

“BRONZE MONKEY STATUE” by Alexander Lee-Rekers (StageMilk, 2024)

The law office of Luther Krupp. Luther himself sits behind his cluttered desk, opposite siblings Miles and Linden. Standing over them is their Aunt Sarah.

AUNT SARAH: It can't be avoided.

LUTHER: No, it can't.

AUNT SARAH: Exactly. I keep telling them that, but they won't listen to me.

LUTHER: It's hard to get young people to listen to anything these-

AUNT SARAH: I said if you won't listen to me, then listen to the lawyer who drew up the will.

LUTHER: And when I did-

AUNT SARAH: Luther Krupp has been with our family longer than dementia and stomach cancer combined. And he's just as tough to rattle.

LUTHER: Thank you, Sarah.

AUNT SARAH: So Miles? Linden? You're going to listen to an expert and he's going to tell you what I told you. *(To LUTHER.)* Tell them.

LUTHER: It can't be avoided.

Aunt Sarah claps her hands together.

AUNT SARAH: You see? He'll bill me an hour for that.

LINDEN: My brother and I can't understand what happened.

AUNT SARAH: It was her *will*, Linden...

LINDEN: So why wasn't it *in* her will?

LUTHER: Just before your mother passed, she donated the item in question to the State Museum. They took possession, as set in a change of ownership contract your mother signed, one week before her death.

AUNT SARAH: It belongs to the museum, my little gemstones. Let it go.

MILES: We know it's in the museum. We saw it there last week.

LINDEN: They invited us to the unveiling!

AUNT SARAH: What were you two planning to do with an antique bronze monkey statue?

Beat. Isn't it obvious, shrugs Miles?

MILES: Sell it.

AUNT SARAH: Sell it?!

MILES: It's ours to sell.

AUNT SARAH: Didn't my sister leave you enough?

MILES: That's not the point. She knew we wanted to sell that piece. We've never liked it, and we made a promise to each other when we were little that we would inherit and sell it one day.

LINDEN: And she hated that we remembered that pact. Took it as a personal attack, like everything else...

AUNT SARAH: She left you her portfolio, she left you her house and everything in it-

LINDEN: *Right. Exactly.* It was in her house. Miles pointed it out the night she-

LUTHER: Children, the fact of the matter is she gave ownership of that statue to the museum before she died. When she passed away, it no longer fell under the list of her possessions. It wasn't hers to give away a second time.

AUNT SARAH: Now do you understand? It can't be-

LINDEN: Avoided, yes. So you've said.

AUNT SARAH: ...live a happy life, do you Linden?

Pause.

MILES: What if it was a fake? What if the museum was told they were displaying a phoney bronze monkey statue?

LINDEN: They wouldn't like that...

LUTHER: Is it fake?

LINDEN: That's not for us to say. But the museum might think twice before they-

MILES: An anonymous tip-off.

LUTHER: To do what I hope you're not suggesting you do, you would need to swear that it was actually fake. And that would dash your chances of ever selling it yourselves.

LINDEN: So we have it appraised after we get it back. We perform a double-check and "What do you know!"

AUNT SARAH: That sounds like fraud.

MILES: Are you a lawyer too, now?

LUTHER: That does sound like fraud.

LINDEN: A gift. An endowment to the museum. We buy it back and sell it on.

MILES: No, we claim the statue was stolen, and pretend to be the original-

LINDEN: Why don't we pay to have it stolen back?

LUTHER: Stop! Enough. I have known you both since you were scared of the door knocker on this building. Don't besmirch your mother's memory with this behaviour. Learn from her example and do *better*.

MILES: ...fine. Consider the bronze monkey statue dropped.

Pause.

LINDEN: Now what about the ivory brooch?

AUNT SARAH: It can't be avoided.

LUTHER: No, it can't.

AUNT SARAH: Exactly. I keep telling them that!

Blackout.

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