



The Fox and the Jay

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Action/adventure, Romance

Rain was rare in the desert, many considered it a blessing. As rain poured down from the sky the citizens of Willowville ran out of their houses to dance on the cobbled streets. Children laughed as they ran through the streets, water dousing their hair and clothing. Wives and husbands grabbed each other's hands and danced together. The sopping wet dresses of young maidens were dragged without a care, hats of gentlemen thrown in celebration. Rain was rare in the desert, many considered it a blessing. Many, but not all.

Several miles away, away from the joyous townsfolk and where sand towered like skyscrapers. Underneath the thick sand sat a lair, an old and abandoned hideout of some dead fool. Candles flickered, the cold nearly paralyzing. On a rotting chair sat a young male, his age unknown to even himself. His black hair was stained a blond silver from years of living in the deep desert. His eyes were a faded black, but as sharp as the knives he carried. He called himself Kit, Kit Blythe. His name, age, and even himself were lost to time. He sharpened a knife with a rock as he listened to the sound of thunder rattling down on the desert. With each strike of lightning, every boom of thunder, his lair shook and his candles wavered. He huffed and threw the rock aside, letting it slide into the piles of treasure lining the wall. He twisted the blade in his hand before shoving it into the sheath wrapped around his leg. Kit grabbed the black cloak sitting on the floor and threw it over his tanned chest. As he started to walk up the stairs, he felt the reassuring rattle of his knives clash against his body. He pushed through the trapdoor that hid his lair. It thumped against the ground, pounds on pounds of sand sliding off. Kit closed the door behind him, using a barefoot to recover it. Kit slid a black fabric mask over his face. He let out a sigh and shook the dirt filled water out of his eyes. And hence another day began.

When the townsfolk had settled down and headed inside to clean their sodden apparel, Kit stalked to the edge

of the village. He stuck to the shadows, the sound of rain covering his footsteps. He pulled out one of his many knives and began to work. He stayed low and moved quickly, weaving between buildings and hiding in the shadows. Kit came upon a larger stone house. He peeked into an open window. A family of four, a mother, father, brother, and older sister. They all were changed into dry clothes as they sat around a dining room table. They laughed and talked about their day as they ate. Kit felt a scowl cover his face, something stirred in his stomach. It wriggled and threatened to overflow from his mouth. It filled him and spread like a disease. But Kit watched, he watched and he waited. No more than a few minutes later, the family started to disperse. The mother washed the dishes, the father cleaning the table. The daughter put away the cleaned dishes, the son sweeping the floor. After, they all started towards their own areas.

That's when Kit struck. He came up from his ducked position and hopped through the window. He crouched onto the floor and started to cross the floor. He searched the kitchen thoroughly, looking for anything of use. Kit grabbed several loaves of bread from the pantry, along with a bag of dried meat. He pulled a scrap of fabric from his pocket and wiped away his fingerprints and the dirt and water he tracked in. Kit sighed and left the kitchen after making sure the kitchen was as it should. He snuck through the halls. Kit kept his ears pricked, his eyes wide and focused. He followed the halls until he reached a series of bedrooms. That's where most people kept their valuables. He put his ear against the door. Nobody was inside, he was good to go. He opened the door with a scrap of fabric and slide in. His eyes scanned the room. The first thing he saw was a wardrobe, then a bedside table, and finally a box engraved with swirled designs. He headed over to the box and flipped open the box. Bingo. He grabbed a handful of silver chains and golden locket. Rubies, diamonds, emeralds, sapphires adorned the jewelry. He scooped them into a large bag. He shut the box and went to the bedside drawer. A few books, a matchbox, a flashlight, and a few files. He threw them all into the bag. Finally, he strode over to the wardrobe. Several suits and dresses filled the small space, hats sitting on the rack above. But what Kit saw below is what he really wanted. An old blanket, a few small holes torn in the fabric. The blanket was old, dust and grime covered it. He grabbed it and shoved it into the bag. He wiped away any evidence that was left and started to head towards the window.

