



# GRIND AND POUND

No refs. No rules. No second chances.

Written by Jorge Parente

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INT. UNDERGROUND VENUE - NIGHT

A dimly lit, run-down basement. A crowd moving in slow motion cheers and screams.

A beaten-up FIGHTER (30), shirtless and heavy, takes a punch to the face. He falls to the ground as JAKE STONE (40), also shirtless and battered, watches his opponent drop onto the dirt. Jake breathes heavily, blood dripping from his nose.

The fighter bounces back and lunges at Jake's legs, dragging him to the ground. He spins and holds Jake in a tight arm-triangle. Jake begins to lose consciousness and taps on the fighter's arm. The fighter releases Jake and gets up. Jake slams his fist to the ground, gritting his teeth.

The fighter glances down at Jake as LANE ROPER (55), well-dressed, raises his arm in victory. Jake gasps. Defeated.

INT. LANE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Lane sits behind a wooden desk, counting money. TWO BODYGUARDS stand behind him. Jake opens the door. Lane glances at him, grabs a thin stack of twenties and drops it on the desk in front of him. Keeps counting.

Jake walks up to the desk, eyes the money, and picks it up. The stack is scrawny. He gives Lane a look. Lane doesn't acknowledge him. The bodyguards watch. Jake leaves the room.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake steps inside. Tosses the fight money on the kitchen table next to a stack of unpaid bills.

He shakes two Tylenol into his palm, tosses them back, and downs a glass of tap water.

Stiff and sore, he shuffles into the living room and eases himself onto the worn-out couch. Every muscle protests.

His hand finds a whiskey bottle behind the couch. He stares at it, twists the cap-his hand shakes.

A framed photo in catches his eye: him and a woman, smiling on a beach.

Screeching tires, a woman's scream, and the sickening crunch of metal echo in his head.

He clenches his jaw, twisting the cap back on with force. His body aches, but nothing compared to the memories.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake wakes up with a black eye. Looks at his phone. It's 10:20. Throws on pants, a shirt, shoes. Heads out.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALLEYWAY - DAY

EMMET (50), wearing white chef's jacket, stands at the door.

EMMET  
Four hours late?  
(beat)  
Why are you even here?

JAKE  
Come on Emmet. I need the job.

EMMET  
I got someone else already. It's just  
dish washing, Jake. You'll find  
another place.

Emmet turns around and walks inside.

JAKE  
Emmet, please.

Door shuts.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Jake's image reflects on the glass of the liquor store. A long hard look. He takes a deep breath. Walks away.

INT. POWER PUNCH GYM - DAY

ROBERT (ROB) FERNANDEZ (55), an experienced fighter, wearing glove pads, runs a punching drill with TERRY (18), a new fighter.

ROB  
Six, three. Come on.

Terry repeatedly throws a left uppercut and a right hook, striking Rob's pads.

Jake walks into the gym and starts pounding the heavy bag nonstop.

ROB (cont'd)  
Stop. Let's take five, kid.

Terry lowers his hands, breathing heavily. Rob removes his pads.

INT. POWER PUNCH GYM - DAY

Rob walks up to Jake, who is still going at the bag.

ROB  
I like your makeup.

Jake stops punching, catching his breath.

JAKE  
Funny.

ROB  
I take it you didn't win last night.

JAKE  
Yeah. Lost my job too.

ROB  
Hmm...  
(beat)  
Rent this month?

JAKE  
Nope.

ROB  
Arianna can always use an extra hand  
in her landscaping business.

JAKE  
I'd rather not get involved with your  
daughter. You know she--

ROB  
I know.

Terry comes close.

TERRY  
Hey Rob. You ready?

ROB  
I'm talking here. Go skip rope for  
five.  
(to Jake)  
Jeez. Can you believe this guy?

Terry shrugs and walks off. Rob pulls out his wallet.

JAKE

Rob--

Rob gives Jake a \$20.

ROB

Get something to eat, kid. Tomorrow  
will be a better day.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

DAVID WOZNIAK (15), a skinny kid. Is being pushed around by  
BULLY ONE, and TWO OTHER BULLIES. Jake walks by and takes  
notice.

JAKE

Hey!

The bullies stop and look at Jake. Bully One, the biggest of  
them all --bigger than Jake-- turns to face him.

BULLY ONE

Keep walking, old man. You're gonna  
break a hip.

Jake chuckles.

BULLY ONE (cont'd)

What's so funny?

JAKE

Your ass on the floor. That's funny.

BULLY ONE

Oh yeah?

Bully One lunges at Jake. Jake sidesteps, grabs his jacket,  
and slams him onto the ground.

The bully gasps, struggling to catch his breath.

JAKE

Told you it was funny.

Jake looks at the other two bullies and walks toward David.  
The bullies back off, help Bully One get up, and shuffle  
away.

JAKE (cont'd)

You okay?

DAVID

Yeah. Thanks. That was cool.

JAKE  
I've seen you before, haven't I?

DAVID  
We're neighbors.

JAKE  
Gotcha. Who were those guys?

DAVID  
Some kids from high school.

JAKE  
High school? They look like they got  
kids in high school.

David laughs.

JAKE (cont'd)  
Listen. If you ever want to learn how  
to defend yourself, let me know.

DAVID  
Will do, sir. Thank you again.

Jake turns around and leaves.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jake sits on a bench, eating a hot dog, a newspaper in his hand. OMAR FLETCHER (34), Jake's old fighting buddy, spots him.

OMAR  
The good old Jake Stone. Been  
forever.

JAKE  
Omar Fletcher. How's it going, buddy?

OMAR  
All good, brother. I heard about--  
(beat)  
Listen. I'm sorry, man.

