

Leonard & Hungry Paul

Episode 4

'Hungry Hungry Paul'

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Based on the novel by Rónán Hession

OPENING TITLES

1 INT. DOJO - DAY

1

HUNGRY PAUL stands in a line of JUDO STUDENTS of varying ages (8 and up). The SENSEI eyes his students.

SENSEI

I need a volunteer.

Hungry Paul avoids eye contact and tries (unsuccessfully) to hide behind ISABELLE.

The sensei points to Isabelle.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

You, let's go.

Isabelle joins him on the mat. They bow, advance on each other... and the sensei quickly throws her. Isabelle lands with a pained reaction.

ISABELLE

(pained shriek)

Hungry Paul winces, feeling a little guilty.

SENSEI

Did everybody see that? Well done, Isabelle, take a breather.

Isabelle sits up, dazed and in pain.

The Sensei looks to the rest of his students.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

Okay, I need another volunteer.

He moves a pointed finger along the line of squirming students... and stops at Hungry Paul.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

You.

Hungry Paul stops breathing.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

Fetch me a mat.

Relieved, Hungry Paul exhales.

The Sensei points to ANOTHER FRIGHTENED STUDENT and gestures for them to join him.

SENSEI (CONT'D)

You. Up here. Let's go!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The thing about fate is...

CUT TO:

In the corner of the dojo, Hungry Paul tugs at a green mat from near the top of a stack of heavy mats.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
No matter what path we take...

Grateful not to be in their place, Hungry Paul looks over his shoulder to see, in the background, another student crying out in pain as they're thrown to the mat.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
There's just no avoiding it.

Hungry Paul gives the mat one last mighty tug and, as it suddenly comes free, inadvertently hits himself in the face with its hard corner. He cries out in pain.

1A **INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, LEONARD'S BEDROOM - DAY** 1A

Leonard stretches with a yawn, then smiles at the memory of his date with Shelley.

2 **EXT. LEONARD'S HOUSE - DAY** 2

The sun is out and the birds are singing.

Dressed for work, Leonard closes the door behind him and, inhaling deeply on the beautiful day, faces the world with a big smile.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Unlike destiny, which all comes down to our choices...

3 **EXT. STREET - DAY** 3

Head held high, Leonard has a skip in his step this morning. He passes some graffiti on a wall - 'DARREN + VICKY' inside a big heart.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And Leonard had made his.

As Leonard passes it (maybe as a wipe) the graffiti changes to 'LEONARD + SHELLEY' inside the big heart.

4

INT. BUS - DAY

4

Sitting in his usual seat upstairs, Leonard observes a loved-up YOUNG COUPLE a few seats in front of him. They playfully nudge each other.

Leonard smiles to himself. From his POV the couple are now Leonard and Shelley. He gently moves her hair back from her face and leans in for a kiss.

Just before their lips connect, the 'BUS STOPPING' bell rings for Leonard's stop, snapping him out of his fantasy. As he gets up from his seat, we see the young couple are now kissing.

5

INT. OFFICE, FOYER - DAY

5

Leonard arrives into the foyer to see Shelley waiting by the lift. She gives him a bright-eyed little wave.

Beaming he walks towards her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The last time Leonard had seen Shelley was on their first date. A date which ended with, what Leonard believed to be, the perfect kiss.

CLOSE ON Leonard's face. Everything slows down. His smile begins to falter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But his tendency to overthink things had him wondering if that kiss had somehow changed the rules.

The smile disappears from his face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

What was the appropriate post-date greeting?

CUT TO FANTASY

Leonard walks up to Shelley and high-fives her.

CUT TO FANTASY

Leonard walks up to Shelley and bows with a flourish.

CUT TO FANTASY

Leonard walks up to Shelley and dips her for a passionate movie kiss.

CUT BACK TO REALITY

Leonard walks up to Shelley and, still undecided, tries for a hybrid of all three, making an awkward mess of it. He releases her.

LEONARD

Sorry, I don't know what that was.

Shelley smirks.

SHELLEY

I don't think there's a word for it.

LEONARD

Should we try again?

