

THIRTY DEEP

By

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LIGHTS UP on GUNS N' STUFF TAXIDERMERY. There is a gun counter with a register, a small table nearby, and a staircase leading up to an office. It is the last day of business and the shop is mostly boxed up. A few mounted animals of various kinds litter the shop's walls, while the gun counter is empty, save a few pistols inside and rifles racked up behind. A SHOTGUN is mounted on the wall directly above the counter, with the mount reading "THE GAVEL". MONTGOMERY, an aged and burly man, is behind the counter. He is working on a mounted beaver. A toilet is flushed, and WHISKEY enters zipping his pants.

MONTGOMERY

You bus' that crapper again?

WHISKEY

It was one time.

MONTGOMERY

One time's plenty. Ain't natural what you do in there.

WHISKEY

Natural as anythin' else.

Whiskey goes to the counter and brings up a bottle of whiskey. He uncaps it and takes a long swig. He surveys Montgomery as he works on the beaver.

The hell you still doin' that fer?

Whiskey grabs the beaver and spins it to face him. Montgomery grabs it back.

MONTGOMERY

Get your dick beaters off my beaver.

WHISKEY

I ain't hurtin' nothin'.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't done on it yet. You grabbin' it like 'at liable offset the glue.

WHISKEY

The hell's it matter? Nobody gon' be here come tomorrow.

MONTGOMERY

Can't leave a job all half-ass like.

Whiskey leans in at the beaver.

WHISKEY

You been workin' this one a while.

MONTGOMERY

Beavers is tough. Tail's a bitch. Takes the right kinda' finesse.

WHISKEY

The hell's 'at mean?

MONTGOMERY

Skill.

WHISKEY

Well if anyone got it, it's you. Best taxidermist in Loving County.

MONTGOMERY

So they say.

WHISKEY

What you gon' do? After.

MONTGOMERY

I'm only thinkin' bout this here beaver.

WHISKEY

You ain't gon' leave town are you?

MONTGOMERY

Keep packin'.

Whiskey moves to some boxes and begins placing various items inside. COOKIE, Montgomery's wife, enters from downstairs. She approaches Montgomery, who stops with the beaver and looks up at her.

MONTGOMERY

Hey, sugar pop.

COOKIE

Got most of the office all packed. Only the computer's left.

WHISKEY

You got one of them?

MONTGOMERY

Cookie does. I don't bother with 'em.

COOKIE

You should start. Makes things easier.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't got nothin' too hard goin' on. What's a computer gon' help me with?

COOKIE

Pass the time, then. Got card games.

MONTGOMERY

Most expensive deck a' cards I ever bought.

COOKIE

Internet.

MONTGOMERY

What?

COOKIE

Lots a neat things on the internet.

MONTGOMERY

I'm fine not knowin' 'em.

WHISKEY

I tried that internet.

Cookie and Montgomery turn to him.

Did one a them datin' places.

COOKIE

Websites.

WHISKEY

Met this girl in prison. Said she needed a man take care a' her when she got out. Went visited her a few times.

MONTGOMERY

No you didn't.

WHISKEY

Ain't lyin'. Gave her money.

MONTGOMERY

What fer?

WHISKEY

Said she needed takin' care of, didn't I? How else you gon' take care a' someone all locked up like 'at.

COOKIE

Must a' been some special lady for you to be givin' money to.

WHISKEY

She was.

COOKIE

What was she like?

WHISKEY

Only saw her sittin' down. Had some tig ol' bitties I'll tell you that. Sorry, Cookie.

Pause.

But it didn't work out.

COOKIE

How come?

WHISKEY

She got in this fight with a guard or somethin'. Put on death row next day. Dust in the wind, man.

MONTGOMERY

An' you wonder why I never hired you.

WHISKEY

Cuz I's overly-qualified.

MONTGOMERY

Overly-stupid. Throwin' money at some gal saw you comin' a mile away.

COOKIE

Love makes you do crazy things.

MONTGOMERY

Crazy makes you do crazy things.

Pause. Cookie turns to Montgomery.

COOKIE

Think I'm a go down to market. Pick us up somethin' t' eat.

