

The Cooler – M/M

INT. CASINO FLOOR – NIGHT

Bernie makes his way across the casino floor, when he's intercepted by Shelly.

SHELLY

Bernie. Mr. Cool. Got a moment?

BERNIE

I was just heading over to --

SHELLY

It can wait.

Shelly escorts Bernie over to a nearby bar area. The BARTENDER zips over with some drinks.

SHELLY

How's the knee?

Bernie shrugs. Natalie steps up to the bar a few feet away.

Puts in a drink order. She catches Bernie's eye. Nods.

Bernie smiles.

SHELLY

I was speaking to this orthopedic surgeon over at Vegas Memorial. He tells me they can replace a man's entire kneecap with titanium. It's the kinda thing that costs a shitload, but since the man's into us for five hundred large, I'm sure we could --

BERNIE

(stealing glances at Natalie)

I told you, I'm not gonna be around after Sunday.

SHELLY

(sighs)

Where you gonna go, Bernie? Where the fuck are you gonna go that's better'n here? I got you covered in this town. People, they know you work for me, that's currency in your pocket. That's fuckin' respect when you walk the floor. Where you gonna get that anyplace else?

BERNIE

(sighs)

Seven days, Shelly. Seven days and I'm out from under.

past
reaches
She

A beautiful WOMAN in a low cut dress, sashays her way
them, heading for a high rollers craps table. Shelly
out, napkin in hand, grabs her arm. Hands her his card.
snatches it, looks it over. Immediately loses all attitude.
Oh shit.

SHELLY

That's right. I like to know who's shopping it in my neighborhood. You wanna keep working the Shangri-la, you come see me tomorrow morning in my office. We'll go over the rules together. And before you come, you bring me a clean bill of health. OK?

The hooker just nods.

SHELLY

All right, get outta here.

drink

She takes off. At the same time Natalie leaves with her order. They walk in the same direction. Shelly mistakes Bernie's wandering look for interest in the hooker.

SHELLY

You want that, Bernie? She's yours. Anytime. I'll keep a tab running for you.

(Bernie shakes his head)

What's a matter? Not your type?

Bernie just stares after Natalie, Shelly finally picking up on it.

BERNIE

Things are getting hot on fourteen. I gotta go.

He limps off. Shelly stares after him. A predator seizing up his prey. Calculating.