

A Twist in the Tail
By
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INT. MIAMI CASINO - NIGHT TIME

Eight men sit at a roulette table, gambling amongst cigar smoke. Their silence contrasts the laughter and chaos in the distance of the busy gambling hall.

KURT, 40's, dark hair, rigid and an ex-Navy seal sits at the table, he's been there a while and looks tired. Sixteen roulette chips are stacked up beside him.

Kurt looks to his watch, gulps down his shot of bourbon and moves all his chips to 20-Black.

The other players on the table position their chips on various other numbers.

The young attractive female Croupier rolls the roulette wheel, it SPINS --

Slows to a stop on -- 10-Red.

Kurt sighs, he's lost everything -- his face shows worry.

EXT. CASINO BACKSTREET - NIGHT TIME

In the black of the night Kurt walks in urgency towards his car, he's apprehensive.

A SUITED MAN, mid 40's, strong and athletic looking -- a professional killer following, approaches Kurt.

SUITED MAN
Kurt, you're a hard man to track
down!

Kurt gulps feeling cold solid metal to his back -- a GUN.

KURT
What do you want?

SUITED MAN
Freeman sent me, he wants his ten
thousand dollars Kurt -- can you pay
it or was it a bad night again?

KURT
I need another week, I'll pay him -
I have half already -- take it easy!

The Suited Man SHUNTS Kurt to his SUV, turns him around, frisks him, then STRIKES the gun end to his face --

Kurt falls back onto his car bleeding from the head, then feels a DEEP hook penetrate into his stomach. He slides to the ground coughing.

SUITED MAN
I am giving you another week,
otherwise your whole place will be
up in smoke -- with you inside it!

Kurt panting and clutching at his head slowly CRANES his eyes up to the Suited Man standing over him.

EXT. MIAMI SUBURBS - NIGHT TIME

A Cherokee jeep rolls onto the front drive of a family house, it's brake lights blink on, then off.

INT. MIAMI HOUSE - NIGHT TIME

JOEL, 40's, tall with dark hair, wears a hunters cap. He stands at the doorway as the door opens.

KAREN, 30's, attractive with mousy hair allows him into her house.

KAREN

Thanks for coming Joel, how are you?

JOEL

Good Karen, it's nice to see you.

Karen's younger son -- JOSH, 9, stands behind his mother as Joel enters and removes his cap glancing around.

Josh smiles and runs to Joel.

JOSH

Uncle Joel!

JOEL

Hey Joel, how are you son?

Joel embraces his nephew.

INT. HOUSE LOUNGE - AN HOUR LATER

Joel sits on an old dining table opposite his sister eating steaming steak and roast potatoes.

KAREN

Do you want anything else Joel?

JOEL

No Karen, that was lovely thank you.

A beat.

KAREN

Since Gus has died, it's just not the same -- everything's changed.

JOEL

There's an epidemic of shark attacks in Miami -- four people are dead now including Gus...

Karen emotional turns seeing Josh standing behind her in his pyjamas. She smiles at him, opens her arms -- he slowly walks to his mother's embrace.

JOEL (CONT'D)

I am going to kill that tiger shark Karen, there's a \$15,000 reward. The local authority are paying out for the biggest catch.

KAREN

Joel, this isn't a panther or a wolf, it's a killer shark -- you can't do it on your own, it's too dangerous!

JOEL

I am looking for a companion, a sailor preferably, you and Josh will get a split of the money, I'll have the satisfaction of knowing people are safe.

(beat)

We're going to get that shark Karen.

Joel drinks his cider down. Karen looks into his passionate gaze combing her fingers through Josh's hair.

INT. MIAMI TOBACCO SHOP - DAY

Kurt wearing a discreet plaster on his head pays the old Chinese Shopkeeper for his tobacco.

SHOPKEEPER

Haven't seen you in a while, how are you doing?

KURT

Could be better, how's business?

SHOPKEEPER

Terrible, I may have to close this place with all those recent shark attacks -- the beach is empty.

KURT

There's been more?

SHOPKEEPER

Yeah -- I should join the hunt - the county is paying a \$15,000 reward to anyone with the largest catch...

Kurt rolling a joint of his tobacco pauses and looks to the Shopkeeper.