"W-Who are you?" Kit flipped back and glared at the intruder. It was the wife. Her almond eyes were wide with fear, fingers trembling and body shaking. "M-My h-h-husband is an o-officer! S-S-So d-don't do anything s-stupid!" she squeaked out. Kit pulled out his knife and pointed it at her.

"Keep your mouth shut and we won't have any problems," he growled. He turned the blade, making it gleam in

the light to prove his point. Her face paled even further, uncontrollable stammers escaping her mouth.

“J-J-James! G-Get i-in here! T-There’s a-a-a—” Kit quickly lunged forward, slashing the wife from her mouth and across her chest. She let out a shriek and Kit took that as his cue to leave. As she fell to the floor and footsteps pounded across the hall, Kit leaped out the window and ran away. He kept out of sight, sneaking past townsfolk attracted to the commotion. It was almost comically easy to reach the edge of town.

The rain soaked through his ragged clothing and through the bag thrown over his shoulder. He slogged through the thick sand, each step just irritating him further. Luckily enough for him, it was only a bit longer until he reached his lair. Kit bent down and through the trapdoor open and started to go down the stone steps. He shut the trap door behind him, encasing the area in darkness. Kit began to shiver, he was soaked to the bone. He threw the bag to the floor and shook his hair out. He brushed away the muck sticking to the sides of his head. Kit let out a sigh and started to strip. He pulled off the roughly stitched white tunic and tossed it to some corner of the room. He yanked off the brown trousers that stuck to his legs. Along with the rope, he used to tie the waistband to his hips. They were tossed into the pile with the shirt too. Kit shivered more intensely, wrapping his arms around his shoulders. Drats, it was freezing. But it wouldn’t do any good to put on clothes why he was still wet. Kit’s teeth chattered as he thought about what he should do. He paced the room as he thought. He walked a few laps, no ideas coming to his mind. He turned around quickly and his foot nudged against the bag filled with his newest bounty. Kit picked the bag up, it was still wet. He sighed, it was the best he could do. He dug into the bag and pulled out the blanket from the wardrobe. The old blanket was, predictably, wet but he wrapped it around his form anyway. He gripped the edges with trembling fingers and crawled over to a rickety table across the room. Kit got onto his knees and grabbed a handful of candles and a matchbox. He crawled into one of the corners, teeth still chattering, and shakily started to light the candles. He set them on the floor around him, it was better than nothing. He hugged himself as tight as he could. All he could do was listen to the drumming of rain and roar of thunder.

Hours passed and candle wax began to drip to the floor. Kit had thrown on an older button-up shirt and a pair of loose-fitting trousers that dragged across the floor. The blanket was laying on his chair, drying. Rain still pounded the earth, Kit was sure that it was the end of the world. They’d never had this much rain, never in history. Kit sighed and sat down on the floor. He grabbed a few bags filled with items. He had time to kill, it was about time he rummaged through his collection. Kit pulled out a few silver bowls and held them to the candlelight. A few scratches here and there, but he’d make decent cash for them in the underground. Next was

a dagger that stretched from his middle finger to his wrist. The blade glimmered brightly, the tip sharp as a viper's fang. The handle was strong and made from cherry colored wood. He twisted it and slashed it through the air a few times. It would make a reliable knife, an excellent weapon for close range fighting. Roughly inscribed in the handle was the word, "Amatus." Kit could only guess that it was supposed to be the name of the blade. He twisted the dagger in his hand again. He could keep it for himself. But it would make a killing in the black market. But it felt so right in his hand! Kit easily twisted and turned and flipped the blade in his hand, exhilaration rushing through him. He tucked it into one of his many sheaths, smirk lining his face. Before he could continue to search through his piles, a thump resonated from above. Kit immediately turned his head up to the stone ceiling. A traveler? This late and in this weather? Stupid villagers. Kit scoffed at the thought of them. Let them freeze, his hideout was perfectly hidden. Another thump, this time closer. Kit stood up from his position on the floor. He put a hand on the handle of his dagger and waited. All there was was the sound of rain and the rolling of thunder. He chuckled to himself, it was nothing.