That'd be fine. MONTGOMERY

What you want? COOKIE

Surprise me. MONTGOMERY

Whiskey? COOKIE

They still got them beef sandwiches? WHISKEY

Reckon so. COOKIE

Get me one of them. Oh, and some cake. WHISKEY

You don't need no cake. MONTGOMERY

I like cake. WHISKEY

I think cake is a great idea. I'll get a nice ol' big one. Maybe some candles. COOKIE

Ain't no one's birthday in here. MONTGOMERY

Don't need to be a birthday to have candles. I'll be back. COOKIE

She kisses Montgomery on the cheek and heads for the door. She exits. Montgomery moves away from the counter, revealing his confinement to a wheelchair. He moves to where Cookie left and watches.

Every time she leaves you watch her. She's gon' be fine. Safe town we got. WHISKEY

I know that. MONTGOMERY

Pause.

She seems okay. WHISKEY
 Why wouldn't she be? MONTGOMERY
 Shop closin' and all. WHISKEY
 Every day's just another with that one. MONTGOMERY
 Suddenly, the phone rings.
 Montgomery lets it go a bit before
 moving to it. He answers.
 Guns n' stuff. You bag it we tag it?...Uh-huh...Well it's
 our last...yeah...uh-huh...okay then bring it on by...I'll
 see what I can do.
 He hangs up.
 Whose 'at? WHISKEY
 Some lady. Got somethin' she needs work on. MONTGOMERY
 You ain't done with the beaver. WHISKEY
 I know that. MONTGOMERY
 How you gon' start somethin' yer last day? WHISKEY
 Don't know what it is yet. Could be a bird or somethin'.
 Them's easy. MONTGOMERY
 If it ain't? WHISKEY
 We'll have to see. MONTGOMERY
 Pause.
 You meet 'em yet? WHISKEY

MONTGOMERY

Who?

WHISKEY

Them gon' be takin' the place over?

MONTGOMERY

Once. Some guy openin' a smoothie place.

WHISKEY

A what?

MONTGOMERY

Smoothie place. He explained it to me. It's like a juice thing but cold.

WHISKEY

All juice is cold, ain't it?

MONTGOMERY

Frozen. With stuff in it.

WHISKEY

What stuff?

MONTGOMERY

I dunno'. Stuff. Like fer energy, I think. And fer losin' weight.

WHISKEY

Sounds like a gay. He a gay?

MONTGOMERY

What's it matter he gay or not?

WHISKEY

Your daddy built this place. Be rollin' over in his grave he found out a gay was walkin' round here.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't gon' find out nothin'. He's dead.

Pause.

Me and Cookie's anniversary is comin' up.

WHISKEY

Oh, yeah? What you gon' do?

MONTGOMERY

Give her this.

Montgomery moves to Whiskey and pulls out a SMALL PICTURE from his pocket. It's old. He hands it to him.

WHISKEY

You still got this?

MONTGOMERY

You holdin' it, ain't you? Been carryin' that around since 'Nam.

WHISKEY

I remember. Always be buggin' us about her. Sayin' how pretty she was.

MONTGOMERY

That picture's what kept me alive.

Whiskey turns to him.

And you.

Whiskey hands the picture back to Montgomery, who puts it back into his pocket.

WHISKEY

She don't know you still got it?

MONTGOMERY

I stole it before we shipped out. Never told her. Didn't know why til now.

WHISKEY

Reminds me of me and Shirley.

Montgomery turns to him.

My prison bride.

MONTGOMERY

Bride?

WHISKEY

The one I done told you bout.

MONTGOMERY

Gotta have a ring to be a bride.

WHISKEY

Prison it's different than real life. Three visits makes you hitched.

MONTGOMERY

No it don't.

WHISKEY

How would you know? All you know is Cookie.

Pause.

Hell, that makes me one of them widows don't it?

MONTGOMERY

Widower.

WHISKEY

What?

MONTGOMERY

Called widower when it's a man still alive.

WHISKEY

Widower. Huh?

