

SHROVETIDE

by

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EXT. ASHBOURNE -- DAY

The cold streets of Ashbourne. The historic middle of the little town. A huge crowd has congregated in the square. Steam's rising from their heads. All face ...

A PODIUM erected at one side of the square. Somebody official looking, probably THE MAYOR, is speaking to the crowd.

MAYOR

...stay ou' of churchyards and fer the last time, would everybody please try not to destroy any more property. The future o' tha' great game's in yer hands. Any more complaints and we're going to ...

Nobody pays attention. They're more concerned with the other side: Upp'ards and Down'Ards. Some deep-rooted feuds here.

One side: Brent and Dorsett and friends. Eye-balling Billy and his gang across the way.

DALTON

I wonder when Tyler's going to show up.

Billy slaps him on the forehead.

DALTON (CONT'D)

Ouhw! Wha' the ...

BILLY

Tha' fuckin' bastard's gone. Off he went, back to fuckin' Texas.

DALTON

I don't know. He said he'll be here.

BILLY

Don't make me hit yeh again. Tha' cunt's probably sittin' posh in first class right now, gettin' a pint and a hand job from the stewardess.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICE -- DAY

No pint. No hand job. Just the opposite: burly Security officers face off against Tyler.

The biggest one looks Tyler's passport over. Checks with his colleagues. They all nod.

SECURITY OFFICER

A'righ'.

He hands Tyler his passport.

SECURITY OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Jus' a bit of advice fer yeh: don't
 get on a plane jus' to tear-arse out
 o' it two minutes later. These days,
 tha' kind o' shite makes people very
 nervous.

TYLER
 What about my luggage?

Through the window, behind the officer, a plane's roaring
 into the grey sky.

SECURITY OFFICER
 Thanks to yeh, it's a bit late going
 to Dallas.

EXT. ASHBOURNE -- DAY

The crowd in the market square might have gotten bigger.
 It's packed with people. And everybody is singing ...

EVERBODY
*... and ever give us cause to sing
 with heart and Voice ...*

The Mayor at the podium is holding a large, colorful ball up
 in the air. More CHEERS! LOUDER SINGING!

EVERBODY (CONT'D)
... god save the queen!

The last word barely out, the Mayor winds up and throws out
 the ball. It arches through the air until ...

... Max, almost thrown by Billy, reaches higher than anybody
 else, stretches and ... just barely tips the ball.

WILBER
 OH FUUU..NNY BUSINESS!

The ball bounces up, then lands in somebody else's hands.
 Immediately, the mob is on him. A mass of people, pushing,
 jostling, yelling. Packed so tight that nothing is moving.

Billy pulls Max to his feet.

BILLY
 Almost mate. Now let's get it.

MAX
 Fuckin' ey.

MAX/BILLY
 AAAAAHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

Max and Billy charge the crowd and disappear in the pack.

Dalton's left behind. Hands in his pockets, cigarette
 dangling from his mouth. He's standing with the rest of the
 stragglers. The undecided.

DALTON
I'm over 'ere then. Righ'. Whenever
yeh get it ou' o' there.

OFF TO THE SIDE

Dewhurst stands on higher ground. Measuring the progress of
the game. Bickerstaff's next to him.

BICKERSTAFF
Back in me days, I'd have scored
twice over already.
(yells at crowd)
Git movin' yeh ingrates!

Dewhurst scans the crowd.

DEWHURST
No sign o' tha' bloody yank.

He rubs his hands together. Not just from the cold.

BICKERSTAFF
Grand. I've seen enough Lonergan to
last me lifetime.

INT. GOODWYNN'S CAR -- DAY

The high whine of Goodwynn's car at full speed. Which his
half of a real car. But Goodwynn's giving his best of 'petal
to the metal'. Tyler's riding next to him.

TYLER
Thanks Goodwynn. I know what this
means.

Goodwynn winks at Tyler.

GOODWYNN
No worries mate. I'm not the biggest
fan of me boss either.

EXT. ASHBOURNE -- DAY

The mob has moved on. It's shifting down the road, slams
into house walls like some blind animal, but it's moving.

Arms are thrashing, an occasional leg sticks out, then
somebody is spit out, bleeding from some wound, but goes
right back into the fray, more determined then ever.

