



SNOOKERED

by Tim Kenny

EXCERPT

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Characters

All characters 40-50 years

Bryn: Husband of Gwen

Gwen: Wife of Bryn

Ivor: Brother of Bryn

Betty: Wife of Ivor

Snookered

Scene 1: Interior: Lounge.

(There is a dining room table and chairs upstage. The table has cups, a tea pot, condiments and a tomato sauce bottle. Behind the table is a sideboard, a table lamp and telephone. In front of the table facing downstage are two angled armchairs and two small tables. There is a coat hanger USR. BETTY and IVOR are sitting in the armchairs. IVOR is finishing a lager tin. BETTY is holding a cup of tea. There is a small plate of chocolate biscuits on the table next to BETTY..)

GWEN: Another cup of tea Betty? I've put some fresh in the pot.

BETTY: That'd be lovely, Gwen - if it's no problem.

GWEN: Give us your cup.

(Sipping tea and handing over cup. GWEN tops it up)

BETTY: I'm sorry your Bryn is out. I was hoping to tell him more about my promotion as Deputy Senior Supervisor at the supermarket. You know I've been moved up the ladder as it were.

GWEN: Bryn? Yes, I'm sure he'd want to know. But he's up with his Ma and Da.

BETTY: Still likes to go for a chat?

GWEN: Oh yes. When he can like.

BETTY: I have to say your Bryn is good about that. Conscientious. That's your Bryn for you. Better than his brother Ivor here.

IVOR: Now don't go on. You know it's my back. *(Stretches and winces)* I can't always get about like I used to. There's nothing like back pain for putting an end to people's gallivanting. Nobody understands it unless they're long-term back sufferers. I can tell you this for nothing our Gwen, there's some days when I.....

BETTY:I think you could make more of an effort with your Ma and Da. Bryn does. After all, they were very good to you.....

IVOR: Bryn! That's all I ever get to hear about is Bryn! Sorry Gwen but listen to me now. Your husband knows full well I would if I could. And that's an end to the matter.

GWEN: We do understand about your back, Ivor. Nobody's having a go at you.

(Ivor sips last of beer and shakes dregs in can)

IVOR: While you're there Gwen, popping out.... you know see if there's another drop of the nectar because I don't mind if I do. *(Shakes can)* I know Bryn keeps a good supply of the stuff.

BETTY: You be careful our Ivor, having a third can.

IVOR: Counting are we? Well, I'm fine. Nothing like a little early celebration. We've got the semi's of the G. Howells snooker championship tonight, Gwen. *(Holds up imaginary cue and lines up against his eye)* Up against Lager Thomas, see. *(Voice like a snooker commentator - low and earnest)*. "And he's lined up the cue for the pink in the top pocket. Perfect stun shot to bring him back onto the black. And there it is - pot black. Little round of quiet applause from the onlookers. Nothing like a bit of appreciation for this great player. Seven points! Magnificent!" *(Normal voice)* No sound like it when a ball rolls into a pocket. Lager won't know what hit him!

GWEN: *(Indifferently)* So that's one more beer then.

BETTY: Then we must go.

IVOR: Listen to this! This cue here. *(Unwraps a cue bag by his chair and holds up unscrewed cue parts)*. This cue here is exactly the same one that was in the finals at The Crucible last year. D'you know who used it? None other than.....

GWEN:I'll see if there's any more of Bryn's beer in the kitchen

(Exits USR. BETTY eats a chocolate biscuit)

BETTY: Can you stop talking about your bloody snooker! It's embarrassing.

(Takes all the chocolate biscuits and puts them in her handbag.)

IVOR: She'll be seeing you doing that one day.

BETTY: What?

IVOR: Don't give me 'what'. You! You pinching all her chocolate biscuits and popping them in your handbag. Leave one, at least.

(BETTY puts one chocolate biscuit back and 'arranges it nicely'.)

BETTY: It's all family. She won't notice. And anyway, you smuggled out two cans of Bryn's beer last time we were here – pretending you'd drunk them when you hadn't.

IVOR: *(Snorts)* With this new cue.....

(Slowly screws cue together)

...I can take on anyone.

BETTY: Put that cue away, Ivor. Give it a rest.

IVOR: *(Laughs)* Good snooker joke there, Betty. You be careful. You'll be making people laugh next. But look our Betty. Look at that cue. Go on.

BETTY: I know all about your bloody cue.

IVOR: Ah, but you need to take a closer look – which you don't. See! Screwed together beautiful. Straight as a die. Ash shaft, ebony butt – hand spliced, of course, blue ebony veneers.

