

Sir Francis:[Drake]

by

Kevin Stillwater

(c) 2009 Copyright Brett Paufler
www.paufler.net
brett@paufler.net

A one, a two, a three:[and you're in].

I can only tell you what I saw, not what I know... or maybe that should be the other way around?

Whatever the case, this is going to be a quick little ditty:[no plot, no skins, no dialogue]. Some might even go so far as to say, no nothing. They'd probably be right...

But then, they probably haven't been pitching me their pennies on the way out either, so who needs 'em?

Sir Francis:[Drake]

I was:[not am, I was] sitting on the train. It was the end of a long trip. I had taken the late night flight in from the outlands:[the islands, beyond the edge, and so forth], and I hadn't slept a wink:[not a wink in two days], but I was still only halfway there.

There was still the train ride.

I'd gotten on at the airport:[end of the line, a sleeping bum my only companion], and things went smoothly enough at first. One bag in the seat beside me, another across my lap and as the early morning passengers got on, I felt sort of secure:[secure enough to check out the girls, drop my feed, and just be].

That might have been a mistake.

[Two, three, four]: stations into the ride, and HE stepped aboard. You couldn't miss him:[everything changed]. I don't need a picture. I don't need a skin:[and neither should you]. He just strutted into the cabin:[like he owned the place], took a good

look around, and let out a bellowing laugh:[at the world, the girl, and himself].

Being there:[with him, in that moment], I checked out the girl:[the lady, the secretary on the way to work, the ex-wife, the informant, and/or the person to whom he owed money].

Whatever the case, she ignored him. At first, I thought he was trying to pick her up. I bet, she thought he was trying to pick her up. But then I began to suspect, maybe they knew each other:[fought over a seat just the other day, or... or... well, you got me as to the next or].

I mean, there are countless dead-end trails of no importance that we could go down.

And that's all in the moments before Drake sat down. In truth, it took me a few days to come up with his name, but I need not bore you with that sort of production detail. The fact is, Drake sat down, the train moved on, while the girl:[whoever she was] simply ignored him.

As it would happen, Drake had chosen the seat directly in front of my own. Oh, happy days! I sat there shivering:[from the cold, my fear, and my need].

Will you allow me the familiarity of admitting embarrassment? The first thing I noticed was his hands:[big, black, and beautiful]. They looked so soft, so strong. I couldn't help but imagine those wonderful hands caressing me:[to my very soul].

It's not a slip. I felt it. Did I mention the shivering cold? A man like that could keep me warm and protect me from the cackling laughter of others:[sort of like as he'd just done].

It was a weird sort of moment:[a paranoid sell-out moment]. I needed to get some sleep. I needed the safety of the monastery:[the Luddite, fanatic, K'fr ridden commune from where I am from]. I'd been there for years:[unplugged, out of touch, and out of reach]. Of course, I wasn't really ready to be with a man... or for that matter a woman, or any of the rest of their kind.

So I stared out the window and watched the lights of the tunnel go by, while Drake took out his breakfast:[Jujubees]. Got to love a man who knows what he wants. I mean, it was great! It had been what? Two years since I'd put out a disc? And YOU just knew I was going to do lay down the tracks for one the moment I hit the shore:[and got back to the real], and here was my character:[my lead, my story] eating Jujubees for breakfast not two feet away! What a godsend! What a find! It was fantastic!

And it wasn't like he was going halfway with it either. He'd gotten himself the big box:[the half-pounder, the kind you get before the opera:{the theater, or the show}] and it was obvious the Jujubees he now had left were what was left over:[after the show, he'd just curled the ends over and here they were now -- a dreamer could make something of that].

Anyway, he just took out the box, unfurled the ends, shook a few of the drops into his outstretched palm, and ate them one by one:[savoring each and every last one].

Let the Juju's enter your mouth. Just take them in your hand like he did:[one by one]. First a green one:[apple, mint, or watermelon -- choose your favorite] as you let the flavor fill your mouth and flow across your tongue. Then feel the rush:[of the sugar, the hit -- the underlying delight]. When it's gone:[and you need some more], do the same for the next:[cherry red, lemon yellow, and/or blueberry blue].

I was enjoying myself:[the way he savored them -- just like the first time, every time]. And then, who eats Jujubees for breakfast? Never mind that I had a pocket full of K'fr:[or to be more precise a bag full of K'fr] covered in chocolate, which I was aching:[and shaking] to sink my teeth into...

But you know, I didn't dare.

Not with Drake right there, the feed in his ear:[disconnected - - ringing and ringing]. Oh, he was a cop. I knew it for sure. And I was done for:[and completely done in]. Everything about him screamed cop:[screamed the law]. He just wasn't right:[wearing his clothes like a second skin:[like a body]], and the cold, my god

the cold:[my withdrawal], and the shining lights of the tunnel that led nowhere:[absolutely nowhere -- and far, far away from the real]. And I still had a thousand miles left to go before I got home:[a place which gladly was no longer my home].

