

THE MONKEY'S BAW

A



Tale

Story by John Lees

Art & Colours by Alex Cormack

Letters by Shawn Lee

PAGE ONE (4 panels)

Panel 1. We're in a private gym in Si McKirdie's home at Unsunk Hill House in the daytime. The gym appears well stocked, with a variety of weights and equipment stacked on shelves, perhaps we can also see an exercise bike and a treadmill. Likely a more modern look than the Gothic stylings we've seen in other rooms in the house, but maybe with light coming in through a big old-fashioned window to indicate we're still in the same building. Our central focus is Si McKirdie, standing on a yoga mat in the middle of the room on one leg, in tree pose. He's barefoot and dressed in a tank top and yoga pants (I'm thinking the giant baggy MC hammer style bamboo pants for Si), his trademark sunglasses absent, but we can maybe play with a red/black colour scheme to help readers make the connection. Here, his eyes are closed, a serene expression on his face, his chest rising as he takes in a deep inhalation. Lettering note: For Si's inhalation here, and the exhalation in the next panel, I'm thinking it could be presented as a sound effect. It might be fun to do something with the letters, have them wisping around like air, moving upward here in the direction of his breath, then projecting outward in the following panel.

McKIRDIE:
fffffffff...

Panel 2. We've tightened in our focus on Si a little here, still with him in tree pose and still with his eyes closed and looking relaxed, but here his mouth is puffing open in a heavy escalation, his chest falling again. Lettering note: The noise is coming from the arriving vehicles outside, here still distant and faint.

McKIRDIE:
hooooooooo....

SFX (faint):
kli-kli-klop kli-kli-klop kli-kli-klop kli-kli-klop

Panel 3. We've tightened in our focus now onto Si's face and upper torso now, with his eyes still closed, but his brow now furrowed with unease.

McKIRDIE:
What... the...

SFX:
KLI-KLI-KLOP KLI-KLI-KLOP KLI-KLI-KLOP KLI-KLI-KLOP

(more)

PAGE ONE (continued)

Panel 4. Hold the focus on Si, and now his eyes are opened, burning angrily as he looks over his shoulder with an expression of annoyance.

McKIRDIE:
...*fuck?!*

SFX:
KLI-KLI-KLOP!

SFX:
KLI-KLI-KLOP!

SFX:
KLI-KLI-KLOP!

PAGE TWO (5 panels)

Panel 1. We're outside now, where we can see it's a dull, rainy day. An 18th Century Restoration era style horse-drawn carriage is making its way up the path towards Unsunk Hill House, flanked by multiple black armoured cars.

SFX:

KLI-KLI-KLOP! KLI-KLI-KLOP!

SFX:

KLI-KLI-KLOP! KLI-KLI-KLOP!

Panel 2. Focus on Si McKirdie as he pads barefoot out through his front door, still in his yoga clothes but now wearing his sunglasses, a look of dismay on his face.

McKIRDIE:

Oh here we go, the big man having another normal one I see...

Panel 3. Establishing shot of Unsunk Hill House, with Si McKirdie standing outside, and the cars and the carriage parked in a semi-circle formation around him. Men in tuxedos have already started stepping out of the cars.

Panel 4. Serious-looking men in tuxedos, clearly a security detail, are either standing by their cars or emerging out of them. Normally you would expect such figures to come armed with guns, but I've quietly been trying to establish *Sink* as a world without any guns present in it, so it might be a nice touch for them to have rapiers in sheaths where a holster would be. One of the tuxedo-wearing figures is older, plumper and less physically imposing than the others, unarmed. This is the herald. He stands by his car, clearing his throat. No one has emerged from the carriage yet, but we can see it in the background as a pair of the security staff unfurl a red carpet up towards it.

HERALD:

Hrm-hrm-hrm!

Panel 5. Our focus is honed in on the herald as he bellows out loudly, dramatically gesturing with his hands in the direction of the carriage.

HERALD:

I AM PRIVILEGED TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF HIS MOST REVERED EXCELLENCY...

PAGE THREE (5 panels)

Panel 1. The security staff have finished unfurling the carpet up to the carriage, and one of them is now unwinding a set of steps from the base of the carriage, leading from the door to the carpeted ground. The door is opening, and Jenkins is stepping out. Jenkins is short, around 5 foot 6, but is built like the proverbial brick shit house. He is dressed in an immaculate suit with a modern cut as opposed to the more old fashioned tuxedos of the security, with a waistcoat on under his suit jacket. He has a hefty beard and long hair pulled up in a top knot, and is wearing heavy, black-rimmed glasses. He has a grim, cold, emotionless expression, and one hand is currently concealed behind his back.

Panel 2. Jenkins now stands on the steps, coldly assessing his surroundings. He is slowly drawing out his hand from behind his back. He's holding an umbrella, but here that may not be clear, with only the handle visible, it might seem like some deadly weapon.

Panel 3. With a smooth flick of the wrist, Jenkins has now opened up the umbrella overhead. It is a dainty, floral umbrella, again something in a Reformation style which might go aesthetically with the carriage, but looks very out of place with Jenkins holding it. His icy expression remains unchanged.

SFX:
FFUUUT!

Panel 4. The Duke has now emerged from the carriage onto the steps, decked out in the full resplendent regalia of a Restoration era nobleman, sheltered from the rain under the umbrella. He's looking out at his surroundings with a contemptuous sneer, waving at his face with a fan. He too has a rapier attached to his belt, though the handle of his is far more ornate, encrusted with gems.

