

The Lottery Ticket

Malcolm stared at the blackboard at the far end of the pub, groaned, and tore up his lottery ticket. I don't know why I bother he said.

It's not all bad news said ~~his closest friend~~ ^{Adam}, because I don't think anyone had won this week, so it will be a rollover, and they were saying on the news, it would be as much as eight million next week.

Eight million would solve a few problems said ~~Frank~~ ^{Malcolm} as he downed his pint.

For me to admitted Adam

You first said Malcolm.

Blackwoods have offered me the chance to buy the pub, but I just have enough capital at the moment.

How much are they asking for?

Two million which is reasonable enough, and the only stipulation they are insisting on is that I continue to use their products for the next ten years.

That seems fair enough said Malcolm, ~~that~~ assuming you made a ~~good profit~~ ^{seventy} profit last year.

Turnover was just below a million, and after rent, rates and tax I showed a surplus of ~~just over~~ ^{around} seventy thousand.

Sounds like a worthwhile investment to me said Malcolm.

And I have plans to add ~~another~~ ^{another} dozen or so cores in the restaurant. I've got my eye on a chef ~~who~~ whose currently working at the Savoy, and has told me he's sick of commuting up and down to London everyday.

Fair enough, but ~~what~~ ^{what} your bank saying.

They lend me a million at four per cent, but they expect to ~~make a loan on~~ ^{have a loan on} all my assets, including the pub. So I'll need to raise another million from other sources, and wondered if you'd like to come in as a partner.

I'd love to send Malcolm, but you couldn't have chosen a worse time.

But I keep reminding in the press, that you are one of the most successful barristers on the southern circuit. Was, but not for much longer.

How come?

Angela has filed for a divorce and in due to see her lawyers on Monday morning.

I'm so sorry said Adam I had no idea he added as looked across the table at his ~~dearest friend~~. old school friend.

I have to admit said Malcolm, ~~that~~ it hasn't been a bundle of laughs lately, and in ~~partly~~ ^{mostly} to blame. ~~spending the week, at that not always coming down at the weekend doesn't help.~~ (no)

But divorce or no divorce, you still earn a healthy income.

And it's going to need ~~to~~ ^{every penny of it} said Malcolm, because Angela's lawyers are driving a hard bargain. They're ~~are~~ demanding the house in Godalming, and our villa in the south of France, and that for starters.

But you've still got the flat in Chelsea.

It's rented, and comes up for review next year. So sorry then you couldn't have picked a worse time, and if that isn't enough, I think she's having an affair with someone, ~~that~~.

~~Why do you think that?~~ 'what makes you think ^{that?}

Because yesterday, I found a cufflink under the bed, and it certainly wasn't mine. However if I win the lottery, you can have the first million.

* * *
She always lit a cigarette after they'd made love, which annoyed him.

How's the divorce settlement coming along Adam asked

she looked
I've got almost everything I wanted (but) Malcolm
has behaved quite well. All that is left to agree on
(the) is ~~the final amount of cash, before we sign anything~~
I know he's worth about three million, so my
lawyers are pushing for every penny they can get.
And are you still planning to invest a million in
the pub said Adam

Of course I am my darling. It's not only a shrewd
investment, but our future.

Adam leaned across and kissed gently on the lips.
And once Malcolm has moved out, we'll be partners
in every sense.

Just don't expect me to serve behind the bar ^{Angela} ~~the~~
said laughing.

Not a chance said Adam but if I'm going to move in
with you, and convert the top floor of the pub into
bedrooms, I'll need your advice on interior design.

Only too happy to help said Angela but perhaps for
the next few weeks it might be wise to wait.

But why asked Adam

If Malcolm were to find out, we were having an
affair, it wouldn't exactly help my negoti^{ing}ation.

You would be right said Adam, because Malcolm
sure you're having an affair, but he ~~can't~~ ^{isn't} certain
~~who with~~. Has no idea who with.

What makes you say that said Angela, sitting
bolt upright.

He told me he'd found a cufflink under ^{your} ~~the~~ bed
and it wasn't his.

~~Then we'll just have to be more careful in the
future. At least until she's agreed on a settlement.
I may just have ^{some time in my} ~~an~~ idea, which would speed up
the whole process.~~

Angela stubbed out her cigarette, leaned back

is how much he's going to pay

Then we'll just have to be more careful in
the future said Angela as she stretched out her leg.
said you she added, I may just have come up with
an idea, that would speed the whole process up, but it
will mean you taking the odd ~~risk~~ risk.

~~lover and said tell me more~~

* * *
Malcolm double checked the numbers on the board, tore up his ticket, smiled and said, ~~the guy~~ a better chance of getting Jack the Ripper acquitted.

Still in there said Adam laughing. Its another rollover, and they are predicting a possible fifteen million next week.

I need it this week said Malcolm. Angela is bleeding me dry.

So theres no chance you'll reconsider investing in the pub.

Not a hope said Malcolm. In fact by this time next week I may not be able to afford a round of drinks that hot.

