Bad Day-Dark Night

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Jason left late after a long, bad day at work. On the walk home, a young man in ragged clothes appeared out of the darkness. "Give me your friggin' wallet, rich boy." At a distance he lunged forward at Jason with a butcher knife.

He backed up and looked around for someone to intervene. Traffic rolled by the side street with no pedestrians in sight. He turned to his military training.

He opened his blazer with both hands to calm the situation. "I have little money and the cards are encrypted."

"I don't give a shit—just give me everything you have."

Jason took off his blazer and folded it over his left arm. "Did you ever try working for all this stuff?"

The man grunted his anger. "Piss off!" and brandished the knife in protest.

Jason pulled out his wallet and watch, holding them in his right hand. He reached out to hand them over to the drugged-out man. The man reached for the wallet. Jason dropped the watch and the wallet and grabbed the guy's wrist. The man then brought the butcher knife wielding around at Jason. "Stop!" Jason said as he brought his left arm up to block the knife, and it struck the blazer.

He held onto the man's hand as they scuffled to their knees. Jason gasped.

The man breathing hard, shouted out. "Let go you stupid son-of-a-bitch__I'll cut you!"

"You drop the knife and I'll give you the cash. Then you can be on your way."

"Why do you have to be such an ass-hole__? Just give me the wallet and I'll leave."

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The man struck Jason's arm with the knife several times before he decided it was in vain. He looked down, taking his eyes of Jason for a moment. Just as the man let his guard down Jason, sucker punched him in the nose. Blood gushed into the man's beard. He cried out, "What a bitch!"

"Drop the knife! It's not that sharp anyway."

"Give me the wallet and I'll drop the knife."

Jason's cell phone rang out playing the intro of the Spanish Harlem as they both glared at each other. A Mexican standoff.

A car turned and lit up the man's face. Jason stepped back. "Oh my God! You're Brian from college."

"So. Who are you?"

"I'm Jason. We had chemistry together. Don't you remember?"

"So what if I do? Are you going to give me the wallet or not?"

"Look, Brian, I can help you. What happened to you?"

"You mean, how did I get here?"

"Yeah. You were bright in class. What the hell happened?"

"It was that friggin' professor, Atherton. He showed me how to make crack and when I started using the rest is what you see."

Brian still armed with his knife, glared at Jason—staring back was Jason with his blazer around his arm. Neither would yield in this Mexican standoff. Some distance had divided them, but Jason still had Brian's left arm in his grasp.

"Brian, let me call your sister. Wasn't she always close to you?"

"That bitch won't help. She turned me in for taking her wedding ring. They've all abandoned me."

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"You're not going to stab me with a dull butcher knife. So, what are you going to do now?"

Brian maneuvered himself over the wallet. Shoved Jason backward and with one quick motion he reached down and grabbed the wallet. Jason stunned at first watched as Brian disappeared into the darkness. Calling out to the moving shadow, Jason shouted, "You dumb shit, I'm going to tell your sister."