

Blessing of Tears

A Highlander® Fan Fiction by Jason Vey

NOTE: I don't own 'em. Panzer and Davis do. I don't mean any harm. Don't sue me. The lyrics were "Gimme the Prize," by Queen, and you can find 'em after the tale. Thanks, Rowan!

Methos knelt at the grave and marveled for one moment at the gravity of it all. It had been three years since he'd been back, and this place, and this monument in particular, still had an impact on him. Oh, with Mac he liked to play the pragmatist, the harsh voice of reason and common sense to offset MacLeod's overly-emotional nature, but there were times when even he needed a good weep. This place was the only place he felt comfortable, and safe, doing that. This was the place where his love - the first mortal woman in hundreds of years at the very least that he had true and deep feelings for - lay buried and at her final peace.

The monument was rather lavish; a large stone with a delicate and rather lifelike carving of an angel sitting crosslegged atop it. Supposedly this angel would act as guardian, much like the Gargoyles of old, but with more charm and grace than those creatures. There was a look of quiet serenity etched into the stone face, so childlike in its beauty...so like her. The stone itself was marble, and Methos paid well to ensure that it was meticulously kept, so that even now, after three years of exposure to the elements, it was as polished and clean as the day it was raised. A small garden was also there, and the best gardeners the immortal could find tended it year-round, removing the flowers in the winter and keeping the landscape properly shaped around her gravesite. If they would allow it, he'd have armed guards posted. She deserved that honor. She deserved far more than that, but at least he could give her in death what she never had in life. Methos wasn't quite sure that she'd appreciate that, for she was a girl of rather simple, if elegant, tastes. But he'd had the resources to give her this, and was determined she wouldn't be denied this one last gift of an exquisite resting place.

Methos forced a half-smile and held up a dozen, long-stemmed red roses that he'd picked up from a street vendor. "These are for you, Alexa," he said. "I remember how much you loved them. You told me once that no one had ever given you roses before." He laughed for a moment. "I suppose that filling the bedroom with them was a bit overboard, but hey. That's me. Oh, how would Richie have said it if he were here? This sucks. I'm sorry, Alexa. I failed you. I tried to save you, I really did. I don't know if I can forgive myself for letting you go, and that's a new experience for me, too. You brought me a world of those."

He looked around for a moment at the sea of monuments, sniffing a rogue tear away. Paris. What a dump. Still, for some reason, Alexa loved this city more than any other they'd visited. Whenever Methos came back here with Mac he found a few hours to slip away, visit this place and give Alexa his love.

"D'you mind if I stay awhile, Love?" He said, then lowered himself to a full sitting position. He leaned back on her gravestone and selected a long piece of grass, which he rather unceremoniously stuck between his teeth. At least it was a nice day; no clouds, no fog...just a clear blue sky and the sun shining down. He sat there, enjoying the sun on his face and reflecting on matters. Perhaps this, in the end, was what immortality really was about. These

stones, that stood the test of time in tribute to those who lay beneath. Certainly they went on far longer than most of Methos's own brethren. Perhaps, in failing Alexa, he'd succeeded in granting her a form of immortality she wouldn't otherwise have achieved when he'd insisted on this lavish place of honor for her. Then again, maybe he was just rationalizing. In five thousand years, he'd gotten pretty good at rationalizing.

Methos's reverie was cut short by a familiar feeling that he had no desire to experience right here and now. It was a sick, nauseous, dizzy feeling that struck like a lightning bolt, then faded to a lingering tingle seconds later. It was what many Immortals called "the Buzz," and it meant another of his kind somewhere near. No doubt they felt his presence as well, and if tradition held true they'd be looking about for him. Normally at this point in time Methos would take the Buzz as his cue to vanish, but there didn't seem to be many places to hide nearby, and he honestly didn't feel like leaving Alexa just yet. At least this was holy ground. Besides, it couldn't hurt to take a peek at who was around, like Mac always said.

Thirty seconds later, Methos didn't know whether to be happy or grim. The Immortal that walked around the corner of a tall monument about fifty yards away was all-too familiar.

"Montag," he whispered.

Gaston Montag hadn't changed a bit, physically, in the last thousand years or so. His hair was still long and black, tied loosely at the base of his neck. Even his clothing, which certainly had a more modern sensibility to it, still had an old-fashioned feel about it, with a poet's blouse beneath his long trenchcoat, and high riding boots into which his brown breeches were stuffed. What an anachronistic idiot. Time to put on his "pleased to see you" face.

"Well, well, well," Methos said. "Look who's here!"

"Methos? Is that you! HA! I thought you were dead!" Montag ran forward and lifted Methos off the ground with immense arms, spinning him in a bear hug embrace.

"And I'd rather hoped you would be," Methos muttered to himself. When Montag finally put him down, Methos said, "Good to see you, Montag. How've you been?"

"Killing, maiming...you know the story."

"Yes, yes, unfortunately I know the story all too well."

