

The Match

**Job repo man, look out man, Scottish on the parents side, I am the
Och Aye.**

Houses out of people's misfortune, the hunter that's me. Suited up.

**SHINED UP. READY, ALWAYS READY. READY FOR THE MONEY, READY TO MAKE,
TAKE THE MONEY.**

The bell is on the left, dark dirty bell. I push the bell.

**An old-timer comes to the door, still in his wake up gear, wife behind in her good
night dear gear, there, by his side.**

:

NO ONE MOVES

:YOUNG MAN

“Hello I’m from the estate agents.”

NOTHING.

:YOUNG MAN

“Jesus.” Said very softly

Big old man

“ARE YOU NOW.” HE NODS, TURNS, WALKS INSIDE

I walk in. It’s dark. I start to look, check it out, make my mental notes.

Bang the place out in white. Chop a wall here, make the bleeding money.

I can hear the ding, ding, ding, of money, the jackpot, the three cherries. I hear the Vagas.

The wife smoked out, yellowed and dying gives me a fool’s grin.

YOUNG MAN

“HELLO I say, making myself sound like a child.

:OLD LADY

“Very nice to meet you, make yourself at home.”

:YOUNG MAN

“OH I will darling.” And I give her my smile, she gives me her fools grin back.

I move through the rooms one to another. They stink of old age.

:YOUNG MAN

“Nice room.” I yell. Saying under my breath Fucking tip.

Time for them to move on. Time for a fresh lemon, time for a change. Time for me. My time.

:YOUNG MAN

“Oh, what a lovely picture.” It’s the two of them sitting on a wall staring at a camera.

PAUSE

:YOUNG MAN

“Been overseas then?”

PAUSE

:YOUNG MAN

“Are you deaf over?”

PAUSE

No voice comes back.

I go to the bedroom, a place of cheap sleep, two beds, a lamp, an ashtray. A carpet worn from door to bed, from all the shuffling to sleep.

I move to the bathroom, a black cracked sink, last nights spit, and teeth waiting to be put in, waiting to be fed. I pick up the glass, I spin the teeth, I spin the teeth round and round.

:YOUNG MAN “Hello someone forget to take you for a walk.” I say to the glass.

:DOG “YELP, YELP”, a mad yelp, coming from the back. I move to the window, pull the lace, grey dirty lace.

:YOUNG MAN “What’s that?”

There swinging from a tree, a frothing dog, choking, kicking, trying to get away from the rope, a fools effort.

He ain’t going no where. He’s stuck, he’s stuck with a rope round his neck. And the old-timer watches and the wife with the fools grin watches and I watch.

I huff onto the window and write

: bye bye.

The old timer takes his wife’s hand and strokes it. She has tears in her eyes.

: “Look at her, now she’s crying.” I say to the window
and room.

She’s crying over a dog. I can hear the old man saying.

:BIG OLD MAN “It has to be done, it’s for the best, who’d look after
him? You’re not allowed pets where we’re going!”

:OLD LADY “But why, why?”

:BIG OLD MAN “Its not allowed, rules silly bleeding rules. The home
doesn’t allow it.” I wait behind the lace, the dirty, filthy
lace.

:YOUNG MAN “You old fools.” I say but no one can hear me.

**The stairs moan, creak, as my leather shoes squeak their way down. Down to the
back garden. I find the dogs back door, scratch marks all over it, he won’t be so
happy he made it out this time. No walkies this time, no chasing a cat. A water
dish a dog’s bowl on a mat, a dog’s biscuit by the side of that, I pull the door
open, I go out.**

Crazy paving onto nice neat cut grass, they keep their grass cut. I wont have to do much with that. A life time's crap is stacked behind the man, ready for a fire. I move to see behind the old-timer, at the front of the stack is a smooth green pool table. It has my attention, and it's all waiting to be burnt.

:YOUNG MAN "Hello, having a fire then, putting him on the barbe?"

