

“THE PITCH” by Alexander Lee-Rekers

SAM and HANK sit in the office of HARPER, a successful owner of bars and clubs. SAM has a large bottle of cleaning liquid on his knee. HANK looks around at the decor.

HANK: I've seen characters in movies hang pictures on the walls of themselves meeting celebrities... I didn't think it happened in real life.

SAM: Harper's the real deal.

HANK: Sure.

SAM: Plus, I need this win. You know that.

HANK: I'm here. We're here. We're doing this.

SAM: Yeah, so do me a favour, will you? Don't get ... you know how you get?

HANK: *(Bristling.)* No? How do I get?

SAM: You're getting it now.

HANK: Confused?

SAM: “Prickly.” You get prickly, especially around Harper.

HANK: I don't like him like you do.

SAM: You think I like him? You think that's what this is?

HANK: You get some way around him as well. Goofy. Like a cartoon character.

SAM: I do not get goofy.

HANK: We make a sale, we make a sale. If we don't, you don't need to go stumbling after it like a guy chasing his hat in the wind.

SAM: Harper's the real deal.

HARPER enters. SAM and HANK move to stand.

HARPER: Sam 'n' Hank! “Shank!” They still call you that? Sit down, guys.

HANK: Thanks for seeing us.

SAM: (*Pointing to photo frame.*) Hey, what's Tiger Woods like in person?

HARPER: Total prick. (*He aims two finger guns.*) What do you have for me?

SAM: Straight to it. Love that! So the other night, Hank and I walk into a bar. And I know what you're thinking, it's not the start of a joke.

HARPER: Ha.

HANK: We're sitting there, looking around. It's a nice place, not a place like yours but it'll do. Little bistro area. And they've got these criss-cross red and white tablecloths on every table. Folded cloth napkins-

HARPER: Surprised they let you into such a classy joint-

SAM: (*Politely laughing.*) So we look around and I say something like: "Must be a lot to wash all these cloths and napkins each week." Nothing to it, just thinking out loud. And then suddenly, Hank gets a whiff. (*Sam mimes sniffing in the air like a hound.*) He picks up on that scent that only he can: opportunity. Advantage. *Value*.

Harper nods. Points to the bottle in Sam's lap.

HARPER: So this is a cleaning product you're selling me?

HANK: We've done extensive research in the field. There's a lot of product on the market, and not a lot of margin for savings. That is until- (*To Sam.*) You want to tell him? It was your find!

SAM: Maximum dilution point. You ever heard of that?

HANK: It's the point you can dilute a cleaning product without it becoming ineffective. Companies don't advertise it, 'cause they want to sell more of their stuff, right? But the research is there. (*Sam hoists bottle.*) And Dyno-Clean can be mixed with a bucket of oil slick and still cut through any stain on your tables.

HARPER: So it's laundry detergent?

SAM: It's not sexy. But we don't sell sexy. At least not any more! (*A forced laugh.*) Hank and I sell *value*. To the customers, like you, who we respect.

HARPER: I'm not feeling it.

Silence.

SAM: Why aren't you feeling it? What's the problem?

HARPER: The problem? The problem is it's a ... bottle of blue goo. What do I want with that? You made it sound exciting and important, sure. But when you walk into my office and I make the time to see you, I expect, I dunno, a little more? Razzle dazzle.

HANK: *(Standing.)* We sell value. Not much more to be said.

SAM: Hank? Prickly. Take a seat. I've got an idea.

Hank sits down.

SAM: So this morning-

HARPER: Another story?

SAM: Just, let me- This morning, I was racing to the Dyno-Clean factory to pick up the sample—which is yours, by the way, enjoy it on us. But then, like an idiot, I bought a ham and cheese bagel and got mustard on my shirt. That's why I'm sitting funny today: I'm sitting here like a contortionist, like some screwed-up used tissue to hide my mustard stain. You want to see it?

HARPER: I'm good.

SAM: You gotta see this. It's gigantic and yellow like some old treasure map!

HANK: Sam-

SAM untucks his shirt and holds it taut in front of him: there is a large mustard stain near the buttons.

SAM: You see what a slob I am? Harper: I believe in Dyno-Clean so much, I am willing to take off my shirt right now, right here in your office and wash it. I'll spot it in here with my handkerchief and rinse it in the sink through the kitchen.

HARPER: *(Laughing.)* You don't have to do that.

HANK: Let's go.

SAM: I'm *going* to do it.. I'm taking the Dyno-Clean pledge- Here-

HARPER: Where'd you find him?

SAM takes off his jacket and his tie.

SAM: Hold this will you? I usually charge extra for this.

HARPER takes the tie, still laughing.

HARPER: You got any stains, Hank?

HANK: Give him back his fucking tie.

Silence.

SAM: We're just joking around.

HANK: *(To Sam.)* We sell value. He can't see that. There's no helping him. *(To Harper.)* We're done.

HARPER hands back SAM'S tie, stands up at his desk.

HARPER: I'll take twenty bottles. *(Pause.)* This some tactic of yours? One of you depresses me, one of you humiliates me?

SAM: We'll chat to your assistant.

HARPER: *(To Hank.)* Will you? Still gonna take my money?

HANK casts his eyes down.

HARPER: Thought so. Always a pleasure.

HARPER exits. SAM and HANK remain in the office, looking at each other.