

JEAN MARTEL
IS
ALIVE AND WELL

by

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6 INT "THE LOCAL" PUB EVENING

This place is a little different than the last place. It has more of a neighborhood pub feel. The people look a little more together and less self-conscious. Sitting at a table near the bar is SARA, DAVE's girl. She's a pretty girl in her late twenties. She's with a group of people who all look fairly businesslike. Some are in suits, as if they've just come from work. DAVE sees SARA and heads over to her table. SAM heads straight to the bar, where people are sitting and talking, including STU and JIM, two Irish guys. Another buddy, TOM, is tending bar.

SAM

Tomm-o! Stu... Jim.

TOM

What's the word Sammy?

SAM

Nothin' new ain't bad. Stu, Jim, still fightin'?

JIM

We never fight. Do we, Stu?

STU

I think we do.

JIM

Don't be daft! I said we never fight, ya twit!

STU

I'll twit you, ya gob-shite!

STU punches JIM right in the face. JIM's head shoots back, then back to normal. He sips his Guinness.

JIM

We don't.

TOM

So, what's goin' on, Sammy?

SAM

Not much. We were just over at Rollo's.

TOM

Any action?

SAM

Are you kiddin'? This is Sammy! *El Gato*, the Cat!!!

TOM

You mean *le gateau*, the cake... as in fruitcake.

JIM, STU, and TOM all crack up.

SAM

Laugh away proud boys. In just about two hours, I'm gonna be knee-deep in some fine German strudel... *mit schlage*, baby!

TOM

Oh, yeah? Then what are you doing here?

SAM

Gotta let 'em wait, Tomm-o. Besides I'm hangin' with Dave.

TOM

Yeah, whatever.

SAM

Hey, Tomm-o, how's about hookin' us up with a couple of drinks?

TOM
What'll you have?

SAM
Two shots of Johnny Red and a couple of beers.

CUT TO: DAVE sitting down next to SARA.

DAVE
Hiya, kid.

SARA
Hello, baby.

They kiss.

SARA
You know Paul.

DAVE looks over at PAUL. It's apparent right away that they aren't the best of friends.

DAVE
Yeah, sure. Hi, Paul. Actually, I think I know everybody here.

DAVE sits down as the table goes back to talking.

CUT TO SAM at the bar.

SAM
Thanks, Tomm-o. Uh, listen, I'm a little skint right now, but I'll be over at the record store tomorrow. So come on by and I'll hook you up.

TOM
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Go on, beat it. Here.

TOM pushes the drinks across the bar to SAM.

SAM
Thanks, bro.

SAM heads over to the table with the drinks. As he sits down, some of the people look at him, not too pleased.

SARA

Hey, Sammy, who was that girl who stumbled out of your room this morning?

SAM

Oh, uh, that was Gerta. She's from Holland. She's over here raising money for UNICEF, by unicycling across America. Healthy type. She could crack walnuts with her thighs.

SARA

Oh, yeah? Well, I caught her cracking open my purse.

SAM

Are you shittin' me? Well, she is trying to raise money.

SARA

Well, I don't appreciate your street skags stealing from me.

SAM

You say that now, but in six months, you'll be glad you sponsored her.

SARA

I already sponsor poor, helpless children: you and Dave.

DAVE shoots her a glance.

PAUL

So, Dave, what's been going on? Sara says you've been having a little trouble getting up and running on that band and CD of yours. You know, I had the same problem until I got my record deal.

DAVE shoots SARA a glance, trying to stay cool.

DAVE

Oh, I wouldn't say that, Paul. Actually, the songs are pretty much done, and the band, well, I can put that together pretty quickly. I've recorded a bunch of tracks already. But it is hard without all the scary industry clout you've got.

PAUL

Yeah, right. I'd like to hear your stuff. Maybe I can check it out tomorrow some time?

DAVE

Yeah, well, tomorrow's no good. It's bad.

PAUL

Sure. I understand. That's okay. I've gotta meet with my product manager at PolyGram and light a fire under their ass on the promotion side. You know, Dave, in a lot of ways, you're lucky you can't get a deal. Once you get signed, it's all one big hassle.

SAM leans in to DAVE.

SAM

What an asshole.

SARA

Paul's just finished a musical, and it's going to be workshopped at La Mama.

DAVE

Hey, that's great.

PAUL

Well, it's actually part of a trilogy. I was originally approached by the Public Theatre, but I prefer the intimacy of La Mama. The record label is handling everything.

SAM

I know what you mean. I was supposed to show my photographs at La MOMA next Friday, but I prefer the intimacy of the Scratcher Bar and Grill. By the way, would you please keep mentioning your record deal every time you say anything? Alright?

PAUL

Old Sammy, always the jester.