HERALD (O.P.):
**LORD AUGUSTUS GLORY WETHERFORD VI, DUKE OF THE RIGHTEOUS
BLACK!!!**

(more)

PAGE THREE (continued)

Panel 5. Si McKirdie and The Duke stand facing each other next to the carriage. Si is standing with his hands clasped behind his back, smiling calmly. The Duke, still fanning himself, is returning the smile, but his is thin and cold. In the background, Jenkins stands behind The Duke, holding up the umbrella over him, casting a cold sideways glare in Si McKirdie's direction.

McKIRDIE:

Good morning, Duke! As pleased as I am with your visitation, if I had known your arrival would be earlier than anticipated I would have been better prepared.

THE DUKE:

Oh, Si McKirdie, old bean, with the disarray of your domain, I concluded there was no time to waste!

THE DUKE:

But let us hasten inside. The foul Scottish air disagrees with my tum-tum.

PAGE FOUR (6 panels)

Panel 1. We're back inside Unsunk Hill House now, as Si McKirdie and The Duke walk side by side down the hallway, with the expressionless Jenkins walking a little behind in the background. Si is flashing The Duke a little incredulous smile, like he's biting his tongue, but The Duke isn't paying him any heed, looking ahead with an arrogant smirk.

McKIRDIE:

Have you eaten? I could cook up a little something for--

THE DUKE:

Shall I cut right to the chase? Daddy swore by you. He used to say you were a force of nature, that you climbed to the top on a mountain of broken bodies.

THE DUKE:

That's why he appointed you at the head of our Scottish chapter. But that was a long time ago, and Daddy's dead and gone now. Things change.

Panel 2. Focus on The Duke, an expression of casual contempt on his face.

THE DUKE:

If you ask me, upward mobility is a nice idea and all, but some qualities are just innate. True greatness is the kind you are born into, not given.

THE DUKE:

Perhaps that is why this burden seems to be proving too much for you these days.

Panel 3. First in a trio of flashback panels. In this one, we have an exterior night-time establishing shot of Mad Mac's in flames, as seen in *Sink #3*.

CAP/THE DUKE:

"Where do I begin? You allowed an associated business to burn to the ground with no reprisal."

Panel 4. Another exterior night-time establishing shot, but here it's Mr. Dig, wielding his shovel, and a handful of other masked residents standing in front of Graphite Green, an image similar to the conclusion of *Sink #9*.

CAP/THE DUKE:

"A local vigilante has commandeered one of our properties, a slap in our face, and has been allowed to continue squatting there."

(more)

PAGE FOUR (continued)

Panel 5. Indoors in an undisclosed location, with The Ghoster lying on a slab, dead, in the aftermath of *Dig*.

CAP/THE DUKE:

"And then The Ghoster, supposedly your great secret weapon, your ultimate ace in the hole, got swatted like a fly."

Panel 6. Si and The Duke are in Si's trophy room now, as seen in previous *Sink* issues. They are standing face to face, glaring at each other.

McKIRDIE:

None of this is straightforward. Any decision I make has an impact. I have to think of the people in this city--

THE DUKE:

But you don't. You're not just some shitty Glasgow crime boss anymore. You are part of something bigger, a grand cause.

THE DUKE:

And any pain, misery, death, all that is not just an acceptable cost of business... it is part of the design. It is all fertile soil for what we seek to grow.

PAGE FIVE (6 panels)

Panel 1. The Duke is pacing across the trophy room, looking around idly at a large, intricately patterned clay pot in the foreground as he speaks. Behind him, Si McKirdie looks ahead with an expression of mild concern. Also in the background, less in focus, is Jenkins, standing at the edge of the frame, and he's looking at Si analytically.

THE DUKE:

On the subject of our cause, there is a certain artefact under your protection. The Monkey's Ball.

THE DUKE:

You were given it to safeguard some time ago, but I may have need for it, and would rather it was in more dependable hands.

Panel 2. Focus on a frowning Si McKirdie.

McKIRDIE:

The Monkey's Ball isn't here, but I can retrieve it for you if you wish.

Panel 3. The Duke has suddenly sparked into a violent fury. He has spun round and is now right in Si's face, yelling angrily at him. He has grabbed the pot he had previously been looking at and is wielding it at Si like a weapon. Si, meanwhile, looks back completely placid, a picture of calm and restraint.

THE DUKE:

Not here?! This whole house is filled with this worthless junk, and you managed to lose the one item of true value in your possession?

McKIRDIE:

It's not lost. It is elsewhere, under safe keeping. It is unsafe for those who know the power of the Monkey's Ball to have it near them for too long. That's why your father gave it to me.

Panel 4. Si has moved a little closer to The Duke, joining him in holding onto the pot, looking down at it fondly as he speaks. The Duke just glares down at it with disdain.

McKIRDIE:

And this is far from junk. This was gifted to me by a tribe in the Amazon rainforest who have had no contact with the outside world for generations. I lived with them for a year.

McKIRDIE:

These pots have immense value to them. They believe they are vessels in which their owners can house their dreams, to one day render them tangible. To be given one is a great honour.

(more)

PAGE FIVE (continued)

Panel 5. Si is moving through the trophy room now, gesturing outwards with his hands, beaming proudly. For the sake of his framing in the next page, I'd have him moving towards the room door. Behind him, The Duke and Jenkins are exchanging knowing smirks, The Duke still gripping the pot.

McKIRDIE:

Each item here tells a story. I believe expanding one's worldview is important. I'm happy to tell you all about more of these items during your stay.

McKIRDIE:

Though you're early, I already have your rooms prepared.

Panel 6. Focus on The Duke, sneering.

THE DUKE:

That's very kind of you, but I won't be taking a room. I'll be taking the house.

PAGE SIX (5 panels)

Panel 1. The Duke is sitting down the pot next to a chair in the room, looking over his shoulder at Si with a mean smirk. Jenkins stands nearby, hands clasped behind his mask, and now he's smiling a little too as he stares at Si. Si looks on with his hands on his hips, confused.

