

GARNET (RICHARD)/SHAG

GARNET: I can never tell if people tell me things because I'm a priest or if I'm a priest because people tell me things. *(Taking the goblet of wine from his tray)* In any case – the seal of confession is the last unbroken seal in this kingdom. *(Offering the cup to Shag)* Drink this. *(Shag goes to sip. Stops.)*

SHAG: You were praying over this. Is this wine or the blood of God?
(a teachable moment)

GARNET: What are you asking me? *Really* asking.

SHAG: *(confrontational)* I'm asking if this is God's blood.

GARNET: That's *not* what you're asking.

SHAG: *(more confrontational)* I am. And this time I know because I'm the one who's asking. I'm asking you if this is God's fucking blood. Is it?
(a moment)

GARNET: You're asking – if there's anything left in you – *(a hand on Shag's heart)* that can still believe that you hold God's blood in a cup. *(Silence, then, lighter)* Either way – it will warm you. Leave me a sip.
(Shag, uncomfortable with the cup, does not drink)

Do you have other children?

SHAG: Two girls – one, the boy's twin. I can't speak to her. It hurts me even to look at her.

GARNET: What's she like?

SHAG: Judith? She frightens me. Her grandfather believed everything. Her father believes little. She believes nothing. Not even that we have souls.

GARNET: *(impressed)* She talks of souls?

SHAG: Not in those words. She calls them our – our secret stories. She doesn't believe we have them. And perhaps we don't anymore.

GARNET: Do you love her – Judith?

SHAG: *(who knows?)* She does things for me.

GARNET: Are you close?

SHAG: Yes, I think we're close. We both know something about the other no one else knows.

GARNET: What . . . if I may ask?

SHAG: We both know I wish *she* was the one who has died. What god would have me in heaven? What devil would have me in hell?

GARNET: Daughters. They're the core of the problem, aren't they?

SHAG: You think the world is a very simple place.

GARNET: Isn't it?

SHAG: Not once politics get into it.

GARNET: What is politics but family writ large? Your own histories show us that. The fate of the nation came down to daughters – Mary and Elizabeth. Two fine, healthy girls. Henry VIII declared Mary a bastard to make way for a son who never arrives. The Pope did the same for Elizabeth. When the girls come to the throne, they kill the men who helped bastardize them. Mary called it Catholicism; Elizabeth, Protestantism. *I* think it would have been simpler, smarter, more pleasurable and finally *easier* – just to have *loved* the *girls*.

SHAG: You don't have children, do you?

GARNET: There are compensations.