

NATIONAL PRIDE

written by

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INT. BAR - DAY

The bar is large and busy, full of people of all ages. The sounds of GLASSES CLINKING, TALKING and LAUGHING fill the room. Along one side is a long oak bar, behind it stands PATRICK LARSSON (50's) and behind him stands a long line of glasses half filled with what could be black oil.

TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC fights to be heard among the noise filling the bar and every now and then the sound of a FIDDLE sneaks through to break the monotony of chatter.

MICHAEL LARSSON (20's) sits on a stool at the bar draining the last drops from a pint of Guinness.

PATRICK

I take it you'll be having another?

MICHAEL

Does the Pope wear a funny hat?

Patrick smiles and grabs three glasses from the line of pre-poured Guinness and fills them to the top.

PATRICK

It's a big day.

MICHAEL

'tis a huge day for the Larssons
uncle Pat, HUGE.

PATRICK

How's Sean?

MICHAEL

He's grand. Just been phone to him.

PATRICK

And?

Michael leans forward and motions Patrick to come closer. Patrick leans his head over the bar and places a large red ear in front of Michael's mouth.

MICHAEL

He asked me to tell yer to stop
putting water in the beer.

Patrick pulls his head back in mock disgust laughing loudly.

PATRICK

Really now, Is that right?

MICHAEL

He told me he was gonna make us
both proud.

Both men look at each other in silence for a moment before a loud CRASH from the corner of the bar interrupts them.

A rather large man in his 50's sits on the floor, an upturned chair and broken pint glass by his side.

MICHAEL (SHOUTING)

Jesus man, look at yer. Not even
three o'clock and yer wrecking the
joint.

Michael wears a large grin on his face.

Loud LAUGHS and JEERS as people help the embarrassed looking man to his feet.

PATRICK

You should be over there with him.

MICHAEL

Sitting on the floor?

Patrick cracks another smile.

PATRICK

With Sean, in Liverpool.

MICHAEL

He has got Kat, he's fine. My place
is here, This place.

Michael outstretches his arms.

PATRICK

I wish your old man was here to see
this.

MICHAEL

He is.

Michael looks up at the picture above the bar, a large photograph of Patrick and another man standing in front of the pub.

The photograph taken a long time ago, both men look to be in their 30's and are smiling proudly. Behind them a large sign above the pub door proudly proclaims that it is LARSSON'S BAR - OPENING NIGHT PARTY.

PATRICK
Can't believe it's been two months.

MICHAEL
He would have loved this. The Grand National, can you believe it?

PATRICK
I still can't no. He would be proud. Of both of you.
(beat)
Anyway come on, It's starting, get yer arse back to your seat.

Michael gives Patrick a wink and takes the drinks from the bar and over to a table where ROY and JOHN, both around his own age are seated.

Michael gets to his seat just as the race starts, everyone in the bar turns towards a giant screen that covers the wall at one end of the bar. A LOUD CHEER erupts as

ON THE TELEVISION

A starting tape breaks and 40 horses are sent hurtling on their way towards the first fence.

Flashes of COLOR from the silk shirts of jockeys riding powerful thoroughbreds as horses plow through hedges and tear branches off as they go through them.

IN THE BAR

Somebody cranks up the volume and the noise is deafening as the sound of 160 HOOVES pounding the ground reverberates around the walls.

Not the sound of coconuts like in a spaghetti western but a heavy thumping that shakes the drinks dotted around the tables in the bar.

ROY
Do yer think he can win?

MICHAEL
Sure, anythings possible if you wish hard enough!
(beat)
You know who said that?

JOHN
Michael Collins?

MICHAEL
My arse Michael Collins, Peter Pan
'twas who.

ROY
Well we're all wishing Michael.

MICHAEL
Good job 'cos he ain't got a chance
without it!

Roy and John both laugh at this.

MICHAEL
(cont'd)
All I want is him back in one
piece, anything else... well, let's
say 'tis nice to dream.

Roy and John turn their heads back towards the screen.

Michael doesn't. He is the only person in the bar not
watching. He looks down at the floor, his hands grip his
chair, he listens intensely.

The noise of the racetrack crowd CHEERING every safe landing
are mingled with the COMMENTARY from a very excited Irish
man who is speaking so fast nobody, not even his mother
would understand a word he is saying.

COMMENTATOR
Drby, brby drby, drby, QUICKSILVER,
drby drby, RED ROOSTER, CLAN
LEADER, drby, drby, ooooooh faller
dat was ROYAL SCOT, drby, drby--

ON THE TELEVISION

Horses are now making their way to the 11th fence, some have
fallen but most are still on their feet and still tightly
bunched together.

The pace quickens somewhat and the noise of POUNDING HOOVES
has more urgency about it.

COMMENTATOR
Drby, drby, drby, CHEEKY MONKEY,
drby, drby.

The 11th fence comes and goes, three more horses fall and
the pace seems to quicken with every stride.

12th, 13th, 14th. Fences seems to be coming up with amazing speed and before the horses even seem to have straightened themselves up and found their feet they face another huge obstacle in their way.

Jockeys hang on for dear life and do their best to steer their horse into the fence at the right time, trying to catch the best stride to clear it with minimal mistake.

COMMENTATOR

Drby, drby, Faller, BLUE NUN, drby,
drby, leader, falls, LADIES CHOICE.

