

All In a Day's Work

A Highlander® Fan Fiction by Jason Vey

Disclaimer: I don't own Methos or Horton. Panzer/Davis does. This is fun. Please don't send me to jail.

Head note: For those of you who have been living on Mars. Methos is Pierson. Pierson is Methos. Don't tell me you're confused.

This day just wasn't going anywhere. Jack didn't ask for this, and he sure as hell didn't want it. All he'd wanted to do was go to the bar and get rip roaring drunk, to forget about that two-timing bitch fucking his best friend, then stagger home from the bar and fall into bed. No doubt tomorrow he'd wind up crawling right back to her, because he was a schmuck, and well, she just had that effect on him. He'd hoped maybe to find some hopped up slut to take home and get out his aggressions with, but no such luck. So there he was, fairly drunk, and wishing he could just die and get out of this vicious cycle.

It was his usual luck that led him to the Hot Metal Bridge and right into the middle of a *sword fight*, of all things.

There were two of them: a tall, lean guy with a mop of dark brown hair and an oversized pullover, wielding a bastard sword. He had a distinctly British nose on him, too. The other was a longhaired Goth in a net shirt and spikes, swinging an ornate katana with an ivory handle shaped like a dragon. The Goth dude had a passion and fury to him, coming at the Brit with grunts and violent strikes, but the Brit was obviously more skilled. He easily countered every one of the Goth's swipes, all the while muttering things like, "listen, kid, we don't have to do this. All I want is my friend's sword back."

Frantically, Jack checked to make sure he still had his Mackerov 9mm in his jacket and thanked God he'd gotten that carry permit; if one of these lunatics saw him, he might need it. Just then, Jack decided it was time to go home a different way. Before he could turn to go, however, the Brit spun and came in low with a wicked cross-cut that sliced the Goth's abdomen wide open. Jack suddenly felt the need to retch right there. The Goth fell to his knees, and the Brit stood up tall, swung his sword around a couple of times, and brought it high over his head.

"I guess we did have to do this," he said. "You know what they say. There can be only one."

He brought the sword down, severing the Goth's head clean at the neck. For a split second Jack was aghast, and completely lost control of his voice. Then it all came out in a guttural scream of terror.

The Brit turned and looked directly at Jack. Then he gave an annoyed sigh and dropped his sword. "I really don't need this," he said.

Then, suddenly, the headless corpse began to *glow*. It actually rose up off the ground, floated for a second, then clattered back to the bridge. And then the lightning began. It seemed at first to arc from the body to the bridge, then little tendrils struck out, hitting the Brit and obviously causing him pain. Damnedest thing Jack had ever seen. But it was only beginning. Before long, full-on bolts of lightning were crashing down from the sky, hitting the bridge and bouncing off, all drawn to this guy like he was some kind of lightning rod. Jack watched, amazed.

Then the lightning arced towards Jack! He tried to run, but before he could, a bolt hit him square in the back, knocking him off his feet. It hurt; it hurt like Hell, but it was so exhilarating at the same time.

Then there was confusion: a gunshot, searing pain, a voice in Jack's head saying, "You shouldn't have seen that, son." Then another gunshot, and the Brit fell to his knees with a look of utter shock on his face. Then blackness.

The world faded into view, slowly. The first thing that Jack became aware of was that it was dark. Soon after, he realized he was chained to a wall, spread-eagled. He craned his neck to look around and saw the Brit hanging next to him. He couldn't be sure in the dark, but Jack could've sworn there was a bloody tear in the gut of the Brit's shirt. What the hell was going on? Why wasn't he dead? He'd been shot in the back! But there wasn't even any pain. He studied the Brit as best he could, trying to lean forward to see if the guy was unconscious, or worse...

"Why don't you take a photograph, kid," the Brit said. "It'll last longer."

"You murdered that guy on the bridge!"

"Self defense. I only wanted my friend's sword back."

"Your friend's sword?"

"Yes. One-of-a-kind. He's rather attached to it. We all are, I suppose. Attached to our swords, that is. Pain-in-the ass, Duncan. Always getting me into trouble." He turned his head, suddenly, and looked Jack full-on. "And you stole part of my Quickening."