"I just came back to see the old sites, visit the old stomping grounds. Then, when I was walking past the cemetery I felt the Buzz and I thought 'that has to be Methos.'"

"Exaggeration was always a gift for you. Montag, how would you possibly have known it was me?"

"How? How could I not know my old teacher?"

"Yes, well, it's good to see you. Sorry I can't stay and chat, but I've gotta get going. Places to go, people to see. I'll be off, now."

"You're leaving?"

"Yes. I've got places to be."

"Where would you want to be, but with me?"

Methos was losing his patience, now. "Do you really want to know, Montag? All right, I'll tell you. Anywhere. I'd rather be anywhere besides dancing the countryside with you."

"How dare you speak to me like that?"

"Oh, please. I'll speak to you however I wish; I taught you everything you know, but if you think I taught you *everything*, you're sadly mistaken. Now let me go." Methos jerked his arm away from Montag and stormed off. "Stupid oaf," he mumbled to himself. "At least Silas had some charm about him."

Methos made his way back to MacLeod's barge, and slumped down on the couch. He grabbed the remote and started channel surfing too fast for him to even register what was on any given channel. It really didn't matter one way or the other; he just wanted to get his mind off of today. All he wanted was a nice, quiet visit with Alexa, but of course that couldn't happen. Someone like Montag was always out there, looking to kill, looking to maim and destroy for his own personal amusement. People like Montag abused the power that came with immortality. It sickened Methos, mostly because only a few thousand years ago, he'd been just like Montag.

"Well," he said to himself, "not exactly like Montag. I'm quite a bit more intelligent."

Another Buzz. Methos cursed and leapt to his feet. He dashed across the room and made for his sword just as the door blasted open and Montag strode into the room.

"Did you really think I'd just let you run off?" Montag grinned.

"How did you find me?"

"How else? I followed you. Now, you're going to come with me, Methos."

"And why would I do that?"

"Because you don't have a choice. You even admitted yourself that you're not the best of swordsmen. I'm pretty sure I could take you."

"Perhaps you could, but not here."

“Why not? Afraid I might damage your precious little boat?”

“It’s not his boat,” a voice said from behind Montag.

The brutish Immortal turned to find himself facing an enemy he hadn’t seen in decades. “Highlander,” he muttered. “Now this is a surprise.”

“Not a very pleasant one. What are you doing in my house, Montag?”

Montag turned back to Methos. “You’ve fallen in with this trash, now? I’m disappointed in you, Methos.”

“Yes, well cut the crap, Montag. What do you want?”

“I want it all. I want your head. And I want his head. You say ‘there can be only one?’ I *am* the one.”

“Get a new line, Chief,” MacLeod said. “I’ve had this place blessed. You can’t fight us, here. I suggest you get out before we throw you out.”

“Fair enough. I didn’t come for you, anyway, Highlander. As for you, Methos, I’ll see you again soon.”

Montag stormed from the room.

“He’s lost it,” MacLeod observed.

“How perceptive,” Methos returned.

“You want to tell me what that was all about? How do you know Montag?”

“Montag, MacLeod, was my illustrious and only student.”

“You spawned that, Methos? Any other rocks we need to overturn? Might as well tell me, now, because they just keep popping up to make my life miserable.”

“Give it a rest, MacLeod. It was a long time ago. I’d just left the Horsemen behind. I knew Kronos’ way wasn’t mine any longer, but I hadn’t yet learned that with Immortality comes responsibility. I still felt I had to take what I wanted from this world. I still felt that if I was to survive, to win the Prize, that I had to be the harshest, toughest of our kind out there. I left, MacLeod, because I knew that eventually I might have to face Kronos – and thank you again for taking care of that problem for me – and I had a long way to go before I had a prayer of being worthy to take him.

“Montag was new. He’d set himself up as a godlike leader of a small village, because he just didn’t understand. I saw in him a simplicity I’d missed ever since I left the Horsemen. He reminded me of Silas. I took it on myself to teach him about immortality. It didn’t take long for me to learn that Montag was nothing like Silas. Montag was more of a nightmarish cross between Silas and Caspian. He had Silas’ brains, but Caspian’s brutality. Where Silas was simple, he had a naïve charm about him that was hard to deny. Don’t give me that look; you didn’t know him. If we could’ve gotten him away from Kronos, we could’ve turned him around. Silas was innocent; he was a warrior who didn’t understand that times change. Montag, on the other hand, simply loved the brutality. He loved the kill and he loved the blood. It sickened me after awhile. Still, MacLeod, I’d *taught* him. I couldn’t bring myself to murder him. So I left, trusting that he wouldn’t last long, anyway. I’m sure you understand, MacLeod. Remember your little gangster pal?”

“Yes, and just like me, you were wrong.”

“Yes, I know.”

“So what do we do about it?”

“*We* don’t do anything. For once, this is my problem, and I’ll deal with it.”

