

OTTO

Have you ever thought, if I died today who would care? Who would weep at my funeral?

Doyle sighs.

OTTO

You're not alone, Doyle. It's time the odds were on your side?

DOYLE

Look, what is all this?

OTTO

Come to this address, at noon.
(hands across a card)
It's time to start winning.

DOYLE

Why should I trust you?

Otto throws the hood over his head and drifts back into the alleyway, slowly fading into the shadows.

OTTO

They want you to roll over and die,
Doyle. I want you to thrive.

Doyle stares on, the blue light shimmering across his face.

EXT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES - DAY

A rundown house, in a rundown neighborhood. A faded sign, "Antiques", rests on a foreboding timber door.

Doyle fidgets, unsure whether to enter. He knocks.

INT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES - FRONT ROOM - DAY

A dark, smoky room rammed with antiques, trinkets and memorabilia. Stuffed animal heads line the wall as though it was a hunting lodge.

Doyle stands nervously in the centre as Otto takes a seat.

OTTO

So you found it then. Well--

DOYLE

Get to it. How you gonna help me?

He smiles at Doyle then gestures to a small, wooden box.

After a pause, Doyle opens the box. Inside he finds a slender, old pipe made out of bone.

OTTO

The Indians were the masters of the pipe. What's forgotten is that they were also the masters of the smoke. They knew every herb, every grass, and what magic could happen when a special soul used a special pipe.

DOYLE

Jesus! I'm here for a smoke. Wow.

Otto smirks - there's more.

OTTO

But a very special one, Doyle. One that will help you see...beyond.

DOYLE
For Christ's sake, see what?

OTTO
The cards, Doyle. See the cards.

Otto throws Doyle a cloth bag - inside a mix of dried herbs.

OTTO
For those who were wronged, like you, they believed the gods gave them spiritual gifts which the herbs unleashed, including vision. Go, see the cards. It's time you lived, time you healed.

Doyle's not happy.

DOYLE
You stupid fuck. You think I'll see the cards by getting stoned. Shit. Oh, and I don't have any money.

Otto tosses Doyle a small wad of cash.

OTTO
I told you, we're brothers. Try the pipe. But there are conditions. Tell nobody about it, or about me. This may be moral, but it's not legal. OK? One more thing. Once you've had some fun, bring me half the winnings. I have plans as well.

Doyle considers the cash, nods agreement - nothing to lose.

INT. DOYLE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A depressing room. Bland walls, stained curtains. A single light bulb hangs above a rusty bed.

Doyle lies back on the bed, considers the pipe.

Decision made, he fills it from the bag and lights up. As he breathes in his eyes widen. A bright BLUE smoke emerges.

The more Doyle inhales, the more he seems energized.

EXT. LAS VEGAS - STRIP - NIGHT

Doyle strides along barely having to drag his leg.

INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL - CASINO - NIGHT

Seated at a blackjack table, Doyle places his chips in front. A DEALER deals the cards.

Doyle has fifteen - he grimaces, not happy. The Dealer has a ten, with one card unseen.

The odds favour the Dealer. What to do?

Doyle turns his focus to the deck, stares hard.

Gradually, the top card becomes translucent - it's a six.

He taps for a card to be dealt to him. It is a six. He has twenty one. The Dealer turns over his card - a nine.

Doyle wins. He chuckles with mild disbelief.

Behind him, a small FIGURE in a red coat watches.

LATER

With chips piled in front of him, Doyle keeps playing, surrounded by a few onlookers.

He throws a chip to the dealer as a tip and cashes out.

INT. DOYLE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Doyle wakes up. By the bed are wads of cash.

With a spring in his step, he jumps out of bed, finds the pipe and lights up.

INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL - CASINO - DAY

Doyle sits at a card table, stacks of chips in front.

Something catches his attention and he slowly raises his arm. It's no longer limp - he smiles.

MONTAGE - DOYLE KEEPS WINNING

Doyle sits at the card table winning chips

Doyle knocks back a drink as an attractive WOMAN, 35, flirts with him. He flirts back.

Naked, Doyle and the Woman snort cocaine, sip champagne

Doyle wins again, secretly watched by Otto who looks older, now with grey beard

In a penthouse apartment, Doyle throws the Woman onto a huge bed covered in cash - they laugh.

END MONTAGE

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

A major party is in full swing. Doyle is the centre of attention, but he doesn't seem interested.

The Woman sits down on Doyle's lap - he hugs her.

LATER

The party's over, bodies lie asleep on the floor and sofas.

Doyle walks up to the kitchenette, no sign of a limp.

He picks up a bottle of beer with his healed arm.

DOYLE
(Looking at arm)
Fuck, yeah.

He frowns - a thought. He heads over to the--

BEDROOM

--The Woman lies peacefully asleep in bed. He locks the door, keeping everyone else out, and goes to the wardrobe.

