

NICKY: Where weren't we? Is the question! Good God—we've been . . . Well what happened was I'd a few bits to do with Eileen down in Killester, so she went off and I went into the Beachcomber—fucking nobody in it! *(To Lockhart)* What time was that at?

LOCKHART: About twelve?

NICKY: Twelve o'clock, nobody in there. I think, "Right I'll just have a quick pint and head on . . ." But then I see Mr. Lockhart is sitting up at the bar, who I know from up in the Marine . . . Mr. Lockhart, you'd do a lot of your drinking up in the Marine Hotel . . .

LOCKHART: I've been known to frequent the premises . . .

*(They all laugh.)*

NICKY: And we know each other from me calling up there to see my brother Eric . . . so we have a pint, but there was no atmosphere, so fuck it, we left—up to The Yacht.

LOCKHART: No, Harry Byrnes.

NICKY: Sorry, no, Harry Byrnes . . .

RICHARD: Oh very posh!

NICKY *(Pouring drinks for Lockhart, Richard and Ivan)*: Oh yeah, they had the fires lit and *then* we were in The Yacht . . . which was hopping.

RICHARD: Jaysus, yous were getting around!

NICKY: That was only the start of it! The Yacht, the Dollymount House . . .

LOCKHART: The Raheny Inn . . .

NICKY: The Raheny Inn, the Green Dolphin, the Station House, the Cedars, the Elphin—your man won't let me put my hand in my pocket—this is taxis everywhere now!

RICHARD: Very smart . . . God yous were . . .

NICKY: Then back all the way up to Edenmore, Eugene's, the Concorde . . . the bleeding Brookwood Inn! And then up here.

RICHARD: My God that's a right Christmas drink, Nicky!

NICKY: Yeah well Mr. Lockhart had to say happy Christmas to a few people . . . *(Suddenly to Lockhart)* We never tracked them down!

LOCKHART: And I'm glad we didn't! Because we would never have made it up here! Anyway, as soon as a sing-along starts, I'm out of a place, that's just the way I am . . . But we're here now, and that's it!

RICHARD: Well I'm glad you're here!

LOCKHART: Yes, and we'll say happy Christmas *(Raises his glass in a toast)* and we'll have a toast . . .

NICKY *(Raising his drink)*: Yes.

*(Ivan, who has just taken a big gulp of whiskey, spits the whiskey back into the glass for the toast.)*

LOCKHART: To old friends and old times!

RICHARD: And new friends!

NICKY: Exactly! Cheers!

RICHARD: Happy Christmas!

NICKY: Happy Christmas!

*(They all drink deeply.)*

*(Taking the bottle to give refills)* So where's Sharky? God I haven't seen him in ages . . .

RICHARD: Ivan, get Sharky there, will you? There's a good man.

IVAN: Yeah, I'll . . .

*(Ivan goes out through the kitchen.)*

NICKY: How is he doing? All right?

RICHARD: Ah, Nicky, sure you know yourself. This is my brother, Mr. Lockhart. He claims he's here to look after me, but

between ourselves, he's an awful useless fucking eejit, God help him. I don't know who's looking after who!

NICKY: Sure you'd be well able to look after yourself, Dick . . .

RICHARD: This is it. If they can get me one of those dogs that bring you your meals . . . or even someone just to do a tiny bit of shopping. Sure all I really need is the bit of company really.

NICKY: Well I knew you'd be up for a bit of companionship, and when I mentioned to Mr. Lockhart that there might be an old game of cards on the horizon, he was very eh . . .

LOCKHART: Well there's nothing like a game of cards at Christmas.

RICHARD: You're so right! And you're welcome, Mr. Lockhart. We're only amateurs now you understand.

NICKY: Go on out of that! You'll have to watch yourself, Mr. Lockhart, you'll be fleeced for Christmas!

RICHARD: Yeah, right!

LOCKHART: No fear! I'm not a big gambler myself necessarily. To be honest with you I just like the social . . . ness and the crack.

RICHARD: Well this is it! There's no big gamblers here, Mr. Lockhart. Why can't a game of cards be just for fun? You know what I mean?

*(Sharky and Ivan enter from the kitchen. Sharky is wearing an apron and rubber gloves, and carrying a filthy cloth. Pause.)*

NICKY: Ah, there you are, Sharky! Happy Christmas!

*(Nicky goes to him to shake hands. Sharky removes a glove to shake his hand dutifully.)*

SHARKY: Yeah, happy Christmas, Nicky.

NICKY: Eileen sends her regards. We hope you'll pop in over the . . .

SHARKY: Yeah, sure . . .

NICKY: This is Mr. Lockhart.

LOCKHART: Sharky. A pleasure.