THE DUKE:

I hope you can understand, I like my space, you see. And while this little domicile is quite quaint and pleasant, it pales in size to what I am accustomed to.

THE DUKE:

I am sure you can come up with some alternative arrangements while I am in town. And I may be in town for a while.

Panel 2. Hold the angle, but now The Duke is stepping up onto the chair, still looking at Si, his smile now faded into a threatening glare.

THE DUKE:

But of course, you are only here at our pleasure, are you not? We plucked you from the filth and put you in this fortunate position, with all its trappings of wealth and comfort.

THE DUKE:

That means that, really, this house... and everything in it... belongs to me. And I can do with it whatever I please.

Panel 3. Low angle (pot POV?) shot looking up at The Duke standing on the chair as he starts to unbutton his breeches, chuckling derisively.

THE DUKE:

Such a lovely sentiment your friends had! But ideas like that are why they live in mud huts while people like me rule the world.

Panel 4. Here, I'm thinking the pot is in the foreground, as are The Duke's feet on the chair. And coming from the top of the frame, an arc of piss is streaming down into the pot. In the background, centrally framed, is Si, standing by the doorway with his hands on his hips, fuming with anger.

SFX:

sssssss...

THE DUKE:

Fill our pot with hopes and dreams! I wager I can fill it up faster, what do you think?

(more)

PAGE SIX (continued)

Panel 5. Hold the same angle, with The Duke still pissing into the pot, but now Si has turned away, and is walking through the door out of the room.

SFX:

SSSSSS...

PAGE SEVEN (6 panels)

Panel 1. We've moved forward in time a little bit, still in the daytime, but that likely won't be clear as daylight isn't visible here. We're positioned behind Si McKirdie - now dressed more recognisably in his black suit, carrying a slender suitcase - as he walks towards the front entrance of Black Hole, the club seen in *Sink #5*. Enforcer Frank, the massive Enforcer who met Emma Callaghan at the bar in that issue, is waiting by the entrance for Si's arrival, a morose expression on his face. A middle-age man in a tracksuit - he's not named in the script, but we'll call him Mick - also stands by the door, looking agitated.

McKIRDIE:

Frank, get the door. I'll be setting up shop at the club for a while.

FRANK:

I've prepared your office for your arrival, boss.

Panel 2. We're still behind Si, but now we've followed him into Black Hole. As it's daytime, it's empty, save for a cleaner mopping the floor. Si is flanked on either side by Mick and Frank, Mick anxiously talking at Si, Frank now holding Si's case, and has a sorrowful expression on his face. Si is looking up at him with concern, apparently ignoring Mick in the process.

MICK:

Mr. McKirdie, I've been waiting to see you. Ruddy Dawson is still waiting for an answer from you about the development contract. He's been very patient, but he needs to--

McKIRDIE:

Frank, have you been crying?

Panel 3. We're still positioned behind the trio, but now they're in Si's plush office. There's a sofa in the office, with some rolled-up blankets piled on it. Also establish near Si a wooden desk with a heavy, jagged edged paperweight resting on it. Frank and Si are standing facing each other. Frank looks worried, wiping at his eye clumsily with the back of his big meaty hand. Si, meanwhile, is looking past him, staring with mild annoyance at Mick, who has stepped around in front of the two of them, and is now angrily pointing at Si.

FRANK:

It's nothing. Humph, my cat's gone missing. But you have far more important matters to--

MICK:

Don't ignore me, Mr. McKirdie. I'm here on behalf of Ruddy, and any disrespect of me will be taken as disrespect of him!

(more)

PAGE SEVEN (continued)

Panel 4. Si has grabbed Mick by his pointed finger and twisted it backward, dragging him by his hand towards the desk. Mick's face is contorted in pain.

MICK:
AAH!

Panel 5. Si has calmly slammed the paperweight pointed end down through Mick's upturned palm, pinning his hand to the desk. He's letting out a scream of pain now.

SFX:
THUKK!

MICK:
AAAAAAAAAAAH!

Panel 6. Si McKirdie is standing alone in his office now, turned to face Frank once more, hands on his hips, a jovial smile on his face. Frank looks back at him solemnly, still worried over his cat. Neither of them is paying much attention to Mick, on his knees, struggling to unpin his hand from the desk as he sobs in pain.

McKIRDIE:
The ginger one? He's a cutie. Don't you worry, we'll track it down. I'll make it a priority!

MICK (small):
Uuuuuuh...

PAGE EIGHT (5 panels)

Panel 1. Exterior daytime establishing shot of Artisan Burger Co, previously seen in *Sink #7*.

CAP/EMMA:

"No! Get fucked, I told you I don't want to talk to you."

Panel 2. We're inside the restaurant, where Emma Callaghan - dressed as a waitress in Artisan Burger Co uniform, indicating she now works here - is storming away from Si's booth, looking furious. Si has jumped up from his booth and is walking after her, grinning nervously.

McKIRDIE:

Most people wouldn't dream of telling me to get fucked, you know.

EMMA:

Great. Why don't you go hassle one of *them*?

McKIRDIE:

Come on, Emma, I miss our chats. How's Bastard doing? How long have you been working here?

Panel 3. Now we're in the kitchen area, with Emma and Si now facing each other. Emma is pointing angrily at Si, while he is looking past her at an off-panel area of the kitchen, confused.

EMMA:

Surely you know already, if you already knew enough to find me here, right? Boundaries, Si.

EMMA:

And you shouldn't be in here. Harry and Blossom who run the place don't like anyone back in the kitchen.

McKIRDIE:

Would that be them?

