

KARL: Would Leo have taken that shot?

MARGO: Possibly. I think... Yes. He did take that one.

THERESE: What an excellent gummy smile.

MARGO: Listen, Therese, while Leo's not here, let me explain something to you—so you can explain to him.

THERESE: What?

MARGO picks up a brightly-coloured folder.

MARGO: I've got some good news. I've been looking at Leo's financial situation—in the long-term—and I've come to an arrangement with the bank. We're going to raise a loan against the value of this land.

THERESE: But Leo could still live here?

MARGO: That's the idea. This way we maintain the house for the rest of his life plus generate cash for his living expenses. Enough to pay for a carer and whatever else he's likely to need.

THERESE: *[calling to the kitchen]* Leo! Margo's got some fantastic news! An excellent surprise! It's like another birthday present!

MARGO: Oh, I wouldn't put it like that.

THERESE: *[calling]* Come on! Quick!

LEO emerges from the kitchen, the tequila bottle stuffed in his vest. He's already quite drunk. He notices the official papers in MARGO's hands.

LEO: What's she got there? I won't sign anything.

THERESE: No, Leo, you don't understand. Let Margo explain. These are bank papers about the house. It's great. She's—

LEO: Therese, don't let her kick me out of my house.

THERESE: Calm down. She's not doing that.

MARGO: This means you won't have to leave the house.

THERESE: See? Margo's fixed it with the bank so you can keep the house no matter what. This is the best birthday present you could ever get.

LEO: Selling off my house on my birthday!

THERESE: No. That's not right. Listen—

LEO: I don't want tricks. She wants to sell my house. Can't you wait till I'm dead? She wants me dead.

MARGO *keeps her eyes down.*

THERESE: No. You don't understand. Just listen—

LEO: See? She doesn't even try to deny it. She wants me dead.

THERESE: Come on, Leo, don't do this.

LEO *pulls the tequila out and takes a swig. The bottle is a third empty.*

What!? What are you—? Oh...

LEO: She's hovering over my rotting body, waiting for me to die.

MARGO: Look, I might go.

MARGO *collects up the papers but LEO snatches them from her.*

LEO: Therese doesn't wish me dead like you do.

THERESE: Leo, give me the bottle.

LEO *moves out of THERESE's reach and drops the papers all over the floor. MARGO gathers them up. LEO rushes to her, sobbing.*

LEO: I'm your father. Your father. Was I so terrible? Is that why you can't love me? Was I such a vile creature to you?

THERESE: He's only saying these things because he's drunk. He doesn't mean—

MARGO: He means it. Booze doesn't change a person. It only loosens the tongue.

LEO: I'm not vile to Therese. Am I, Therese? You tell her. I'm good... I can be good.

THERESE: It'd be good if you gave me the bottle right now.

LEO: I did my best... why can't you love me? You pay a stranger to look after me.

THERESE: He's talking like this because he feels ashamed and he wants—

MARGO: You think? I think he's a self-pitying drunk wanting me to tell him lies.

LEO: Don't say cruel things to me. Therese, why is she saying...? Ohhh... Therese—a stranger—she cares more about me than my own daughter.

THERESE: Leo, stop. That's enough.

LEO: Therese loves me. Finally I know what a real loving child is like.

Why can't you be my real loving child like Therese?

MARGO: Your 'real loving child' is only here because she's paid to be.

LEO: Therese loves me.

MARGO: Yeah? For all you know, she's just hanging around here to rip you off. It's not hard to take advantage of a friendless, dying, old dickhead.

LEO: You're a jealous bitch! You understand nothing about love!

LEO clutches the bottle to his belly and runs up the stairs.

MARGO heads for the door. THERESE rushes to block her path.

THERESE: Please please, don't go off and think— It was my fault. I wanted everything to be— He's been getting so much better, remembering more. I know it can be better with you and him—

MARGO: Oh. You know.

THERESE: I know I pushed too fast and that's why he went off at the mouth but please don't go away thinking—

MARGO: What the fuck are you doing here? Who are you? Another one of the leeches trying to suck money out of him?

THERESE: What? No... please don't say—

MARGO: Make him dependent on you, ration his alcohol, sack the respite nurses to get total control. Is that what you're doing?

THERESE: Eh? No, the other nurses were upsetting—

MARGO: Straight-out stealing? Is that it? A thief pinching anything you can get your grubby hands on.

THERESE: No, no. That's not true.

MARGO: Given your history, I wouldn't be surprised.

THERESE: I haven't stolen anything.

MARGO: No, no. You're just very stupid. So stupid you thought a bit of robust family therapy would clear the air.

THERESE: I'm trying to look after him the best I can.

MARGO: And all you've managed to do is churn up the sludge at the bottom of the cess-pit.

THERESE: I was only wanting—

MARGO: Do you know how dangerous you are? Do you know what an almighty fucking mess you've created?

THERESE: I pushed too fast—

MARGO: I think you'd better shut up now.

KARL: Hey—I know it's not my business but—

MARGO: No, it's not your business. It's mine. In the end, it's me who gets stuck with cleaning up the mess. This isn't going to work anymore. Leo staying in this house. A parade of people like you turning up. I think the best thing is if I sort out some new arrangement. I want you to pack your things and be gone tomorrow morning.

THERESE: What? You want me to—?

MARGO: You can stay here tonight but you'll have to leave in the morning.

THERESE: I don't understand what you're—

MARGO: It's not complicated. You're sacked. I want you out of here.

MARGO exits. THERESE is too stunned to speak for a moment.

THERESE: I never ever thought about stealing from Leo.

KARL: I know that. You don't have to tell me that.

