

Ice

by Michael Olsen

Characters: DIANE FIELDER (F) 40s

SARAH GOODMAN (F) 20s

Lights come up on a gloomy warehouse. There is a desk centre stage, and a general feeling of dirt and grime about the place. DIANE bursts in. She is wearing a clown's costume, all multicoloured craziness, along with a bright orange frizzy wig. She stops to cough, then goes over to the desk. She removes a piece of black velvet material from the desk drawer, and lays it on the desk. Then she gropes around inside her costume and pulls out a small pouch. She upends the pouch on the cloth. A handful of uncut diamonds tumble out. Diane is delighted. She counts them. She is very pleased. She counts them again.

SARAH: *(off)* I suppose they don't count themselves, do they?

SARAH enters. She is wearing a French maid's outfit. Diane rushes up to Sarah and hugs her.

DIANE: We did it! We did it!

SARAH: We really did, didn't we?

DIANE: I couldn't believe it! It went off without a hitch! Wasn't I right about the party?

SARAH: You were right.

DIANE: There were so many people they couldn't watch that silly conservatory for two minutes. Julio Sandini is the biggest mark in the history of the city and we got him!

SARAH: How did you know he was going to throw a fancy dress party?

DIANE: Who didn't know? You just have to subscribe to the right Twitter pages, that's all.

SARAH: The diamonds were right where you said they'd be?

DIANE: In a safe hidden behind the agapanthus. Weird place to put them, but hey! I'm not complaining!

SARAH: No problem with the safe?

DIANE: It was an Eagle SB-O1E. Could have opened it with my eyes closed.

SARAH: Everyone was there. Did you see Brad Pitt?

DIANE: See him? I nearly bumped into him and one of his kids. The only trouble going as a clown is you have to act like one.

- SARAH:** I thought you did a great job.
- DIANE:** And you, my dear, looked absolutely scrumptious. Was that George Clooney hitting on you?
- SARAH:** The tall guy? He was old enough to be my grandfather!
- DIANE:** There was a moment, though, when I really thought it was all up.
- SARAH:** When that security guard came over?
- DIANE:** He looked like he played for St Kilda and had the morals to boot.
- SARAH:** I didn't hear what you said.
- DIANE:** He said no-one could go into the conservatory.
- SARAH:** I heard that.
- DIANE:** So all I said was: If you want to spoil Julio's party you go right ahead.
- SARAH:** And he let you in?
- DIANE:** He didn't know who I was. I could have been the Queen of Sheba for all he knew. Don't want to upset the talent.
- SARAH:** Wow.
- DIANE:** So come on. Where's the rest of it? The transfer went well, don't you think?
- Diane coughs.*
- SARAH:** I don't have them.
- DIANE:** Of course you do. I gave you half, in the butler's pantry.
- SARAH:** They were too much. I had to lose them.
- DIANE:** You ditched them?
- SARAH:** I ditched them.
- DIANE:** Where?
- SARAH:** In the main hall, behind some statue.
- DIANE:** I don't believe it. I don't want to believe it. I refuse to believe it!

- SARAH:** You better believe it.
- DIANE:** Why?
- SARAH:** I was getting heat. There were two guys on the door. They were looking at me funny.
- DIANE:** So?
- SARAH:** So I—I panicked. I ditched the stuff behind the roman soldier statue.
- DIANE:** So what are we supposed to do now? Waltz back in and say “Excuse me, my friend and I just want to collect our uncut diamonds that we stashed behind the roman soldier statue?”
- SARAH:** I knew you wouldn't understand.
- DIANE:** What's to understand? You choked. That's all. You frigging choked on the one day in your whole miserable little life when I was relying on you. *(Pause)* I knew it. I absolutely knew it!
- SARAH:** Knew what?
- DIANE:** I knew I shouldn't have relied on a crack head!
- SARAH:** I am not a crack head! I'm not! I haven't used in what? Three weeks?
- DIANE:** Whatever.
- SARAH:** You can say anything you like to me but you do not say “Whatever”!
- DIANE:** I think today of all days I can call you anything I damnwell like. I think crack head pretty much sums it up, Miss Whatever.
- SARAH:** But you don't get to—
- DIANE:** Oh really? I don't get to what? Call you pretty names when they bloodywell fit like a glove? I trained you. I gave you a place to live. I pulled you out of the gutter like the trash you were and made you into something—dare I say it?—something decent. And I've asked nothing in return. Nothing. Now when I ask this one small favour, granted, it's one that requires a bit of guts and determination, and perhaps a bit of womanly skill as well, but nothing you can't handle, you have stuffed it up big time.
- SARAH:** But—
- DIANE:** But nothing. Nothing! *(Diane coughs again.)* The plan was perfect. Perfect.
- SARAH:** *(mumbling)* Nothing's perfect.