(more)

PAGE EIGHT (continued)

Panel 4. Our perspective has swivelled, following Emma's gaze as she turns to look over her shoulder at the far end of the kitchen, revealing Harry and Blossom Melbitoste. We've seen Harry Melbitoste before, the hipstery looking dude from back in *Sink #7*, and Blossom Melbitoste is his hippie wife. Harry is sat on a chair, with Blossom straddling his lap. Blossom is holding a comically massive burger in both hands, and is guiding it into the waiting mouth of Harry, who is wearing a similarly comically massive bib, mouth open. One important detail about the decor of the kitchen, which I don't want to be obvious - hopefully the comic imagery of Blossom and Harry will draw readers' eyes away - but which needs to be seeded in here. There is an overhead unit above one of the stoves, from which hang various pans. And on the shelf above the unit, there are various potted plants with hanging vines, and partially obscured in the centre among them is the Bloodstone, a red-hued, circular stone tablet with a strange symbol carved into it, which we'll see again next issue.

BLOSSOM:

Hi there, Mr. McKirdie. We've heard all about you, lovely to meet at last! I hope our kitchen is up to your standards.

HARRY:

Aaak chaaa eeechuu!

BLOSSOM:

Nuh-uh, sweetie cheeks, keep the mouth open for the tasty burger plane. Vroom vroom!

Panel 5. Focus on Si, flashing a lopsided smile and a thumbs up.

McKIRDIE:

Well, to my knowledge, nobody has died in this kitchen, so that must put it above most other Sinkhill eateries!

PAGE NINE (6 panels)

Panel 1. Focus on Emma, glowering with anger.

EMMA:

Okay, you want to talk? Let's talk.

EMMA:

What happened to Jordan?

Panel 2. Si looks crestfallen as he walks through the kitchen door back out onto the diner floor. And now it's Emma following him, brimming with frustration.

McKIRDIE:

I told you, I have no idea. The last time I saw your friend was when he left my house of his own volition, quite unharmed.

EMMA:

Oh, bullshit! He spent a whole week terrified of this "Lead Balloon" of yours, goes to see you, and never comes back.

Panel 3. Emma has moved closer to Emma, and now her expression has softened, a pleading look in her eyes. McKirdie is staring ahead with a conflicted expression.

EMMA:

If you want me to believe you, fine, let me in. Tell me what this big secret ritual was, help me understand what Jordan might have done next.

McKIRDIE:

I...

Panel 4. Reverse angle, behind Si and looking past Emma, and now we can see Jenkins sitting in a booth at the far end of the restaurant, staring up at us coldly.

McKIRDIE:

To be continued.

(more)

PAGE NINE (continued)

Panel 5. Si has turned and walked away towards the exit, leaving an infuriated Emma throwing her hands up in exasperation.

EMMA:

Ugh. Don't bother.

EMMA:

Florence Kilcolm is looking for you, by the way. Wants to talk to you.

McKIRDIE:

I know, you've told me before.

Panel 6. Outside Artisan Burger Co, Si stands at the doorway, holding the door open, looking ahead with a look of mild annoyance as, in the background, Emma coldly shouts after him.

EMMA (O.P.):

No, now she really wants to talk to you. Says it's important.

PAGE TEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. Establishing shot of an old antique shop, absolutely rammed full of items, so densely packed it's difficult to navigate through. Si McKirdie is in the antique shop, looking around with curiosity. In the background just behind him is a large old-fashioned wooden wardrobe with closed doors, stuffed in amid high piles of other junk.

McKIRDIE:
Paul? You about?

Panel 2. Hold the angle, but now the wardrobe doors have swung open, and it turns out the wardrobe had no back on it and is functioning as a kind of doorway. Si is recoiling back in surprise. Paul, a mousy old man in his 70s with a long, scraggly white beard, has emerged from the opening, smiling cheerfully at Si.

McKIRDIE:
Ooft!

PAUL:
Sorry, Mr. McKirdie, did I surprise you? Good to see you as always.

Panel 3. A serious Si is following Paul back through the wardrobe doorway as Paul, his smile now faltered, gestures for him to come after him, pulling a little torch out of his pocket.

McKIRDIE:
It's not a social call I'm afraid, Paul. I'm here for The Monkey's Baw.

PAUL:
Ah. You know, the best way to protect something important isn't to put it under lock and key, where it might get broken into. You hide it in plain sight, like the purloined letter.

Panel 4. Si and Paul are in a ramshackle tunnel of stacked-high furniture, with the outside daylight blocked off enough that Paul has had to produce a torch. He's digging through a pile of stuff as McKirdie looks around cautiously, as if expecting this tunnel to collapse on them at any moment.

PAUL:
I've made a point on reading up on this as little as possible, not even looking at it. Like you said, the less I know the better...

PAUL:
But I know enough to know you kept this away from you for a reason, and you taking it back can't be good news.

(more)

PAGE TEN (continued)

Panel 5. Si is stepping back out of the wardrobe now, opening up the chest. We can't see its contents, but we can see from him looking down that he's not happy with what he sees inside. Behind him, a confused Paul is also on his way out of the tunnel.

McKIRDIE:

It's not, but it's a calculated risk I need to... what?

PAGE ELEVEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. McKirdie POV looking down at the open chest in his hands. Stuffed inside is a scruffy vintage teddy bear.

McKIRDIE:
What is this!?

Panel 2. Paul is peering over Si's shoulder down at the contents of the chest, mortified, while Si casts him a sideways scowl.

PAUL:
This wasn't me, Mr. McKirdie, I swear! I don't know how... *Jimmy!* That deadbeat Jimmy Cole was snooping around the chest a while back, I told him it wasn't for sale.

PAUL:
He must have taken it then. I can tell you where he lives if--

McKIRDIE:
I know where Jimmy lives. I know where everyone lives.

