

5. LIAM RETURNS TO THE PUB

THE DOOR TO THE BAR FLIES OPEN. EVERYONE TURNS TO SEE LIAM STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, DRENCHED. HE LOOKS A BIT SHELLSHOCKED.

SEAN

Jesus, Liam?

WILLIAM

Are you alright?

LIAM MUMBLES SOMETHING INAUDIBLE.

GERARD

Get him a towel, Michael.

MICHAEL

Where at?

SEAN

Upstairs.

MICHAEL EXITS BEHIND THE BAR TO GET THE TOWEL, WILLIAM GOES TO LIAM AND BRINGS HIM THROUGH TO A BAR STOOL. SEAN PASSES HIM A WHISKEY. LIAM STARES AT IT FOR A MOMENT, THEN KNOCKS IT BACK SLOWLY. HE PUTS THE GLASS DOWN, AND EVERYONE IS STARING AT HIM.

LIAM

She left me.

WILLIAM

What?!

LIAM

Amanda's left me. I got home and...and she was there with the car full of her things.

SEAN

What did she say?

LIAM

She said she couldn't spend another day living with a miserable shite like me. She said she's not too old to make a fresh start of it. She said every time she looks at my face it makes her pray for death.

FATHER KEVIN

God save us, Liam. That's dreadful.

GERARD

Jesus...

SHANE

Bitch.

THEY TURN TO LOOK AT SHANE. MICHAEL RETURNS WITH A TOWEL, AND GIVES IT TO LIAM.

MICHAEL

There you go, Liam. What's wrong with you? Did you hear –

GERARD

Amanda's leaving him.

MICHAEL

Oh shit! Sorry Father...

SEAN

Maybe you can work it out?

LIAM

I said that to her. I asked if she'd take me back.

WILLIAM

What did she say?

LIAM

She said...I can't say in front of Father Kevin.

FATHER KEVIN

It's alright, Liam. What did she say to you?

LIAM

Well...she said she'd rather let a sweaty chimpanzee have his way with her than take me back.

FATHER KEVIN

God help us...

SHANE

Bitch!

SEAN

Here, I'm sure she's just upset about something...sure you know what women are like.

GERARD

Aye, she'll forget about it soon enough.

LIAM

I don't think so.

WILLIAM

Liam, you're soaked through. Get into the bathroom and get yourself dried off.

LIAM

Right...

LIAM STANDS UP AND HEADS TOWARDS THE BATHROOM, AND EVERYONE LOOKS A BIT AWKWARD. LIAM STOPS AND TURNS.

LIAM

I tried calling to see if you'd still be open...

GERARD

Oh right...we mustn't have heard it over the football.

LIAM

Oh aye, I forgot about that. What happened, anyway? Last I saw we were up 1-0.

GERARD

Well, it was -

SEAN

Ah, sure we won.

EVERYONE TURNS TO STARE AT SEAN IN DISBELIEF.

LIAM

Did we?

SEAN

Aye, we won.

LIAM

Sure, that's good, I suppose.

SEAN

It is, surely! You go on in and get yourself dried up now.

LIAM

Right...

LIAM TURNS AND EXITS.

GERARD

Sean, what the fuck was that?! Sorry, Father.

SEAN

I just –

FATHER KEVIN

What are you lying to him for, Sean?

SEAN

He can't –

MICHAEL

Are you trying to mess with his head?

SEAN

Would you all shut up for a second and listen! Look, I panicked...I didn't think he could take it if he knew the truth! It's bad enough that his wife's left him, but what would this do to him?

MICHAEL

But Sean, do you not think he's going to find out?

SEAN

What?

FATHER KEVIN

Michael's right, Sean. Of course he's going to find out! What are you going to tell him when Ireland aren't in the World Cup next year?!

SHANE

We will be.

WILLIAM

Bullshit!

SEAN

Shut up, lads! Listen, I don't know! We'll just figure something out...

MICHAEL

We need to tell him the truth.

SEAN

No, we don't! Not now! It'll finish him.

WILLIAM

Don't see why, it was a great result.

SEAN

Fuck up, William! Sorry Father. Listen, we'll have to tell him eventually. But can we not give the poor bastard one thing to hold on to just for one night?

MICHAEL

I don't like this.

GERARD

Neither do I, but I think Sean might be right. The man needs something to get him through the night.

SHANE

But will it not upset him more when he finds out we lied to him?

FATHER KEVIN

Young Shane's right. We shouldn't be lying to him, it's not right. We're only setting him up for more disappointment.

SEAN

Father, I really think we have to give him something to cheer him up, even just a wee bit tonight. We're just going to have to –

LIAM RE-ENTERS, SLIGHTLY DRIER.

WILLIAM

There he is! Feeling better, lad?

LIAM

No.

FATHER KEVIN

Listen now, Liam, it's times like this you turn to God. He works in mysterious ways, you know.

LIAM

Right...I think I'll just have another drink for now, Father.

SEAN POURS HIM ANOTHER WHISKEY.

WILLIAM

So, what are you going to do now?

LIAM

Not a whole lot I can do, is there? No wife, no job.

SHANE

No dog.

THEY TURN TO SHANE.

