

LITTLE FISH

"PILOT"

by

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EXT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - DAY

It's a bustling Saturday at THE QUEEN'S COCK in the sleepy Northern town of Settle. Boozers mill about the local watering hole, the air alive with a mix of CHATTER, the CLINK OF GLASSES, and the low RUMBLE of sports commentary.

Near the main entrance is a sign displaying: '**Beerlympics Next Saturday. Chug One, Chug All.**'

INT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - DAY

It's a spacious pub, with room for a pool table, multiple screens and a cosy, cluttered and utterly charming interior.

There are your standard variety patrons: your LADSLADSLADS watching sports, the OLD LASSES bickering in a corner, a fidgety FIRST DATE. The familiar buzz of socialising.

But the atmosphere hinges on the lady pulling the pints: LUCY (late 30s; lacking size, but makes up for it in personality).

She sets THREE FRESH PINTS on the bar for STABBY (early 20s).

LUCY

Now Stabby, I don't want to be seeing your fucking insides coming out like last week, alright?

STABBY

Are you accusing me of not being able to handle my liquor, Luce?

LUCY

Couldn't lead a horse away from water now, could I?

Beat. They stare each other down.

Then they burst into a shared laugh before he gathers his pints and heaves them back to the lads.

In the background sits a **dart board surrounded by a wall of framed portraits**, though we can't make out the faces yet.

Lucy starts serving the next customer, MAEVE (60s).

LUCY

Alright, Maeve?

MAEVE

Aye, Luce. If you can count hypertension, restless legs, and these fucking bloody hot flashes as alright. I've got sweat dripping in places I didn't know could drip.

LUCY

Damn the glands to hell, love. Nothing I enjoy more than lubricating an already drenched woman.

MAEVE

You're a scoundrel, dear. Two Thatchers, and make sure they're cold as a coffin.

Lucy works the bar fluidly, like it's second nature. There's a familiarity between her and the patrons, with everyone on first name (or nickname) basis. Snippets of the day pass by:

Two grumbling lads watch football on one of the big screens.

LAD 1

Mate, this fucking squad is piss useless.

LAD 2

We're not winning shite this year.

A goal is immediately scored and the pub erupts, including the two moaning lads. Beer goes flying, Lucy refilling.

INT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - DAY - LATER

Two old lasses are sat near the bar, regaling each other with their weekly complaints, and guzzling down pints.

OLD LASS 1

He left the milk out for six days.

OLD LASS 2

Ach he's young, it'll make him strong.

OLD LASS 1

Not Petey. Mark. He's sixty-fockin-four. It was whole milk.

OLD LASS 2

(turns to bar)

Luce, you've got some sort of cocktail with milk in it, don't ye?

LUCY
 (calling from bar)
 Hmm... Could do ye a White Russian?

Eyebrows are raised. They cackle.

INT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - DAY - LATER

The two nervous first daters are sat across from each other, oogling and sweating, but in a wholesome way.

NERVOUS BOY
 (visibly shaking)
 I... I really like your shirt.

INSERT: Graphic tee that says 'I bleed for my sins too' with a picture of Jesus on a cross made of blood-soaked tampons.

NERVOUS GIRL
 (blushing)
 Thanks, I made it myself.

INT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - DAY - LATER

The pace quickens and the groups start to blend.

The old lasses are chatting up the lads; one spills his pint on the nervous girl.

Nervous boy stands up to defend her, then catches himself and sits back down.

Lucy throws him a bar towel, he gently wipes her shirt as chaos engulfs them.

An old lass is watching darts on a TV in the back and calls out to Lucy:

OLD LASS 3
 Hey Luce! That's that old friend of yours, innit?

Lucy looks to the screen and sees GARY 'GAZ' BISHOP (40s), elbow bent, dart in hand, perfect form. He throws a winning dart as they watch the celebrations unfold on screen.

A flicker of longing betrays her. But she quickly stiffens.

LUCY
 Barely recognised ol' Gaz. Not that he looks that different -- it's mostly the jowls. And the form.

The pub spectators laugh; Lucy with the banter, how typical.

Maeve is stood near the bar, close enough for a whisper.

MAEVE

I miss watching you play, love.
Never seen nothing like it.

Lucy shrugs off the compliment and gets back to work.

INT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - EVENING - LATER

The energy is kinetic. An old lass does a jagerbomb.

Two lads are I-love-you-manning in the corner.

The nervouses are sloppily swapping spit.

Stabby vomits on a rug by one of the TVs. The lads laugh.

Maeve is swaying, absolutely soaked -- is that sweat or beer?