Panel 3. Paul, now clutching the chest, is shrinking back nervously as McKirdie, headed in the direction of the exit, has spun round angrily to face Paul.

PAUL:
Before you go, Mr. McKirdie, I need to tell you, Florence Kilcolm was in here recently, said she was looking for you--

McKIRDIE:
Why does everyone keep telling me about Florence Kilcolm?

Panel 4. Focus on Si McKirdie, looking angry.

McKIRDIE:
In case you haven't noticed, I've got a lot on my plate.

McKIRDIE:
If Miss Kilcolm has a problem with me, then she can join the very long line, and I'll get to her in due course.

(more)

PAGE ELEVEN (continued)

Panel 5. An anxious Paul looks downward at the chest clutched in his hands as McKirdie turns away from him, face set in a grim frown, once again headed for the exit.

PAUL:

One more thing, sorry... Jimmy is an idiot, but he's not a bad person. Please show him some leniency?

McKIRDIE:

I'd be more concerned with asking for leniency for *you*, Paul, you really fucked me here. Hiding in plain *shite*, more like!

PAGE TWELVE (6 panels)

Panel 1. Outside the antique shop, Si is staring ahead and letting out a sigh in response to the off-panel voice.

JENKINS (O.P.):
Looking for something?

Panel 2. We've turned around with McKirdie to see Jenkins casually leaning against a traffic light, a smirk on his face.

JENKINS:
Empty-handed, I see. Don't tell me you've lost it.

JENKINS:
If The Duke were to hear you left his property somewhere unreliable, that might be the last straw.

Panel 3. McKirdie and Jenkins stand facing each other, each flashing a fake smile at the other.

McKIRDIE:
Jenkins, right? This was just an errand. I've not been to collect the Monkey's Baw yet, but I assure you it is somewhere very safe.

JENKINS:
How about we go there right now, together? Unless that would be a problem?

Panel 4. Focus on Si, adopting a very convincing relaxed stance with a casual smile on his face as he takes his phone out of pocket.

McKIRDIE:
No problem at all. It is under the care of a very trusted associate of mine.

McKIRDIE:
I'll call one of my people to take us to him.

(more)

PAGE TWELVE (continued)

Panel 5. Si smiles with feigned amusement at Jenkins, who has moved closer to Si, a thin smile on his lips, but now probing him with analytical eyes.

JENKINS:

That's good to hear. I was starting to think that you're not a true believer in the search for the Black Door. Or that your arse had gone in your old age.

JENKINS:

But hey-ho, you've protected The Monkey's Ball, so I must have been mistaken.

Panel 6. Hold the same angle, and Si still has the same smile, but now he has leaned forward towards Jenkins, whose smile has faded into a frown.

McKIRDIE:

We all make mistakes. When I noticed you've been following me all day, I assumed you were a snake trying to swipe up the Monkey's Baw first to get in The Duke's good graces.

McKIRDIE:

But now that I've talked to you, it's clear you're a nice lad.

PAGE THIRTEEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. We've jumped forward a little in time now, still daylight, with Si and Jenkins stepping out of the back of a black car. It might be visible that Frank is the one driving. Si is looking up at the rundown tenement building they've arrived at (may not be visible depending on what angle you've drawn this at) while Jenkins is staring coldly at Si.

JENKINS:

What are you waiting for? Let's go see this trusted associate.

Panel 2. Si is now standing outside the tenement building, staring at it. It may not be immediately clear here, but he's mentally lining up the open dumpster at the side of the building with a side window above it on the top floor three levels up. Jenkins glares at him impatiently as he walks past him towards the front door.

McKIRDIE:

He's on the top floor. But you need to give me ten seconds once I'm up there before you come up.

JENKINS:

Come on...

McKIRDIE:

I'm serious. What am I going to pull in ten seconds?

Panel 3. McKirdie and Jenkins are inside the building now, at the bottom of the close stairway. Si is holding Jenkins's arm, looking at him solemnly while Jenkins looks back at him incredulously.

McKIRDIE:

He'll only open the door for me, alone.

Panel 4. Focus on McKirdie who has already started ascending the stairs, but doing so backwards, turned to face downwards at Jenkins.

McKIRDIE:

If he suspects even the slightest thing is amiss, he cuts and runs, heads to our meeting point with The Monkey's Baw.

Panel 5. Focus on Si making his way up the stairway, a focused expression on his face.

McKIRDIE:

Just ten seconds, okay? It will make things a lot easier.

PAGE FOURTEEN (8 panels)

Panel 1. Si McKirdie is up on the top floor now, standing in front of an apartment door. His shoulders are slumped, and he looks at it wearily.

McKIRDIE:
Right...

Panel 2. Si is still standing in front of the door, but now his expression has hardened into one of determination, with his leg raised, knee bent, bracing to give the door a big kick.

Panel 3. Si has kicked the door open.

SFX:
WUDD!

McKIRDIE:
One...

Panel 4. We're behind Si as he paces into the apartment. A startled Jimmy Doyle - a lanky, sleazy looking type - is standing in the living area with a deer in the headlights look, helplessly watching him approach. In the background at the far end of the flat we can see a window.

Lettering note: Could we maybe do something to indicate that McKirdie is talking over Jimmy as he speaks? Maybe have his word balloon overlap over Jimmy's a little?

JIMMY:
Muh-Mr. McKirdie?! Eh-eh-is this about the uuh money I owe at the club 'cause I uh--

McKIRDIE:
Two... three...

Panel 5. Without breaking pace, McKirdie has gripped Jimmy by the throat with one hand, and is continuing to walk towards the window at the far end of the apartment, forcing a shocked, choking Jimmy to stagger backwards with him.

