

# *The Sting*

INT. GONDORFF'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gondorff and Hooker are playing gin rummy and drinking. Gondorff makes little comments as he plays, but Hooker is quiet and withdrawn. The carousel is not in operation and a heavy silence hangs over the place.

GONDORFF

What's the matter, kid? You're not sayin' much.

HOOKER

Just a little nervous, that's all.

GONDORFF

Luther always told me to bite my toenails when I get nervous. You see yourself doin' that and you realize it ain't worth it.

Hooker smiles feebly.

Billie appears at the door.

BILLIE

Things are a little slow tonight, Henry. I wanna open the round for the girls.

Gondorff takes out a set of keys and tosses them to her. She leaves to go start the merry-go-round. Gondorff settles back into the game.

GONDORFF

Take it easy, you won't lose him now. We had him 10 years ago when he decided to be somebody. Believe me, I've seen enough to know.

HOOKER

(softly)

How many guys you conned in your life, Henry?

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GONDORFF

Two or three hundred I guess.  
Sometimes played two a day when I  
was in Shea's mob. We had it down  
to a business.

(pause)

'Course Chicago was a right town  
then. The fix was in. The dicks  
took their end without a beef. All  
the Wall Street boys wanted to make  
investments for us. Even had marks  
looking us up, thinkin' they could  
beat the game.

(pause)

Yeh, kid, it really stunk. No  
sense in bein' a grifter if it's  
the same as bein' a citizen.

Gondorff chucks his cards on the table. He's through for  
the night.

GONDORFF

I better do some packin'. I'm  
gonna be a hot number again after  
tomorrow.

HOOKER

Then why you doin' it?

GONDORFF

Seems worthwhile, doesn't it?  
Maybe it's just for the cave-in on  
Lonnegan's face when we put in the  
sting.

That's good enough. Hooker gets up to leave.

HOOKER

Henry.

HOOKER

Yeh.

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HOOKER

(apologetically)

I appreciate your stickin' your  
neck out. I wouldn't have asked ya  
if it weren't for Luther.

GONDORFF

Ain't nothin' gonna make up for  
Luther, kid.

(pause)

Revenge is for suckers. I been  
griftin' 30 years and never got any.

Hooker just nods and walks out the door.