

THE ABYSS GAZES ALSO

Written by

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INT. THE HAWKHOUSE FLOOR - NIGHT

We see the front of a menu; the cover reads "THE HAWKHOUSE". The address beneath it is familiar to us: 1960 Hopper Avenue.

WAITRESS

Alone tonight, honey?

The menu is lowered, revealing Stan. We see he's inside a smoky, dreamily-lit bar - a stark contrast to Castro's. He's seated at a table with a cushiony booth chair. The WAITRESS before him stares with curiosity.

STAN

Yep, just me. And I'll take
a...just a whiskey, please. No ice.

WAITRESS

You want me to take the menu or are
we gonna want somethin' to eat?

STAN

You can take it.

The Waitress grabs the menu, trots off. Stan slumps back in his chair. His eyes pan across the unimpressive room. Patrons sit around tables with large hookahs in the center. The air is clouded with smoke through which patrons appear and disappear.

Stan watches as a group of three men swoop in from the Hawkhouse's front door, head straight towards the back of the bar, disappear behind beaded curtains on a slender door frame. The beads clack together softly. No one seems to mind.

Stan glances towards the bar. The Waitress is engrossed in a conversation with two of her coworkers. Stan nonchalantly heads towards the beaded curtains. He stands before the curtain, hesitating briefly. A voice calls.

RABBIT (O.S.)

Come on in, Detective Mecs!

Stan jerks his head, alert, unsure of who is speaking to him. Two sets of hands appear from behind the curtain, grab him, pull him inside.

INT. RABBIT'S ROOM - SAME

Stan frees himself from the mysterious grasp, immediately finding himself in a long, narrow room. On both his right and left stand two brutish thugs, both of whom just grabbed him. They now block his exit.

Before him, a long rug extends to a shiny chair. Sitting in the chair is a large, bald-headed man with a white suit and a sinister smile which houses a cigar. His skin, unlike any character we've seen yet, is completely pitch-black, like a void in space itself. This is RABBIT.

RABBIT

Detective Mecs. It is such a pleasure to have you visit the Hawkhouse this evening. I was actually hoping we'd have the opportunity to speak to one another. Did you get something to drink? I think you said whiskey?

STAN

(Reservedly)

Whiskey's fine.

RABBIT

I certainly agree!

Rabbit points to one of his henchmen behind Stan. The henchman disappears through the door.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

I must say, detective, I'm quite the fan of some of your work, especially back in the old days. Where does the time go?

The henchman reappears through the curtain with two glasses. He hands one to Stan, brings the other to Rabbit.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Thank you. You're never over here on the east end! So, go on! What's the case? Maybe I can shoot you some pointers.

STAN

(Hesitantly)

Simple infidelity --

RABBIT

Hey, there's a little bit of flavor in your voice! You're not a local?

STAN

My family is from Brazil.

RABBIT

Brazil. Lovely. You've been? The women would just knock you dead.

STAN

No.

RABBIT

You should visit! You should visit.

Rabbit rises from his chair, strolls towards Stan. Stan meets his gaze. Rabbit stands towering over Stan.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Lots of infidelity in Brazil. A lot more than you'll find here.

Rabbit places his enormous right hand on Stan's shoulder.

RABBIT (CONT'D)

Why do people do it, do you think?
Is it in our blood?

STAN

Maybe some people just feel alone.

Rabbit's grip tightens.

RABBIT

Loneliness. People say love makes you do crazy things. I always thought love's absence is stronger. Oh, listen to me, all Socrates when you're just here trying to do your job. Can I help at all?

STAN

No thank you, but I appreciate it. The drink, too. I gotta get going.

RABBIT

I've taken up enough of your time, I just wanted to meet you.

Stan steps away from Rabbit's grasp, then shakes his hand.

STAN

It was nice to meet you Mr...

RABBIT

Rabbit. A pleasure, Detective Mecs.

INT. CARALIS DINER - DAY

A small daisy in a dainty vase decorates the booth table where Stan and Peter sit across from each other. Empty plates lay before them, as do steaming cups of coffee.

PETER
Odd night then, huh?

STAN
Odd night. His hand was about the size of my head. And this, still no clue.

Stan pulls the greeting card from his pocket, tosses it onto the table. Peter flicks it open.

PETER
Unique handwriting.

A waitress strides over to the table holding a pot of coffee. Her name tag reads **ELSA**. Stan covers the card with his hand.

ELSA
Here's the check, gentlemen.

PETER
Thank you.

Elsa walks away. Peter pulls out a credit card, places it on the slip of paper before him. Stan inhales tellingly.

PETER (CONT'D)
Don't even try it. If you're so worried I'll take it out of your payment, hardass.

STAN
Peter--

PETER
Peter nothing. Come on. This place didn't even have real syrup, anyways. It was that cheap sweet stuff that crusts over.

STAN
I...Thank you. Hey, how are you? I mean, with...

PETER
I've just been trying not to think about it. I don't even remember the last thing I said to her. It's just...I just have to focus on the race right now. It's fucked but this has actually boosted my numbers. Christ, listen to me. I mean, what about you?

STAN

Me? Don't worry about me. Hey, at least let me see how much it was, I can spot the tip.

Stan slides the slip from beneath the card. He stares at it, focusing intensely on the handwriting. **"2 EGGS OVER EASY - PANCAKES SAUSAGE"** reads the familiar handwriting. Stan glances at the greeting card. The zero in "1960" on the card has a line through it, as do the zeroes on the bill. The "e" and "r" of "Hopper" on the card are connected in a loose cursive, as are the "e" and "r" of "over" on the check.

PETER

Yeah, I guess everyone deals with things their own way. I remember when I lost my parents. My first big paycheck out of Harvard I bought them a new furnace for their house up in Claremont, but the pipes in the house were too old. They died. Carbon monoxide. I never blamed myself, and I won't now--

STAN

Peter, look at this.

Stan slides the greeting card and the bill across the table to Peter. Peter looks at it, confused. Realization flickers across his face. He raises his eyes to meet Stan's gaze. Stan twists his face. Coincidence?

ELSA

Pardon me, gentlemen, but when you're ready to pay I'll meet you at the register.

Stan and Peter look up to see Elsa back at the table. As they look up, Elsa looks down. Her eyesight fixes directly on the greeting card. Her smile tightens. The mood instantly grows tense. Elsa silently turns away, retreats to the register.

Stan and Peter exchange sickly glances. They carefully rise from their booth, approach the counter. Peter wearily hands Elsa his credit card. She slowly taps the keys on the register. As she does, her other hand sneakily inches beneath the counter. She then slides Peter's card slowly through the sensor. We hear a distinct clicking noise.

STAN

Shit!

Stan pushes Peter to the floor. Elsa pulls a gun from beneath the counter, points it at Stan.

Stan swipes at her arm, sending the bullet into a ceiling light, spraying sparks on yelling customers. Stan smacks the gun out from Elsa's grasp. It slides across the floor. Elsa turns, dashes through the kitchen doors.

STAN (CONT'D)

Peter, are you--

PETER

Go after her!

Stan hops across the counter, runs through the doors.

INT. DINER KITCHEN - SAME

Stan, panting, looks quickly from left to right at the small, dingy kitchen. A door slides closed near the far wall.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND DINER - SAME

Stan bursts through the door into an alley. Elsa is nowhere to be found. Stan pants, police sirens grow in the distance. Angrily, he kicks a stray bottle in the alley at the wall.