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP!

One moment Kit's standing all alone and next to the staircase, the next he's doused in rain and there's a body on the floor in front of him. He only gaped for a second before yanking Amatus out of his sheath and at the intruder.

"Who the hell are you!?" Kit barked out. The intruder let out a groan and tried to sit up from the dusty floor. The intruder was seemingly male with slightly shaggy dark brown, nearly black, hair. He was drenched head to toe in muck and sand.

"I told you to state yourself!" Kit thundered. He stomped over to the intruder and grabbed him by his hair. The intruder let out a hiss of pain, scrunching up his eyes. His arms laid limp at his sides, his legs dragging on the floor. "Answer me! Unless you want my knife six inches through your heart!" Kit hissed. The intruder let out a small groan, eyes opening slightly. They were a deep blue, murky and dense like the ocean.

"Jayden! Jayden Starling!" he choked out. Kit looked over Jayden one more time before dropping him to the floor. Jayden gasped in air, he'd been holding his breath the dumb fuck, he scrambled to his knees and looked up at Kit.

"Get the fuck out. If the cops find my place anytime soon, I'll be coming for your heart," Kit spat. He used his knife to direct him to the staircase. "Be grateful for your mercy." He turned away from the traveler and back to the pile of items he'd set out. Before he could walk away, Jayden shouted out a, "Wait!" Kit growled and turned

back to the male sitting on the floor.

“What?” he hissed out. Jayden looked up at him with wide eyes, hands folded on his knees.

“P-Please I got c-c-chased out of Willowsville, I h-have n-nowhere else t-t-to go!” Jayden cried out. Tears filled his murky eyes, his hands now clasped over his chest. “I c-couldn’t make a l-living of my o-own due to my family, I d-don’t have any f-f-family!” Tears were threatening to overflow and a small snuffle escaped him as he spoke. As Jayden sniffled on the floor, shivering on the floor Kit felt something he hadn’t felt in a long time. Sympathy. He huffed and turned away from the trembling male.

“Fine, stay here if you please!” he spat out. He heard Jayden give a relieved sigh.

“But I refuse to have a slacker in my den, you’ll have a few jobs to do while you stay here,” Kit sat down at his pile as he spoke.

“Y-Yes of course!” Jayden stammered out. Kit sighed and rubbed his forehead. He just couldn’t turn away one of his own.

“Go to sleep, we start tomorrow,” Kit demanded. Without looking behind him, he could tell that Jayden had curled up on the floor. Kit pulled out a few golden bracelets, he could get a few weeks worth of food at the Raven with it. He’d probably need it with this new visitor.

A few hours passed and the rain was finally starting to slow. But a new annoyance was pecking at the back of his mind. He could hear Jayden’s teeth chattering from across the room. Over the hours, Jayden had slowly migrated to the corner of the room and decided to take shelter there. But no matter how far away the male was, he could still hear the click-clatter of his teeth. He let out a deep sigh and Jayden’s shivering stopped for a moment.

“You’re cold,”

“Mm-hm,” Kit let out another sigh and stood up. Jayden looked at him fearfully. He walked over to his chair where the now dry blanket sat. He then strolled over to where Jayden was and dropped it over his head.

“Go to sleep,” he commanded. Jayden let out a little hum and curled back up in the corner. Before Kit settled down himself, he turned back to Jayden one more time. “Next time, just ask,” he sighed. Jayden sleepily nodded before his eyes fluttered shut. Kit let out a small sigh and started to blow some of the candles out.

