

TRACY LETTS

(Arthur exits to the kitchen, grabs his coat.)

LUTHER: Mary Mother of God, where's the heater in this joint?
My blood is frozen.

(Arthur reenters, zips up a money bag.)

ARTHUR: I gotta get to the bank before seven. You good until seven?

FRANCO: Moppin' it up over here, boss.

(The four men consider each other for an awkward moment. Arthur exits. Franco and Luther hug.)

Start

LUTHER: Great to see you.

FRANCO: You, too.

LUTHER: You remember Kevin? He was out there at Hawthorne with us some.

KEVIN *(Presses a handshake)*: How's it goin'?

FRANCO: Yeah, good.

LUTHER: Where you been?

FRANCO: I been around.

LUTHER: I haven't seen you. I thought for sure we'd see you over at the club for the Breeders' Cup. Grady had a big thing, with barbecue, all the nuts. It was okay.

FRANCO: I been too tapped out.

LUTHER: Tell me about it. I got my ass handed to me last couple months.

FRANCO: Yeah?

KEVIN: Big Ten's been a bloodbath.

LUTHER: Every fucking thing, the Series set me back a good chunk and I been playing catch up ever since. Then all of a sudden Notre Dame decides to play ball and I gotta pay off every mackerel-snapper this side of South Bend. Fucking freak show.

SUPERIOR DONUTS

FRANCO: Times are tough.

LUTHER: Times are tough. Times are tough. How 'bout you? You doing okay?

FRANCO: No, I. Hey, I'm working here, so you see how I am.

KEVIN: Yeah, you're working in this donut shop.

FRANCO: Yeah, for now.

LUTHER: We're the last of the working men.

KEVIN: What do you get here, like minimum?

LUTHER: Last time I saw you though, you had something else working, right? Some crazy thing about, what was it, *gold*?

FRANCO: Yeah, no, that fell through—

KEVIN: What, like a—you had a treasure map?

LUTHER *(Laughs)*: Right, it was like a treasure map, and the X marked the spot.

KEVIN: Where you found the buried treasure—

LUTHER: Gold doubloons.

FRANCO: No, it wasn't . . . it doesn't matter—

LUTHER: I'm just bustin' your hump. Christ, at least you're trying. That's why I love you, kid, you're always working some Chinese angle. What do you got for me?

FRANCO: Not much.

KEVIN: What is not much?

LUTHER: How much?

FRANCO: Three hundred.

LUTHER: Jeez, Franco, that's rough on me, y'know? I mean I got Grady snapping at my heels. The wolves are at the door.

FRANCO: I'm sorry, Luther, that's what I got.

LUTHER: I hate this. Y'know? I mean I really hate it. You and me? But I'm in a tough spot.

FRANCO: I hear you.

LUTHER: You don't act like it. And then you disappear on me.

FRANCO: I didn't disappear.

LUTHER: When's the last time you're in the club?

FRANCO: I had to come up with a new plan.

KEVIN: The Donut Plan.

FRANCO: That's why I got this shitty gig, just 'cause I figured something is better than nothing.

LUTHER: You're into me for sixteen K, Frank. Three yards just won't cut it.

FRANCO: Okay . . .

LUTHER: So you tell me, what else can we do about this?

FRANCO: Extend my credit. Give me the Bears on Sunday. Double or nothing.

LUTHER: That's how we got into this mess. I knew better than to let you double down at eight but I was doin' you a solid. It's over now; I can't do it. Cutler tanks and you're into me for thirty-two thousand and that can't happen. Anyway, you want to gamble on paper only and I need cash in hand, right?

KEVIN: Meanwhile the juice is adding up.

LUTHER: That's right, our debts just get bigger, yours and mine.

FRANCO: I'd lay it off with another bookie if I could—

KEVIN: If you could find someone who'll let you bet sixteen grand that you don't have. And you can't find that.

LUTHER: Credit's dried up all over.

KEVIN: And word's out on you.

LUTHER: And word's out on you, Frank. So what are we going to do about this situation? 'Cause I'm worried.

FRANCO: Let it ride, double or nothing, one more week.

KEVIN: The fuck.

FRANCO: Let it ride. Bears plus three-and-a-half.

(Luther winces, grabs his stomach.)

End

LUTHER: Got any milk?

(Franco gets Luther a glass of milk.)

Ulcer. Like I swallowed a hot coal. My wife's sister showed up at the apartment last week, from Puerto Rico, left her

husband or he kicked her out, some fucking thing, nobody has a job, brought her two kids with her. They're living in our dining room, for Christ's sake, got their toys spread out all over. I wake up in the morning and all I hear all day is these electronic video games and computers. I live with robots. I said, "Marisol, for the love of God, your sister can't afford to rent a place for her and her kids but she's got more electronics than NASA." My wife bawled me out. *You know Marisol: "Chu got no caring is what. Chu got no empathy."* I said, "Why do you think I got an ulcer? What do you think gave it to me?" She says smoking cigars and eating Italian beef. I say, "No, it's empathy."

KEVIN: Right.

LUTHER: I got a hole in my stomach because I take on the worries of the world. That's my problem, Franco: it's empathy. Your worries are my worries. You can't come up with a solution to your problem and it makes the hole in my stomach get that much bigger. So let's get practical here. How about your mom? Can you hit her up for it?

FRANCO: Luther, my mom is livin' on a government check. I pay for her and my baby sister.

LUTHER: C'mon, nothing stashed in the coffee can for a rainy day?

FRANCO: No way. I'm doing everything I can to get us out of that dump we're in.

LUTHER: And you don't know where your old man is.

KEVIN: There's a shocker.

FRANCO (*Ignoring Kevin*): No, I don't hear from him.

LUTHER: Grannies? Uncles? Aunties?

FRANCO: No.

LUTHER: How about the teachers over at your old school, at Truman, none of them are—?

FRANCO: No, we don't keep in touch.

LUTHER: Neighborhood buddies.

FRANCO: Nope . . .