

We won't be long, Mr. Lockhart. The winos are always scared of me. Drinking that old meths always has them nervy, you see. Sharky, you look after Mr. Lockhart. Come on! We'll have them gone out of it now, lickety-spit.

NICKY: We're not gonna be getting in a fight, are we?

RICHARD: No, no, they'll run off immediately. We'll be back in a minute. Come on, Ivan! Nicky, hit that light out there for yourselves.

NICKY: Yeah I got it.

*(Nicky hits a switch in the kitchen as Ivan opens the back door and leads Richard out, followed by Nicky. Sharky and Lockhart are alone. Sharky shakes his head at Lockhart.)*

LOCKHART: I know. Family, ha?

SHARKY: Yeah, don't talk to me. Are you okay for a drink there or ...

LOCKHART: Yeah I'm grand. You not having a drink yourself?

SHARKY: Nah ... I'm ... trying to ... not drink.

LOCKHART: If you can just beat Christmas, ha?

SHARKY *(A little laugh)*: Yeah ...

LOCKHART: If I can just beat Christmas I can achieve anything!

SHARKY: Mmm.

LOCKHART: But it's so hard. 'Cause the old drink stops the brain cranking. Stops the mind going into the little cell.

*(Sharky looks at Lockhart, wondering about him.)*

I've seen you on your travels. You don't remember me, Sharky ...

SHARKY *(Trying to place him)*: No I ... I do ...

LOCKHART: Yeah, I've seen you. On your wandering ways. I've seen you going down Wicklow Street, and halfway up Dame

Street, down Suffolk Street, Grafton Street, Dawson Street, round and round, back up, back down, am I right? *(Pause)* I've seen all those hopeless thoughts, buried there, in your stupid scrunched-up face.

SHARKY: What are you talking about?

LOCKHART: Oh come on, Sharky! You don't remember me?

SHARKY: No, I . . . I do. But where did we . . . ?

LOCKHART: We met in the Bridewell, Sharky.

*(Short pause.)*

Remember? We were locked up in a cell together. You'd had a bit of bother the night before? . . . You were waiting to go up before the judge . . . We played cards!

SHARKY: Yeah . . . no . . . I remember you but . . .

LOCKHART *(Brightly)*: So how have things been with you?

SHARKY: . . . Okay . . .

LOCKHART: Not great though . . .

*(Pause.)*

SHARKY: You've a good memory.

LOCKHART: Old as the hills, Sharky. You know I was sure I'd run into you today. *(Laughs)* But you're off the drink! Now that completely threw me, I have to say! Do you know how many pubs I was in?

SHARKY: Were you looking for me?

LOCKHART: Well, it's just that matter we discussed back then, in the Bridewell that night.

*(Short pause.)*

SHARKY: This has to be what? Twenty years ago!



LOCKHART: Twenty-five years ago. But considering what happened, I'm surprised you don't know why I'm here.

SHARKY: Yeah, well I don't.

LOCKHART (*Disappointed*): Ah, Sharky . . . We had a deal. (*Short pause*) No?

SHARKY: Look I don't know what's going on here, or if Nicky's put you up to this, but I have to say I don't know what you're talking about.

LOCKHART: Are you serious?

SHARKY: Do I look like I'm telling a joke?

LOCKHART: No, hold on. Are you seriously trying to tell me . . . ? You're seriously standing there telling me that it's never struck you as odd? Down all these years that you just walked out of jail? After what you did? Ah, that's brilliant!

SHARKY: What do you mean "after what I did"?

LOCKHART: Oh, come on, now . . .

SHARKY: What? What did I . . . I can't even . . . What? I got into a fight with some wino in the back of a shebeen up in . . . Francis Street or . . . somewhere, was it? I can hardly even remember! So what?

LOCKHART: Well no, not quite. His name was Laurence Joyce. He was sixty-one. He was a vagrant. He said he was trying to get to Cardiff? . . . Said he had some family there? Said his wife was once the Cardiff Rose? . . . You beat him up in the back of O'Dowd's public house in the early hours of the twenty-fourth of December 1981. You killed him. (*Short pause*) I let you out. I set you free.

(*Pause.*)

SHARKY: No, here, wait a minute, if you're gonna . . .

LOCKHART: Come on, you remember that moment when the guards opened the door, in the morning? And told you to get your stuff and get lost?

SHARKY: . . . Yeah?

LOCKHART: I organized that. Because you won that hand of poker we were playing.

SHARKY: Wait a minute. *That fella* didn't die!

LOCKHART: Oh no. He did! Are you trying to tell me you don't see him in your nightmares?

*(Pause. Sharky doesn't respond.)*

God the poor old brain hasn't aged too well, has it, Sharky? Look at you. Twenty-five years on the lash like some old borderline wino yourself. What chance *haven't* you fucked up? Driving the van for those English fellas? The best years of your life with Eileen. What happened there? Tell me, are you still in the wars with Dublin Bus about the night you were drunk and you fell down the stairs? How much are you looking for, for that twinge in your back? You make me laugh, Sharky.

*(Pause. Sharky is staring at Lockhart, dumbfounded.)*