



SHEEP FOR A LAMB

BY

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Extract

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# **SHEEP FOR A LAMB**

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## SCENE ONE: PRISON VISITORS' ROOM

*A prison visiting room. A table. A chair either side of it. CATHERINE stands. She is fashionably dressed, and smartly, office wear, skirt and heels, a jacket in a bright primary colour, buttoned up, maybe red.*

*She carries a briefcase.*

*She is nervous, checking her watch, her hair, the document file in her briefcase.*

*The door opens and MICHAEL enters. He is a prisoner, but there would be no way of knowing this from his jumper and jeans. The handcuffs he wears are a giveaway.*

**CATHERINE** Hi, hello, good morning. *(she puts out a hand to shake his, then realises as he raises his hands)* Oh. I'm sorry. They didn't tell me you'd be ... No. I suppose I should ... *(He sits down)* It's not standard, that's all. Not what ... OK, look, bad start. Let me ... *(She fishes in her bag for papers, puts them on the table, but still does not sit)* So, good morning. Yeah. I'm Catherine. Catherine Macallister. *(pause: no response)* And we know who you are, so ... *(she sits)* I can, maybe, outline what I've got in mind, or would you ...? No. Well. OK. So, in my letter, as I said in my letter, obviously, your appeal's been, that's been lost, that's a setback, obviously, and getting another appeal's going to be tough, and won't be coming soon, and what you need is a new campaign, out beyond the system, not the courts, not the lawyers, appeal to the public out there to build up a head of steam around the idea that you should be released now. I mean, the evidence [...??] And, I wanted to offer myself to run that campaign, maybe run a website, get some media, some more positive media, maybe TV spots, to highlight your case, get you in the public eye, tell them about, the, you, real, the real you, not the person the papers have [...] make you sympathetic so that there's some pressure for [...] *(pause)* Because there's a really good case [...] *(pause)* OK. Does that sound [...]? Would that be [...]? *(pause)* Is there any chance that [...] *(pause)* OK. OK.

*(Catherine puts her bag in her folder, and rises, as if to go. As she reaches the door)*

**MICHAEL** You give up easy. *(Catherine stops, half-turns)* You're no use to me if you give up easy.

**CATHERINE** I know what you're doing here. You're testing me. Like Alex Wakefield.

**MICHAEL** Ah! You've read 'The Book'?

**CATHERINE** Met the author. She had a lot to say about you.

**MICHAEL** Not one word that lying bitch wrote is true. Including 'The'.

**CATHERINE** I know. I've read it. *(beat)* I understand your hostility. I recognize your suspicion. I really do.

**MICHAEL** Ain't you the smart one?

*Pause. She waits. He waits. He gestures to the chair. She sits.*

**MICHAEL** I know you. We've met.

**CATHERINE** I don't think so.

**MICHAEL** You don't think so? You don't think so? People don't forget they've met me.

**CATHERINE** We've never met.

**MICHAEL** I've seen you.

**CATHERINE** There's a million women look like me. *(he's not convinced)* Thanks for agreeing to see me.

**MICHAEL** My diary wasn't full.

**CATHERINE** I guess you have a lot of free time.

**MICHAEL** I have no free time at all, darling. I have a lot of unoccupied time.

**CATHERINE** Sorry.

**MICHAEL** Bad choice of words. Not precise. You don't think you've met me? I have a lot of free time? I don't need a lawyer with a bad choice of words. Been there, done that. Didn't go well.

**CATHERINE** He's dead, you know. Last year.

**MICHAEL** I know. I had a party.

**CATHERINE** You can party in here?

**MICHAEL** You can do anything. In your head.

**CATHERINE** OK.

**MICHAEL** Only space I've got. You dress nice.

**CATHERINE** Thank you.

**MICHAEL** Though there's me not using words right. Nice? What does nice say to you? When I mean you look fuckable.

**CATHERINE** OK. *(beat)* You're in here, I think any woman [...]

**MICHAEL** Yeah, maybe. 'Cos you're right; you are, kind of, average. Point is, got to choose your words right. One thing you learn, 15 years in here, you got to choose your words right, or you're 15 years in here. I like your jacket.

**CATHERINE** *(uncomfortable)* Could we, could we maybe, keep this on a more professional footing?

**MICHAEL** Right. Yeah. Inappropriate language in a workplace setting? Only, as you correctly surmise, I don't get to see many women. Don't get much chance for chat-up.

