

Shutter Island | Dennis Lehane

Chapter 6

Dolores, karats of anger in her eyes, Bing Crosby crooning “East Side of Heaven” from somewhere in the apartment, the kitchen, maybe. She says, “Jesus, Teddy. Jesus Christ.” She’s holding an empty bottle of JTS Brown in her hand. His empty bottle. And Teddy realizes she’s found one of his stashes.

“Are you ever sober? Are you ever fucking sober anymore? Answer me.”

But Teddy can’t. He can’t speak. He’s not even sure where his body is. He can see her and she keeps coming down that long hallway toward him, but he can’t see his physical self, can’t even feel it. There’s a mirror at the other end of the hall behind Dolores, and he’s not reflected in it.

She turns left into the living room and the back of her is charred, smoldering a bit. The bottle is no longer in her hand, and small ribbons of smoke unwind from her hair. She stops at a window. “Oh, look. They’re so pretty like that. Floating.”

Teddy is beside her at the window, and she’s no longer burned, she’s soaking wet, and he can see himself, his hand as he places it on her shoulder, the fingers draping over her collarbone, and she turns her head and gives his fingers a quick kiss.

“What did you do?” he says, not even sure why he’s asking.

“Look at them out there.”

“Baby, why you all wet?” he says, but isn’t surprised when she doesn’t answer.

The view out the window is not what he expects. It’s not the view they had from the apartment on Buttonwood, but the view of another place they stayed once, a cabin. There’s a small pond out there with small logs floating in it, and Teddy notices how smooth they are, turning almost imperceptibly, the water shivering and gone white in places under the moon.

“That’s a nice gazebo,” she says. “So white. You can smell the fresh paint.”

“It is nice.”

“So,” Dolores says.

“Killed a lot of people in the war.”

“Why you drink.”

“Maybe.”

“She’s here.”

“Rachel?”

Dolores nods. “She never left. You almost saw it. You almost did.” “The Law of Four.”

“It’s code.”

“Sure, but for what?”

“She’s here. You can’t leave.”

He wraps his arms around her from behind, buries his face in the side of her neck. “I’m not going to leave. I love you. I love you so much.”

Her belly springs a leak and the liquid flows through his hands. “I’m bones in a box, Teddy.”

“I am. You have to wake up.”

5 “You’re here.”

“I’m not. You have to face that. She’s here. You’re here. He’s here too. Count the beds. He’s here.”

“Who?”

“Laeddis.”

The name crawls through his flesh and climbs over his bones.

10 “No.”

“Yes.” She bends her head back, looks up at him.

“You’ve known.”

“I haven’t.”

“Yes, you have. You can’t leave.”

15 “You’re tense all the time.” He kneads her shoulders, and she lets out a soft moan of surprise that gives him a hard-on.

“I’m not tense anymore,” she says. “I’m home.”

“This isn’t home,” he says.

“Sure, it is. My home. She’s here. He’s here.”

20 “Laeddis.”

“Laeddis,” she says. Then: “I need to go.”

“No.” He’s crying. “No. Stay.”

“Oh, God.” She leans back into him. “Let me go. Let me go.” “Please don’t go.” His tears spill down her body and mix with her pouring belly. “I need to hold you just a little longer. A little longer. Please.”

25 She lets loose a small bubble of a sound---half sigh, half howl, so torn and beautiful in its anguish—and she kisses his knuckles. “Okay. Hold tight. Tight as you can.”

And he holds his wife. He holds her and holds her.
