

Crimson Whiskey

By A.M. Jeans

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It was my father from whom I developed a taste for fine drinks. He always favored a series of fine malts, but drank whatever he could get his hands on.

It's Christmas time. The family gathers at the summer home for dinner. Funny. Summer home for Christmas. Why not the ski cabin? You can ask dad, his friends, and the cheap stuff.

The family all gathers at our massive table in our sub-par dining room. Nearly everyone is here. Not mom. Why not mom? Ask dad and the cheap stuff.

Dad was off his head at dinner. I had to leave. He's angry now that I'm the new man of the family, his throne burnt and his crown tarnished. He doesn't even get an end seat. That's what got him started.

I had to leave the table. So I wouldn't say anything. So I wouldn't make a scene. Nobody seemed to mind. They all understand. It's hard for all of us.

An hour passes and the company leaves. I'm all alone to clean up. But first, my special cabinet.

I was always one for the stronger drinks. Second shelf, to the right. Big and fat, crystal clear glass bottle, surrounding the purely golden liquid. The perfect specimen.

I take it out of the cabinet. The gun from the holster. I take a glass and watch the stream of the golden liquid pour into it. It thrashes against the inside of the glass in a torrent of gold and glass, a magnificent display.

Suddenly, a hand forcibly spins me around. A lick of gold from the bottle in my right hand is thrown into the air, and the glass in my left hand falls, the torrent spreading out over the floor. My rotation completes and the owner of the hand is revealed to me. Dad. Drunk, sweaty, and arm cocked into attack position. He follows through, the blow hitting my cheek with considerable force for someone under the influence.

I still have the upper hand. He's far more intoxicated than I am. Without a thought, my instincts bring the capless bottle to his temple. The bottle explodes on collision, and another storm of gold and glass begins to follow him to the ground.

As an almost anticipatory move, my eyes leave the failing figures and look to the ground, waiting for them to catch up. That's when I see it. The glass, it's destroyed base jutting upwards. I could have moved it. Or I could have caught him. If this mans existence had less of an abusive past, and if his role as my father went past referring to him as dad. I let him fall for mom. For me. For the god damn ski cabin. For the family.

The fall completes, the sharp edges of the glass colliding with his flabby beer gut, not standing a chance. The bottle and it's former contents soon follow, mixing with the new bloodstream seeping from his wounds. A river of crimson whiskey, representing what he's done with it's help over the years, the glass shards of the bottle float among it. My bottle. My brand new bottle. Damn shame.

Wish I could say the same for dad.

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