Blood & Whiskey: A Monologue by Fleance – Eden Tomes

Air… I just need air. My lungs… they feel like fire. Heart’s trying to hammer its way out. So cold. This brick, it’s… it’s real. It’s rough. But what I saw… was *that* real?

(Blink)

The flash… from the barrel. So quick. And the noise… like thunder right in my ear. Dad… he shouted. My name. "Run, Fleance! Run!" His voice… it didn't sound like his. It… broke. And then he just… folded. Like… like a coat dropped on the floor. Just… down.

(Shaking head)

No. No. It’s not… He can’t be. Not Dad. Not *my* dad. Banquo. Everyone knew Banquo. Strongest man I ever knew. They… they couldn’t just… Who *were* they?

Gunpowder. I can still smell it. Stings my nose. And this… this garbage. My hands… look at them. Shaking like leaves. Stop it. Stop. Just… breathe. He told me to run. So I ran.

(Silence)

He’s gone. Isn’t he? They shot him. Right there. On the street. He shoved me… so hard. Sent me sprawling. Saved me. And they… they didn’t even look at him after. Just… walked away. My father.

He… he taught me to tie my shoes. Showed me how to hold a bat. That stupid song he’d whistle when he was fixing something… It’s all… gone. The whole world feels… wrong. Tilted. Like it’s about to slide off into nothing. Don’t cry. Not here. They’ll hear. But Dad… oh, Dad… why?

(Furrowing brow)

Who were they? Their hats were pulled down low… but they knew us. They were waiting. It wasn’t… it wasn’t just a robbery. This was… for him. For us. Why? He was always straight. Always loyal… to the Family. To… to Mr. Macbeth. *Uncle Mac.*

Macbeth… He’s the Don now. Ever since Mr. Duncan… went away. Dad was… Dad was his oldest friend. His partner. He wouldn’t… would he? *Could* he?

(Volume drops)

Those whispers… Dad heard them. In the clubs, on the corners. From those old women with their cards and their strange eyes. Whispers about… about me. That our name… that *I* would be… something. That Macbeth wouldn’t want that. Dad laughed them off. Said it was just street talk, nonsense. But his eyes… when he thought I wasn’t looking… he was worried. He was.

Macbeth got what he wanted. The top. The whole damn city in his pocket. But the whispers… they said *I* was the one who could… undo it. Is that it? Is that why? Did Uncle Mac… did he send them? To stop the whispers? By stopping… us?

They know I got away. I saw one of them look… right as I scrambled into the dark. They’ll be looking. I’m a loose end. A witness. His son. Where can I go? Who do I trust? Everyone Dad knew… they’re all under *his* thumb now. Macbeth’s. Anyone could sell me out for a few dollars, for a pat on the back from the new Don. This whole city… it used to feel like ours. Now every shadow has teeth. Every doorway could be hiding them.

(Volume increases)

He was a good man! A better man than… than *him*, if this is his doing. He didn’t deserve to be gunned down like some… animal! This is it, then. This is their precious "Family." Their "business." Not just fancy suits and whispered deals. It’s this. It’s blood and betrayal. And I was supposed to be… what? Blind? Stupid?

I was just a kid. Dad… he tried to keep me from this. But I see it now. I see it all so clearly. Their smiles. Their handshakes. All rotten. All lies. They think I’m just some scared boy, running for his life. And I am. I *am* scared. But there’s something else now… under the fear. Something… burning. They took him from me. They took *everything*.

(Looking forward)

"Run, Fleance, run!" That’s what he yelled. He didn’t say "give up." He said "run." Survive. Those whispers… Macbeth was scared of them. Tried to silence them. But he couldn’t. Because *I’m* still here. The whispers are still alive as long as *I* am.

I won’t let them win. I won’t let his death be for… for nothing. I don’t know how yet. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do. But I’m his son. I am Banquo’s son. And I will live. I *have* to. For him. And maybe… maybe one day… they’ll all find out what they did. They’ll all understand.

(Deep breath)

The night’s not over. Not for me. It’s just… beginning. I need to disappear. Get smart. Real smart. And I need to remember this. This cold. This alley. And this fire… inside. Always remember.