Kit sat on his molding chair while turning a knife in his hand. Amatus’s handle was now somewhat worn with age, but so was Kit. It’d only been a year since he had found the blade, but he felt as though he lived a thousand lives. He turned the blade anxiously in hands, a nervous tick he’d gotten over the years. He was going to tell

him, he was going to tell Jayden the truth. After all they'd been through, he didn't want to hide his past anymore. Kit let out a long sigh and used the bladeless hand to rub at his forehead. Just as he was about to sit up and look for Jayden, the said male came bounding down the stairs. His dark brown hair flowed slightly, his cheeks flushed a bright pink, and a smile graced his face. Even though he willed it not, a flush covered his own cheeks as well.

"I brought home the big haul today!" Jayden yelled as he ran over to Kit. He threw the bag from over his shoulder onto the floor and watched as bundles of cash and food poured out. He gave a wider grin, giving a genuine closed-eyed smile. "You were right, those golden rods were worth a fortune," Jayden laughed. Kit gave a small chuckle of his own and rubbed the back of his neck.

"Marta will do anything for her witchcraft," he mumbled. Kit looked down at his feet and shuffled slightly. Jayden suddenly stopped laughing.

"You okay? You're acting a little strange," Jayden gently grabbed Kit by the chin to tilt his face up. Kit felt his face heat up even more. He still had one more secret he wouldn't ever share. Jayden's lip was jutting out just slightly, he'd always been an open book.

"I'm fine," Kit coughed out, backing away from his grip. Then again, he was always an open book around Jayden. He looked to Kit confusedly but backed up anyway. He looked sad for a moment but perked up immediately after.

"We should go down to the oasis, that should perk you up!" Jayden chirped. Without waiting for Kit's response, he grabbed him by the wrist and started to drag him up and out of his lair.

They walked across the burning sand, the sun beating down on their cloaked bodies. Jayden ran as fast as could, taking Kit with him.

"H-Hey! B-Be careful Jayden!" Kit shouted as he panted. Jayden merely giggled and continued to drag him through the desert.

"Hurry up Kit!" Jayden shouted gleefully. Jayden let out another melodic laugh and despite himself, Kit couldn't help but smile too. They laughed and raced through the desert like children. Jayden looked back at Kit and ended up tripping over his cloak. He let out a yelp and pulled Kit down with him. Sand filled their already dirty hair, both of them had a mouthful of sand. But they laughed, they howled with laughter. Kit watched his crush and felt his heart swell.

"Look, there's the oasis," Jayden said softly. Kit turned around and saw that Jayden's words were true. Just a

few yards away was the small pool of crystal blue water. A few sparse bushes and some lanky trees sat around it. Kit stripped off his cloak and dipped himself into the water. Jayden followed the same suit. Kit let out a relaxed sigh as he felt the cool water grace his burning skin. He laid back on the edge with his eyes closed. He heard Jayden give a small giggle.

“What are you plan—” He choked and sputtered as he was splashed in the face with cold water. He coughed and wiped away water from his eyes. Jayden laughed, holding his stomach and a bright smile painted on his lips. “You little,” Kit growled, lunging towards him. Jayden let out a small cry and tried to run through the water. Kit chased after him, his arms stretched out and fingers straining. It didn’t take him long to grab Jayden by the waist and drag him into the water. He shrieked as he fell, turning to face Kit. They tumbled into the water. Everything blurred, the only thing he could hear clearly was his trembling heart. In the heat of the moment, he let go of Jayden’s torso. They both broke the surface of the water at the same time, gasping for air. They waded to the edge before collapsing, small spurts of giggles escaping them. Kit rested his head against Jayden’s chest without thinking. His heart gave a jump at the feeling of Jayden’s warm skin against his own. Kit flushed and tried to pull back. But Jayden stopped him by wrapping an arm around him, his hand clasping the back of his head.

“Don’t worry, you’re fine,” Jayden murmured. Kit felt every word vibrate through his chest. But he did as he was told and stayed where he was. Jayden’s stomach raised and lowered with every breath, his heart steadily beating in his chest. It was comforting in a way. One of Jayden’s hands came up to carefully caress his face. Kit naturally craned his head to look up at him.

“Sorry,” Jayden apologized softly.