Worse. Angela has now ~~used~~^{used} the anti, and is demanding two million, and I don't know where she means its going to ~~cost~~^{find} that sort of money.

Pity said Adam. Because I had a meeting with a representative from the brewery last week and we've agreed terms. As soon as I can lay my hands on ~~the~~^{the extra} million they'll draw up a contract.

You should approach my wife, ^{said Malcolm} by this time next week she might well be able to afford it.

* * *
Im still confident hell agree to the two million said ~~Angela~~^{Angela}, as long as ^{you} get the timing right.

Take me through it one more time said ~~Adam~~^{Adam}. The lottery winner is always announced on a Sunday night, and for the past month Ive been checking ~~the~~^{the numbers} numbers. They were 12-8-76. 11-2-77. 97 my birthday and the birthday, and our wedding anniversary. said Angela as she lit another cigarette. How romantic. said Adam

And we know he never checks the numbers on the television, because by then he's on his way to see you at the pub, you know said Angela. I didn't even realise Malcolm played the lottery. Has he ever won anything ~~with the~~ in the past?

Not a great deal. Three thousand a few years back, and the thousand last month, but it's enough to keep him going.

So if you are able to convince him he's won the jackpot on Sunday night, ^{said Angela} remembering he'll be going onto London, ~~that~~ my lawyers should be able to take him for ^{the} two million on Monday morning.

Just be sure to call me just as soon as he's on the way to the pub, so I can check his numbers up on the board.

* * *

Chris said ~~that~~, Malcolm, as he tore up his ticket. What a complete waste of time.

Don't give up now said Mark, because it's another ~~note~~. ~~Even I'm going to buy a ticket.~~ rollover ^{week}.

How much are they ~~predicting~~ ^{predicting} this time thirty possibly forty million, even I'm going to buy a ticket. ~~that time~~.

And if you win you can pay off my wife's settlement. Hows all that coming along, asked Adam who ~~already knew the answer~~ knew only too well.

She's still pressing me for the two million, and I'm seriously thinking about it, just to get her off my back.

Perhaps it is time to move on suggested Adam. Talking of moving on we got to dash, we got a late flight from Gatwick. I'm appearing in a case in Jersey ^{on Monday} but I expect to be back on Thursday, so see you ^{at home} Saturday night.

Adam watched his friend drive out of the car park, sat by the window and

and then waited for a ~~few moments~~ ^{more minutes} before he called Angela.

Was seriously thinking about it said Adam
thinking about what?

Agree ^{my} to let you have ^{the} two million.

Maybe when he wins the lottery on Sunday?

It will be all set up, just as you suggested.

If you manage to pull it off said Angela, I think we should treat ourselves to a little holiday in my, ~~our~~ ^{new} home in the south of France. After all you'll need a little break before you take over the pub.

* * *

There's a winner this week whispered Adam as he cupped his hand over the phone.

Yes I ^{know} we just seen it on television, Hurby-six million, and two winners, and what a stroke of luck one of them ~~was~~ purchased their ticket from a shop in the south of England.

Is it all set up for tomorrow? asked Adam.

Malcolm and I are meeting ^{up} with our solicitor in Chancery Lane at nine tomorrow morning, but I'd better ring off because he left almost twenty minutes ago, so he should be with you ~~fairly shortly~~ at any moment.

I'll call you back the moment he ~~sets off~~ ^{sets off} for London.

Adam put the phone down, walked across to the blackboard and chalked up the numbers 12 8 76 11 5 97. He then ~~went back~~ ^{returned} to the bar, unwrapped a bottle of vintage champagne, poured two glasses and made his way across to Malcolm's usual table.

A few minutes later Adam looked out of the window, and spotted Malcolm driving into the car park. He wondered what his reaction would be when he saw his numbers chalked up on the board.

Adam already had a little speech prepared. Say nothing

to anyone. The last thing you need is for Angela to find out, just when you're agreeing a settlement.

When Malcolm walked into the pub, Adam thought he looked tired. He was about to become wide awake. He walked slowly across to join ~~Adam~~^{his friend}, gave him a warm smile and collapsed into the seat opposite him.

Adam handed him a glass of champagne. Vintage he said.

Have you raised the million you needed. asked Malcolm. Far better said Adam, why don't you turn round and look at the blackboard.

Malcolm turned around and stared at the number in disbelief. ~~How~~^{to he} Malcolm murmured asked Adam. How does it feel ~~to know you won't be getting anything~~
~~He~~ Adam said Malcolm.

I don't think that's the word I would use. Money it is just worth thirty six million.

But I haven't said Malcolm holding his head in his hands. My car ran over in Jersey, and I didn't get ~~it~~ back in time to buy a ticket.

Still said Adam.

And it gets worse, said Malcolm. I've just signed an agreement to let ~~Angela~~^{Angela} have two million, so all we got ^{left} to my name, is a cufflink.

Still Adam repeated as Malcolm put a hand in his pocket, took out a cufflink and placed it in the centre of the table.

Adam stared down at the blue and ~~silver~~ silver crested cufflink. Still he said for a third time. ~~It wasn't me~~^{because}, it certainly was it was.

THE END