BETTY: Not to mention the price....

IVOR: It's a wonder of craftsmanship this is.

BETTY: Ridiculous for a bit of wood.

IVOR: Professional cue, Betty.

BETTY: For what you paid for it we could....

IVOR: ...us professionals need the right tools. I beat him easy last year. Problem with Lager - he's got too big. Pot belly gets in the way of his pot black.

BETTY: You're not doing too badly yourself in the belly department. You watch it. I've had to let out your trousers twice this last year.

IVOR: I'm half the size of Lager.

BETTY: And another thing. The Heddlu will be about. They'll be eyeing that Oddfellows' Club of yours. You don't want them stopping you to be done for drink driving like Morgan Morgans. Banned he was. Banned for 18 months. Lost his job n'all.

IVOR: No worries. I'll take the back road. No police down there. *(Leaning towards her)* See, Betty, what you need to understand is this. They need somewhere to pull you over, the Heddlu that is. That's the secret. Always drive on roads where there's nowhere for them to pull you up. Anyway, the match is four hours away and I'll only have a couple. Yes, siree. It'll be me and Chicken Jones in the final. I can feel it right here. I knows it. It's going to be - my lucky night. *(Sings the song, 'Lucky, lucky, lucky')*

(GWEN enters USR with cup of tea and tin of beer)

Gwen: There. One tea, one beer. That's the last of Bryn's stock.

IVOR: Thanks Gwen. (*Opens beer can and drinks*). Cheers. Listen to this. Two fish swimming and one hits a concrete wall. Turns to the other and says...

GWEN:“Dam!”

IVOR: You've heard it.

GWEN: When you were here last.

BETTY: We've heard all your jokes, Ivor. I've told you.

IVOR: Not all.

BETTY: All.

GWEN: (*Pointedly*) You like the biscuits, Betty?

BETTY: The biscuits? Oh! Yes...yes. Not bad. I just have the one these days. Tea's not the same without a biscuit to dunk. (*Makes noise with hand on chest and gives quiet burp*). Gives me a bit of gyp if I have too many. You know how it is.

IVOR: You haven't heard this one.

BETTY: Ivor!

IVOR: Just the one. Two parrots sitting on a perch. One says to the other: 'Can you smell fish'?

(Sound of front door opening off).

GWEN: That'll be our Bryn. I'll just go out and see how he is. It'll be a surprise seeing you.

(Exits)

IVOR: (*Calling after her*) Good joke that, Gwen. (*To BETTY*). Told that up the Oddfellows last night. What a laugh! Sitting on a perch.....(*his voice trails off in quiet laughter*)

BETTY: Now don't go winding your brother up like you did last time. And no more jokes. We've heard them all.

IVOR: Not all. (*Pause*) When did I wind him up?

BETTY: You knows just what I'm talking about.

IVOR: What?

BETTY: Roses.

IVOR: I won't say a word about.....

BETTY: ...and Ma and Da.

Ivor: I'm saying nothing.

Scene 2: (Interior Hall. Lights dim and USR is lit highlighting hat stand. GWEN and BRYN enter and stand by hat stand. BRYN takes off coat and hangs up throughout conversation.)

GWEN: *(Kissing him and in quiet voice)* Your brother Ivor is in there.

BRYN: Oh no!

GWEN: Shh! Don't let him hear you say that.

BRYN How to ruin a good afternoon. I'm going out again. *(Turns as though to exit)*

GWEN: Now don't go doing things like that. Ivor knows you're here...

Bryn: ...All the same...

GWEN:now, now, don't get upsetting yourself. They won't be here long.

BRYN: 'They?' Has he brought that silly shrew with him? How many times she mentioned her promotion?

GWEN: Just the once.

BRYN I suppose he's drunk all the beer.

GWEN: I told him the third can was the last.

BRYN: And the biscuits?

GWEN: All gone except the one as usual.

BRYN: He ruins my life, that brother of mine. And he ruined Ma and Da's. He wants to get himself a job. *(Angrily)* Tell me, why do I go through my life being tidy and he goes along sponging on the State?

GWEN: Shhh... now don't get your voice up. They'll hear you. Doesn't do any good. Just smile and, well, you know, be polite.

Bryn: He's got that bloody competition tonight. If he wins, he'll be round here thinking he's Ronnie O'Sullivan or whatever.

GWEN: I've had the winning shot from him already.

BRYN: What's he here for anyway?

GWEN:you know, flashing as usual. Both of them. Talk to him about his new car or something. He's got another one from Motability.