JIMMY:
URRK!

McKIRDIE:
Four... five...

(more)

PAGE FOURTEEN (continued)

Panel 6. Si has Jimmy backed up against the back wall now, and is hauling up the window fully open with his free hand while, with the hand on Jimmy's throat, he positions Jimmy up on the edge of the window frame.

McKIRDIE:
Six keepyourelbowsin...

JIMMY:
Wait! Wait!

Panel 7. Si has pushed Jimmy out of the window, Jimmy screaming as he tumbles out and down, vanishing out of frame.

McKIRDIE:
Seven...

JIMMY:
EEEEEEEEEEEE!!

Panel 8. Si has turned to face us, a calm, focused expression on his face as he stands next to a room doorway, carving a rough mark into the frame with a small pen knife.

McKIRDIE:
Eight... nine...

PAGE FIFTEEN (6 panels)

Panel 1. An establishing shot of the apartment, with Si and Jenkins standing in the middle of the now vacated living area, Si looking solemn, Jenkins looking suspicious.

McKIRDIE:

He's gone, and it looks like he left in a hurry. Something's made him take flight.

McKIRDIE:

But he left a marking over there, that tells me the artefact is safe, and we've to meet at our designated rendez-vous point.

Panel 2. We're back outside now, with Jenkins stepping back into the black car as Si holds the door open for him, leaning in to speak politely to Frank.

McKIRDIE:

Back to Black Hole please, Frank.

Panel 3. Si has slammed the car door shut without getting in, cheerfully waving at a shocked Jenkins, pressed against the window, as the car starts to drive away.

McKIRDIE:

Oh hang on I forgot something, I'll get you at the location.

JENKINS:

McKirdie!

Panel 4. The car drives off, a furious Jenkins glaring out through the back windscreen and hammering on it, while an upbeat Si McKirdie casually walks towards the side of the tenement building.

Panel 5. Si has approached the dumpster we saw earlier, and is climbing up on the edge of it, peering in.

Panel 6. Si is hauling Jimmy - dazed, frightened and soaked in bin juice - out of the skip, looking at him with a wry smile.

JIMMY:

Aaah! You coulda killed me!

McKIRDIE:

Consider yourself lucky. This is one of Sinkhill's nicer skips.

PAGE SIXTEEN (5 panels)

Panel 1. Si has bunched up the front of Jimmy's shirt in his hands and shoved him back into the side of the dumpster, scowling at him while Jimmy winces fearfully.

McKIRDIE:

You stole something from Paul's antique shop that belonged to me.

JIMMY:

I-I didnae know!

McKIRDIE:

I already know a waste of space like you will have sold it on for a few quid, so just tell me who has it now.

Panel 2. Focus on a frightened Jimmy, pressed up against the skip.

JIMMY:

I owed money to Ruddy Dawson, and he took that as a chunk towards gettin' square. Said it looked fancy.

Panel 3. Focus on Si, still holding onto Jimmy, a look of dejection on his face.

McKIRDIE:

Ruddy Dawson has The Monkey's Ball? Shit.

JIMMY (O.P.):

Are you going to get it back?

McKIRDIE:

No...

(more)

PAGE SIXTEEN (continued)

Panel 4. We've switched scenes to an exterior establishing shot outside a grimy old man pub called The Burly Arms. It's not quite night yet, but the daylight is waning now, taking on an orange tinge. Jimmy and Si are standing outside, Jimmy looking down meekly as Si sternly points at his face.

CAP/McKIRDIE:
"We are."

McKIRDIE:
Stay put, you hear? If I have to come find you, the next fall won't have a soft landing at the bottom.

Panel 5. Si is walking towards the door of the Burly Arms with a sombre expression, his phone held up to his ear.

McKIRDIE:
Frank, put Jenkins on.

McKIRDIE:
Yeah, yeah, hawd yer wheesht. I'm meeting my guy soon, you want to be there?

PAGE SEVENTEEN (7 panels)

Panel 1. Interior establishing shot of The Burly Arms pub, a fairly bland, rundown Old Firm pub. Si is walking towards the bar, his back to us. The booths and tables all around him are packed with tough-looking thugs in tracksuits - no Dickheads, no red-suited underlings, this is firmly hostile terrain - all of whom are glaring at him as he walks past. Sat prominently featured at one of the tables is Mick, his hand now heavily bandaged. **Also prominently featured is our backer cameo appearance for this issue.** Si's moving towards the bar, behind which stands Ruddy Dawson, called Ruddy because of his rosy, red-cheeked complexion. He's a big, burly dude, quite fat, with a frazzled nest of ginger hair and a big messy beard. He too is giving Si the evil eye as he approaches. It won't be in focus here, but you might want to establish that, on a shelf behind the bar, The Monkey's Ball is on display. It's a statue of a rather ghoulish, twisted looking monkey, holding a large, gleaming green gem.

McKIRDIE:
Ruddy.

RUDDY:
Si. Not like you to be in this neck of the woods.

Panel 2. Si has sat down at the bar, smiling casually as he looks across at Ruddy, eyeing him with a mean look as he polishes a glass.

McKIRDIE:
Well, I wanted to grant you approval for your contract in person, I know you've been waiting.

McKIRDIE:
And I got a notion for a pint with a friendly face.

Panel 3. Tight focus on a pint being drawn from tap into a glass.

SFX:
SHOOOOP.

Panel 4. Focus on Si sat at the bar, cheerfully holding the beer up to his lips, having just taken a sip. He's pointing at the off-panel Monkey's Ball. In the background, we might see the numerous heavies staring daggers at him.

McKIRDIE:
Aaah, that hits the spot. Fine draughtsmanship, very clean glass, too.

McKIRDIE:
Say...