SHELLEY

I'd like that.

(quiet)

But maybe not here. I'm thinking we keep this on the down-low at the office. We don't want HR on our backs.

LEONARD

Got it.

SHELLEY

Not after my last job; I do *not* need another legal battle on my hands.

He looks at her unsure. Her smile lets a relieved Leonard know she's joking.

GREG enters the foyer and ignores their polite nods as they wait together for the lift.

Leonard glances at Shelley, pleased about their shared secret.

Another busy day at the office.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It is said that the universe has no centre, that the very concept is inapplicable since any point, anywhere, could be considered its centre.

CUT TO:

Working at his desk, Leonard looks over to Shelley but she's busy, speaking on the phone.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So an argument could be made that,
in a way, any one of us could be
the centre of the universe.

MARK BAXTER arrives over and perches on Leonard's desk.

MARK BAXTER

John Lenver!

A FEMALE OFFICE WORKER passes.

MARK BAXTER (CONT'D)

Is she new? Anyway. Just got word
back from the printers...

(sound fades to barely
audible)

the books on the way and they say
it's looking great. You'll have
your advance copy tomorrow.

Hopefully we won't have any colour
page issues again. But who knows...

The SOUND OF Mark's babbling fades as Leonard steals a glance at Shelley.

(NOTE: Once faded down, Mark's lines run barely audibly beneath the Narrator's lines).

Shelley's still on the phone but is now looking over at Leonard.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It would be a pointless and
annoying argument but, be that as
it may, for Leonard...

They share a smile.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

... Shelley had become just that.

MARK BAXTER

(sound fades back up)

That's why my advice to everyone,
is to wear reading gloves. Later,
Leinster!

Mark Baxter leaves and Leonard hasn't heard a word.

LEONARD

Later.

CUT TO:

8 **OMITTED**

8

9 **INT. OFFICE, SEATING AREA - DAY**

9

On Leonard's happy, loved-up face, he and Shelley stand and drink coffee together.

Mark scrolls on his phone at a nearby seating area.

Shelley is a little self-conscious in Leonard's gaze.

SHELLEY

What?

Leonard snaps out of it.

LEONARD

Nothing. I'm just glad you like the idea.

SHELLEY

You should have written your own book ages ago.

LEONARD

Maybe. But a Roman encyclopaedia? You think the world needs another?

SHELLEY

Ah but this one will be different. This one will be yours.

She gestures towards Mark Baxter.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

You should pitch it to Mark right now.

LEONARD

I don't know, I'm only at the ideas stage really.

SHELLEY

What have you got to lose? Do it.

RHONA appears behind them with a knowing smile.

RHONA

Don't you two look cosy.

Shelley pulls away from Leonard a little too quickly.

SHELLEY

We were talking shop actually.
Leonard has an idea to pitch to
Mark Baxter.

Leonard eyes Shelley with a mock-annoyed expression. She replies with an innocent smile.

A DISTANT PHONE RINGS.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

I think that's my phone.

Shelley heads back to her desk. Rhona moves on too.

Leonard eyes Mark Baxter. Should he pitch his idea? A wave of self-doubt washes over him and Leonard decides against it. He heads back to his desk.

10

INT. OFFICE - DAY

10

Later. Leonard is at his desk when Shelley, wearing her coat and ready to leave, appears.

(NOTE: from the other side of the office floor, Mark Baxter sees them talking.)

SHELLEY

So long, sucker.

LEONARD

Hey, I was thinking, there's a Jack B. Yeats exhibition at the national gallery, we could go tonight if you fancy it?

SHELLEY

Ooh, can't do tonight. Maybe later in the week?

LEONARD

Great.

Shelley's phone rings and she rolls her eyes - *can't I have just one minute?*

She takes the call and waves a silent goodbye as she walks away towards the exit. Leonard returns to his work.

Mark Baxter passes Shelley on his way across the office floor.

Reaching Leonard, Mark pauses to look back at Shelley as she disappears through the doors.

MARK BAXTER

You're wasting your time with her.

LEONARD

What? With who?

