

A 'Bait' Shop specializing in single malt scotches and fresh baked sourdough. Not a single item of bait to be seen, discounting the sushi-to-go packs next to the cash register. I prodded at the cello-wrapped contents of one with a finger as Ollie rang me up.

"I was terribly sorry to learn of your loss," I tried.

***Gustafson*:** "What loss would that be, Mister Phelps?" ,” ***Digby*:** He stared down at me from his six-six height, his barrel chest heaving in exasperation at my rampant and stupid sensitivity.

"I was referring to your wife? I understood that she had..." What Digby? Passed on? Drowned? Jumped from the bridge? "...died."

***Gustafson*:** "I was no longer married to the woman, as you know." He dropped a wine bottle into a sack on the counter with a wooden thud. "So, your pity is unnecessary. Thank you all the same. Cash, please."

***Digby*:** "Yes, cash," I said. My charge account was apparently closed. "My mistake, sorry. I feel bad for your son."

***Gustafson*:** "Don't." He took a hundred dollar bill from me and placed it on the front of the register.

"Mister Phelps, whatever was between my wife, ex-wife, and yourself is none of my business. But..."

***Digby*:** "There was nothing between your wife, ex-wife, and me."

***Gustafson*:** "But my son is my business, and I take care of my business." He rubbed a yellow-tipped pen device over my bill. "I recommend the same to others."

***Digby*:** The hundred was given a nod and placed in the drawer.

"Well, I'm sorry for him all the same." I picked up the sack, invisible to him.

***Gustafson*:** "Fifty-seven and three is sixty. Two twenties makes a hundred." He looked up from the cash on the counter with a frozen stare. "The matter is shut. Good evening, Mister Phelps."