“You’re fine,” Kit simply stared up at Jayden’s deep blue eyes, Jayden doing the same to Kit’s dull black ones. Without their consent, they started to slowly lean towards each other. Slowly, slowly, slowly they inched closer to each other. Kit moved his hands to Jayden’s chest, nearly straddling his lap. Closer, closer, closer. Kit could see every detail of Jayden’s face. Small lines traced around his eyes and mouth. A few beauty scars dotted his cheeks. Kit leaned closer, Jayden did the same. Slowly, slowly, slowly, closer, closer, closer. Then they bumped noses. Both of them jumped back from the contact. Kit looked down shamefully, cheeks a bright red. Jayden gave an awkward laugh and looked away as well. They sat in silence for a moment, coming back to reality.

“Here, I want you to have this,” he muttered. He pulled Amatus out of his pocket and held it out. Jayden looked to the knife to Kit’s face, eyes almost comically wide.

“W-What? B-But Amatus is your favorite!” Jayden stammered. Kit huffed and looked away.

“Just take it,” Kit forced the handle of the blade into Jayden’s palm. “I want you to keep it,” Kit murmured. Jayden opened his mouth to stammer out a reply, but the sound of several bangs interrupted him. Gunshots. “The fox has to be over here!”

“We’ll finally get that rotten thief and give him what he deserves!”

Kit stood up from the water. A large group of people were running towards him from the distance.

“Jayden!” He gasped. He looked fearfully up at him. Kit’s heart began to pound, panic setting in his bones. “J-Jayden, listen to me,” he said, turning to face him. “You gotta run, run and then stay low somewhere,” Kit rambled. He grabbed him by the arm and dragged him out of the water. He started pushing him in the opposite direction of the gun-wielding strangers.

“W-Wait! What about you?!” Jayden squeaked out. Kit continued to push him in the opposite direction. “I-I’ll be fine,” Kit lied. He gave Jayden an extra hard shove and threw his cloak at him. “Get going, just run to the Raven. Ask Belle for a map and head for the big city,” Kit instructed, his voice shaking. He tried to swallow down his nervousness. “They won’t be able to find you there,” Jayden forced his heels into the ground and grabbed Kit by the shoulders.

“What about you!? I can’t leave you here on your own!” Jayden cried. He looked split in between rage and sorrow.

“You can and you will,”

“You can’t face them on your own!”

“Shut up. Don’t worry about me, just get out of here!”

“I’M NOT GOING TO LEAVE YOU!” Kit grabbed Jayden’s arms and forced them off his shoulders. He forced him to turn around and pushed him as far as he could.

“GO! YOU HAVE TO RUN!” Kit screamed. Tears streamed down both of their faces. “Please, just go. I-I can’t—I won’t let you get hurt,” Jayden was openly sobbing, standing his ground. Kit gave him one more weak push.

“Please, go,” Kit whispered. Jayden let out a broken sob as he turned around and ran. Kit wiped away the tears staining his face and turned to face the mob. They were closer than he would like. But he walked up to them calmly, another knife in hand.

“Stand where you are filthy thief!” one of them shouted. The crowd chanted in agreement.

“Please, you are the filthy pigs!” Kit spat out. He pointed his knife to the crowd. “You are the thieves, you took

what little I had when I was a child,” He took a few stomps forwards, ignoring the click of loading guns. “You came to my house and killed the only ones that took me in!” Kit was spurred on by the crowd, the memories of his makeshift family, the idea of the one he loved getting hurt. “My father may be a mafia member, my mother an assassin, my brothers and sisters pickpockets,” Tears filled his eyes but he refused to let it show. He glared into the crowd, rage burning and hurt building. “But they didn’t deserve to die!” He heard the bang of a gun first. He felt something hit him, liquid bleeding through his clothes. He looked down slowly, deep red spread quickly through his thin shirt and over his skin. He was falling back, everything was fading. A woman with skin as pale as the moon and eyes as green as the forest and hair as black as the night. Mother... A man with chestnut brown hair and mocha colored skin. His eyes glimmered like dark sapphires, a smirk covering his face. Father... Three girls, one with bright blond hair and sea green eyes. Freckles adorned all their faces but stuck out mostly on the pale blond. The last two had skin of ivory and dark red hair. Their eyes were deep but sparkled with emerald green. Madeline, Rosemary, and Elaine. The last thing he saw before everything turned to black was his two brothers.