BRYN: I wondered whose that was out front. That's why he's brought it round - to do a bit of showing off. It's just not fair. Some of us have to put our back into life but not him. Oh no!

GWEN: Put on a smile and be cheery. Come on. *(Pause)* There. That's better.

Scene 3: *(Lounge as before. Lights come up.)*

(GWEN takes BRYN'S arm and leads him CS)

GWEN: Here he is! Back from the front.

BRYN: *(Grumpily)* Hullo Betty. Hullo our Ivor. *(Pause)* See you got a new car.

IVOR: Great, isn't it! It's amazing what you can get with Motability these days. The other was three years old. Had to go. Now I got air con, auto and all the toys.

BRYN: *(Cynically)* I suppose you'll be needing air con with your back. How is your back?

IVOR: Now don't go on about it, our Bryn. I know you. But... well, since you ask - as a matter of fact it's playing up something dreadful. I was in the doctor's the other day and he said to me - mark this mind you - that my back problem was one of the longest lasting back conditions he had come across. And that's as true as I'm sitting here. He said.....

BRYN:still no work then? We got a part-time job to suit you at Mogfords. Just the ticket.

IVOR: Now don't go on about jobs. Please. *(Winces)* I've just told you. You know it's bad. Keeps me from doing things. If my back was okay, I'd take a job faster than you could say 'pot black'.

BETTY: I've been promoted.

BRYN: You said last time.

BETTY: But I didn't know for sure then. Thought it was coming, didn't I Ivor?

IVOR: Oh yes. You could see the promotion coming for our Betty a mile away. What she doesn't know about how that place runs.....

GWEN: It's Acting Deputy Supervisor, Bryn.

BETTY: Acting Deputy Senior Supervisor.

BRYN: So it's not yet confirmed then Betty - you being just 'Acting'.

IVOR: Good as, isn't it love?

BETTY: (*Sheepishly*). Well, yes. I don't see what else they can do. That Bossy Evans woman isn't coming back since the incident... (*knowingly and with disgust*) you know – in the ladies' staff toilets. I don't even want to talk about it. Who would have thought it? Her and that Phyllis woman from Fresh Produce. Disgusting.

IVOR: (*Quietly sniggering at Bryn*) Don't go upsetting yourself. These things happen.

BETTY: Well, it shouldn't be allowed. (*Pause*) Anyway, talking of the promotion, I know my way around the place like nobody.....

IVOR:and she's got the experience, haven't you love? Experience counts a lot these days. (*Drinks beer noisily*). Same as in snooker. Do you know what the nurse in the surgery said to me?

(*BRYN takes last biscuit*)

BRYN: (*Bitterly*) Alright if I have the last biscuit?

BETTY: Help yourself. I've had my one.

GWEN: Cuppa tea to go with it, Bryn?

BRYN: (*Rising*) I'll get it.

GWEN: (*Pushing him down*) No I'll do it. (*Whispering to BRYN*) You sit down and make polite conversation. I have to. So, talk to your Ivor. (*Nudges him*)

IVOR: The nurse said: 'with friends like mine, who needs enemas'.... we're always swapping jokes.

(*GWEN exits USR. Followed by long silence*)

IVOR: Well, I thought it was funny.

(*Embarrassed silence*)

BETTY: Been a lovely day, Bryn. Bit cool. Gwen says you've been up to see your Ma and Da. That's nice.

BRYN: Took them a few flowers.

BETTY: I mean what d'you do when you get there?

IVOR: Bloody talks, that's what he does, don't you Bryn? That's what you told me. Can't see the sense of it myself.

BRYN: It's good therapy.

IVOR: What talking to a grave! There's people dying to get into Clytha Cemetery and there's you - a queue jumper! You should take up snooker, Bryn. Far more healthy.

BETTY: Stop it! It's snooker this and snooker that. I've had enough about snooker for one day. (*Angrily*) You should go up there yourself, Ivor. Do you good. Put a few flowers about. Tidy it up a bit. Help your brother.

IVOR: (*Ooohing and arrghing*). Back see. Can't bend. Can't do nothing.

BRYN: You should try growing roses. A little bending will do it no end of good.

IVOR: Now stop winding me up, our Bryn. And talking of roses. How are the roses, Bryn? (*BETTY nudges IVOR*) You going to win back the Valley Rose Bowl from Weed-free Lewis this time?

BRYN: Not too sure this year.

IVOR: Tell me this our Bryn. There's one thing I can't understand. Da won that trophy – what, how many years?