DIANE: Too bloody right. You just proved that.

SARAH: Why can't we go back?

DIANE: They've probably found it by now. They must have done a huge clean up.

SARAH: We could be cleaners or something. Waltz right in the front door.

DIANE: Did you see the amount of CCTV that place had? Costumes or not they've got us figured out by now. I'm not walking back into the lion's den.

SARAH: You said it was a perfect plan! You said there would be no problems!

Sarah starts to tear up.

DIANE: For godsake don't go to pieces. We're still here. We still have— something.

SARAH: How much have we got?

DIANE: Not enough.

SARAH: How much?

DIANE: Not enough, alright?

SARAH: Let me count it.

DIANE: No way.

SARAH: You think I'm going to diddle you out of this much?

DIANE: Alright, count them.

Diane scoops up the uncut diamonds and hands them to Sarah. Sarah marvels at them, holding some up to the light.

SARAH: They're so pretty, even uncut.

DIANE: They look better when they're cut, believe me, and that's also when they're worth more. *(Pause)* I thought he'd be here by now.

SARAH: Really?

DIANE: Hertzberg is never late.

SARAH: First time for everything.

DIANE: Hertzberg is many things: a liar, a chiseller, a creepoid of the first order, but he is never late. *(looking at her watch)* Hell!

Diane coughs again, hard, this time into a hankie. She looks at the hankie and grimaces.

SARAH: You should see a doctor.

DIANE: I did.

SARAH: And?

DIANE: It's nothing. Just a cold. I suppose in your case the dope just kills the viruses, doesn't it? *(Pause)* Give me the ice.

Sarah hands over the uncut diamonds. Diane runs her hand over them, picks one or two out for closer inspection.

SARAH: Whatcha gonna do?

DIANE: If we split this, as we agreed, 50-50, there won't be enough. *(Pause)* All it comes down to is a couple of pretty rocks. *(Pause)* I never liked Julio Sandini. Arrogant prick. And what he did to that model, what was her name?—

SARAH: Manuela Cortez.

DIANE: What he did to her and got away with! I hope he's pissed off. The only way to hurt these bastards is in the hip-pocket.

SARAH: So what are you saying?

DIANE: I'm saying you take it.

SARAH: No. You earned it.

DIANE: You need it.

SARAH: You do too!

DIANE: As I said, it's not enough. It's nowhere near enough. *(Pause)* What will you do with it?

SARAH: Nothing.

DIANE: Come on. You must have some idea.

SARAH: It was for my OBBIE.

DIANE: Your what?

SARAH: My OBBIE. My One Big Break.

DIANE: Well, it's a start.

Diane moves to the door.

SARAH: Where are you going?

DIANE: I've given up.

Diane coughs.

SARAH: Take it. It sounds like you need it.

DIANE: That's the difference between us: I know when to give up. Look after yourself, kid. Then, again, I suppose you always have, haven't you?

Sarah rushes up and hugs Diane. Diane is disconcerted and doesn't know what to do.

SARAH: Goodbye then.

Diane leaves. Sarah waves, makes sure Diane really is gone. Sarah turns back to the diamonds, marvelling at them.

Diane enters.

DIANE: Couldn't help but get to thinking about Hertzberg.

Sarah jumps.