Whiskey takes a long swig from the bottle. Suddenly, the door opens and JANICE, a woman of high class, enters. Montgomery and Whiskey turn to her.

JANICE

Is this guns and stuff?

MONTGOMERY

You bag it, we tag it. You that lady from the phone?

JANICE

We spoke earlier, yes.

She notices the boxes.

Is it a bad time?

MONTGOMERY

Same a time as any. What are we workin' with?

JANICE

I have a special project for you that I will be paying rather well for.

WHISKEY

She talks funny.

MONTGOMERY

Shut up.

Janice turns to Whiskey.

JANICE
Is this the help?

MONTGOMERY
No help at all. Just Whiskey.

JANICE
Whiskey?

WHISKEY
What they call me. On account a this.

He waves the bottle.

MONTGOMERY
Don't pay no mind to him. I sure as hell don't.

JANICE
Noted.

Montgomery turns to Whiskey.

MONTGOMERY
You been noted.

He turns back to Janice.
So what is it? Bird? Cat?

JANICE
Nothing like that.

MONTGOMERY
Then what?

Janice begins walking around the shop, glancing around at the various items.

JANICE
Before we continue, I would like to verify a few things first.

WHISKEY
Huh?

MONTGOMERY
It means make sure.

WHISKEY
What you need to make sure of, lady?

JANICE

Mrs. Rothstein. Janice Rothstein.

Whiskey turns to Montgomery.

WHISKEY

That's a Jew name. She's a Jew. You got a real life Jew in your store.

JANICE

Antisemitism is a serious offense, sir.

Whiskey turns to Montgomery.

MONTGOMERY

Jew-hatin'.

Whiskey turns back to Janice.

WHISKEY

I don't mean nothin' by it, ma'am. Just never met one a you types b'fore. I'm Whiskey.

He outstretches his hand, as if to shake. Janice doesn't accept. She turns to Montgomery instead.

JANICE

You are Mr. Grey, correct?

MONTGOMERY

Yes'm.

JANICE

The Montgomery Grey?

MONTGOMERY

That I know of. Could be more some other place.

JANICE

Best taxidermist in Loving County?

WHISKEY

Tol' you.

MONTGOMERY

Supposin' so.

JANICE

And you'll do anything?

MONTGOMERY
Depends on what you call 'anything'.

Janice surveys the shop a bit

JANICE
Relocating?

MONTGOMERY
Closin'. Last day.

JANICE
I would assume the best in the county would never have a last day.

MONTGOMERY
Well, you know what assumin' does. Times is changin'. No one really needs my services no more.

JANICE
People still hunt, don't they?

WHISKEY
All the good ones is dead. Or like Montgomery here.

Janice turns to Montgomery.

JANICE
Crippled?

MONTGOMERY
Pacifists. So what's the animal?

Pause.

JANICE
I think it's best for me to disclose the amount of compensation before we commence.

Montgomery and Whiskey just stare.
Tell you how much I will pay.

MONTGOMERY
Oh. Sure.

Janice reaches into her purse and removes a CHECK. She hands it to Montgomery, who is taken aback by the amount.

WHISKEY
How much?

MONTGOMERY

Unless you got a whale in the back a yer car, I can't think of a single thing cost this much to mount.

JANICE

Is that sufficient, then?

MONTGOMERY

You got whale?

JANICE

I'll show you.

Janice exits. Whiskey moves closer to Montgomery.

WHISKEY

What's the check?

Montgomery hands Whiskey the check. He is also taken aback.

I never seen this much numbers at one time b'fore. This is Jew money.

MONTGOMERY

Maybe.

WHISKEY

What you think she got?

MONTGOMERY

If it ain't whale, I dunno'.

Janice re-enters. She is carrying the dead body of JIMMY, her son. Montgomery and Whiskey are taken aback even more so than when they saw the check.

WHISKEY

That ain't whale.

MONTGOMERY

Hold on now, lady - Mrs. Rothstein - This ain't that kind a place.

Janice drops Jimmy's body near the counter.

JANICE

Best taxidermist in town, right?

MONTGOMERY

Maybe so. But not like that. You need to leave. Take the kid with you.

