

Game Night

by Tom Fassbender

Randy stood in the alley behind Krasnowski Construction with a loaded gun shoved down the front of his pants. His friend Todd was inside, unloading the safe. And when Todd walked out the door, Randy was going to shoot him in the face.

Everyone knew old man Krasnowski paid his crew in cash. The word was he had ties to the big boys out of Chicago, but he paid well, so no one asked too many questions. Todd's gal Laurie answered the phones there, and the other night she told Todd that tonight, a few weeks before Christmas, the safe would be full of money for salaries plus bonuses.

So Todd came up with the perfect plan. Rob the place on Monday night as the Packers played the Bears at Lambeau Field. Downtown Green Bay was deserted at the best of times, but during the biggest game of the season, it was a ghost town. Everyone would be watching that game, either at the stadium, a tavern, or in an overheated den.

So Randy stood watch outside, freezing his ass off, as Todd cleaned out the safe and Laurie sat in the car just around the corner, ready for a quick getaway. The idea was to blow town and make it to Kaukauna before the game was over. No one would look for them in Kaukauna.

A cold wind whipped down the alley, blasting Randy in the face with a shower of snow. He pulled his Packers cap down over his ears, then slid his hands into the pockets of his parka to warm his numb fingers. He'd wanted to wear mittens, but it was really hard to fire a gun with mittens on.

He ran his thumb over the Buck knife in his pocket, the one his

father had given him when he was 12 to use on the hunting trip they never took. He pulled the knife out of his pocket and flicked it open, thought about how much he missed his dad ...

Todd exploded out the door with a fat bag of money tucked under his arm.

Randy jumped, his heart beating faster. He dropped the knife and fumbled to pull out the gun, but the hammer caught on his jeans. He jerked hard, a rip echoed down the narrow alley, and he pointed the gun at Todd.

"Randy, what the hell are you doing?"

What was he doing? He thought about last night, alone with Laurie. She told him Todd was going to cut both of them out of the deal and run off with Amy, that slut waitress from the diner. Randy would be left behind to take the fall. She gave him the gun so he could care of Todd first. Then they could get away. Together.

He remembered her lips, her hair, the way she smelled, the way she tasted. The way she felt ...

He pulled the trigger.

Nothing happened.

Randy looked at the gun and give it a little shake. Then his world spun around as he took Todd's punch across his jaw. The gun tumbled from Randy's fingers as he crumpled to the ground. Todd started kicking him in the belly. Randy curled up, whimpering.

"You always were an idiot, Randy." Todd kept kicking.

Randy searched frantically through the snow. He needed to find that

gun. But he found his knife first, still open. He grabbed it and lurched upward, burying the blade deep, just above Todd's belt. He twisted and jerked it sideways, ripping a hole through Todd's guts.

Todd stumbled backwards, gasping, holding his hands over the wound, trying to keep the blood in, but failing. He sank to his knees, cold eyes staring at Randy, then collapsed against a snowbank.

Randy looked around. There was a lot of blood. Blood on the snow. Blood on his hands. Blood on the money. He wiped his hands on his pants, then bent down and picked up the money bag. He grinned. It felt heavy.

Pain exploded across the back of his skull, and he toppled face-first into the snow. He squirmed and rolled over, holding the back of his head and trying to push himself up. Laurie stood over him, tire iron in one hand and the bag of money in the other.

"Sorry, Randy. But you really are an idiot."

She turned and walked away into the swirling snow as sirens wailed in the distance.