JAKE  
Yeah. Thanks.

Beat.

OMAR  
How's life treating ya? Still  
fighting, I see.

JAKE

Yeah.

OMAR

How's that going?

JAKE

Could be better. You?

OMAR

I'm doing great, actually. Meeting a girl around the corner.

(beat)

What are you up to tonight?

JAKE

Hey man. I think you're cute, but--

OMAR

(laughs)

I'm working for Titanium Wolf Security. We got a job tonight, and I could use an extra hand. We go in, look tough and get out. Easy, peasy. \$400 for three hours. Interested?

JAKE

I think you just got cuter.

OMAR

Nice. Meet me at ten, 36th and Rochester. Yellow door on the south side. Do you have a black suit, white shirt, and a tie?

JAKE

Yup.

OMAR

Great. See you then, brother.

Omar gets up and fist bumps Jake. Walks away.

EXT. 36TH AND ROCHESTER - STREET - NIGHT

Jake, in a black suit, walks up to the only yellow door. Knocks. A moment later, the door unlocks and Omar appears behind it.

OMAR

Hey. Follow me.



INT. 36TH AND ROCHESTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A dark hallway. Omar closes the door and hands Jake a large stack of hundreds.

JAKE  
This is more than four hundred.

OMAR  
Just watch my back. Come on.

Jake, still confused, follows Omar into--

INT. 36TH AND ROCHESTER - BACKROOM - NIGHT

A cramped backroom. A single bulb overhead casts shadows on a rickety wooden table cluttered with poker chips, beer bottles, cigarettes, playing cards and crumpled bills sit on the table.

MATTY (50, grizzled, big), sits across from BOBBY (40, big, fidgety). FRANK (40, scrawny, sweat stained) gets up from the table and grabs a beer from the corner.

The door creaks open. OMAR steps in, Jake behind him. The room stills.

OMAR  
Hey Matty.

MATTY  
Omar.

OMAR  
How's business?

MATTY  
Slow.

OMAR  
Yeah. The boss wants his money. Now.

MATTY  
Tell Locke he'll have it next week.

Omar gives Matty a long look. Walks behind him and bends over his ear.

OMAR  
Did I stutter?

Frank grips a beer bottle, slipping it behind his back. Jake clocks it.

MATTY

Omar, come on.

Omar takes the cards from Matty's hands and places them face up on the table.

OMAR

Money. Now.

Frank closes in behind Omar. Raises the bottle. Jake runs and punches the bottle before it hits Omar's head, smashing it into pieces. Frank walks back and hits a wall.

Omar looks at Frank, then turns back to Matty.

OMAR (cont'd)

That just cost you extra.

MATTY

I don't have--

Omar punches Matty in the center of the face. Matty's nose is a bloody mess now.

Matty tries to stand up, but Omar takes out a knife and places it on Matty's throat. Matty slowly sits down.

OMAR

Come again?

A beat.

MATTY

Bobby. Get seven.

Bobby scrambles to a metal box in the corner. Pulls out a stack of cash. Brings it back to Matty.

BOBBY

There's only six-five.

Matty looks at Omar. Omar looks at the table. Nods.

Matty grabs all the money on the table, counts it. Omar's knife still in this throat.

MATTY

Six-eight?

Omar presses the knife in. Just a hair.

MATTY (cont'd)

Alright, damn--

Matty yanks out his wallet. Pulls out two hundred. Slaps it onto the pile. He goes to put his wallet away.

OMAR  
(softly)  
Hey--

Omar nods. Matty understands. He gets angry and puts all the money in his wallet on the table.

Omar lets go.

OMAR (cont'd)  
Pleasure doing business.  
(to Matty, looking at Frank)  
Put a leash on that dog. One day he's gonna be roadkill.

Omar walks to the door and leaves, followed by Jake.

Matty stares daggers, wipes his nose.

EXT. 36TH AND ROCHESTER - STREET - NIGHT

Omar and Jake step out of the building. The air is heavy. Omar pulls out the wad of cash, hands Jake five hundred.

OMAR  
Nice work tonight.

Jake stares at the money in his hand.

JAKE  
That wasn't a job. That was a shakedown.

OMAR  
I said it was security. You provided security.

JAKE  
I'm done.

Jake walks away.

OMAR  
No refs. No rules. And it pays more than getting your face smashed for crumbs.

Omar gives Jake a piece of paper.

OMAR (cont'd)  
You have potential. Call me when you  
figure that out.

Omar turns and disappears into the night. Jake sees him go.

INT. RENAISSANCE DINER - NIGHT

It's quiet. A few patrons murmur over coffee. Jake enters, passes VERONICA HILL (40s, owner), who watches him. He slides into a booth, stares out the window. She drops a bag of frozen peas on the table.

VERONICA  
Fighting in a suit now?

JAKE  
Yeah, figured I'd bleed in style.

She chuckles, pours him coffee. He puts the peas to his eye.

VERONICA  
Anything else?

JAKE  
This is perfect. Thanks V.

VERONICA  
You ever need more than peas and  
caffeine... you know where I am.

Jake meets her eyes, a flicker of something unspoken. She gives him a small smile and walks off.

EXT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake reaches his building. Bag of peas in hand. Gets in.

Across the street, parked in the dark, a black sedan idles. Inside, MATTY sits behind the wheel -nose stuffed with cotton, eyes bruised and puffy-. Rage simmers just beneath his quiet stare.

Bobby rides shotgun. In the back, Frank eyes the building.

MATTY  
Let's go.

The car doors open. The three men exit and head toward the building, reaching the main entrance.

END EPISODE 1