Inside is a safe. He opens it and finds the bag of herbs, checks it. It's almost empty.

DOYLE
Shit!

Further in the safe, the pipe rests on top of his gun.

Doyle throws a thoughtful glance at the sleeping Woman.

EXT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES - DAY

Doyle tentatively approaches the door.

He gazes back up the road as though looking for reassurance.

After a deep sigh, he knocks on the door.

INT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Doyle and Otto face each other - a stand off. Otto looks haggard with grey beard and poor complexion.

OTTO

No money, not even a beer. You broke the rules, Doyle.

DOYLE

What did you expect from a stoned loser who can see the cards? Look, I needed to have fun. And so should you, you look like shit.

Otto chuckles. He looks Doyle over.

OTTO

So it worked then?

DOYLE

No shit. Now you gonna give me some more smoke? You'll get the money, I promise. No more parties, I've had fun. It's time to live properly.

OTTO

Yeah, right. Actually, I'm more interested in your limbs. They're like new.

DOYLE

God knows how. I was told the nerves couldn't be fixed.

OTTO

Left like Humpty Dumpty, never to be put back together again.

DOYLE

Something like that. Now, where's the smoke. I need to get playing.

Doyle shuffles, doesn't like this place.

Otto goes to a sideboard and retrieves an ornate bowl. He gives it a gentle polish.

OTTO

And like clockwork, they come running back for more.

DOYLE

They?

OTTO
I need to explain something, but
first I'll make us coffee. As you
observed, I need a boost.

MINUTES LATER

They sit down, coffee mugs in hand.

OTTO
There's an engraving on the pipe.

DOYLE
So?

OTTO
It says that the magic only happens
if you truly desire it. Not all do,
but clearly you did. Big time.

Doyle laughs - he's had a good time. He drinks up, reflects.

DOYLE
True. Hey, I was thinking. Why not
smoke this yourself? Win some cash.

OTTO
It wouldn't work. I am not you. I
don't desire money, hookers, drugs.

Doyle wipes sweat from his brow.

DOYLE
Hey! I don't do hookers. OK, lets
cut to the chase, what do you want
for some more?

Otto puts his cup down and walks over to one of the animal
heads mounted on the wall. Hanging to the side is a dagger.

OTTO
What do I want? I want your blood.

DOYLE
You what?

OTTO
Most who smoke the pipe, die. But
some, like you, feel the magic so
strongly, they not only see, but
they heal, they grow. That makes
you special...to me.

Doyle wipes more sweat, he's beginning to sway.

DOYLE
I don't feel good.

OTTO
That's because I've drugged you.
It's a short term paralysis. The
blood is much stronger if taken
when alive, and it's tastier.

Doyle staggers to his feet, collapses.

Otto stands over him, dagger in hand - menacing.

DOYLE
Why?

OTTO
Because I'm two hundred years old
and I like living. You see, I have
learnt to reap the blood of those
who can re-grow. And as we know, no
one's going to mourn your death, or
come calling. You were perfect.

Otto grabs Doyle's arm and handcuffs it to a radiator.

OTTO
Consider this payback for the good
times I've given you.

Doyle's head slumps to one side.

DOYLE
(slurring)
You...bastard.

OTTO
Hey, you had fun! But I can't wait
any longer. I was starting to fade.
I can't have that at my age, can I?

Otto places the ornate bowl under his wrist, slices deep.

Doyle's body spasms. His free arm weakly flails at Otto's
face, who fends it off, until the arm slumps down on top of
Doyle's coat pocket.

Resigned to his fate, Doyle smiles at Otto.

DOYLE
I'm...not...sorry.

OTTO
Good. It was worth it, wasn't it.

DOYLE
I...broke...the rules.

KNOCK KNOCK

Otto's head spins toward the door.

DOYLE
I told her...everything.

FLASHBACK - EXT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES

Doyle looks back up the road at his Woman. In her hand is a small bag.

She throws him a caring smile, then points at her watch and mouths 'Ten Minutes'.

END FLASHBACK

As Otto jumps to his feet, he knocks over the bowl of blood.

OTTO
Oh, no, no, no.

KNOCK KNOCK

Otto dashes toward the door but slips on the blood. His body flips in the air and his head slams the floor next to Doyle.

Otto's alive, but not moving. Doyle spies an opportunity.

With all that he has left, Doyle rolls over toward Otto, dragging his free hand which now holds the gun. He jabs it into Otto's head. Otto's aware, but freezes.

OTTO
Don't do this, Doyle. Remember the parties, the cards, the money.

DOYLE
It's time to die. We cheated life.

EXT. OTTO'S ANTIQUES - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A GUNSHOT startles the Woman and she drops the bag. The contents spill out - a wad of cash, the last herb stash and the pipe.

She grabs the cash, ignoring the pipe and herbs, then runs off. As she does, her foot crushes the pipe and...

...a last puff of blue smoke emerges.