I would have drifted off:[into my thoughts, into my dreams], but that was when Drake:[the guy, the cop, the ganger-banger -- dressed to the nines], having just come off a score:[no doubt], took out a wad of cash:[like a wad, a big wad -- big enough to remember wad, a wad big enough to make note of here and now]. And to the side, in between himself and the wall, he started counting the script. And who uses script these days? Who? Damn ganger-bangers! That's who:[and no one else]. And what's he doing? He's counting it! Right there:[right in the open]. And I got the best view in the house, so I'm counting along:[only part of me is wondering whether he's counting, so I can count, and he can get the count from me through the feed -- that in the end wasn't on].

I guess, I was tired:[am tired -- it must show].

Looking over his shoulder, I realize I'm being rude, so I look away. I look at the lights:[and the girl -- and what passes for her feed]. And we ride along:[time passes].

After a while, the conductor comes through:[looking for tickets, making sure we're not destroying the place, or because it's his job], and Drake pays his respects:[or at least what passes in this place for his respects]. He takes his foot off the chair on which it is resting:[for a second -- just for a second], and then it goes right back down. The conductor doesn't notice:[doesn't even care]. But I do.

Drake's testing:[seeing what he can get away with].

Because he doesn't know:[it's as simple as that -- he just doesn't know].

After that, he plays with his umbrella. And truthfully, I don't even know why I'm mentioning it:[just going down a list, I suppose]. Perhaps because it's got a sharp tip:[a sharpened tip] and I notice. Or perhaps, because they don't use umbrella's in the

reaches:[the islands, my tropical home -- away from home], since there, droplets of rain are considered blessings from above:[Heaven, some such nonsense -- or so I am told].

Of course, watching Drake flex his fingers around the grip as he gave the weapon a testing twirl:[right there in the train], I realized that the last thing this man might want would be a blessing.

Shake my head:[if you like -- in disbelief, to stay awake].
Look out the window. This is me: [tired, worried, worn out, and old]. Oh, yeah. And you might want to feel the heavy weight of the bag of K'fr sitting in your lap, feel the misery in your bones:[only a thousand miles more, only a thousand miles more -- and then watch them flow by one by one:(by long aching one)].

And then Drake:[what a character, what a card, what a call], he just won't let it be. Fidgeting:[nervous, his own drugs wearing off], he goes through his pocket:[his last pocket -- searching, hoping to find:(who knows what?)].

Yes! Pay dirt! He was happy, though I didn't entirely know why.

I mean, he held the paper so I could read it:[just like everything else -- so I could follow along, just like some crazy who thinks he's a feed; and so, life to him is just one big show].

So of course, as he reads, he takes out his Jujubees again. Feel free:[back up, reverse], and taste the flavor if you will, but I just read over his shoulder. Believe it or not, it was a court summons:[for hire or reward -- I could never be sure].

And he just held it there and let me read it. Oh, you could say he was reading it:[maybe hoping I would read along and explain it to him], but the fact is:[and will remain], it was a court summons:[pure and simple].

And then that was it. Looking at the signs going by in the dark, he suddenly realized his number was up, and he got off the train: [I think it was called The Sir Francis Drake -- the airport express].

Sir Francis:[Drake]

I'm not saying I put the rest together in real time:[I didn't]. But eventually it came to me. That girl at the start, the one who invoked the laughter. She was:[she is -- the informant, the ex-wife, someone who knew him:(who could tag him)], but she didn't:[she couldn't -- because she can't].

You see, in the beginning Sir Francis was a cop:[an angel, a hard working man trying to do good], but he had lost his way:[carried a gun, used a gun, murdered a man -- and killed in cold blood:(an innocent had died)]. In that moment:[of weakness - - and unmerciful judgment], Drake:[the demon], had taken over the body of Sir Francis:[the Good]. And as to the rest, I had only had the good fortune of having a front seat as HE took inventory of his new find:[the body, a skin].

Like I said, I'm not big on plot:[or dialogue, or skins], but it's there if you want it. I figure Drake:[Sir Francis] will show up at the sub-station:[police] seeking the reward on himself only to run into the one person in the world:[this or the next] who could tag him:[Valerie -- Valkyrie:(the true love herself)]. And being special:[the one, the only], we'll even give her a line:[to end it all] as she says, "You're not Drake."

Sir Francis:[Drake]

And as to the rest:[the beginning that ends], do what you will with it. But please, don't forget to empty your pockets on the way out and kick me down a dime...

Not that it matters. By the time this loads, I'll have dropped my load, be back on the train:[and the plane], and with any luck be back on the beach:[hitting the waves] before sunrise tomorrow.

[God]:I hate the real world