MICHAEL

What are you saying that for?

SHANE

Sorry...

LIAM

He's right. I've got nothing.

FATHER KEVIN

Ah sure that's not true. You've got your health, you've got your friends, and you've got your faith.

LIAM

No offence, Father, but I don't really think my faith is doing me much good now this evening, is it? *****6MINS*****

GERARD

Where's Amanda gone?

LIAM

Probably to her ma's. I tried calling her but she wouldn't answer.

SHANE

Maybe she's found someone else.

ALL TURN TO FACE SHANE.

GERARD

I'm not going to tell you again to shut your mouth.

LIAM

Oh Christ...what if she has found someone else?

FATHER KEVIN

Ah, come on now!

SEAN

That won't be it at all.

GERARD

Ignore Shane, he's full of shit, Liam.

MICHAEL

Full of it.

SHANE

Oh, is that right, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yes, it is. Now shut up!

LIAM

Maybe she has, but. Maybe that's why she's left me...

WILLIAM

It won't be that, Liam. Don't be telling yourself that.

LIAM

So what, then? For if it's not another fella then it's something to do with me.

NOBODY KNOWS HOW TO ANSWER THIS.

SEAN

Maybe she's one of them gays.

THEY ALL TURN TO SEAN.

MICHAEL

Gay?

SEAN

You never know.

LIAM

You think Amanda's gay?

SEAN

Well, she might not be.

GERARD

Might not be?

SEAN

I'm just saying you hear of it happening. And, that wouldn't be anything to do with you so you wouldn't have to be too hard on yourself.

MICHAEL

Sean, do you know you're talking out loud?

SEAN

Sure it happened to your man from *Friends*.

MICHAEL

Friends is fictional, Sean.

FATHER KEVIN

I'm sure she's not gay, Liam.

SHANE

Wouldn't it be some craic but if she -

GERARD

Shut up.

WILLIAM

Here Sean, get me another one would you? And one for Liam as well.

LIAM

Cheers, William.

SEAN POURS LIAM ANOTHER WHISKEY AND PUTS IT DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM. HE GETS WILLIAM A DRINK.

GERARD

I'll take another as well, please. Father?

FATHER KEVIN

Ah, I really shouldn't.

GERARD

Sure you may as well, Father.

FATHER KEVIN

Ah, maybe you're right. Here, let me get these ones.

GERARD

Not at all, Father, never you worry.

SEAN GIVES WILLIAM HIS PINT AND WILLIAM PAYS SEAN.

FATHER KEVIN

Ach, you're very kind, Gerard.

MICHAEL

Da, will you get me one?

GERARD

You've had enough. I told you earlier to stop necking them.

SHANE

Aye, Michael. You must be some kind of alco.

GERARD

Shut it, you.

MICHAEL

Yeah, shut it! Come on da, just one more, please?

GERARD

Jesus, this is your last one.

SEAN

So what's that, Gerard? Three pints?

FATHER KEVIN

Only a half for me, Sean.

SHANE

Can I get a drink, da?

GERARD

You can have a coke.

MICHAEL

Fanta.

SEAN

A Fanta, is it?

GERARD

Please, Sean.

LIAM

Maybe it's something I could have done differently?

FATHER KEVIN

Well, that's an interesting possibility, Liam. In my line of work I speak to many couples and one thing I hear quite often from the women is that their husbands have maybe forgotten how to romance their wives. When's the last time you bought her flowers or just simply told her you loved her?

LIAM THINKS.

LIAM

I bought her flowers last year.

GERARD

That's nice.

LIAM

Aye, she needed them to put on her uncle's grave.

WILLIAM

Don't think that's what Father Kevin meant, Liam.

FATHER KEVIN

No, not quite.

SEAN

When's the last time you told her you loved her?

LIAM

Jesus, I don't know...couple of years ago, maybe?

FATHER KEVIN

Oh, Liam! You can't be leaving it that long without telling her you love her!

MICHAEL

When's the last time you told ma you love her?

GERARD

I don't know...I think it might have been when we went to Spain.

SHANE

That was in 1999!

MICHAEL

'98.

FATHER KEVIN

Ah now, Gerard.

GERARD

Well, I might have said it since then.

SEAN

That's a fierce length of time.

WILLIAM

Your wife will be next, Gerard.

GERARD

Fuck up, William!

LIAM

Do you think I should tell her I love her?

SEAN

Gerard's wife?

MICHAEL

I think he means his own wife, Sean.

LIAM

I do, aye.

FATHER KEVIN

It can't hurt.

LIAM

Maybe I'll try calling her.

SEAN

Do you want to use the phone upstairs?

LIAM

Cheers, Sean.

LIAM EXITS.

GERARD

Do you think I should call your ma?

MICHAEL

No, she'd probably think you're drunk if you call her at this time of night and tell her you love her.

GERARD

Aye, maybe you're right.

FATHER KEVIN

Lads, I think we should tell Liam when he comes downstairs that Ireland didn't win.

SEAN

No, maybe just don't talk about it.

WILLIAM

And what will yous do when he sees the paper in the morning?

MICHAEL

We'll have to tell him tonight.