KURT

Really...

SHOPKEEPER

Yeah, there was a guy in here earlier, he needs someone to sail a boat -- he's a hunter, placed an ad on the board there...

Kurt walks to the ad, takes it from the board.

KURT

I've sailed a few boats in my time -
- can I take this?

SHOPKEEPER

Sure go right ahead and good luck!

INT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - DAY

Joel walks into the gardens, he's approached by a burly SHOP ATTENDANT, late 20's, dark long draping hair.

SHOP ATTENDANT
Can I help you sir?

JOEL
Yeah, I am looking for Hemlock, do you have any?

SHOP ATTENDANT
Hemlock...sure, we have some conifers straight ahead sir.

INT. DOLPHIN MALL - DAY

Joel walking through and enters into an aquarium shop.

INT. AQUARIUM SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Joel approaches the counter, the short SHOPKEEPER, geeky -- wearing glasses looks up to him, then glances around the empty shop nervously.

The Shopkeeper paces to the door, closes it, then locks it.

SHOPKEEPER
(low)
They arrived this morning...

He bends under the counter LIFTING a plastic carry tank into view containing two large puffer fish.

JOEL
Great, I'll take them both.

SHOPKEEPER
Mr. -- I won't ask what they're for, but these are \$300.00 a piece.

Joel removes \$300.00 from his wallet and places it onto the counter.

JOEL
Relax, I am using their poison to kill sharks, not people...

SHOPKEEPER
Sharks -- oh -- for the reward...

JOEL
Yes, for the biggest tiger shark.

SHOPKEEPER
Make sure you soak your bate with their poison for at least a day -- kill as many of those bastard sharks as you can! One of the girls that died, was a friend of my sister.

Joel looks to the Shopkeeper, he's stern and focused. He takes the fish tank of puffer fish and exits the shop.

EXT. MIAMI HARBOUR - DAY

Joel, wearing his cap under the blazing sun carries a large ice box in one hand and a black gallon bottle in the other.

An M1 Garand rifle hangs from his shoulder strap. He walks onto a large white FISHING BOAT.

In the distance other fisherman are gearing up their boats with equipment -- almost ready for the hunt.

KURT
(shouting)
Hey! -- are you Joel?

INT. FISHING BOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Joel turns standing on deck, places down the heavy ice box and black gallon looking across to Kurt approaching.

JOEL
Yeah, and you must be Kurt...

Kurt carrying a kit bag climbs down and approaches Joel.

KURT
Aye aye captain -- this is a lovely boat that you have here, I can sail this baby no problem!

JOEL
Good, you're hired -- come on Kurt, let's get to work -- untie the rope, we're sailing out immediately.

Kurt leaps off the boat and unties the rope. Joel pulls the rope through divorcing the boat from the dock.

Joel runs and LEAPS back onto the boat.

KURT
(panting)
What's in the ice box?

JOEL
It's full of Kingfish, bait for the sharks.

Kurt glances up at the boat, he focuses on a large motorised harness with a large hook hanging from it.

An old fishing trawler across the water roars diesel fumes into the air -- it passes the fishing Harbour.

BERNIE - 50's, a typical fisherman type with a beer belly hanging below his tight white t-shirt stands on deck looking towards Joel. A lit cigar respire in his mouth.

BERNIE

Hey Joel, we're going to kick your butt, that thirteen footer is mine!

JOEL

You know Bernie we're bringing many sharks back, not one -- and not swordfish. How many do you seriously think you'll fit in that old piece of shit of a boat?

BERNIE

(shouting)

Oh, we're just looking for the one, the biggest, and I am going to fill it full of lead. He's mine!

JOEL

Good luck -- but this boat's bringing him back Bernie!

Kurt smiles looking to Bernie, then turns to Joel.

Joel angry heads into the Bridge room, Kurt follows.

INT. BRIDGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KURT

Should we set sail captain?

JOEL

Let's go Kurt.

Kurt throws down his kit bag, Joel's eyes rest on him.

Kurt takes the wheel and starts the boat. With the engine rasping he adjusts the controls and sails away.

EXT. MIAMI HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS

The fishing boat sails towards the Atlantic ocean.