The man has his big hands around the dog's throat, squeezing out the last drop, it's a horrible noise and then it stops, I hear the neighbors next door, I turn they are watching too, I wave.

:YOUNG MAN "alright." I say.

They say nothing back, they're Old as well.

The old timers wife is still crying.

:YOUNG MAN "Who's the gardener? What a lovely garden. I must say."

:OLD LADY "Me!" the smoker, the tear choker, says.

The old-timer is still by her side stroking her, soothing her.

:YOUNG MAN

“Lovely must take you a long time, bet you it does?”
And I walk over to her, I’m going to hold her hand.

PAUSE SHE DOESN’T LET HIM TAKE HER HAND

:YOUNG MAN

“And you’re having a fire as well, aren’t you busy!” I
say.

:BIG OLD MAN

“Yeah.” He says.

PAUSE

“Well it really is a very nice house and garden, lovely. I
think I’m about done. Lets think?” I say.

:BIG OLD MAN

“Good.” The old timer says.

I turn to walk away, the pool table, I remember the green velvet. I turn.

:YOUNG MAN

“Oh yeah, I’ll give you twenty quid for the pool table.”
I say. I move my hand slowly to my pocket.

:BIG OLD MAN

“Snooker table!” He says.

:YOUNG MAN

“Whatever, I’ll give you twenty for it.” I say, running
my tongue over a finger.

:BIG OLD MAN

“I’m burning it mate.” he says.

:YOUNG MAN

“What? I’m ready to give you twenty for it.” I say.

:BIG OLD MAN

“Not interested in your money.” He says.

:YOUNG MAN

“Look wait a minute here, there’s no need to burn the
table. I’ll give you thirty for it and that’s way over the
odds.”

:BIG OLD MAN

“I’ve told you, I’m not interested, in the likes of you and your money.”

:YOUNG MAN

“You’re being silly. Isn’t he being silly? I say turning to his wife, childish in fact.”

:OLD LADY

“I think you’ll find he’s being who he is young man.”
She’s still bloody crying.

:YOUNG MAN

“Look I’ll give you a game for it, who ever pots the most balls wins. If I win I get the table, if you win, well you keep the table and the kids home doesn’t get it, because that’s what we’re playing for here. Giving something to poor deprived young people.”

PAUSE

:OLD LADY

“Go on Bert.”

:YOUNG MAN

“Yes or no? I’m in a hurry, simple rules for a simple game.”

:BIG OLD MAN

“I don’t like you Mister.” He says “But I like to play and I don’t play so much these days.”

PAUSE

:BIG OLD MAN

“One other thing, I don’t believe a word you say.” He says.

:YOUNG MAN

“No need to be like that old boy. It’s a game. Just a game.”

His wife goes over to the fire, gets the cues, the balls, shuffles over.

:YOUNG MAN

“So you were going to burn the lot? Bloody idiots.” I say struggling to get the table off the fire.

:OLD LADY

“Here darling.”

She says shaking, handing her husband the cues, he holds one out for me.

:BIG OLD MAN

“You choose?” He says.

:YOUNG MAN

“What is one a bad one?”

:BIG OLD MAN

“No, in my world you wouldn’t do something like that.”
He says.

I take what I think is the straightest, the straight eye jack.

:YOUNG MAN

“Lets kick this pool game off.” I say.

:BIG OLD MAN

“Snooker.” He shouts.

:YOUNG MAN

“Whatever, does it matter? You’re touchy. You break,
I’ll give you the advantage.” I say.

He fires a hard white, the balls explode, one rolls into the middle pocket.

:YOUNG MAN

“Lucky old man.” I say. The man got lucky. He pots
another. The man can play a bit.

PAUSE

:YOUNG MAN

“Been practicing?”

And then he misses, ah.

:YOUNG MAN

“My turn.” I say rolling my shoulders.

PAUSE

:YOUNG MAN

“The heart breaker, you watch this.”

I shout bringing my que through the white. I pot one, then another.

:YOUNG MAN

“The man’s on a roll.” I say looking to the sky.