"The lightning?"

"Bright boy. Good God, you don't know what's happening, do you? That would explain why I didn't sense you. Well, kid, you'd better stick with me for the time being. I think we can help each other out."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Well, for starters, where are we?"

Jack squinted into the darkness. The place looked familiar, but barren. It was a large room; they were on a high stage of some sort. The room below was tiered, and there were two exit doors at the far end. Something told him he should know this place, but that it looked different than the place he would've recognized.

"I can't place it," He gasped. "I feel like I should know, but...Why wasn't your friend after his own sword?"

"He is. He's just not as good as me. Either that, or he's given up and is brooding with Joe right now. Listen, if it helps place us, I came to for a moment when they dragged us in. Just before they shot me in the face again, I noticed that the sign outside said, *King's Court*."

"Of course! The old Beehive. It's been closed for like two years. Used to be a movie theater, then a coffeehouse, then it was a bar for awhile."

"Now it seems it's a headquarters for the Hunters."

"Okay, who the fuck are the Hunters?"

"No time to explain it all to you right now, kid. Suffice it to say, they're the bad guys. And we have to get out of here."

"Dude, first of all, my name is Jack, not 'kid.' Second of all, I'm open to suggestions. We're chained to the wall."

"Adam Pierson," the Brit said. "And that's a situation that is easily remedied." He maneuvered his hands around, grimacing in pain as the manacles dug into his wrists, but managed to work a small metal object out of his sleeve. "Amanda was right," he said, "this is coming in handy. And I didn't want to listen to her. I've gotten soft."

"What, are you going to pick the locks?"

"That's the plan."

"Right. 'Cause that's a skill that just everyone has."

"Hey, spend a few years wandering Europe with Houdini, and you pick up a few things."

"Excuse me?"

"Shut up and let me concentrate. I'll explain later."

A sound of grinding metal, a click, a clack, and Adam clattered to the floor. He stood up, rubbing his wrists, and looked at Jack. "Whatever you do, don't make a sound. You'd be best to pretend you're still dead."

“Jesus, what the *hell* are you talking about?”

“Adam. And don’t make me knock you out. I’ll be back for you, as soon as I get my bearings.”

Methos moved to the exits at the top of the theater. By some miracle of providence, they weren’t locked. Probably would’ve been if the Hunters knew who it was they were holding. Hell, if the Hunters knew who it was they were holding, he probably wouldn’t be alive. And why did they want him alive, anyway? This wasn’t their M.O.

First things, first: he wanted his sword back, and dammit, after all this trouble, he was getting Duncan’s back as well. All this because of some stupid Goth kid who thought he was hot shit because he became immortal last week. Then again, if one wanted to go back farther, it could be Methos’ fault. *Oh, come on, Duncan. You’ll love Pittsburgh. I can’t believe you’ve never been to a blue-collar town before. It’s quaint. It’s a rock and roll town. You’ll love it.*

“And where’s Duncan now? Probably whining to Joe or Richie. I am an idiot, sometimes,” Methos mumbled, and stepped out into the lobby of the place. There was a bar of sorts in front of him and to the left, and sunlight streamed in through the front doors. Next to him was an empty concession stand, and beyond that, a staircase leading down. So that big room behind must’ve been the theater at one point in time. No guards. Why?

The sound of a toilet flushing downstairs answered the question for him, and Methos vaulted over the concession stand, landing in a crouch well out-of sight.

Heavy footfalls ascended the stairs to his right. He had a moment to reflect just how much he loved mortal overconfidence before the footfalls stopped directly in front of the concession stand. Methos looked around for something, anything to use. His eyes fell upon an old electrical cable, laying splayed upon the floor. A bit crass, but it would do. He gathered it up, quietly, and wrapped the ends around his hands, then pulled it taut. He stood, slowly, reflecting that Duncan never would’ve had the guts to do this. He never did have a taste for murder. Methos, on the other hand, had been there and done that thousands of times over. One did what he had to do.