SAM
Old Paul, always the pri...

DAVE cuts him off.

DAVE
How about some more drinks?

He turns to SAM.

DAVE
A lot of them.

CUT TO a montage of the bar. The Yardbirds song "For Your Love" comes on the jukebox. People are drinking, talking, etc. We end up with SAM at the bar standing next to a girl in a vinyl halter top.

SAM
Man, what I wouldn't give for a bottle of 409 and a couple of handy wipes.

CUT TO DAVE at table. PAUL is finishing a joke.

PAUL
So, Sartre says, "Such ennui".

Everybody at the table laughs at PAUL's joke. SARA is also laughing. DAVE looks at her, then over to PAUL.

7 INT "THE LOCAL" PUB (DAVE'S FANTASY) EVENING

DAVE goes into fantasy mode, in over-saturated color. He pulls out a huge handgun and points it at PAUL's forehead.

DAVE
So, make it one for Sartre and one more for the road.

DAVE pulls the trigger and blows PAUL's head off.

CUT TO A CLOSE-UP of DAVE's blood-spattered face.

DAVE
Ohhh, the ennui, the ennui.

8 INT "THE LOCAL" PUB (REALITY)

EVENING

PAUL reacts quizzically.

PAUL

What?

DAVE opens his eyes and comes back to reality.

PAUL

Dave, did you say something?

Everybody's looking at DAVE.

DAVE

Oh, no. I just wanted to remember the punch line.

PAUL

Well I guess you could think of it as a joke, but I'd like to think of it as just a humorous peroration.

Everyone at the table breaks into laughter... everyone but DAVE. He sneers with anger and mumbles.

DAVE

You're a fucking joke.

PAUL

I'm sorry... did you say something?

DAVE

Uh... I said I could use a rum and coke. Where the fuck is Sammy?

CUT TO the bar where SAM is talking to another girl.

SAM

Have I told you, you have a booming body?

She smacks him.

SAM

Have I told you, I wanna screw you?

She smacks him again.

SAM

(continues)

Have I told you my cheek really hurts?

CUT TO the same bar later that night. The music is quieter, the place has thinned out. Only a few tables remain. DAVE and SAM are both back at the table with PAUL, SARA and the others. They're talking. They all seem pretty drunk.

SARA

Sure, I love Leonard Cohen, but you can't really compare him to Jacques Brel, can you?

PAUL

Hey, if you're in the game, you're in the game. Of course it's easier to compare him to someone like Dylan or the populist crap by the Beatles.

DAVE

I think that's a little too harsh. I mean, just because something is popular doesn't necessarily mean it's shit.

PAUL

That's just the kind of response the entertainment industry expects from the masses.

DAVE

Hey, watch it! Don't start lumping me in with the masses. Anyway, I think The Beatles were geniuses. Besides, I'm sure Sir Paul isn't loosing any sleep just because you don't like him.

The group laughs.

PAUL

Good one, Davey. I guess a good joke is better than a good point.

SARA jumps in.

SARA

I think what he means is that there are alternatives to mainstream art, whatever the quality.

DAVE

Oh, so, now I'm too mainstream?

SARA

I didn't say that.

DAVE

Sure you did. But that's okay. I don't have to justify my taste to anybody. I'm into stuff you guys have never even heard of.

PAUL

Really? Like who?

Taken aback by the question, DAVE looks around. His eye catches a bottle of Martel cognac behind the bar.

DAVE

Weeeelllll... Martel for one!

PAUL

Martel who?

DAVE

Martel? Martel who? Surely you jest?

SAM, who has been sitting there mouth open, has noticed DAVE looking at the bottle. He also realizes his friend has been called out. He backs DAVE up.

SAM

Jean Martel.

DAVE looks over at SAM with surprise, but with thanks.

DAVE

Yeah, Jean Martel. Christ, I can't believe you've never heard of him. He's practically the father of the whole "Avant Garde" movement. Guru to writers and painters. A musician's musician. A poet's poet.

PAUL

I didn't say I've never heard of him.
Of course I've heard of him.

SARA

Well, I haven't.

DAVE

That's okay, Sara. Paul doesn't care what you know, as long as you can get him in with William Morris. Right, Paulie, old chap? You've been doing that since you two were at Yale. For all I know you probably sealed the deal there when you were smashed on wine and cheese at some Skull-and-Bones lit-fest

SAM laughs out loud. No one else does. SAM catches himself, as the group gets quiet and tense.

SARA

Excuse me, Dave, but you can really be an asshole sometimes.

SARA leaves.

DAVE

Christ!

DAVE follows her out.

SAM

So, Paul. Who do you really like better:
The Beatles or The Stones?

PAUL

Oh, shut up.