The pub has reached its standard level of carnage.

The chat and BUZZ and CHAOS crescendo.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE QUEEN'S COCK - NIGHT - LATER

Silence. Lucy is taking out the trash and locking up. One of the old lasses is smooching Stabby up against the pub. The only sound is of their WET LIPS SMACKING against each other.

TITLE CARD: LITTLE FISH

LUCY

Night Doreen. Night Stabby.

They don't answer. Their mouths are busy.

EXT. SETTLE STREETS - NIGHT

Lucy walks home in relative silence. She strolls up the high street, through dark alleyways that in any other world would be eerie, but here are peaceful and serene.

Arriving at a modest row house, she lets herself in.

INT. LUCY'S HOME - NIGHT

She enters, stepping on a few pieces of mail that have been shoved through the slot. She riffles through them -- a couple say 'URGENT', 'LATE FEE', 'PLEASE RESPOND'. She chucks them aside, a problem for tomorrow.

Her home is scattered with knickknacks, photos, books, sports equipment -- a physical representation of a full life. A hoarder might deem it tidy.

She tenderly picks up her cat MARGARET 'MARG' CATWOOD (3) and kisses her on the head while walking to her bedroom.

INT. LUCY'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her nightstand is home to a Leaning Tower of Books. We get it, she likes to read. She drops Marg on her bed, grabs her old-timey nightgown, and heads to the bathroom.

INT. LUCY'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

She placidly runs through her nighttime routine: face, teeth, creams. She's middle-aged, not entirely hopeless.

INT. LUCY'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

She crawls into bed with Marg, and is about to close her eyes when she gets a PING on her phone. She checks the message: **We need a word. I'll be round.**

She looks mildly concerned, then sets her phone back and closes her eyes. Mind over matter with this one.

EXT. LONDON OFFICE - DAY

In a sharp contrast to the calm of Lucy's home, London is in top rainy, HONKING, frantic form.

INT. LONDON OFFICE - DAY

JACK (early 30s; Canadian, uncharacteristically perky) is sat at his desk, buzzing with energy and typing ferociously. His colleague, BUNNY (late 20s; glam, posh Londoner), plops beside him, sunglasses on, yawning.

BUNNY

Jackie-poo, darling, your Monday morning blitz is draining my chakra. Can you please go back to being a miserable vampire?

JACK

(focused on screen)

Not today, Bunny honey. I've got my pitch meeting in fifteen, and papa is finally cooking again.

Bunny groans.

BUNNY

Ew. I think you might be bipolar.

JACK

I think you mean a 'high roller'.

BUNNY

Tragic.

JACK

Do you think Peter will buy-in on a story about the similarities in motor sports and equestrianism? I think I have an angle. It involves dressage.

He looks expectantly at Bunny, puppy eyes glowing with hope.

BUNNY

How many pitches do you have?

JACK

Nine. Not including the racing babies. Still undecided on that.

Off Bunny's look, Jack grabs his laptop and leaves, still in good spirits. He passes another colleague, DUNCAN (20s; stylish Northerner) and gives him an enthusiastic high five.

Duncan and Bunny exchange a look: *what's gotten into him?*

INT. LONDON OFFICE - BOARDROOM - DAY

Jack sits completely deflated, surrounded by a handful of other colleagues. He's lost his chutzpah. Their boss PETER (50s) is mid-lecture. He's not what you'd expect from a sports exec (aka: incredibly wholesome and flamboyant).

PETER

I'm not angry, I'm just disappointed, team. This is *los deportes* we're writing about here! Capital S sports! There are so many different disciplines, so many athletes having a moment right now and this is the smut you bring me?

(looks at papers)

Where's the STORY? Where's the HUMANITY? Our readers want to get invested in personal triumph, they want someone to root for. Now go on and find me something compelling, something with heart.

Peter sighs, clearly exasperated.

PETER (CONT'D)

For now I guess we'll run with coverage from the WSL and Wimby. And Mikey, if you can get an interview with Borthwick and make him not sound like a slab of sirloin, that'll tide us over. But I want something better, gang. Warm my darn heart for Cheese's sake.

The group heads to leave, and Jack takes one last look back at Peter, who gives him an overly dramatic sad face.

PETER (CONT'D)

Come on, Jackie.
(shakes fists)
Triumph!

OFF PETER...

INT. LONDON OFFICE - DAY

Slumped at his desk (which is covered in sports swag), Jack sits limply while Bunny and Duncan attempt to cheer him up. Duncan can't help but play with all the MERCH.