Methos turned and left. MacLeod stared after him a moment, debating, then went about his business. He’d never seen Methos this grim. Had the man finally learned the meaning of guilt, or remorse? Ah, well. He’d have to re-learn to trust the old man someday, and now was as good a time as any to start.

The Buzz came as soon as Methos entered the graveyard. No, this couldn’t be. He’d desperately hoped to get here first, thinking that Montag would look for him here. But not this; this wasn’t right. Montag wasn’t this smart, it couldn’t be –

Alexa’s grave was demolished, the garden torn up by its roots, the exquisite angel statue ripped from the shattered headstone and cast aside. Its head had broken off and lay several meters from the statue. The grave itself had been dug up, and Methos could clearly see Alexa’s decomposed hand sticking up from the hole in the earth.

And there, atop the hole, sat Montag, with a look of supreme glee on his face. “Like it?” He asked. “I did it before I even came looking for you. I think it’s got a certain...art to it. You?”

“You bastard,” Methos growled. “I’m going to kill you for this.”

“You’re welcome to try,” Montag spat. “I’ll be outside the cemetery, waiting.”

Montag turned to leave – a fatal mistake. Methos pulled a handgun from inside his coat and leveled it on his former pupil, then pulled the trigger once, twice, a third time. Montag collapsed to the ground.

“I didn’t say I’d do it fair,” Methos said, and proceeded to drag Montag from the graveyard. Once out, he dropped the body on the ground, then sat, waiting for Montag to awaken; he wanted to relish this. It took only a few moments more before Montag’s body spasmed with the return of his life energy, and Methos placed his foot on the prone Immortal’s chest. Montag looked up at him, clearly fearful, as Methos once again leveled his gun on his former pupil.

“I wanted you to know what was going to happen to you,” Methos said. “I told you I didn’t teach you everything. You desecrated her grave, and you deserve this, and more. My only regret is that I can’t kill you more than once.”

He pulled the trigger, sending a bullet right into Montag’s face. Then he stood and drew his sword, spinning it and enjoying the feel of it in his hands, before raising it above his head. “The battle’s fought, Montag, and for right now, the game is won. I haven’t said this in a long, long time, but... There can be only one.”

Methos brought the sword down, neatly severing the remains of Montag’s head from his body. Methos stood, head raised to the sky and waiting the pain and ecstasy that was to follow. His hair stood on end, and he felt the tingling of electricity that signified the beginning of the Quickening. Flashes of lightning arced down, striking the ground for meters in every direction, but each and every one arcing back to Methos in the end. Methos’s arms flew out to the side of their own volition, and a blast of energy threw his sword from him. Another strike and the Immortal fell to his knees. Then the images came; in the space of a few seconds Methos found himself bombarded with the memories of all that Montag had done; all the atrocities he’d committed, all the experiences he’d had. All of it overwhelmed Methos and for a split second, he remembered why he’d loved what he was, he knew again the glory and ecstasy of murder and of taking what he wanted at the point of a sword. Then the pain overcame the memories once more, and Methos fell to all fours. Finally, the last lightning strike came down and everything faded. He was himself again, but he was something more. He had new experiences, and a new bit of brutality that had to be integrated into his psyche. He needed a drink.

First, he stumbled back to the cemetery and placed Alexa back into a position that had a semblance of dignity. He closed the lid of her casket and brushed as much dirt in on top of it as he could. Then he let the tears flow. In a few moments, he would contact the keeper of this place and demand that her resting place be repaired. For now, it was time to grieve. He hadn’t been able to save her in life, and now he had failed in death to defend her body. That situation, at least, had been rectified, and he let his tears flow. Byron had once told him that no holy water so blessed the land as did the tears of a bereaved lover, and Methos now understood the meaning of those simple words. He gave Alexa his blessings, and his apology, then moved on to repair the damage that another of a thousand mistakes had wrought.

-FINIS-

Thanks to Rowan for the lyrics! Sorry I couldn't get a tale going that really captured the mood of them; I had thought originally to write a Kurgan story, but Methos kept scratching at me (I blame Amand-r). He had a story to tell, so I didn't have much of a choice but to go with it. Not my best work, but oh, well. We all have bad ones once in awhile.

Song - "Gimme The Prize"
Album - "A Kind of Magic" 1986
Artist - Queen
Lyrics/Score - Brian May

Here I am, I'm the master of your destiny
I am the one, the only one,
I am the god of kingdom come
Gimme the prize, just gimme the prize
Give me your kings, let me squeeze them in my hands
Your puny princes,
Your so called leaders of your land,
I'll eat them whole before I'm done
The battles fought and the game is won
I am the one, the only one,
I am the god of kingdom come, just gimme the prize
Move over, I said move over
Hey, hey, hey clear the way
There is no escape from my authority - I tell you -
I am the one, the only one,
I am the god of kingdom come
Gimme the prize, just gimme the prize,
I am the one, the only one,
I am the god of kingdom come,
Gimme the prize