EXT. WESTERN ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT TIME

The white boat BEAMS an aura under the moonlit sky, floating still above the gentle waves of the black water.

INT. MESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joel drinks from a cider bottle.

Kurt sits captivated, smoking a joint -- watching Joel.

KURT

That's terrible...

JOEL

Gus was a diver -- marine research, I was with him in these very waters. That thing was fucking huge, around sixteen feet in length -- the biggest one that's out here and he's still alive Kurt...

KURT
How can you be sure?

JOEL
Because Gus darted that thing
inside it's stomach with an acoustic
tag, before it wrecked his cage
and...and severed him in half!

Joel finishes his cider, then removes a Garmin type
tracker from a bag that's beside him.

KURT
Then the \$15,000 is in the bag!

JOEL
Yeah it is, and you can have half
Kurt, just get me to where I need to
be and leave killing that fucking
thing to me.

The Garmin receiver BEEPS, then again. Joel stands and
turns to Kurt.

JOEL
It's close, about half a mile from us...

Kurt LEAPS up, they head to the Bridge Room.

INT. BRIDGE ROOM - NIGHT TIME

Kurt starts the boat, he glances to the Garmin tracker.

JOEL
Head South!

Joel takes his M1 Garand, throws it over his shoulder and
heads out of the Bridge room out to the main deck.

INT. MAIN DECK - CONTINUOUS

Joel reaches, LIFTS the black gallon from the deck and
heads to the edge of the boat watching his tracker.

The boat cruises at full speed, the beacon beeps faster.

Joel unscrews the gallon top off and pours fish blood out
into the water. He glances back to his ice box.

Looking up, he swings the hanging hook into the blood
thick water --

The LARGE HOOK with a twenty foot CRANE has a motorised
reel attached to the main deck -- to reel in the steel
harness, designed for a heavy catch.

The boat slows tearing through the water.

Joel looks ahead hearing the beacon frequency increase.

THUD!

Joel falls to his knees looking ahead to the water -- he feels warm BLOOD rolling down the back of his neck.

A deep blow to his head oozes blood -- Kurt stands behind Joel clutching at a crowbar. Joel falls to the deck.

KURT
I'll take that!

Kurt SNATCHES the tracker from Joel's lifeless hands.

Joel gaping to the starlit sky gasps in horror trying to reach to his rifle, his skull CRUSHED from the blow.

KURT (CONT'D)
Out in the field, us Navy Seals seen many horrific things -- we had to do what we had to, to stay alive.

JOEL
(feebly)
What -- Why?

KURT
(callously)
I need that fifteen grand -- otherwise I am a dead man...

JOEL
I'll give it to you -- please...

KURT
I am sorry Joel, but I need to invite that shark here!

Kurt takes a knife from his waist and LUNGES it into Joel's stomach. Joel's eyes GLARE open.

Kurt lifts gasping Joel, takes his rifle, then pulls at the STUCK knife, blood SPRAYS. He THROWS Joel off deck.

His body a dead weight CRASHES into the black water. Joel stunned from cold horror tries to kick in the water.

KURT (CONT'D)
(wiping knife)
Goodbye friend...

Kurt watches the beacon, it draws close to a silence.

THEN --

Joel CRIES out, he's pulled down into the water.

A HUGE TIGER SHARK HEAD with BLACK EYES FIXED

cranes FURIOUSLY from left to right, jaws LOCKED onto Joel's blood gushing legs -- SWINGING HIM through the RED-BLACK WATER. The shark struggles CAUGHT on the hook.

Kurt takes AIM --
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Successive shots unleash LEAD holes into the head of the huge Tiger shark.

The LOCK of its JAWS eases -- it's lifeless.

Bubbles of blood and flesh surface to the water. Joel's torn body, almost severed floats away in the water.

The tiger shark is DEAD in the BLACK WATER.

Kurt frantically looks around the deck, see's the motor.

He pushes the red button as the reel winds up, LIFTING the huge tiger shark out of the water from its throat.

The fishing boat deck TILTS creaking towards the water.

Kurt HEAVES pulling swinging the rail towards the boat, the tiger shark swings into the boat.

The steel reel slowly unwinds automatically descending the bloodied shark onto the deck.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Karen stands next to the open plan kitchen with the cordless phone to her ear.