MARK BAXTER

Shelley. She doesn't like to mix business and pleasure.

LEONARD

Right.

MARK BAXTER

Anyway, I'm pretty sure she already has a fella on the go.

Leonard smirks to himself, enjoying his secret.

LEONARD

Oh really?

MARK BAXTER

Yeah, I just heard her arranging to go to the cinema tonight with some guy called Patrick.

Mark Baxter moves on, leaving Leonard to wonder who exactly this 'Patrick' is.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

If you were to list the billion most frequently asked questions in the universe, 'Who is Patrick?' would not be amongst them.

11

INT. BUS - DAY

11

Leonard sits upstairs, deep in thought.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And yet, for Leonard, it was the only question.

He sees ANOTHER YOUNG COUPLE canoodling a few seats in front of him. In his mind's eye the canoodling woman becomes Shelley.

INTERCOM ANNOUNCEMENT

Next stop, Patrick's Street.

Leonard snaps out of it.

11A

INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, HALL - DAY

11A

Leonard arrives home. There is some post waiting for him including an A4 size letter.

11B **INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY** 11B

Letters now open, Leonard studies a brochure for urns from a company called 'Urn After Breathing.'

They all look very same-y. Different shades of the same urn. Fed-up, Leonard grabs his jacket and heads out.

12 **OMITTED** 12

13 **INT. PARLEY VIEW, KITCHEN - DAY** 13

Leonard and Hungry Paul sit either side of a chessboard. Hungry Paul is wearing his game's visor as they set up their pieces.

It's only now that Leonard notices the black eye that Hungry Paul's visor had been hiding.

LEONARD

What happened to your eye?

HUNGRY PAUL

Judo.

LEONARD

I didn't realise it got that rough.

Hungry Paul shrugs it off with heroic indifference.

HUNGRY PAUL

It is what it is.

Leonard can't help but notice how unusually poker-faced his friend is tonight. He tries to break the ice.

LEONARD

So. The big award ceremony this week. Exciting.

Hungry Paul doesn't react.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

Are you nervous at all?

HUNGRY PAUL

No.

Leonard nods, then eyes the chessboard. A beat.

LEONARD

The Danish Gambit? That's an unusually aggressive play for you. Everything alright?

Hungry Paul nods but Leonard knows that something is up.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

Look, sorry about cancelling last night, I got a bit caught up in the whole Shelley thing.

Hungry Paul considers the apology for a long beat before finally accepting it.

HUNGRY PAUL

Water under the bridge.

Leonard moves a piece on the board.

HUNGRY PAUL (CONT'D)

And how is the office romance going?

LEONARD

Honestly? I'm not sure. I think she might be at the cinema with some guy called Patrick right now.

A little distracted, Leonard moves one of his chess pieces.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

Sorry, I didn't come here to unload my woes on you.

Hungry Paul gives a slow, sad shake of his head.

HUNGRY PAUL

You're losing your queen.

LEONARD

I'm not sure she ever was my-

Hungry Paul cuts him off, gesturing to the chessboard.

HUNGRY PAUL

No, bishop to G5, you're losing your queen.

He moves his bishop to G5, taking Leonard's queen.

HUNGRY PAUL (CONT'D)

Check.

Leonard gives an accepting nod.

LEONARD

Ah. Right.

16 **OMITTED** 16

17 **OMITTED** 17

18 **OMITTED** 18

18A INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, LANDING - DAY 18A

In pyjamas, Leonard exits his room on his way to the bathroom, passing his mother's room as he goes.

The door is slightly ajar, he shuts it firmly closed.

19 EXT. LEONARD'S HOUSE - DAY 19

A subdued Leonard closes the door behind him.

20 **INT. BUS - DAY** 20

Seated upstairs, Leonard stares ahead in deep thought.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Leonard knew that there was no
point in delaying the inevitable...

Leonard arrives at his desk and, taking off his backpack, he sees a package on his desk. He opens it and takes out the latest edition of 'Facts at my Fingertips' (by Mark Baxter B.Ed.).

He looks to Shelley's desk - she's not in yet.

Later. HELPDESK GREG is at his workstation, headphones on.