(more)

PAGE SEVENTEEN (continued)

Panel 5. Focus on The Monkey's Ball statue on the shelf, seeming to emit a faint green glow.

McKIRDIE (O.P.):
Where did you get that beauty?

Panel 6. Ruddy has cheered up a little, and has now moved over next to the statue, looking at it admiringly. Si remains sitting at the bar, looking across at him.

RUDDY:
Oh, this fella? Picked him up on my travels. A bit tacky, but he brightens the place up.

McKIRDIE:
That's actually quite the collector's item. I've been on the lookout for one just like it.

Panel 7. Back to the focus on Si, and now he has pulled a leather wallet from his pocket, and is drawing a wad of bills from it. His expression is a very carefully calculated look of casual interest.

McKIRDIE:
How about I take it off your hands right now?

McKIRDIE:
£500 is a little overvalued, but I'd gladly pay extra just to get my hands on it at last.

PAGE EIGHTEEN (6 panels)

Panel 1. Si's smile has faded a little as Ruddy leans across the bar to get in his face, flashing a mean smirk.

RUDDY:

How about not for sale? How about you being here yourself without any protection means you must be desperate to get that statue and don't want anyone to know about it?

RUDDY:

I've always hated you, Si. Up in that big house of yours, thinking you're untouchable.

Panel 2. Behind Si, various thugs have left their seats and are now gathering around him at the bar, many towering over him. One has placed a threatening hand on his shoulder, with Si casting him a sideways glance over his shoulder. Ruddy remains leaning forward, glaring hatefully at him.

RUDDY:

But word is you've been turfed out the big house and you're on the ropes.

RUDDY:

Maybe you're not the supernatural demon man everyone whispers you are. Maybe we all kick fuck out of you here and you do fuck all about it.

Panel 3. Focus on Si, which we'll hold for three panels. Here, he's smiling again, looking ahead of us and presumably directly at Ruddy. Let's think of these few panels as a Ruddy POV shot.

McKIRDIE:

Maybe. Or maybe I came here on my own because I know I have nothing to fear from any of you.

McKIRDIE:

Kick fuck out of me if you want. I'll even let you get the first thump in for free, Ruddy.

Panel 4. Si's smile has vanished now, as he tilts his head downward, taking off his sunglasses.

McKIRDIE:

But a word of courteous advice. You hit me, you best do it so hard that I stay down. If you can.

McKIRDIE:

Because if I get back up. Oh, if I get back up...

(more)

PAGE EIGHTEEN (continued)

Panel 5. The shades are off now, and Si is flashing his terrifying, murderous eyes directly at us, his lip curled in a fearsome scowl. A death glare that could turn milk.

McKIRDIE:

You'll have offended me, most gravely.

McKIRDIE:

And your loved ones will deny ever knowing you to escape my wrath, after what I do here tonight.

Panel 6. Reverse angle now, looking over Si's shoulder at the unnerved Ruddy.

McKIRDIE:

You can see what happens, one way or the other.

McKIRDIE:

Or you can just give me the monkey, for the generous price of £400.

PAGE NINETEEN (4 panels)

Panel 1. An exterior establishing shot of the Burly Arms.

Panel 2. Si has stepped outside now, shades back on. It's left unclear what choice Ruddy made in the end, but either way it ended with Si getting the Monkey's Ball. He is looking down at the Monkey's Ball statue held in one hand, an expression of worry on his face. The hand not holding the statue is trembling, indicated with some motion lines.

Panel 3. Hold the angle of the previous panel, but now Si is letting out a deep breath, shoulders slumping, tightening the previously trembling hand into a clenched fist.

McKIRDIE:
hooooooooo....

Panel 4. Now we're behind McKirdie, watching him confidently walk across the road, arms outstretched, towards the anxious, waiting Jimmy.

McKIRDIE:
Jimmy! I'm pleasantly surprised that you stuck around.

McKIRDIE:
Come along now, I've got a chum I'd like you to meet.

PAGE TWENTY (5 panels)

Panel 1. We're back outside now at a street corner (presumably not too far from the bar, but not directly outside it), as Jenkins steps out a car that has just pulled up to the curb (he's driving himself this time), glaring with annoyance at Si and Jimmy who are standing together on the pavement a little further ahead. Si is clutching the Monkey's Ball, smiling confidently, while Jimmy looks at him anxiously.

JENKINS:

You think you're funny, McKirdie, playing silly beggars with me?

McKIRDIE:

I'm actually hilarious. But that's beside the point. Here, as promised, is the Monkey's Baw.

Panel 2. Jenkins is looking intently at the statue, reaching out for it, but Si is casually pulling it back out of his grasp, still smiling pleasantly at him. Jimmy stands next to Si, looking on, confused.

JENKINS:

Fine. I'll drive us to The Duke and we can hand it over...

McKIRDIE:

Nuh-uh. I need you to do something for me first, to prove your dedication to the cause.

Panel 3. McKirdie has paced around as he speaks, so he has now positioned himself in front of Jimmy, with Jenkins behind Jimmy in the background. Both are looking cautiously at Si as he speaks thoughtfully, looking at the statue and neither of them.

McKIRDIE:

Jimmy here has been a loyal ally to me, done a most commendable job. A paragon of trustworthiness.

McKIRDIE:

But you, Jenkins, implied my heart wasn't in this. That I was too soft to make difficult calls...

Panel 4. In a single fluid movement, Si has spun round and thrust out the hand not holding the statue at Jimmy, catching him square under the tip of the nose with a palm strike, hitting him with such force that his head has snapped back with a crack. We can assume he's driven the bone of his nose into his brain, killing him instantly. Jenkins's eyes have widened with shock in the background.

SFX:

KRAKK!