INT. FISHING BOAT MESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joel's Motorola cell vibrates on the mess room table.

INT. BOAT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Kurt bends looking into the deep black glazed eyes of the tiger shark, it's mouth tainted with Joel's blood.

He looks at the ice box, then opens it - inside are lots of fresh rainbow mackerel.

INT. FISHING BOAT - MESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Motorola cell vibrates again - Kurt approaches, thinks takes the phone - and answers it.

KURT
(breaking down)
Hello, god -- he's dead, the shark -
- it was being hooked in, it, it
attacked Joel -- oh god, it's killed
him -- he's dead, he's dead!

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Karen choking up, bursts out uncontrollably, she slides down the kitchen wall and sits onto the floor holding the phone.

KAREN
Oh god no -- no! no! no!
(beat)
I'll have to notify the police, you
need to come back to harbour...

INT. FISHING BOAT MESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KURT

Karen, Joel told me about Gus, I got the bastard, I got the shark, it's fucking dead!

Kurt places the cell down. He wipes his teary face which grows a smug smile.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Karen wipes her tears, then dials 911 looking into the distance whilst thinking of the past.

KAREN

Hello - my brother's been killed, it was a shark attack out at sea...

INT. FISHING BOAT - BRIDGE ROOM - LATER

Joel THRUSTS the fishing boat back towards the harbour, then slows to a stop. Ahead police cars are awaiting.

EXT. FISHING HARBOUR - CONTINUOUS

An air ambulance with its spotlight beaming flies over the boat out towards the sea.

Kurt paces to the deck bleeding from his arm.

A tall detective with sagged eyes hiding a formidable intelligence stands wearing a long grey coat -- he gazes at Kurt, then his injury.

EXT. HARBOUR - A FEW DAYS LATER - SUNSHINE

Crowds of people fill the location, the boats have returned with their catches, it's the announcement day.

The sharks on harnesses are lifted and measured - tail to snout, the location is scattered with dead sharks.

Kurt stands with a bandage around his arm -- he's beaming as his Tiger shark is lifted. It's clear from a distance that it's the prize winner amidst several others.

ANNOUNCER

Well Kurt, your injury has paid off! Sixteen feet! It's tragic that we've lost yet another citizen, but quite clearly you are the winner and I don't think the people have anything further to fear now. Those killer sharks are dead and they're here.

(beat)

Now tell us Kurt, how did you do it?

KURT

I owe it all to Joel, he led me to this shark.

KURT (CONT'D)

But justice has been done, this is the shark that's likely killed all of those people, and now he's dead!

People in the crowds cheer and applause.

The plump Announcer with fair hair and a pronounced limp from a shark injury is handed a cheque -- it has Kurt Mitchell printed onto it.

Kurt smiles and heads up onto the stage to collect it.

INT. KURT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT TIME

Kurt sits in an old worn house, he thinks at a dining table drinking beer with satisfaction.

He dials his cell and pushes it to his ear.

KURT

Hello Spencer, yeah it's Kurt, tell Freeman I will have his money in two days...

(laughing)

Robbed a bank, no -- not quite.

Kurt places the cell down with his bandaged arm, then pulls his steaming plate of fried mackerel forward.

He has a FLASHBACK:

FISHING BOAT MEMORY:

On the boat, Kurt bends -- looks to the dead shark, lifts its snout, then takes his arm and places it into the sharks jaws. He grits his teeth with the pain.

Kurt places his body weight onto the sharks mouth, his arm is pierced, it bleeds -- a CONVINCING injury.

He stands and washes Joel's tainted blood from the crowbar in the seawater.

BACK TO SCENE:

Smiling he tucks in, eating the fish -- it tastes good. His plan came together perfectly he wonders.

THEN --

Kurt coughs, drops the knife and fork, attempts to stand collapsing back onto the chair with convulsions.

BLOOD leaches out from his nose, his face turns bright red, he can't breathe -- he SHAKES VIGOROUSLY.

Kurt's head DROPS - he's dead from eating the poisoned mackerel, a deadly cocktail of Hemlock and Tetrodotoxin.

Joel's grey icebox sits on the kitchen floor beside Kurt.

THE END.