What fun.

But something's happening. The shouts get louder. The pack
of people moves faster, loser, more frantic. And suddenly:

BRENT BREAKS FREE! Clutching the ball to his chest. A great
ROAR!

EVERBODY
AAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!!

And the rabble is after Brent. He's dodging people left and right. Quick side steps. The race is on!

Brent seems to have a clear path to the river. Everybody's behind him. He can smell the ... what the fuck? Somebody stepped into the road. Not just somebody:

TYLER!

VOICE (O.S.)
It's the bloody yank!

Brent, now looking hateful, charges with newfound energy. Tyler gets ready. Arms out. Legs running in place.

BRENT
Out o' me way yeh bastard!

TYLER
Come and get it!

Brent steps it up. Tyler starts to run backwards.

BRENT
OU' O' ME FUCKIN' WAY!

He fakes left, runs right. Almost gets by Tyler. But Tyler's too fast. Adjusts too well. He drills Brent with a beautiful bread and butter tackle ...

WHAM! Right between the numbers. SLAM! Brent hits the ground. The ball rolls off into the gutter.

The mob behind them both stops dead in their tracks. Silence hangs over the street. Heavy breathing. Steam rising from heated bodies.

VOICE (O.S.)
He can't do tha'!

BILLY (O.S.)
Says who?

Billy pushes his way through the mob.

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Would yeh fuckin' move?

He finally breaks free.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Why can't he do tha'?

BRENT
Because he's a feckin' yank! He
doesn't belong here.

Brent spits some blood on the street. Struggles to his feet, ignoring Tyler's outstretched hand.

BRENT (CONT'D)
He's not one o' us.

BILLY
Is tha' why ye've been givin' him
hell all this week? Look a' him.
He's a fuckin' Lonergan if I ever
saw one.

TYLER
Logan.

BILLY
Now's the time to shut it!

Tyler holds up his hands. Alright. Quiet it is.

BILLY (CONT'D)
It doesn't matter where he lives
righ' now. He's got his roots righ'
here. He bloody owns a house jus'
down the street ...

DEWHURST
Not fer long.

He's walking up slowly, Bickerstaff in tow.

BILLY
Well we'll see abou' that. Nothin's
been decided yet so take yer scarecrow
and scutter off. Let the real men
play.

Some agreeable mumbling from the crowd.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Lonergan's been playin' here fer as
far as any of yeh bastards can
remember.

VOICE (O.S.)
Nobody wants to remember tha'.

BILLY
I saw yeh. You'll git yer's later.
But fer now, anybody who's willing
to get his teeth kicked in fer a
bloody ball should be allowed to do
jus' tha'.

RIGHT! Others say NOT SO! Discordant mumbling.

BRENT
Is tha' jus' another one of yer
upp'ard tricks?

Inciting words. Upp'ards don't like it. Down'Ards jump on
it. Quickly, the atmosphere heats up. Shouting ensues.
Shoving. Somebody's about to throw a punch when ...

BILLY
OI! HEY! YEH FUCKTARDS! Save tha'
fer the game!

A moment of silence. Indecision hangs in the air. Until:

WILBER
Oh fuuu...udge it. If he wants a
bloody nose, let him have it. But
let's git on with it.

EVERBODY
YEAH!

The mob redistributes itself. Orients itself. An impromptu
center emerges around the ball. Tyler pats Billy on the
back.

TYLER
Thanks mate.

BILLY
Good to have yeh back. Jus' don't
fuck it up.

He winks at Tyler. But something catches Tyler's eye:
There's Annie. He pushes his way towards her.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Tha's exactly wha' I mean yeh cunt.

But Tyler's gone.

TYLER
Hiyah Annie.

ANNIE
Oh. Hi. Didn't see yeh there.

TYLER
Really? That whole lynch mob thing
ran past you?

ANNIE
Yes. So. Shouldn't you be back
with yer wife?

TYLER
What? What wife?

ANNIE
Oh don't yeh play stupid with me. I
know all abou' yer little Lonergan
games.

TYLER
What are you talking ...

ANNIE
I can't believe I almost fell fer
it. Maybe it's better to stick with
what yeh know.

TYLER
But Annie ...