In a flash, the makeshift garrote was tight around the guard’s throat. A hard pull, a moment of struggle, and the man’s mortal neck snapped like a twig. Methos leapt back over the concession stand and rooted through the man’s coat, coming up with a .40 caliber Glock pistol and a silencer. He screwed the silencer onto the barrel and looked around, quickly, then dug again in the guard’s pockets, coming up with a set of keys.

“Why do they always put the keys on the guard? In a few thousand years, you’d think mankind would’ve wised up a little. Not that I’m complaining.”

He re-entered the theater, jogged to the stage, and vaulted up.

“Wow, you really came back,” Jack said. “I thought you were as good as gone n’at.”

“What the hell is that? ‘N’at.’ I’ve heard of dialect before, but really.”

“Are you going to get me down or what?”

“No, I thought I’d leave you here to rot.” Methos sifted through the keys until he located a standard handcuff key. It fit the manacles perfectly.

Jack dropped to the ground, rubbing his wrists. “What do they want with us?”

“Dunno for certain. Hunters usually kill immortals. My guess, though, is that we’re bait.”

“Wait a second...immortals?”

“Yeah, kid. Immortals. You got shot. You died. You came back. It happens to the best of us. You’ll stay alive unless someone cuts off your head. In which case, lightning city. You saw me do it. I think that about covers all you need to know right now. Whether you believe it or not, we’ll deal with later. For now you follow me and keep your wits about you. You know how to use one of these?”

He held up the Glock, which Jack took gratefully. “Yeah. I carry.”

“Good. Keep it ready, and if anyone starts trouble you start shooting, and fire till he is done in, you got it?”

“Yeah. I guess so.”

“Wonderful. Let’s go.”

“Wait, what are you going to use?”

“My sword, once we get it and Duncan’s sword back. Are there any other rooms to this place besides the lobby, the bathrooms, and in here?”

“Yeah, there’s an upstairs. Used to be the bar. Down by the main entrance, off to the right. There’s a doorway there and a staircase that leads up.”

“My guess is that’s where they’ll be.”

“Uh, Adam, I don’t like what I think you’re thinking. Where exactly are we going?”

“Into the belly of the whale, Kid. C’mon.”

“Hang on a second,” Jack said, and rooted through the pockets of his long, black duster. Finally, he came up with a small, round piece of elastic. “Glad they didn’t think to take this.” He pulled his hair back into a tight ponytail, then said, “Okay, I’m ready.”

Methos and Jack crept up the front stairs, near the main entrance of the place. Methos was fairly impressed with the kid’s stealthiness. Even with the trench coat, the combat boots, and the chains the kid managed to stay pretty quiet. With the right teacher, the kid could go far.

They reached the top of the stairs and Methos put his hand up. He looked over his shoulder at Jack. “Layout up here?”

“There’s a big room right around the corner, and on the other side of that wall, behind that door directly across from us, that’s where the bar was,” Jack hissed.

Methos nodded, and motioned for Jack to stay quiet. He then stepped around the corner to find himself face-to-face with an uzi attached to a Hunter.

“Mr. Pierson,” the Hunter said. “You should’ve stayed put. We’d have let you live until MacLeod showed up.”

Haughty bastard. “I’m still alive.”

“Not for long. Not now.”

“You still need me to get MacLeod.”

“Not really. We have his sword, you see. And the kid.”

“Well, see there’s two problems with that. The first being that Mac doesn’t even know the kid. In fact, I just met him myself. The second problem?” Methos clicked his tongue, just to push the guy’s buttons. “You don’t have the kid.”

“You sonofabitch—” The guy leaned on his trigger, and Methos dodged back into the stairwell. He looked at Jack and nodded to the pistol.

“You wanna do it?”

“Uh, never killed anyone before.”

“Right. Lemme borrow that.”

He took the Glock, waited patiently for the uzi to stop firing, stepped out, pointed the gun, and squeezed off a single shot. The Hunter fell dead instantly, a bullet hole square between his eyes. Methos tossed the gun to Jack and shrugged.

“I wasn’t always such a nice guy,” He said. “Okay, here’s where it gets messy. We charge in through this door, take whoever we can, and hope the swords are there. Ready?”

“No...”