The balls keep rolling in. I feel good, I wink at the neighbor he doesn’t wink back.

I’m feeling cocky, damn it I am cocky. I miss. It was near, but I miss.

:YOUNG MAN

“Shit, got any chalk?” I say.

:BIG OLD MAN

“No, I don’t have chalk.” He says.

He places his cue onto the green, fires the white, he hits a hard ball, the ball disappears. He gets another. He's on a roll.

:OLD LADY "Good." His wife says in a low soft voice.

:YOUNG MAN "Good, lucky more like." I say.

I look at her she smiles at me, a silly smile. He misses.

:YOUNG MAN "Ha, luck always runs out, it's got too. The mans back."
I say smiling at her then at him.

My turn.

I walk to the table not many balls left, I can still do it.

The old timer is staring at me.

:YOUNG MAN "You like to stare don't you? Think you'll put me off?"

He's staring at me, his wife even the neighbor.

:YOUNG MAN "You lot won't put me off, it ain't possible."

I look at the dog silent on the rope, then back at them.

: “He’s gone silence, you’re little dog.”

Eyes turn to the dog. And I bang my shot a good shot, the ball down, and I turn and look them in the eyes.

:YOUNG MAN “I’m coming back at you jack, I’m coming back jack.”

:BIG OLD MAN “My names Bert.” He says.

:YOUNG MAN “Yeah whatever. I don’t care, I’m whipping your arse.
You don’t like me now?”

:BIG OLD MAN “Not even a little bit. Didn’t like you as soon as you
came through the door.” He says.

:YOUNG MAN “Well old-timer your days are up.”

The old lady coughs, brings up a little flem.

I miss hit the ball, the cues goes off to one side, the ball rolls past the pocket.

:YOUNG MAN “I bet you’ve got chalk.” I say. “You just don’t want me
to have it.”

I loosen off my tie, I'm beginning to sweat. I'm getting hot, he's put heat under my collar.

He's still staring at me.

He walks to the table and bangs another one down, god he hits a hard ball.

:YOUNG MAN "I bet you hit your kids." I say.

:OLD LADY "Our child died when he was very young."

PAUSE

This is going to be close. He misses there are three balls to go and he is one up.

:YOUNG MAN EXCITED "My turn, it looks like it's my turn, old-timer. Looks like the after-eight, the end of the mint the end of the day." I say.

I rub my fingers, rub them, rub them slowly. Stare at him, the old boy is good but he ain't as good as me.

:YOUNG MAN "My day. Religious? You better be."

I wink at the wife, she smiles back.

I take my time, I take my shot. I place it, I miss, I fucking miss, the air comes out of me.

:YOUNG MAN “Shit, shit, shit.”

Nothing, he doesn’t smile, he doesn’t say a word, nothing, he walks to the table.

:YOUNG MAN “Pressure, can you handle it?”

He doesn’t say a word.

nice and slow, takes his shot. He gets a rebound, it goes in. Just, it goes in.

Two balls to play and again the ball goes in, it’s his game. He turns, looks at me, looks me in the eye. The neighbor who’s been watching says.

:NEIGHBOR “Well done Mr Gibbs.” I stare at the neighbor.

PAUSE

:YOUNG MAN “Yeah, well.”

His wife comes to my side touches my arm, I swing round, I move, put a little space between me and the lady.

:OLD LADY

“Unlucky and you were going to give it to a home. That is unlucky.” And she turns.

I lost, this old boy just beat me and there ain’t a damn thing I can do, not a trick I can pull.

:BIG OLD MAN

“It’s for the fire son. It’s for the fire. You’ve made me feel better about burning it.”

His wife picks up one end, him the other they can hardly lift it.

:OLD LADY

“Do you think you can give us a hand?” The old lined smoker asks.

:YOUNG MAN

“No I don’t think I can.” I say.

And I watch as it’s slowly moved to the front of the fire. The smooth velvet green looks at me.

They throw the cues on, strike a match.

END

mark kotting

