

“FOLK NIGHT” by Alexander Lee-Rekers

An office boardroom. Mediator DEREK sits in the middle of the table, flanked by manager CLIFF and employee LUCY.

LUCY: Who’s going to start? Because I was called in during my lunch hour and I don’t know what I’m doing here.

CLIFF: I appreciate that; Lucy, this shouldn’t take long. You know Derek from HR? He’s going to be acting as a mediator for us in this session.

DEREK: Not officially, mind you. No, this is strictly informal. A favour from me to Cliff as he speaks to you today.

CLIFF: Lucy, you’re not in trouble.

LUCY: Good.

CLIFF: And Derek is here to make that very clear.

DEREK: That part *is* official! Still informal, though.

CLIFF: But I did want to speak to you about something that has been troubling me. Nothing major, nothing disciplinary-

LUCY: Nothing official.

CLIFF: See? You get it! So. Thursday nights in the Fowler household are date nights. The missus and I dress up, make an effort, pick a restaurant or a movie and have a good time. After that, we find a fun local spot for a night-cap, maybe discuss the meal or the movie. Are you following?

LUCY: I understand the words you’re saying.

CLIFF: Let me get to the point: last night, after a steak at Weston’s, we strolled around the neighbourhood until we came to a delightful dive bar called Sapper’s Tavern.

LUCY: Oh no...

CLIFF: *(To Derek.)* Where it turns out Lucy’s been keeping quite the secret.

DEREK: Oh dear. This might need to be official after all...

CLIFF: Whatever you're thinking, Derek, it's not that. Lucy was performing *on stage* in the Sapper's Tavern folk night! She sings! Plays guitar! She was magical- *(To Lucy.)* My wife *loved* you. Kept trying to find you on Spotify on the drive home.

LUCY: I didn't see you in the crowd.

CLIFF: Well you wouldn't have with the following you've got. A regular Hard Day's Night down at Sapper's Tavern!

DEREK: How cool! You should play the Christmas party this year.

CLIFF: Slow down, Derek. Because there's a catch. This is why you're here today. We sat there for a few songs and after a while, as you do, I started listening to the lyrics.

DEREK: The actual words being sung?

CLIFF: Correct. And I was shocked, Lucy... Is everything all right? Are you that unhappy in the workplace? The lyrics were "union this", "bosses that", Masters of War and hammers and bells- you seemed like a completely different person.

LUCY: Cliff, I don't mean to sound awful, but it's not really any of your business. Right, Derek? I'm singing in my own time, I'm not hurting anybody-

CLIFF: I'm worried if *you're* hurting. These delusional statements about industry, the very systems that keep us clothed and fed.

LUCY: Is there any chance you're infringing on my right to my own political opinions?

CLIFF: God, no! This is all very informal.

LUCY: It still feels like a violation of my privacy.

CLIFF: Then we're agreed: you shall sing your songs at home.

LUCY: What? No. You stepped into my gig, listened to my songs. I don't bring the folk night audience here to the office.

DEREK: That would not be appropriate.

CLIFF: But I can't have you working here knowing it makes you unhappy. Are you? Unhappy in your job?

LUCY: *(To Derek.)* Do I have to answer that?

DEREK: ...you sort of did.

LUCY: I sing those song because I love them, because I believe in their messages. But that's folk night, not the office. I know the difference.

CLIFF: Good. I guess?

LUCY: Good. I think we're done here.

DEREK: Wait. One more thing. Would you play at the Christmas party?

CLIFF: The missus would love it.

LUCY: Tell her I'll burn her a CD.