Shelley is at her desk, on the phone.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
... As difficult and uncomfortable as confronting Shelley over Patrick might be, living in wilful ignorance was not an option.

Leonard watches Shelley from his desk. Seeing her end her call, Leonard steels himself, gets to his feet, and begins the walk to her desk.

She's in her usual upbeat, playful mood as he arrives.

SHELLEY

Leonard! You look tired. Big night?

LEONARD

Not really. I spent most of it
catching up on my writer's block.

(almost afraid to ask)

You?

SHELLEY

Living the dream.

Greg slides back one of his headphones to listen in.

Shelley can see Leonard has something on his mind.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

Everything alright?

Greg tries to subtly move his chair a little closer.

This is not easy for Leonard.

LEONARD

I had something I wanted to ask, or
rather 'say', to you.

(corrects himself)

No, sorry, it was 'ask'.

SHELLEY

Okay. Ask away.

Greg is moving a little closer again. Leonard looks at him
and he suddenly stops, acting innocent.

LEONARD

Can I speak to you...

(re:Greg)

Somewhere else?

SHELLEY

Sounds ominous.

To Greg's disappointment, she follows Leonard to the
photocopier where things are a little more private.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)

What's up?

LEONARD

So. I wanted to say-

Shelley interrupts to correct him.

SHELLEY

'Ask'.

LEONARD

Right! Yes, I wanted to *ask* you...

Leonard chickens out, feigning forgetfulness.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

You know, I can't seem to remember
now what it was I-

Highly amused, Shelley isn't fooled for a second and cuts him off.

SHELLEY

Just *ask* me!

LEONARD

(blurts it out)

Were you at the cinema last night
with some guy called Patrick?

Shelley is caught off guard, this is not a conversation she wants to have.

SHELLEY

I was.

LEONARD

Ah.

SHELLEY

We went to see *Fart of Darkness*.

Leonard isn't quite sure what to do with that.

LEONARD

Okay.

SHELLEY

Patrick is my son. We went to the
cinema for his birthday.

Leonard was not expecting that.

LEONARD

You have a son?

Shelley looks vulnerable.

SHELLEY

Is that a problem for you?

LEONARD

(high-pitched)

Of course not.

Shelley can see Leonard is still processing it all.

SHELLEY

(genuine)

Actually, Patrick's a big fan of yours. Facts at my Fingertips are a bedtime favourite in our house.

Leonard smiles.

LEONARD

That's lovely.

(amused by his stupidity)

I pictured Patrick as some alpha male I couldn't compete with. Not a toddler.

Although he meant it lightly, it doesn't land that way.

Shelley responds with a smile and tries for a playful tone, but can't quite manage to disguise the edge in her voice.

SHELLEY

Actually, Patrick's seven. And you could never compete with him.

Neither of them liked the sound of that. Leonard desperately tries to back-pedal.

LEONARD

No, God no, I didn't mean it like that.

Shelley knows she has overreacted.

SHELLEY

(vulnerable)

Look, the thing is I don't tend to bring up Patrick on first dates.

LEONARD

(remembering)

More of a third date thing.

SHELLEY

Correct.

(with a smile)

I like to separate 'Hot-Mom-Shelley' from 'Hot-date-Shelley'.

LEONARD

Of course. I hope I haven't... I didn't...

(peters out)

She smiles, saving Leonard from himself.

SHELLEY

Seriously, don't worry about it.

But I should really get back to...

She points to her desk.

SHELLEY (CONT'D)
Whatever it is I do.

LEONARD
Right. Me too.

With a small wave he turns in the direction of his desk, hoping he hasn't ruined anything.

23 INT. OFFICE - DAY

23

Eyeing the copy of his new encyclopaedia, Leonard gets an idea.

CUT TO:

Shelley is packing up, getting ready to leave. Leonard approaches with the copy of the new book.

SHELLEY
Oh, hey!

LEONARD
Here.

He gives her the book.

SHELLEY
What's this?

LEONARD
It's the latest Facts at my
Fingertips - fresh off the presses.

Shelley eyes it.