SEAN

And what are we supposed to say? 'Sorry Liam, we lied and a big French bastard cheated us out of the World Cup'?! That'll cheer him up.

SHANE

He *is* a bastard!

GERARD

Shane!

SHANE

A big cheating bastard!

GERARD

Damn it, Shane!

WILLIAM

Would yous all leave Henry alone!

MICHAEL

It's *Henry*!

WILLIAM

That's what I'm saying!

FATHER KEVIN

Come on now, fellas! What are we going to say to him?

SEAN

Maybe we should just say we thought we were through to the World Cup, but we were wrong.

MICHAEL

How's he expected to believe that?

GERARD

We could say the TV was playing up.

WILLIAM

That wouldn't even be a lie.

SEAN

Fuck up, William!

FATHER KEVIN

Look, we've just got to be honest.

SHANE

We might still be at the World Cup!

WILLIAM

Not likely.

MICHAEL

Would you shut up?

WILLIAM

France for the World Cup!

LIAM ENTERS.

LIAM

What's that?

EVERYONE JUMPS.

GERARD

Nothing.

LIAM

Were you talking about the World Cup?

MICHAEL/SEAN

No/Yes.

MICHAEL AND SEAN LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

MICHAEL

Well...not really.

LIAM

Was it a good game, anyway?

THEY ALL LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND MUTTER NONCOMMITTALLY AND UNINTELLIGIBLY.

GERARD

Ah, you know. Here, did she answer?

LIAM

No, she didn't. I left a message so she might call back in a bit.

WILLIAM

I'm sure she will.

SHANE

I'm not.

GERARD CLIPS SHANE OVER THE EAR.

LIAM

So tell me about the football. Did it finish 1-0?

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER. NOBODY KNOWS WHAT TO SAY. THERE'S AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE.

LIAM

What?

FATHER KEVIN

Well, you see the thing is -

GERARD

The thing is I can't remember the final score.

LIAM

You can't remember?

THEY LOOK AGAIN AT EACH OTHER, AND ONCE AGAIN THEY ALL MUTTER NONCOMMITTALLY.

LIAM

Surely you remember the score? I thought you said we won?

SEAN

We did.

EVERYONE LOOKS AT HIM AGAIN.

LIAM

Well, did it finish 1-0?

SEAN

Now I remember! Yes, it did! It finished 1-0.

LIAM

Oh right. So was it penalties?

SEAN

Eh?

LIAM

Well it will have been one each on aggregate.

MICHAEL

Remember, Sean? Remember that France won the first leg 1-0, so if it finished 1-0 that means it's *a draw*.

SEAN

Oh, shite! That's right!

LIAM

What's going on? Did you not watch the match?

SEAN

No, we did.

THE REST OF THE GROUP CAN'T BELIEVE THAT SEAN IS DIGGING HIMSELF DEEPER INTO A HOLE.

LIAM

You did?

MICHAEL

Bits of it.

LIAM

Bits of it?

FATHER KEVIN

It was the TV.

LIAM

What?

WILLIAM

Heap of shite! Kept cutting out!

SEAN

Shut up, William.

GERARD

Aye, missed the whole second half of extra time.

LIAM

So how do you know we won?

THEY LOOK AROUND.

FATHER KEVIN

Well...uh....

MICHAEL

Someone called us and told us!

SEAN

Yes! That's it! I forgot!

FATHER KEVIN

Oh dear...

LIAM

What's that, Father?

FATHER KEVIN

Oh...nothing, just saying a wee prayer.

LIAM

Oh right. So what did you say, someone called?

SEAN

That's right!

LIAM

How come when I tried calling nobody could hear the phone?

THEY LOOK AROUND.

GERARD

Well, we were all outside at a point. Maybe you called then.

LIAM

Why were you all outside?

SHANE

Aye da, why were we all outside?!

GERARD

Shut up, Shane!

MICHAEL

The aerial.

SEAN

Brilliant!

LIAM

What?

MICHAEL

We thought the aerial might have fallen down, which would explain why we couldn't watch the second half of the match. So we went outside to fix it, and that must be when you called.

LIAM

Oh right. So who called and told you that we'd won?

GERARD

Sean's brother.

LIAM

The one who lives in Australia?

GERARD

Yes.

SEAN

No. I don't talk to him anymore.

THE GROUP LOOK COMPLETELY STUNNED THAT SEAN KEEPS MESSING THE LIE UP.

WILLIAM

Wait, do you not mean your brother-in-law?

MICHAEL

Yes, that's what he meant. Sean's brother-in-law called and told us that Ireland won the football.

LIAM

Oh right. Well, did he mention whether it went to penalties?

GERARD

I think it must have.

SEAN

Must have done...

MICHAEL

It did. Definitely did.

SEAN

Must have done...

MICHAEL

It did. Definitely did.

LIAM

Oh, well that's good. World Cup to look forward to next year.

WILLIAM

Oh yes, we're all looking forward to the World Cup! Aren't we lads?

*WILLIAM LAUGHS. THEY LOOK AT WILLIAM WITH PURE LOATHING, BUT
CHEER UNENTHUSIASTICALLY TO KEEP UP THE LIE.*