**CATHERINE** Your technique needs some work.

**MICHAEL** I'm out of practice, darling. I still like your jacket. Button it up. Button it up for me?

*Pause. Catherine thinks about leaving. Michael waits patiently.*

**CATHERINE** Is this another test? This is another test, isn't it? You're just [...]

**MICHAEL** You tell me. You read the book. You met the author.

*Pause*

**CATHERINE** She said you were a bastard.

**MICHAEL** World says I'm a bastard, darling.

*He shakes his handcuffs at her.*

**CATHERINE** I'm sorry for [*trying to shake hands*]. I didn't know they would [*cuff you*].

**MICHAEL** I can't be trusted, darling. Not with a woman. They let you have a pen?

**CATHERINE** No. They took all my pens.

**MICHAEL** (*rising intensity*) Deadly weapon the pen. You could make notes about me with it. Like the bitch. (*pause; then rising intensity*) Or, me? Gouge your eyes out with a pen. Not that I would, mind. Not pretty eyes like yours. Not the sort of thing I do. Not the sort of thing I've ever done.

*By the end he is staring directly into the audience, shrieking, and Catherine is against the furthest wall.*

**MICHAEL** (*calm*) Sit down.

*Pause. She does.*

**MICHAEL** You said, in your letter, said you're a lawyer.

**CATHERINE** I am a lawyer.

**MICHAEL** (*at audience*) Kind that doesn't recognise a two-way mirror.

**CATHERINE** I know they're watching us. And recording.

**MICHAEL** For your protection.

**CATHERINE** Yours, too. Everything you say to me is recorded this time.

**MICHAEL** What kind of law?

**CATHERINE** Law's law.

**MICHAEL** Don't play games with me. (*beat; no response*) Qualified last year. What? Sold a few houses? Written a will?

**CATHERINE** I'm looking for criminal work.

**MICHAEL** Not here you're not.

**CATHERINE** *(beaten)* OK. If you don't want to do this, I don't want to be here.

*She rises, gathers her papers and turns to go.*

**MICHAEL** I do want to do this.

**CATHERINE** Be precise in your words. Be precise in your words, you said. So what does 'Not here you don't' mean?

**MICHAEL** *(handclap, so far as cuffs allow)* That's more like it. More like it.

*He signals. She sits.*

**CATHERINE** So?

**MICHAEL** So?

**CATHERINE** So stop playing stupid fucking mind games or I walk.

*Pause*

**MICHAEL** So, I said 'Not here you don't' because you don't look for more criminal work here because I am not a criminal.

*Pause*

**CATHERINE** OK.

**MICHAEL** I am not a criminal. *(pause)* I need you to believe I am not a criminal. We going to work together, I need you to believe I am an innocent man.

**CATHERINE** I believe you were wrongly convicted.

**MICHAEL** So, now the words are careful?

**CATHERINE** Precisely. The evidence is all circumstantial, no conclusive forensics, no reliable witness.

**MICHAEL** No bodies.

**CATHERINE** No. No bodies.

**MICHAEL** You think I killed them?

**CATHERINE** I can't see how you were convicted.

**MICHAEL** Not 'not guilty', then. Just not proven.

**CATHERINE** Not proven is not guilty.

**MICHAEL** But not innocent, either.

**CATHERINE** I promised you when I wrote. No bullshit. Total honesty. *(pause)* They shouldn't have convicted you, not on that evidence.

**MICHAEL** Not even if I did it?

**CATHERINE** Not even if you did it.

**MICHAEL** You'd let me go even if you knew it was me?

**CATHERINE** No, I'd let you go free because I don't know it was you. That's how it works. Innocent until proven guilty. Not proven is not guilty.

**MICHAEL** Tell that to my jury.

**CATHERINE** A majority of your jury. Ten of your jury. After six days? Two still voting not guilty? Suggests some doubt. Some reasonable doubt.

**MICHAEL** They convicted me.

**CATHERINE** They hated you.

**MICHAEL** Everyone hates a child killer.

*Pause*

**CATHERINE** Are you a child killer?

**MICHAEL** No.

**CATHERINE** They hated you. Even the two that voted to free you hated you.

**MICHAEL**     You've talked to the jurors?