LEONARD (CONT'D)
I signed it to Patrick. As a
birthday present.

SHELLEY
Thanks!

Everything still seems a little off between them. Shelley glances at Greg who is eavesdropping again.

GREG
(high-pitched, knowing)
Oooooh.

SHELLEY
(to Leonard)
See ya.

LEONARD

Bye.

He smiles. But watching her go, Leonard still isn't convinced that things are okay.

Greg winks knowingly at Leonard.

24 OMITTED

24

25 INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, LEONARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT/DAY

25

Leonard lies in his bed, staring at the ceiling.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's hard to feel secure in a
universe which is expanding at over
160,000 miles per hour.

Night turns to day in a matter of seconds.

26 INT. HOSPITAL, WARD - DAY

26

Having finished watering MRS. HAWTHORNE'S sunflower, Hungry Paul, wearing his suit, sits next to her.

In a now familiar act, they hold hands and silently stare into the middle distance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At those speeds we all need
something to hold on to...

27 INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

27

In his pyjamas, Leonard, also staring into the middle distance, sits at the table, his spoonful of cereal frozen in the air, halfway to his mouth.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And Leonard had the uncomfortable
feeling he was losing his grip.

28 EXT. PARLEY VIEW - DAY

28

Another beautiful morning outside Parley View.

29 INT. PARLEY VIEW, KITCHEN - DAY

29

GRACE, HELEN and PETER scrutinise the seating plan for the wedding like generals in a war room.

GRACE

We can move the Flemings to table
five, but then we need to find a
place for Jane.

HELEN

Lovely Jane, I haven't seen her in
years.

PETER

Such a sweetheart. There's still a
spot at table eight? Which would
put her beside...

He squints at the plan.

PETER (CONT'D)

Uncle Michael.

Grace looks horrified.

GRACE

The sex tourist?!

HELEN

Don't say that! Messy divorces
create nasty rumours and I for one
never believed a word of it.

PETER

So I'll put Jane at table eight?

HELEN/GRACE

(in unison)

God no.

Peter makes a note on the seating plan.

HELEN

So do we know where the honeymoon
is going to be?

GRACE

Nope. Andrew's organising the whole
thing; he wants it to be a
surprise.

PETER

What a smoothie.

GRACE

I think he's feeling bad about
being away so much before the
wedding. Not that I'm complaining.

PETER

Maybe I should do the same thing
for your mother.

GRACE

Why not? You've been talking
forever about taking a big trip.

Helen keeps her eyes fixed on the seating plan.

HELEN

I think we have enough on our plate
at the moment.

Grace is mildly irked by the response. A beat.

GRACE

Speaking of which, where is my
little brother?

Peter looks to Grace - *take it easy.*

HELEN

He was having trouble with his
cufflinks so he went out to clear
his head.

Grace looks to Peter - *are you hearing this?*

Helen spots her look.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(pointed)

And I was talking about the seating
plan.

Knowing there's no point in pushing it any further, Grace
returns her attention to the seating plan.

Leonard enters through the back door, dressed for the gala,
with Hungry Paul in tow.

LEONARD

Look who I found on my way.

Peter beams.

PETER

The man of the hour.

Hungry Paul smiles uncomfortably in the proud gaze of his
parents.

CUT TO:

Leonard stands with Hungry Paul, helping him with his
cufflinks.

LEONARD

You must have come up with quite an e-mail sign-off to get nominated for a Chamber of Commerce award.

HUNGRY PAUL

You can stop fishing; I'm not telling you my entry.

Leonard looks at his friend, half-joking.

LEONARD

You know, if you win, you could copyright the phrase and earn some cash every time it was used.

HUNGRY PAUL

I'm not looking to make money. I want to contribute to society. Make a difference. That sort of thing.

LEONARD

You could give the money to charity?

HUNGRY PAUL

That's fundraising, not charity. I want to make a clean, straight contribution to the world.

Feeling put in his place, Leonard shrugs.

LEONARD

Just a thought.
(re: the cufflinks)
Done.

Grace enters with a makeup compact.