Every time a horse falls there is a huge cry from the crowd on the screen as betting slips are ripped up and tossed aside.

IN THE BAR

It is different, everyone watches in silence.

As the race progresses silence turns into a murmur, occasionally a whisper.

Now it is more than a whisper, people quietly urging one of the horses on. A sharp intake of breath whenever he jumps, a quietly muffled cheer when he lands safely.

One name seems to be on everyones lips but it seems nobody dare say it out loud.

JOHN

Halfway now Michael, he's still
there with a chance.

ON THE TELEVISION

CELTIC DREAMER throws himself and his jockey at fence 15. Standing over 5 feet tall it is a massive wall of birch and branches and is as deep as it is long.

As he lands a loose horse appears in front of him and Celtic Dreamer cannot stop himself colliding with it.

IN THE BAR

People watch with hands in front of their faces.

DAVID

Oh shit.

As

ON THE TELEVISION

Celtic Dreamer stumbles, his front legs give way and with his jockey fighting hard to stay on board his nose hits the floor.

Horses rush past him as he struggles to stay upright.

IN THE BAR

There is complete silence, all eyes glued to what is

ON THE TELEVISION

As suddenly as he fell, Celtic Dreamer gets back to his feet and approaches the bend making up as much lost ground as he can on his way to fence 16. His jockey sits low in the saddle and holds the reins tightly. He barely moves his body at all.

IN THE BAR

A huge SIGH OF RELIEF followed by a loud CHEER.

Michael does not look, he sits quietly staring at the space between his feet. Roy rubs the top of his head.

ROY

Don't worry Michael, we'll tell yer
when it is safe to look.

ON THE TELEVISION

Horses jump the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th fences. More fallers, more CRASHING FENCES. We have passed halfway and twenty four horses are making their way around the circuit for the second time. Celtic Dreamer is back on the outside and full of running.

20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th. The pace quickens and some of the horses cannot keep up, A few more fall, some are pulled up. The leading pack begins to break away and quicken up towards the 25th fence.

IN THE BAR

a single shout.

VOICE IN THE BAR (SHOUTING)

C'mon Celtic Dreamer!

This is infectious, It was what everyone was waiting for. Now everyone in the bar is shouting out the name of the horse.

Everyone except Michael is looking as

ON THE TELEVISION

The 25th fence looms into view and the remaining eleven horses that have any chance approach within two lengths of each other.

Celtic Dreamer on the outside is the first to approach it, a huge, majestic leap sends him clear over.

IN THE BAR

Patrons cheer in unison and Guinness is sent splashing around the place like black rain.

Fences fly by now as

ON THE TELEVISION

The 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th fences are jumped.

There is only one horse in it now. Celtic Dreamer has spreadeagled the field and is over fifteen lengths in front.

IN THE BAR

People are already celebrating, the commentator

ON THE TELEVISION

Has somehow got himself even more excited.

COMMENTATOR

Drby, drby, Celtic Dreamer, For
Ireland, Celtic Dreamer.

The horse looks majestic, his muscles hard at work powering his huge frame forward towards the finish.

He is tired now and his jockey is pushing frantically, the reins let out, trying to keep him moving forward.

The whip in his right hand, not touching the horse but helping keep his focus on the job in hand.

This great skill from the jockey helps the horse find his stride and Celtic Dreamer lifts himself into the air launching himself into the final fence.

Then silence, a hush descends and

IN THE BAR

You could almost hear a pin drop, you really could.

All eyes are fixed

ON THE TELEVISION

As if in slow motion Celtic Dreamer steams though the fence as though it was made of paper.

IN THE BAR

Michael finally lifts his head and watches.

ON THE TELEVISION

Celtic Dreamer lands and hits the hard ground with a stumble.

He is incredibly tired and with still a long run-in to go is slowing down dramatically.

But he picks up, his jockey looking behind and seeing there is nothing coming grabs the reigns and urges him on. He has all the time in the world and

IN THE BAR

Michael erupts.

MICHAEL (SHOUTING)

Go on Celtic Dreamer, Fecking Go
on. Go on!

Michael jumps up onto the table and now dances up and down in delight as

ON THE TELEVISION

Celtic Dreamer crawls across the line with his young jockey standing in his stirrups, his arms waving in jubilation.

IN THE BAR

Everyone goes bonkers, everybody dances and shouts. Michael still on the table tries to get quieten everyone up and get their attention.

MICHAEL (SHOUTING)

A drink, Shoooooosh. Everyone Shut
up. A Drink.

The bar now goes quiet as people hush each other up,
Somebody hands Michael a fresh pint of Guinness.

MICHAEL

A drink.

Michael lifts his glass up high.

MICHAEL

To the Winner of the 2008 Grand
National, My baby brother..

(beat)

Sean Larsson.

As Michael takes a swig of his drink the bar erupts in
celebration once again.

Michael turns and raises his glass high and watches his
brother

ON THE TELEVISION

Slowly riding Celtic Dreamer back towards the parade ring
and to glory. People are lined up at each side cheering him,
grabbing his hand as he goes by. Tears are streaming down
his face, he waves to the cameras, to the people he knows
are watching back home.

IN THE BAR

Michael turns to look at Patrick to see the old man being
congratulated by anyone and everyone who can get close
enough to him.

Michael now has tears running down his own face and with a
look up to the photograph above the bar raises his glass
once more.

THE END.