“You’ll make us proud, won’t ‘cha?”

“Yeah, won’t ‘cha?” The taller leaned on the smaller one. The taller had bright red hair, nearly orange in the light. His eyes glowed with a chocolate brown. His skin was almost as dark as father’s. The smaller had dark black hair and eyes like amber orbs. His skin was paler than a sheet of paper but had a yellow tint to it.

“I promise to make ya proud, I promise Joshua, I promise Asher!” Kit let a smile onto his lips, tears ran down his cheeks. I’m sorry, I’m sorry I couldn’t make you proud...

His eyes fluttered open, a sluggishness overbearing his senses. He shivered from his place on the floor. Kit pulled himself up from the damp floor, only to groan in pain. The shackles chained around his wrists and ankles dug into his skin, his body was stiff from the stone below him.

“Kit... Kit... Kit!” Kit blinked away the tiredness from his eyes and forced his wobbling legs to stand. It couldn’t be...

“Jayden?” he croaked out. He looked up and through a small window, he saw Jayden.

“Yes, it’s me! Let’s get you out of here!” Jayden hissed. He showed Kit Amatus and started to saw away at the rusting bars. Kit merely babbled for a moment, but quickly felt panic flow through his bones.

“What are you doing here? I told you to run!” Kit spat. Jayden rolled his bar and pulled out one of five bars.

“I heard everything, I’m not leaving you to face that on your own,” Jayden retorted. He pulled out another bar.

“I don’t care, if you get caught we’ll both be hung!”

“Shut up and we won’t get caught!” Kit huffed and glared up at the brunette. Jayden sighed as he pulled out the third bar.

“Listen, I know you’re not good with emotions or people,” Jayden started. “But I care, I care. So I won’t let you waste away here, or anywhere for that matter,” Kit let out another deep sigh.

“I care too, I guess,” mumbled. Jayden smirked and pulled out the final bar. Jayden reached his arms through the small window and Kit grasped his hands. Kit jumped up and put his feet on the wall. Jayden yanked him up and Kit quickly climbed. Within a minute, Kit was on the sand covered land.

“T-Thanks I—” Jayden grabbed him by the cheeks and put his lips against his own. Kit easily fell into the kiss, their lips clicking together in the best way. It was desperate, it was messy, but it was perfect. They pulled away from each other, eyes hazy and hearts pounding in rhythm.

“Don’t mention it, love,” Jayden murmured. Kit flushed and snuggled into the crook of his neck. He heard and felt Jayden chuckle.

“Let’s get going,” Kit sighed. Jayden stood and took one of Kit’s hands into his own. He slashed his binds with Amatus, leaving chunks of metal on the desert sand.

Hand in hand they ran off into the night, they ran to the future. A future of love and hardship, a future filled with joy and sorrow. They stayed together through it all, through whatever life threw at them. Everybody thought that they were the villains, cold and made of stone. Nobody knew of the shared nights, of the love they shared. The citizens of Willowsville sang of the ones that got away.

The Fox and the Jay, the ones that got away,

The Fox was chained with silver and gold,

The Jay flew in and grabbed him by his scruff,

They flew into the moon to wreak havoc only they could,

If only one would shoot them down,

The Fox and the Jay, The Fox and the Jay.

No one would know the truth, nobody ever would. Kit and Jayden would live a loving life of crime. But nobody would know the truth they hid. Everyone would point fingers and cry, blaming the thieves for their woes. No one would accept that the thieves were humans, that they were in love. But that’s okay... Kit didn’t like people

getting into his business anyway.

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