GRACE

Give me a look at that eye.

Hungry Paul sits and Grace perches on the armrest next to him. She begins to apply concealer to his black eye.

GRACE (CONT'D)

(to Leonard)
So, any updates on the love life?
Shelley, isn't it?

HUNGRY PAUL

She now has a seven-year-old son.

GRACE

You work fast.

Leonard slumps down onto the couch and smiles weakly.

LEONARD
His name's Patrick.

GRACE
And you didn't know?

LEONARD
Nope.

She looks worried for Leonard.

GRACE
That's quite a surprise. How did
you react?

LEONARD
I don't know; I didn't know how to
react. So, possibly badly.

GRACE
Does Patrick change things for you?

LEONARD
No. And I'm hoping I didn't make it
look that way.

GRACE
Her son is obviously her number
one. All she needs from you is to
know that you're interested.

LEONARD
I am interested.

GRACE
Great. Then *show her* you're
interested.

31 OMITTED

31

32 OMITTED CONTENT MOVED TO 34A

32

33 OMITTED

33

34 EXT. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - DAY

34

A coffee van and a food truck (both decorated with balloons) cater to A SMALL CROWD. Some CHILDREN queue to have their faces painted while others watch A CLOWN making balloon animals.

In the middle of it all, a mime (ARNO) mimics random victims who force smiles while trying to get away from him.

Grace, Helen and Peter look on.

Alone, Leonard speaks on the phone.

LEONARD

Hey Shelley. Bit last minute I know, but a friend of mine is nominated for an award and there's a sort of gala today. Now actually.

The FOLLOWING SCENE IS INTERCUT:

34A **EXT. STREET - DAY**

34A

Shelley steps out of a barber shop, into the street.

SHELLEY

Okay.

LEONARD

Anyway, I was wondering if maybe you'd like to come.

SHELLEY

Aw, thanks, but I promised Patrick we'd spend the day together - haircut, park and pizza.

LEONARD

(eager)

You could bring Patrick along; there's face-painting and clowns - the perfect family day out.

Leonard hears himself and decides to clarify he wasn't referring to them as a family.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that we're, you know... I'm only saying it's for everyone.

Shelley cringes but it doesn't show in her voice.

SHELLEY

Sounds good but I think we'll stick to our plans.

LEONARD

Right. Sure. Another time, maybe.

SHELLEY

Wish your friend luck.

34B EXT. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - DAY

34B

On the phone, Leonard tries to sound bright.

LEONARD

Absolutely.

Leonard finishes the call. Grace eyes Leonard with a hopeful smile. Leonard shakes his head 'no' but puts on a brave face.

HELEN

Isn't this impressive?

Both Peter and Grace look puzzled by Helen's assertion.

Leonard arrives back.

LEONARD

Where's our nominee?

PETER

I think he had to declare his presence to the powers that be.

Hungry Paul returns, now wearing a badge that reads 'Special Guest'.

PETER (CONT'D)

Special Guest. Very impressive.

HELEN

Shouldn't you be inside, love?

HUNGRY PAUL

They said they'd come find me.

WENDY DAVENPORT (O.S.)

Found you!

The highly strung WENDY DAVENPORT approaches the group.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

Wendy Davenport, Chamber President.

She shakes Hungry Paul's hand a little too vigorously for his liking.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

We're starting shortly, so let's get you inside to meet the other nominees.

HELEN

Best of luck!

Peter smiles with fingers crossed as Wendy ushers a mildly panicked Hungry Paul towards the building.

Now seated before the small stage, the crowd applaud lightly. Leonard, Grace, Helen and Peter are seated together. Leonard and Grace exchange an uncertain look.

Wendy Davenport walks on from the wings, also applauding, as she steps up to the podium.

WENDY DAVENPORT

Let's hear it again for the St. Jude's National School Dancers.

A barely polite trickle of applause.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

Didn't they start off well? Not to worry.

Producing a golden envelope, she adopts a more serious air, taking in the crowd.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

(dramatic/solemn)

Some time ago, we asked you, the public, to create a new email sign-off to be used by the Chamber of Commerce, nationwide, in all business correspondence. And three of you more than rose to the occasion.