JANICE

Jimmy.

MONTGOMERY

What?

JANICE

His name is Jimmy. I'm not leaving until he gets the proper treatment he deserves.

WHISKEY

He deserves a wash. Kid smells somethin' fierce.

MONTGOMERY

Sorry, ma'am. You at the wrong place for that sort a thing. Them funeral homes where you need to take him.

JANICE

Why? So they can put him in the ground? Not my Jimmy. He needs to be with his family.

MONTGOMERY

All due respect, ma'am but he ain't gon' be anyplace. He's dead.

JANICE

Isn't that what you do? Bring life to dead things?

MONTGOMERY

Don't do human.

WHISKEY

Ain't no different than that ape you done last month.

Janice turns to Whiskey, who notices her.

Ain't meanin' yer boy's like a monkey or nothin'. Just sayin'.

JANICE

Saying what?

WHISKEY

Six a one.

JANICE

Of one what?

MONTGOMERY

Half dozen the other. Means the same. And it ain't. Two things get done 'round here. Sellin' guns and moutin' game. This kinda' work be best done someplace else.

JANICE

That kind of money be better somewhere else as well?

Pause.

From the looks of things around here you could use that check. Probably more so than the money sucking funeral industry.

Whiskey turns to Montgomery.

WHISKEY

Jew lady's makin' sense. That kind of check'll make it so you stay open.

Montgomery turns to Whiskey.

MONTGOMERY

Place done been sold to the smoothie guy.

WHISKEY

Then you buy it back.

Montgomery turns to Janice.

MONTGOMERY

It's about more than money.

JANICE

It never is.

Janice reaches into her purse once more. She removes a BUSINESS CARD and hands it to Montgomery, who takes it.

I have more errands to run. I'll return soon. Think it over a bit and call me on my cell if you have any further questions. It's that last number there. I'll be needing that check back.

Montgomery lifts the check slowly. Janice grabs it. She puts the check back in her purse and begins to exit. She turns back to Jimmy's body and strokes his hair.

Don't disappoint us, Mr. Grey.

She kisses Jimmy on the head and begins to exit.

Yer crazy, lady.

WHISKEY

Janice turns to him.

JANICE

Just a mother.

Janice exits.

WHISKEY

What's that card?

Montgomery hands Whiskey the card.
He reads it.

Janice Rothstein. DDS. Pearly White Bright Dentistry. She a
teeth person?

MONTGOMERY

Reckon so.

WHISKEY

Ain't them teeth people richer n' hell?

MONTGOMERY

From what I know 'about 'em.

WHISKEY

Know she's good fer it, then.

MONTGOMERY

Never thought she wasn't.

WHISKEY

Lady drive all the way here, that thing in her car?

MONTGOMERY

Stranger things, I reckon.

WHISKEY

Cookie's gon' shit, she sees that thing in here.

MONTGOMERY

She seen worse.

WHISKEY

What's worse than a dead guy?

Montgomery turns to him.

MONTGOMERY

The crapper after you been on it. Get back to the boxes.

Montgomery moves back to the counter and continues working on the beaver.

WHISKEY

I ain't packin' no more. I am retired.

MONTGOMERY

If you retired you can get out then. Shop ain't big enough for two useless bodies.

He motions to Jimmy's body.

WHISKEY

You gon' do it?

MONTGOMERY

What?

WHISKEY

Stuff that feller.

MONTGOMERY

It's mount. And I dunno' yet. Need some more thinkin' time on it. 'Sides I still got this here beaver.

WHISKEY

Ain't got a lot a time left fer thinkin'. Or the beaver.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't gon' take too long fer neither.

Suddenly, Cookie enters through the door, carrying a LARGE BROWN SACK. Montgomery and Whiskey turn to her as she notices Jimmy's body. She stares a bit at the body, then up at Montgomery and Whiskey. She glances back down at the body, then exits. Whiskey turns to Montgomery.

WHISKEY

Tol' you.

Cookie re-enters and moves straight to Montgomery.

COOKIE

Why is there a dead boy by the counter?

MONTGOMERY

His mama wants him mounted.

