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The mismatched boots hobbled up and down eerily, glinty silver and blue in the moonlight. It was late and he was still half asleep, though he had often wondered how anyone could sleep in New York City, where the blare of sirens was more often heard than an alarm clock.

He wished he had a siren now. Private detectives weren't allowed sirens, or badges - but apparently they could still be woken up at three in the morning by surly police ~~and~~ captains. They should at least give him one of those flashing lights, he thought, as he turned into the carpark next to the docks. His daughter would love to see them flashing as they drove past Hudson Park, making the ~~other~~ pigeons fly.

He was still thinking about pigeons as he climbed out of his car and searched through the sea of police officers, coroners and fisherman for the sergeant. ~~He~~ It didn't take him long - the sergeant was ~~a~~ tall, fat and loud, and was often noted to be closest in appearance to an obese walrus. He waddled over and started barking immediately.

"Morning, O'Keefe! Some poor creature washed up ~~in~~ at the docks this morning. Thought you might know him."

O'Keefe's stomach sank, and he felt the usual itch on his right arm, where the mark used to be. What was an Irishman doing face-down in the Hudson at three in the morning? He prayed to god that it was ~~also~~ nobody he knew. Still, if they had the mark.

The sergeant had walked over to where the coroner stood over a puffy white cadaver, looking down on it like he was watching a particularly interesting play. O'Keefe hated coroners. They were one ring up from the cops, and that was about ten rings too few.

"Male, thirty-five, looks like he drowned," the coroner droned, not looking up. The sergeant had lit a cigar and was puffing away at it, nodding the coroner along.

"No wallet no I.D. A small shamrock tattoo on his upper right arm." O'Keefe felt the blood drain out of his face. That was not good. That was not good at all.

"Oh, and this." The coroner ~~then~~ slipped something into the sergeant's hand, who squinted at it, grunted, and passed it along to O'Keefe.

It was smooth and heavy in his hands, and the

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coldness of it send a chill up his spine.

"A stone?", he asked the coroner, perplexed. "Where was it found?"

"It was on his hand. Turn it over," the coroner replied.

He did so, and felt colder than ever. There, ~~was~~ scratched into the stone's grey face, were the words "STAY OUT OF ST PATRICK'S".

The sergeant coughed a little, and then again, swallowing O'Keefe's eyes. If he had been looking, he would see those same eyes rolling - O'Keefe had seen this act many times before.

"Now, you know I don't like asking, and you're not on the force, but..." The sergeant looked at O'Keefe hopefully, and was met with silence. The sergeant sucked on his cigar a moment longer, then continued.

"...but I can't just show my face in Irish Quarter asking about a dead body. The Shams aren't too fond of the police on a good day, so I was hopin' you could."

"Consurely I done," O'Keefe replied firmly. He would have to head home on sleep a bit before heading over

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to Irish Quarter. It would be bad enough going back alone, but he wouldn't want to be dried when he did it.

He slumped back into his car, stone still in hand, and started preparing himself for the confrontation with his brother.

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New York is noisy all the time. This was a simple fact; the sun comes up, the sun goes down, New York is incredibly loud. But on a Sunday that noise seemed almost muted, dull, as still as it could get without ever stopping. O'Keefe wondered if it was just because he had grown used to the sound or because he spent every Sunday morning in church.

He had passed his usual church on the way to St Patrick's Cathedral. St Patrick's, everyone agreed, was the most beautiful church in all of New York, with its sprawling towers and stained glass windows. It was also the home of the Irish-American ^{and} trade, headed by the oldest Irish family in New England: the O'Keefes.

He walked down the hall dressed in his Sunday best, trying to make as little noise as possible before sliding into the foremost pew. It was after ~~mass~~ and the church

was really empty, save for a few people littered among the seats, paying or clutching their rosaries. O'Keefe bent his head and tried to ignore the stone in his pocket for ten minutes, until someone sat down next to him. He did not then need to look up to know who it was.

"Hello, Patrok," O'Keefe whispered, glancing up at his younger brother. Patrok was staring straight ahead.

"You'll not talk, then? Alright," O'Keefe pulled out the stone and waved it under his brother's nose.

"Know anything about this?" Patrok shook his head. O'Keefe felt his patience slipping away, and dropped the stone onto the ground.

"What about the dead man floating in the Hudson?"

Patrok's head snapped up. "How do you know he's Irish?"

O'Keefe rolled his eyes. "Because he's got a shamrock tattoo you idiot! I do remember what they look like." Before mine was burnt off, he thought, and cursed his fists to stop them trying to take the burn where his shamrock used to be.

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Patrick cursed and looked away.

"Damn, I knew I forgot something!" O'Keefe felt his stomach drop in horror.

"You killed him? Why?" It came out as a shocked whisper.

"He made Da mad," Patrick said, with a little shrug.

"You'll cover it up, then?" Patrick added, raising his brows.

O'Keefe looked away, feeling like he was going to be sick. He had left the mob to make an honest living - for his daughter and for himself - but he could not let his brother get dragged off to prison - or the needle. He was the eldest, and he had made his mother a promise - to protect his brothers. It did not matter if the war was justice - family was blood. And blood was everything.

"Consider it done."

He stood up to leave, the stone glinting ~~with~~ the reflection of candles on his shoes.

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