

"Your castle is mine! Your island fortress is mine. My men, your former compatriots," he emphasizes, "Scours the island for anything of value, even stashed away in any nook or hole will be found. There is nothing you have left that can surprise me," his foot presses more firmly into my throat, "There is nothing left for you to do than to give me MY treasure."

"You don't get it," I choked out to him, "This place. This damned rock was never my home."

He relents and laughs as he retracts his foot, "And what was it then? A summer lodge? A place to count your fortunes in quiet? Tell us old wise one, why did you lead us to gather so much for so long to just lock it up and throw US away?"

I sit up rubbing my throat, "No one quits this life. We stop sure, but we don't quit it."

"That can't be all," he scoffs, "Even then, why would I want to quit this? I have the people. I clearly have the skill, and now I have the power of this fortress to back me up. I don't plan on quitting for a very long time," he pulls his saber from its sheath once more and points it to my throat, "So what does quitting have to do with this place?"

With a grin I scoff at him, "I've built this place to be my tomb and you jump started the burial process," I can feel the shock from my cold stare as it pierces through him.

"How-?"

"You wouldn't have noticed when your ships moored here. The levers on the docks would appear as string or a loose board," I see his confusion and take the silence as a cue to go on, "Those levers are attached to various fuses. Those fuses are each attached to a thirty minute timer that probably began roughly, oh, 29 minutes ago. Everything here that you and your men fought, evaded and disarmed weren't meant to stop you, but devour what little time there was. Those that died because of them, well, they will unfortunately miss the fireworks. Anyone still on the boats will be treated to one amazing show."

I watch his now pale expression; even if I was bluffing he knows that this is a fatal gamble. I lie, I die. I tell the truth, I die. He knows it, I know it, "Y-you wouldn't," he finally says in a hollow tone.

"I told you, no one retires from this. We live and die for our crimes and our greed. I decided that my death would be signified by the destruction of the very beacon of my reign of terror and scatter my fortunes for others to hunt after," A distant rumbling can be heard, not from far away but below, "You wanted everything I had. You have it! My island, my fortress, my fortunes, my life! And most importantly, MY FATE!"

I watch him try to flee the treasure vault as I shout this to him. His need to survive overpowering his want to see me dead. All I can do is laugh. And laugh I do before the ground, and the gold that sits upon it, lifts with the rising pressure that tons of black powder igniting simultaneously could provide.

Unfortunately I cannot tell you what happened next as I was practically evaporated by the force of the explosion and the golden shrapnel that was cast out from it. However, I can tell you that there were survivors who witnessed and were terrified by the sight of the island tearing itself asunder. No one escaped that went inland. Some of the boats didn't even make it out of the dock from the flying debris.

I heard the stories, as much as you probably did, but I can see by your face that you have questions.

How could I be here if I really was there? If I was lying, how do I know such intimate details? Well, that's gonna take a while to explain, but it looks like it's time for you to announce last call. I'll leave you to clean your tavern, survivor. Maybe I'll wander back in another night.