THERESE: I even know where there are drawings hidden in this house.

Leo's told me. I could've stolen them but I didn't.

KARL: You're not that kind of person.

THERESE: She can just go, 'You're a thief', 'You're sacked'.

KARL: When Margo calms down, she'll change her mind.

THERESE: She won't. A person like her. The way she talked about me...

KARL: I can't believe she'd really sack you.

THERESE: You heard her! Believe it. Believe that people can be maggots, and idiots like me get shafted. That's how the world works, okay? Margo's right. I'm stupid. Thick. A retard.

KARL: Don't say that. It's not true.

THERESE: How many gullible idiots could they find to live in this dump and look after an old drunk?

KARL: I can't think of anyone who could do this job the way— You do an amazing job.

THERESE: But that doesn't fucking count.

KARL: Listen, listen, let me talk to Margo. When she calms down—

THERESE: Leo told me there are drawings hidden in the wall cavity right here. I could take them right now—easily.

KARL: I guess you could. But you're not like that.

THERESE: Margo thinks I am. 'Grubby hands'.

KARL: No, Margo doesn't think you're stealing. That's not what she said. She didn't say—

LEO appears on the stairs. He's drunker and more spiteful.

LEO: Stop that wretched noise. I can't sleep for all the noise. [*He staggers downstairs, holding the two-thirds empty bottle.*] Ah, I see you're entertaining your chippie boyfriend.

THERESE: Karl's not my boyfriend.

LEO: He's a dickless wonder.

THERESE: Don't say one more word. Go to bed.

LEO: I heard the shouting down here! Managed to get The Viper upset, didn't you? Now she's gonna sell my house from under me! Thanks to you, interfering bitch. [*He presses his fingers into his upper abdomen.*] Oh, I've got pain here.

THERESE: Because of the tequila you poured down your gullet.

LEO: Shut up. You're only here because The Viper pays you to wipe the arse of the old pisspot.

KARL: Leo, you don't want to talk to Therese like that. You don't really mean—

THERESE: Stay out of it, Karl.

LEO: [*to KARL*] Why did she come here? Couldn't get a job anywhere else? No. She enjoys feeling superior. Must be a rare treat for someone as low on the shit-pile as her. 'Oh, here's this pathetic old drunk. I can feel superior to him!'

THERESE: I never thought that.

LEO: But she was wrong! I have been someone important and she's just some lowlife slag.

KARL: Leo. Go upstairs and sleep it off.

LEO: She's just like all the others. She's a vulture picking on my carcass before I'm dead. 'Oh, Leo, you're gorgeous.' So I'll leave it all to her in my will. The beloved carer Therese inherits the Bailey estate.

THERESE: Shut up now, Leo. Please.

LEO: Oh, don't snivel.

KARL: Leo—stop. That's enough.

KARL *tries to ease LEO away gently. LEO shakes him off.*

LEO: Who are you? Go away.

LEO *circles THERESE, pressing his face close to her.*

Look at you. No wonder your poor bloody parents are ashamed of you. What scrap of joy did you ever bring to them? None. Their daughter's a thief and a slut and a liar. Ripping off the hairdresser lady. What an ugly little story that is. Your parents be better off never laying eyes on you again.

THERESE *slaps LEO across the face repeatedly. She slaps him hard, out of control. LEO reels helplessly and collapses into a chair. THERESE is poised to hit him again when KARL restrains her.*

KARL: Therese. Stop. You don't want to do this.

THERESE *backs away, gulps for breath.*

It's okay. You're okay, aren't you Leo? Therese, let's just all calm down.

THERESE: Look what I did.

KARL: But that wasn't you. You're not really like that.

THERESE: This is me. Use your eyes.

KARL: Let's all calm down. Leo looks okay.

THERESE: Shut up, Karl.

THERESE *feels along the wall she indicated earlier.*

KARL: What are you doing?

THERESE: Finding the hiding spot.

THERESE *hacks into the wall, tearing the woodwork apart.*

KARL: Oh no, Therese, stop. You're not this kind of person.

THERESE: I am. I've stolen stuff before. I've been in jail. This is the kind of person I am.

KARL: Not the person I've seen.

THERESE: Go away. Don't look at me.

KARL: Look, Leo's okay. He got a fright but you haven't really hurt him.

THERESE: I said go away.

THERESE *pulls a section loose to reveal the cavity.*

KARL: I can't believe you're doing this.

THERESE *pulls a package out of the cavity—two drawings wrapped in plastic.*

What are you going to do with those?

THERESE: Sell them. Get myself some money.

KARL: Come on, Therese.

THERESE *wraps the drawings in a rug.*

THERESE: Don't look at me. Fuck you. Don't look at me. Are you fucking deaf? I can feel your eyes on me. Fuck off.

KARL *flinches against the vicious tone in her voice but stands his ground.* THERESE *is acutely aware of him looking at her. Her manic energy suddenly flags. She drops the drawings on the ground and flops against the wall.*

KARL: Therese—

THERESE: I don't want you looking at me. Get out! Get out!

KARL *leaves.* THERESE *doesn't move and LEO is slumped in a stupor on the other side of the room as the house sinks into darkness.*

SCENE TWO

The next morning.

LEO *is asleep where he collapsed the night before. The drawings wrapped in the rug lie on the floor where THERESE dropped them. There's no sign of THERESE.*

MARGO *enters, carrying a couple of empty cardboard boxes. She sees the sleeping LEO and then notices the torn-apart wall. She unfolds the rug to find the drawings inside.*

LEO *mumbles as he wakes up, hung over.*

MARGO: Are you all right?