To the side of the stage, Hungry Paul can be seen waiting with TWO OTHER CONTESTANTS.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

And so, without further ado...

She opens the envelope, takes out a card, and eyes the results.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

In third place, Dermot Larkin, who suggested... 'Don't be a stranger'. Where's Dermot? Here he is!

DERMOT steps up onto stage with some sleazy winks and nods, befitting his entry.

Wendy shakes his hand before gesturing to a peculiar looking hamper sitting at the side of the stage.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

And you have won yourself a hamper of bike-related goods, kindly donated by our very own 'Lucille's Wheels'.

Light applause.

Dermot leaves the stage, collecting the hamper on his way, as Wendy returns her attention to the card in hand.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

In second place, with an excellent entry, which the judges described as '*Practical, permissive and not wholly original*', is Carol Flanagan, who submitted, 'Please feel free to get in touch'.

More light applause as CAROL joins Wendy on stage to receive a handshake and an envelope.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

Very well done, Carol. Carol has won a spa treatment of her choice, donated by...

(she squints at the card)

Her own salon. I think that's what we call a break-even outcome.

Carol leaves the stage half-heartedly waving the envelope to the crowd who applaud her away.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

And so, it is my great privilege to announce our competition winner, and reveal our new email sign-off... drum roll please.

Wendy looks off stage for a beat.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

No drum roll.

(eyeing the card)

The most elegant of entries...

'You may wish to note the above'.

As she says this, a banner unfurls overhead, reading 'You may wish to note the above'.

There is a big round of applause and some cheering as Hungry Paul takes to the stage.

LEONARD

He won!

Leonard claps enthusiastically. Helen and Peter hug - this is clearly the first official 'win' in Hungry Paul's history.

HELEN/PETER
(ecstatic)
He won!

Grace is in shock.

GRACE
He won?

Wendy presents Hungry Paul with a giant novelty cheque for ten thousand euro and a trophy, depicting a severed hand writing with a quill.

WENDY DAVENPORT
Congratulations.

Wendy takes a step back, gesturing for Hungry Paul to say a few words into the mic.

Hungry Paul stands silently at the podium, staring out into a crowd that becomes progressively quieter as they wait for him to say something.

Arno (the mime), watching from the back of the room, accidentally knocks over an empty can on the floor and is SHUSHED.

Hungry Paul continues to stare silently into the crowd.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
To the casual observer, it might have appeared like a classic case of stage fright.

The crowd is starting to look puzzled and uncomfortable. Even Leonard and his family are looking concerned.

GRACE
(whispers to herself)
Please say something.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It wasn't. In a world of noise, Hungry Paul found himself sharing a rare moment of silence with a room full of strangers.

Although the crowd are getting restless, Arno gazes at Hungry Paul in awe.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And he wanted to bask in that moment for as long as possible.

Wendy Davenport can't take it anymore.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Not everybody felt the same way.

WENDY DAVENPORT
 (to herself)
 Oh for Christ's...

Wendy springs into action and, in one swift move, manages to send Hungry Paul on his way as she takes over the podium.

WENDY DAVENPORT (CONT'D)
 Speechless. I think that says it all.

She joins the crowd in applauding their winner.

Hungry Paul leaves the stage and suddenly finds himself overwhelmed by the attention and noise.

From Hungry Paul's POV it's a suffocating experience of people in his face, clapping, patting his back and shaking his hand.

Hungry Paul puts his head down and keeps walking, picking up speed, until he bursts through the exit door.

36

INT. LOBBY AREA, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - DAY

36

Hungry Paul inhales deeply, as if surfacing from under water.

Arno comes out the door behind him.

ARNO
 Are you okay?

Hungry Paul is catching his breath and recovering quickly.

HUNGRY PAUL
 Fine.

ARNO
 I am Arno.

Despite the fact that he is still in full makeup, he gestures towards the Chamber of Commerce building behind them.

ARNO (CONT'D)
 I was the mime?

HUNGRY PAUL
 I didn't think mimes were allowed to talk.

