

Fifty Fifty

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT SHACK - DAY

A neglected structure simmers in the hellish heat. A crappy weathervane creaks in the blistering wind.

Three pairs of dusty boots march along with purposeful haste.

Three HUNTERS (40's) approach the shack with a bulldozer attitude.

Steely eyes.

Sawed-off shotguns.

Seems like nothing's gonna stop them on their way to that door until --

A sudden and violent COUGH brings them to their knees.

The grim determination in their faces dies as their cough gets worse by the second.

Blood sprays from their mouths into their hands.

Choking, red-faced, they turn back and crawl on their bellies to get away from the shack.

One painful inch at a time.

Seems like they know that the shanty is the cause of their illness.

Once they're far enough, whatever was attacking them gives them a break, letting them catch their breaths.

A hunter sees a pair of black leather boots standing right in front of him. Looks up to find:

SCARLET (30's). Black duster flows behind her like a cape. Mirrorshades reflect the dazzling sun. Fingerless gloves cover her hands. The definition of badass.

SCARLET

Shotguns are useless against a
witch from the Stygian Coven, and
you just breached her circle.

The Hunter stares at her as if she was speaking Chinese.

She paces along with a confident stride, follows the hunters' same path.

Whips out a retractable cane. Scrapes the dirt in front of her as she goes.

Stops when she uncovers something:

A layer of red powder hidden under the surface.

SCARLET

Be thankful this powder isn't
black. You'll live.

She goes around the shack, raking the soil with her cane, revealing a red powder trail that curves, hinting there might be a circle surrounding the shack.

Appearing from around the shack, she sees EWAN (30's). A maverick with a five o'clock shadow. The male version of Scarlet. He rakes the soil using a similar cane.

They share a tense silence as they keep scraping the dirt, slowly approaching each other.

SCARLET

Ewan.

EWAN

Scarlet.

SCARLET

You lost hair.

EWAN

Your ass got fat. What are you
doing here?

SCARLET

Hunting in my territory. You?

The tip of his cane uncovers a patch of clean soil. No red powder. An opening. He goes through it, breaching the circle.

Scarlet follows him.

EWAN

Last I checked, the Stygian Coven
was based in Las Cruces.

SCARLET

This is not Las Cruces.

EWAN

But this is a Stygian Witch.

SCARLET

Selling jinx jobs in Albuquerque.

EWAN

Still my fish.

SCARLET

Swimming in my pond.

EWAN

Not for long.

SCARLET

If you ask nicely, we can split the bounty fifty-fifty.

EWAN

This ain't our divorce, "sweetheart". Seventy-thirty.

SCARLET

Fair enough. Fifty-fifty.

He pulls open the front door. As he does, the shack morphs into...

INT. SHACK'S ATTIC

...a miniature replica of the shanty. A pair of bloodshot eyes watch as the mini-door creaks open on its own.

These are the eyes of the creepily beautiful WITCH (40's). A pale woman with a Goth appearance. Her long hair flutters in the wind blowing through a window.

Her bony finger pushes the door closed, which causes --

GROUND FLOOR

-- the real door to SLAM SHUT.

Scarlet and Ewan whirl with an uneasy feeling.

They're alone in a barren room where dusty sunlight streams through barred windows.

She tries to open the door, but can't, because --

ATTIC

-- the Witch's finger blocks the replica's door.

GROUND FLOOR

Ewan zeroes in on a ladder that leads to a ceiling hatch. He climbs it up as...

SCARLET

Heard you were dating that Chili's waitress. Stacy.

EWAN

Heard you "heard" because you've been asking around.

SCARLET
Was Stacy the one with the shrill
voice and the pimpled face?

EWAN
Wow. You really miss me.

SCARLET
I'll take that as a "yes".

He tries to push open the hatch. Can't. As he fruitlessly insists, the hatch morphs into...

MINIATURE REPLICA

...the replica's hatch, being blocked by the witch's finger entering through the attic's window.

GROUND FLOOR

Ewan climbs down.

EWAN
Damn symbiotic replicas. We're
trapped.

Scarlet wipes beads of sweat from her brow.

SCARLET
(grim)
And sweating too much.

ATTIC

The Witch smiles with perverse joy as she uses a lighter to heat up the steel tray on which the replica sits.

Her right eye peeks through one of the replica's windows, as if she somehow could see:

GROUND FLOOR

Scarlet and Ewan now sweat like in a sauna.

EWAN
Great. She's a cooker.

SCARLET
(hushed)
Behind me. Can you see her?

Over her shoulder, he spots a faint reflection of the witch's giant eye in a window.

Using Scarlet as cover so the eye can't see him, he empties a small leather sack into his open hand. Black powder.

She whirls - YANKS the window open.

He BLOWS the black powder into the opening, which causes --

ATTIC

A spurt of dust jets from the miniature window into the witch's eye!

She backs away SCREAMING in miserable pain, as if she was just hit by a spurt of acid.

She hears noises down below, someone hurrying up the ladder. She bristles, whips out a nasty DAGGER.

The hatch opens. Ewan and Scarlet climb into the attic. Their eyes dart around the place, searching for their prey but --

The witch has mysteriously disappeared.

EWAN

Great. A defensive mirage.

They take off their mirrorshades. Check the room again through the glasses' reflection.

Nothing of interest at first.

But then Scarlet's shades reflect:

The witch is right behind Ewan!

About to stab him when --

Scarlet BLOWS into the replica's attic window, which causes --

A gust of wind BURSTS through the real window, knocking Ewan and the witch down to the floor.

Her dagger slides away.

Before she can get it --

Ewan BLOWS some white powder onto her face, putting her into an instant sleep:

THUD - her head hits the floor.

EXT. DESERT SHACK - DAY

Hunters sit on the dirt, still recovering, not very happy to see:

Ewan and Scarlet exit the shack, dragging the Witch along by her arms.

SCARLET

Another hideout was discovered today in Las Cruces. That bounty could have been all yours, yet here you are, which obviously means --

EWAN

-- that I didn't know about the other job.

They stop. The discussion continues face to face.

SCARLET

Sheriff told me you turned the job down.

He opens his mouth to retort. Can't.

EWAN

Wanna grab a beer?

SCARLET

Wow. You really miss me.

EWAN

I'll take that as a "yes".

SCARLET

You're buying.

EWAN

Fair enough. Fifty-fifty.

SCARLET

Not a bad deal, considering you drink like a girl.

Grins widen into smiles. Their lips touch for a kiss.

FADE OUT.