

have him getting into bad habits when only visiting for a few days.”

“Coming up, Finbarr, coming up.”

Sitting at the bar, Jake scanned the interior of the pub. Walls were covered with framed photographs of sporting occasions; many were sports Jake had difficulty comprehending. Sports jerseys bearing the logo, “Jack McCarthy’s Bar,” bedecked the far wall.

“Finbarr, a person could die of thirst here. How long does it take to pour a pint of Guinness?”

“Jake, you are a heathen. Do you not know that Guinness is a religious experience, man? It is also a cultural experience and a work of art. You cannot, Jake, you cannot rush a work of art, no matter how much you want to. Can you imagine how da Vinci would have felt, when painting the Mona Lisa, like, if he got a phone call from his patron to say, ‘Hey, Leo, is da painting of me missus ready yet?’ He wouldn’t have been too impressed, me lad, not too impressed at all. It’s the same with this black magic we are waiting on. Guinness isn’t just a product. It is an experience, and that, me boyo, is what you should be offering your customers with your products—an experience. You’ve got to give them a reason to purchase beyond just the core product.”

Two pints of Guinness appeared in front of the



cousins. Jake moved to lift his pint and was gently chided by Finbarr.

“Take it easy, man. Just look at that work of art in front of you. Appreciate it. Don’t drink it yet, it hasn’t settled. Look. Look and wonder at the way those tiny orphan bubbles are moving through the glass, seeking rest in some Guinness wonderland. When those bubbles finally cease, when those brown clouds finally settle, when you have a clean black beautiful pint in front of you, that—Jake, that, is when you raise the magical brew to those parched lips of yours.”

“Jeez, you’re making this like a sacred experience.”

“And is it not?” said Finbarr, his voice rising in mock horror. “You know, we have numerous Guinness connoisseurs who come in here every night, not for the drink mind, but just to be able to watch—and wonder—and wait, as their pint of Guinness settles.”

“Yeah, right. Of course, to appreciate that a few times a night, they have to drink the pint.”

“That’s right. That’s right. But that’s only an afterthought, a side benefit, like. I reckon those guys would rather watch the pint settle than look at Pamela Anderson.”

“They’re obviously perverts, Finbarr. Now do you



mind if I take my first drink?”

“Knock it back, Jake. You deserve it. But when doing it, remember, that it’s more than the product you are consuming.”

Jake sipped at the creamy pint and wiped his upper lip in appreciation.

“It’s like mother’s milk, isn’t it, Jake?”

“Yeah, it’s good stuff. Guinness must be one of the best known brands in the world, Finbarr.”

“That’s right. That’s right. You know you can debate until the cows come home how Guinness developed the image and loyalty it has today, but whatever it is, Guinness and a small number of other brands have a unique magic which ensures that their consumer pull—brand loyalty if you like—is much greater than it logically should be. A kind of ‘je ne sais quoi’ if you will.”

“Ooh, that’s pretty posh.”

“Shut up and drink your pint. I’m trying to be serious here. You can’t put a value on that brand magic. It’s what Harley-Davidson has got and it’s what Starbucks has got. Jake, if you could ever develop a sense of magic around your brand, that is when you will start to make some real money, because consumers will be buying your product—not for its core, but for something intangible.”