ARNO
 I'm off duty now.

HUNGRY PAUL
 Right. I'm trying to place the accent. Limerick?

ARNO THE MIME
France.

Hungry Paul snaps his fingers.

HUNGRY PAUL
Bingo.

ARNO THE MIME
I was impressed by your speech.
Magnificent.

HUNGRY PAUL
I didn't say anything.

ARNO THE MIME
Didn't you?

Arno looks at him knowingly.

ARNO THE MIME (CONT'D)
You know, The National Mime
Association is interviewing for a
new spokesperson. I think you
should apply for the position.

Hungry Paul is now even more confused.

HUNGRY PAUL
A spokesperson... for mimes.

With some impressive sleight of hand, a business card
appears in Arno's hand. He gives it to Hungry Paul.

ARNO THE MIME
Think about it.

As Arno walks back towards the doors, Hungry Paul examines
the card.

Arno passes Leonard and Hungry Paul's concerned family on
their way out the door.

GRACE
All good, little brother?

HUNGRY PAUL
All good.

He joins them and Peter pats his shoulder as Leonard shakes
his hand. Helen beams at her human sunfish.

The oversized cheque is on the counter. There are signs of
celebration - open wine bottles and the remains of an Indian
takeaway.

Hungry Paul is loading the dishwasher when Leonard enters from the living room.

LEONARD

I'm afraid it's time for my Irish
goodbye.

HUNGRY PAUL

I think if you tell people you're
going it classifies as a common
goodbye.

LEONARD

Right. See you on games night?

HUNGRY PAUL

I was thinking The Game of Life?

Leonard smiles as he goes to the back door.

LEONARD

Sounds good. Although I think
you're already winning at that one.
Goodnight.

HUNGRY PAUL

Goodnight, Leonard.

Leonard exits. Hungry Paul returns to his chore. A beat.
Grace enters with an empty glass.

GRACE

Was that Leonard sneaking out?

HUNGRY PAUL

And doing a terrible job of it.

Grace refills her wine glass. Her pouring skills, and the generous quantity she supplies herself with, suggest this is not her first glass of the evening.

GRACE

You should be very proud.

HUNGRY PAUL

Thanks.

GRACE

What do you think you'll do with
all that money?

Hungry Paul shrugs.

HUNGRY PAUL

Probably put it in the credit
union for a rainy day. Haven't
really thought about it.

GRACE

Well you should. I'm getting married, Mum and Dad are retired, maybe you should think of-

HUNGRY PAUL

Retiring?

GRACE

No. Moving on. This windfall could be the very thing you need to kick on with your life.

Hungry Paul appears mildly confused.

HUNGRY PAUL

What do you mean?

GRACE

Come on. Are you planning to spend the rest of your life playing 'Guess Who?' and living with Mum and Dad?

Now Hungry Paul looks properly confused, as if the thought of doing anything else had never occurred to him before this very moment.

Seeing the look on Hungry Paul's face, Grace suddenly feels like she might have overstepped.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You know what? Don't listen to me. Blame it on the grape juice. You did great today.

She raises her glass to him.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Congratulations.

Grace leaves and Hungry Paul is left to consider her words. Unsure what to think, he resumes loading the dishwasher.

Through the window, we see Peter, Helen and Grace seated around the dining room table, LAUGHING as Hungry Paul rejoins them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sometimes, in the seemingly chaotic universe, things have a way of falling into place.

Peter starts to deal cards.

39

INT. LEONARD'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

39

Leonard sits on his couch with the sketches and notes of his Roman encyclopaedia before him. He's working on a new sketch.

The sketch he is working on shows a young Roman boy looking up at the stars.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

After a day of Shelley weighing heavy on his mind, Leonard retreated to the place he always visited when hiding from uncomfortable thoughts.

We PULL OUT to reveal that it is seven-year-old Leonard who is now doodling (wearing the same clothes) and as we continue to PULL OUT to--

39A

EXT. LEONARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

39A

Through the window we see the content young Leonard, lost in his imagination.

The stars shimmer in the vast universe above.

The End.

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OMITTED

40