DUNCAN

Mate, you'll be fine. You've got great ideas and you're a bomb writer, you just need to find the right hook, yeah?

He grabs a MINI BOXING GLOVE and laughs: *right hook lol.*

BUNNY

Babes, listen to Duncan. You're just in a bit of a dry spell. Surely you've had writer's block before. What do you normally do to get out of it?

JACK

Well, usually I'd go play pick up.

All three look to the rain whipping the window.

JACK (CONT'D)

But seeing as that's not a possibility because London is Londoning, I guess I'll just... I don't know... wallow in self pity for a few hours instead.

BUNNY

I know some old school friends who play netball on Monday nights?

JACK

(disgusted)

Bunny, how many times do I have to tell you, netball is not the same as basketball.

BUNNY

(shrugs)

There's a hoop and a ball.

DUNCAN

You work in the Sports department!

Duncan grabs a PLUSH BASKETBALL from Jack's desk and throws it lightly at Bunny's head. She gives him a tired look.

JACK

It was literally invented as a modified version of basketball for women. It's inherently offensive. Aren't you a feminist?

BUNNY

A feminist and a marketer, darling. All it needs is a little makeover.

(beat)

Doesn't Alice play netball?

JACK

Yes. And that's precisely why I'm so passionate about its demise. I'm deeply embarrassed that the woman I love plays *loser* basketball. Competitively.

BUNNY

Are you now calling women losers?

JACK

Is this how you're cheering me up!?
(looking to Duncan)
I'm under siege here!

Duncan puts on a FOAM FINGER. He's a hand talker.

DUNCAN

You know what I think would cheer you up? You should come back home with me this weekend for the Beerlympics.

BUNNY

Grim.

DUNCAN

It's mad fun! The whole village turns up, all my hometown friends come back for it.

JACK

I appreciate that, Duncs, really. But Alice and I have a date night on Saturday.

BUNNY

What sad romantic catastrophe have you planned this time?

JACK

(proud)

We're making personalised snow globes.

BUNNY

It's June.

JACK

Now, sorry, are you saying *Dune* or *June*, I can't quite tell...

BUNNY

Oh fuck off, not this again. You moved *here*, asshole.

OFF DUNCAN poking Bunny with the foam finger...

INT. LONDON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack enters, sullen. ALICE (early 30s), is fully geared up in some INTENSE RUNNING SWAG: visor, compression socks, rain jacket that makes a whooshing noise whenever she moves, and a fluorescent vest over top. The whole shebang.

ALICE

(preoccupied)

Hey baby, how was your day.

JACK

Uhg. So shit. Peter didn't like any of my pitches.

Alice looks to Jack and her face falls.

ALICE

Oh honey, please don't do this. Not right now. It's a Monday. The week literally just started.

JACK

Do what? I'm telling you about my day?

ALICE

But you're all sad and mopey and I'm about to get my endorphins on and you're already draining them.

JACK

(offended, sarcastic)

Okay, sorry. How was your day?

She moves to the sink to fill her Camelbak up with water.

ALICE

Oh don't do that, now you're all pissy at me.

JACK

Alice, I've said like five words since I've walked in the door. How are you already mad at me?

ALICE

(mad)

I'm not mad.

(calms)

Babe, it's your energy. When you're down, it sucks the life out of everything. And I'm sorry for pouncing, but I'm so tired of coming home to you being a mopey little sad boy.

(swings her Camelbak on)

You sometimes... suck... like...the *life* out of me.

She takes a long sip of water from her Camelbak straw while maintaining eye contact with Jack.

JACK

Jesus.

ALICE

I had a good day. Most of my days are good days. Yes, of course, shit things happen, but you deal and you persevere.

JACK
I deal. I persevere.

ALICE
You haven't. Not for a long while.
And I just don't know how to help
you.

JACK
Help me...

ALICE
Deal, and persevere.

JACK
Wait. Are you breaking up with me?

ALICE
I'm going for a run.

JACK
But... what about our snow globes?

She walks toward Jack, rain jacket swishing as she gives him a stiff hug. He doesn't know what that means. Before leaving, she turns to give Jack a final look. He's even more confused.

INT. LONDON APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Alice and Jack are in bed; she looks to be asleep, he's awake staring at the ceiling. Rain still lashing the windows.

JACK
(whispering)
Alice... Alice?

ALICE
(big exhale)
Yes, Jack?

JACK
(whispering)
Netball is a disgrace to female
athletes everywhere and I for one
think it's a sad disservice to
young women that this country so
heavily separates sports by gender.

ALICE
(beat)
I'll move out on Saturday.