All of a sudden, there's Brent next to Annie.

BRENT
Piss of to yer side, will yeh?

TYLER
You want to kiss the pavement again?

BRENT
Come on Annie.

He leads her away. She lets him.

TYLER
But Annie ... Annie! I ... Annie!

She looks back briefly, but then she's swallowed by the throng
of people.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I'm in love with you.

A Passersby glowers at Tyler.

TYLER (CONT'D)
No no, I wasn't ...

PASSERSBY
Feckin' sausage jockey.

Shaking his head, he leaves a bewildered Tyler standing in
the middle of the street.

EXT. ASHBOURNE -- MOMENTS LATER

An intersection. More room for the mob to gather. The pack
of people rings around somebody holding the ball up.

Anticipation.

The man throws the ball high in the air! The mob ...

EVERBODY
AAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!

... surges forward. Like an implosion, everybody pushes
towards the center. Tyler's caught in the current and ripped
along. Swimming with the pack, he spots ...

ANNIE, standing on some steps. Pretending not to see him.

TYLER
Annie! ANNIE! RIGHT HERE!

Is she looking his way?

TYLER (CONT'D)

I don't have a wife. Do you hear me? Never had one. It's not true.

Now she's definitely looking his way.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Did you hear me? No wife. I swear!

Annie's moving her lips, but nothing. The crowd's too loud. Tyler tries to stay upright and not get trampled. One last look at Annie ... is she smiling? She's smiling. At him.

He dives forward with new found energy.

Again, there's a big pile-up of people, everybody shoving this way and that so that in the end, nobody goes anywhere.

INT. PUB -- DAY

One of the many pubs all throughout Ashbourne. It's packed. Standing room only. Pints are handed overhead, spilled on people, drunk as fast as liquids can pour down throats. And that's pretty fast.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oi! Here they come!

And sure enough:

Outside, the pack of players pushes, shoves, punches it's way past the windows. Some inside the pub try to join the fray, but they don't go far. It's too crowded. Most people just continue with their business: drinking.

With much hollering and cursing, the mob of players waltzes past the windows and is out of sight.

Until, only a few moments later, they holler, curse, fight, stampede the other way. Such is shrovetide.

EXT. ASHBOURNE -- DAY

On a street not too far from the pack of players. The occasional bloodied player staggers in or out of the game.

Annie is walking with her gaggle of girlfriends. They leisurely keep pace with the progress of the game.

GIRLFRIEND

Grown men. Actin' like the pillocks they are.

A young man, full of eagerness, runs by them. Nods.

YOUNG MAN

Ladies.

And he breaks out running, charging the fray.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
 AAAAAHHHHH!!!!

GIRLFRIEND
 I needn't say more.

ANNIE
 Do you believe him?

The other Girlfriend chimes in.

GIRLFRIEND 2
 If they don't talk with their cock,
 men lie. Tha's a fact.

GIRLFRIEND
 An' some are bigger liars then others.

They laugh.

GIRLFRIEND 2
 Now really Annie. I'm sorry, but
 tha' bloody yank's jus' the same
 sorry spineless support system fer a
 wanger like all the others.

ANNIE
 He seemed different though.

GIRLFRIEND 2
 Yeah. He had all his teeth.

They stroll by Dewhurst and Bickerstaff, craning their necks,
 eagerly following the game.

GIRLFRIEND
 And then there's the flightless birds.

DEWHURST
 Look at tha'. It's the trollop
 brigade.

GIRLFRIEND 2
 Up yours.

GIRLFRIEND
 Is it true tha' yank bet his house
 on the game?

DEWHURST
 If yeh need to know: he did. Not
 tha' I wish fer it, but if yeh
 Down'Ards win, I do too. A bit of a
 pickle fer meself I admit.

GIRLFRIEND 2
 Exactly wha' I was most interested
 in: the moral dilemma of Dewhurst
 the second.

DEWHURST

Third.

GIRLFRIEND 2

Wha'ever.

GIRLFRIEND

Cheerioh fellas. And try not to
snuff it today.

They leave the old men behind.

GIRLFRIEND 2

Tha' yank o' yours sure's a bit off
his chump, ain't he?

ANNIE

I don't know wha' to think anymore.