“Now!” Methos kicked the door open and charged into the room. There were five more of them in there, and one fell before he knew what hit him as a sharp palm strike to the throat crushed his windpipe. Methos kicked a table over and crouched behind it as gunfire erupted around him. He grabbed the leg of the Hunter he’d just dropped and dragged the guy back, tearing the gun from the Hunter’s shoulder holster.

“Thank you,” Methos said. He checked the breech and grunted. “I’m getting too old for this.” Then he popped up and returned fire. Where the hell was the kid?

The Hunters fell quickly, one, two, three, four, and Methos stood carefully, holding the gun at the ready. No one in sight. Not even Jack.

Little bastard probably cut and ran, he thought. Ah, well. I don’t blame him. Not as if I don’t do the same when I can.

Now where would the swords be? Behind the bar, perhaps? Methos crept over and looked back. Nothing except a few old bottles of cheap alcohol, left over and two years old. Didn’t do him any good; he’d rather have a beer than this cheap junk. Where, then?

“Looking for something, Adam?” The voice was all-too familiar, and Methos turned with a scowl. The first thing he saw was Jack, quite disarmed, with Methos’ sword held to his neck. Methos let his gaze wander up to where a clean-cut British man with an air of perpetual cruelty etched on his round face stood, holding Jack in a half-Nelson, Methos’ sword at the kid’s throat, and Duncan’s sword dangling from the other hand.

“Horton.”

“Sorry, Adam,” Jack gasped. “I tried to come through the other door, to get them from behind. He was waiting.”

“Yes, he’s clever that way. This has nothing to do with the boy, Horton. Let him go.”

“Sorry, Adam, but this time you’re wrong. The boy is an Immortal. That means it has everything to do with him. I could kill him now, very easily.”

Methos raised the gun. “You kill him, Horton, and I kill you.”

“That certainly seems to be the case, doesn’t it? In that case, I back the boy out and you stay put. You have my word when I reach the street I will let him go.”

“I’ve a better idea. How about you let him go, and I let you walk out of here?”

“We obviously don’t trust each other.”

“You have a gift for understatement, James.”

“Well, then. Why don’t I just kill the boy now, and get it over with?”

Methos pulled the trigger. Jack’s head snapped back, and blood poured down his face. The unfortunate kid’s head made hard contact with Horton’s nose, which broke with a sickening *crack*, and blood in turn spilled down Horton’s face. The impact knocked Horton back against the wall, and both of the swords clattered to the ground as he clutched his nose in pain. Methos scowled and took aim again.

Horton ran.

“Nice little game of dominos, that was.” Methos made his way to where Jack lay and examined the wound. “That’s gonna take awhile. Sorry about that, Kid. Had to do something.” He looked to his right, out the door through which Horton came, and saw his own trench coat laying on the floor. “Lucky me,” he said to no one in particular, and went to grab his coat. He slung the coat over his shoulders, and tucked the swords inside. He cocked his head to look at Jack, then made a snap decision.

“C’mon, handsome,” he said, and threw Jack over his shoulders. “Boy, do you have a lot to learn about tactics. Let’s get out of here before I have to explain all this to the police.”

-FINIS-

Do it Again
Steely Dan

In the mornin’ you go gunnin’
For the man who stole your water
And you fire till he is done in
But they catch you at the border
And the mourners are all singin’
As they drag you by your feet
But the hangman isn’t hangin’
And they put you in the street

Let’s go.

Well you know she’s no high climber
Then you find your only friend
In a room with your two timer
And you’re sure you’re at the end

Then you love a little wild one
But she brings you only sorrow

All the time you know she's smilin'
You'll be on your knees tomorrow.

You go back, Jack
You go back
Do It Again
Wheel's turnin' round
And round
You go back Jack
Do it again

Now you swear and kick and beg us
That you're not a gambling man
Then you find you're back in Vegas
With a candle in your hand
Your black cards can make you money
So you hide them when you're able
In the land of milk and honey
You must put them on the table

You go back, Jack
Do it again
Wheel turning round and round
Back you go
Come on to me
Wheel turning round and round
Beautifully
Wheel turning round