(more)

PAGE TWENTY (continued)

Panel 5. Si is walking away with a smile of satisfaction, leaving behind Jenkins, who has stumbled backwards onto the ground as the dead Jimmy has fallen into him.

McKIRDIE:

Jimmy's services are no longer required, thus rendering him a loose end.

McKIRDIE:

You wouldn't mind cleaning up this mess for me, would you? I can walk to see The Duke myself. I certainly know the way.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE (5 panels)

Panel 1. We're in Si's trophy room at Unsunk Hill House, and Si stands with a frown looking at The Duke, who is cackling with delight as he looks down at the Monkey's Ball cradled in his hands.

THE DUKE:
Excellent!

THE DUKE:
Perhaps you may not be a complete failure and embarrassment after all, Si. I shall be in touch with more ways you can work towards redeeming yourself.

Panel 2. Exterior establishing shot of Unsunk Hill House at night, as Si walks away from the grounds, looking over his shoulder at his home.

Panel 3. We're gone from Unsunk Hill House now, and back in the more familiar urban terrain of Sinkhill at night. Si is standing in profile at the edge of a pavement, illuminated by a streetlight, about to cross the road. He's looking ahead at something off-panel across the road, his features lit up into a relieved grin.

McKIRDIE:
Oh, you're kidding me on...

Panel 4. Si POV, looking across the road at Humph, lying sedately on the pavement at the other side.

McKIRDIE (O.P.):
Humph!

Panel 5. Focus on Si, stepping out onto the road, grinning down at the off-panel Humph.

McKIRDIE:
Another item off the list! You know, Humph, today started out rough, but it seems like by the end it's all worked out okay...

PAGE TWENTY-TWO (4 panels)

Panel 1. A similar angle to the previous panel, but a car has come charging in from the right of the frame, its brakes screeching to a halt just as its collided with Si McKirdie. His body has jerked to the side, his head cracking off the windscreen, his face contorted in pain.

SFX:
SKREEE!

Panel 2. Ground level shot of Si crawling on the road, his glasses smashed, a trail of blood oozing down onto the road from a wound on his head. He looks totally dazed.

Panel 3. We're still at ground level, but now Si is being kicked in the face by a foot in a high-heeled shoe.

SFX:
WUDD!

Panel 4. Low-angle shot looking up at Florence Kilcolm, who is standing over the unconscious Si McKirdie, lying facedown in the foreground. She's looking down at him with a grim stare.

FLORENCE:
Si McKirdie... I'm Florence Kilcolm.

PAGE TWENTY-THREE (5 panels)

Panel 1. We've switched scenes to an interior night-time establishing shot of a kitchen (eagle-eyed readers might be able to recognise it as the kitchen we saw Florence hanging out in with her friend's kids in the montage at the end of *Sink #5*), with Si McKirdie and Florence Kilcolml in profile, facing each other. Si is tied to a chair in the middle of the room, his hands tied behind his back and his leg fastened to the chair legs. His shades are missing, and he's busted up a little from the collision, but not looking seriously injured. He's smiling wearily across at Florence, who is straddling a chair facing him, arms folded over the chair back. She's smirking at him knowingly. Worth noting, a third chair is sat in between them, one that when occupied would leave the group sitting in a semi-circle.

McKIRDIE:

Well, Miss Kilcolml... this is certainly one way to set up a meeting.

FLORENCE:

What else wis I supposed to do? I've bin lettin' everyone know I wanted a word, ye sure know where to find me.

FLORENCE:

But ye never came! So I came to you.

Panel 2. Focus on McKirdie, eyeing the off-panel Florence impatiently.

McKIRDIE:

Yes, yes, you made quite the splash on your return.

McKIRDIE:

But it may shock you to learn that I'm in no rush to attend to unsolicited feedback from the peanut gallery on how I choose to run my organisation.

Panel 3. Focus on Florence, and now she's serious, glaring threateningly at the off-panel Si.

FLORENCE:

This isnae aboot that. This is about a wee boy called Robbie Carmichael.

FLORENCE:

He was murdered. Some sick fuck bit through his neck and dropped him in a pile of bin bags like he was rubbish.

(more)

PAGE TWENTY-THREE (continued)

Panel 4. Si scoffs incredulously as Florence looks over her shoulder in the direction of the knocking on the back door.

FLORENCE:

His maw and da have asked me to look for answers.

McKIRDIE:

Do you seriously think I have the time or energy to be out beasting on local children?

FLORENCE:

A ritualistic killin' like that? Far as I'm concerned yer first on my--

SFX:

NOK-NOK-NOK!

Panel 5. Focus on Florence as she walks towards the back door to open it, looking back over her shoulder at us with a stern glare.

FLORENCE:

But it's no' my call. There's someone I want ye to meet, someone who needs ye to listen to them.

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR (4 panels)

Panel 1. Florence has opened the door, revealing Chrissie Woods standing there, looking nervous as she steps inside.

CHRISSIE:

Mr. McKirdie, my name is Chrissie Woods.

Panel 2. Si looks inquisitively across at Chrissie as she hesitantly takes her seat in the previously empty chair, with a serious Florence returning to her seat.

CHRISSIE:

What happened to Robbie didn't come as a surprise to me. And in fact, since it happened, I've been getting my share of feart looks.

CHRISSIE:

If there is anyone who knows Sinkhill's history, who can help me make sense of my experience and how it relates to what's happening now, it's you.

Panel 3. Focus on Chrissie, now looking determined.

CHRISSIE:

I'm going to tell you my story. I'm going to tell you about Iron-Tooth Jack, the Gorbals Vampire.

Panel 4. Our regular closing panel, with the title font on the all-black background.

BOTTOM CAP:

SINK.