COOKIE

This ain't that kinda place.

MONTGOMERY

What I told her.

COOKIE

Shoulda' took him to the funeral parlor.

MONTGOMERY

She don't want him in a funeral.

COOKIE

You ain't doin' it, are you?

MONTGOMERY

Still thinkin' on it.

COOKIE

Ain't nothin' need thinkin' on. This ain't that kinda place and you ain't that kinda man. You ain't doin' it.

WHISKEY

She payin' a lot fer it.

COOKIE

How much?

MONTGOMERY

Thirty deep.

Cookie is taken aback.

COOKIE

Thirty thousand?

MONTGOMERY

What I said.

Cookie turns to Jimmy's body, then back to Montgomery.

COOKIE

You keep thinkin' on it. Whiskey, help me with the cake.

She moves to the front door and exits. Whiskey follows suit.

WHISKEY

I love cake.

He exits. Montgomery turns to Jimmy's body and stares. He leans over and pokes it. Cookie and Whiskey re-enter. Whiskey is carrying a CAKE with CANDLES.

COOKIE

Got thirty candles here. One for each year you been runnin' the place.

MONTGOMERY

How nice.

Whiskey sets the cake on the counter.

COOKIE

I'm gonna' go pack up the computer.

She begins to exit. Montgomery motions to the brown sack.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't you gon' eat first?

Cookie turns back.

COOKIE

Not with that thing in here, I ain't. You liable catch somethin' eating near the dead.

She begins to exit, but turns back once more.

And at least spray somethin' while you sittin' there thinkin'. Place smells like the bathroom after Whiskey's done been in it.

She motions to the large brown sack on the counter. Montgomery turns to Whiskey.

MONTGOMERY

Tol' you. Now you best come do somethin' with him before we eat.

WHISKEY

Do what?

MONTGOMERY

Move him away from the counter, for one. And you best spray somethin' b'fore Cookie comes back down.

WHISKEY

I ain't goin' nowhere near that thing.

MONTGOMERY

You is, or you can get out.

WHISKEY

You want him moved so bad, you go on and do it yerself.

MONTGOMERY

I got the beaver.

Pause.

WHISKEY

Fine. Been doin' all the dirty work fer years, why quit now?

Whiskey moves to Jimmy's body and takes a deep breath and holds it. He grabs the body and awkwardly begins moving him past the counter toward the stairs.

MONTGOMERY

Don't be puttin' him over there. Set him upright on that chair.

Whiskey turns to him and Montgomery points to the chair on the opposite side from the staircase. Whiskey shifts around and drags the body to the chair. He sets Jimmy up in it and moves away. He releases his breath and turns to Montgomery.

WHISKEY

Time?

MONTGOMERY

Time on what?

WHISKEY

My breath holdin'.

MONTGOMERY

Ain't keep track.

WHISKEY

Son'bitch. You never do. Gotta be some kind a record.

MONTGOMERY

Don't bet on it. There's folk been known hold their breath for days.

WHISKEY

While draggin' a dead boy?

MONTGOMERY

Don't rightly know. Hell, you may have yourself a record there, Whiskey.

Whiskey looks at Jimmy's body.

WHISKEY

Kinda looks like Bobby.

Montgomery stops working on the beaver.

MONTGOMERY

No he don't.

WHISKEY

In the eyes. Got Cookie's eyes, don't he? Look it.

Montgomery turns to Jimmy's body. He stares a moment before turning back to the beaver.

MONTGOMERY

I don't see it.

WHISKEY

Come on closer to it, then.

MONTGOMERY

I got the beaver.

WHISKEY

Beaver ain't goin' no place. Come look it fer a minute. Looks like yer boy sittin' over here. Spittin' image. Save that Jew honker.

Montgomery turns Whiskey.

MONTGOMERY

My boy ain't sittin' no place at all. He's dead.

WHISKEY

I'm only sayin' /

MONTGOMERY

/You ain't sayin' nothin'. Never have said nothin' yer whole life. That's you Whiskey. Talkin' all over and ain't sayin' a damn thing.

Pause.

(MORE)