SARAH: What about him?

DIANE: He's not late. He's not coming at all, is he?

SARAH: What do you mean?

DIANE: What I mean, babycakes, is that you told him not to come. You cancelled his appointment.

SARAH: Why would I do that?

DIANE: I'm glad you're not denying it now.

SARAH: I am denying it!

DIANE: You said nothing to him.

SARAH: No.

DIANE: Maybe you didn't need to speak. It was understood. He is, after all, a man, and they prefer actions to words.

SARAH: What are you saying?

DIANE: I'm saying you must have been very persuasive. The question is, what about the other half of the ice? Do you really think you can waltz back in and get it? Or did you have someone else at the party? Someone who took your stash and now you're waiting for them?

SARAH: You're crazy.

DIANE: Am I?

SARAH: You think someone else is coming with my stash?

DIANE: Let's just wait and see, shall we?

SARAH: Alright, let's.

Pause

DIANE: I must admit, it's something that I would have done. Years ago. When I was younger.

SARAH: What's that?

DIANE: Ditch the stash, get it later. Get it all for myself.

SARAH: When you had nothing to lose.

DIANE: If I had nothing to lose back then I've certainly got even less to lose now. *(Pause)* Why didn't you just tell me?

SARAH: Would you have said something—years ago?

DIANE: Good point.

SARAH: But like you say, you've got nothing to lose now.

DIANE: What do you mean?

SARAH: I mean, what were you planning to do. To me?

- DIANE:** To you?
- SARAH:** You said you've got even less to lose now, so I figure you planned to get all the ice and leave.
- DIANE:** No. We agreed. 50-50.
- SARAH:** No, you needed someone else to split the stash in the party to get it out. That was me. But what were you going to do to get your hands on all of it? After I handed over my half, what were you planning to do? Kill me? Just hit me and run? What?
- Diane has a coughing fit.*
- SARAH:** Maybe you'll respect me now.
- DIANE:** Respect you?
- SARAH:** Tell me the truth. The first and last time.
- Pause*
- DIANE:** The truth is I need the ice for an operation. You might have noticed the coughing, the blood.
- SARAH:** Of course.
- DIANE:** There's a clinic, in Switzerland, of course, where they carry out lung transplants, no questions asked. Probably from some poor homeless Rumanian girls. If I don't get one, I'll die. I'll slowly drown in my own blood and there's nothing they can do for me here. I could go on the waiting list here, but there's no guarantee.
- SARAH:** That's a bit dramatic. So you're dying.
- DIANE:** Yes.
- SARAH:** Not nice, is it?
- DIANE:** No.
- SARAH:** I've woken up so many times in hospital I'm convinced heaven looks like the inside of of an emergency room.
- DIANE:** Dying's easy, living's hard.
- SARAH:** Why didn't you tell me?
- DIANE:** There's something I hadn't figured on doing: how to get the diamonds off you.

SARAH: Like your Last Rule of Planning: You can't plan everything.

DIANE: So, you were listening to what I said.

SARAH: I owe you everything.

DIANE: Great. Now what?

SARAH: Hertzberg isn't coming.

DIANE: I figured.

SARAH: We need to wait for the heat to pass.

DIANE: That's true. The getaway is 50% of the job.

SARAH: Then we can look for somewhere better to live.

DIANE: You don't like my place?

SARAH: It's a hole. A pretty hole, of course, but a hole all the same. We need somewhere by the sea, with a view of the beach, the sound of birds—

DIANE: I hate seagulls.

SARAH: —and Norfolk pines—

DIANE: —blocking the view.

SARAH: You don't like?

DIANE: Very pretty, but it's your future, not mine. If I had a choice, I'd go up the mountains. Lot's of trees and rocks and maybe a river running through it. That's paradise for me.

SARAH: So let's do it.

DIANE: Not with these. *(Pause)* You go for it. It's your time.

Diane moves off.

SARAH: Where are you going?

DIANE: Home.

SARAH: They'll be looking for us there. Cops, or Sandini.

DIANE: They can have me.