



DOING THE PUB QUIZ

By David Spicer

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The play takes place just before the Pub Quiz Team, WE ARE SMARTICUS!, sign into The Great British Pub Quiz First National Eliminating Round.

TOM is there some time before the others. He is nervously waiting, arranging and rearranging his papers, checking his many pens are working, ensuring the team's banner (which is proudly – if somewhat obviously – reading WE ARE SMARTICUS!!) and stupid lucky mascot are visible behind him and finally having a sneaky pick of his nose or squeeze of a pimple, using his laptop camera as a mirror. And it is as he is engrossed doing this that JUDITH, REBECCA and EBON all come online and catch him at it.

REBECCA Pick us a winner, Tom.

TOM *(Startled)* Ah! Hi! There you are. I was just...

REBECCA Yeah, we could see.

EBON Eat more fruit, Tom.

JUDITH Hello Tom. Hi Rebecca. Hi Ebon.

TOM Where have you been? I was waiting for you.

EBON We're not late.

REBECCA It doesn't start for ages yet.

TOM No, but I wanted us to meet up early and talk tactics?

JUDITH *(Worried)* Tactics?

REBECCA What tactics? It's a quiz. They ask questions, we answer them.

EBON No, Rebecca, Tom's right. This isn't just 'a quiz'. This is the big one.

TOM Thank you, Ebon. And this isn't even just 'The Big One'. This is The Great British Pub Quiz First National Eliminating Round.

EBON And it don't get bigger than that. *(Beat)* Until the Second National Eliminating Round. Obviously.

TOM We've never got this far before.

EBON Never even got close.

TOM But after our historically crushing victory over the Kings Arms Quizzicals last week...

EBON Ha! Pathetic no-nothings!

TOM ...we're here.

REBECCA Thanks to Jason.

TOM There's no 'I' in Quiz, Rebecca.

JUDITH I think there is actually, Tom.

TOM Okay, in 'Quiz Team'.

JUDITH No, that's still got an 'I' in it.

EBON Look, what Tom's saying, Judith, is that our victory was a team effort.

He quickly thinks and then...

EBON And there's no 'I' in that.

REBECCA I'm just saying we won against the Quizzicals because Jason answered most of the questions.

EBON Supported by all of us!

At this point, JASON appears.

JASON Hi guys.

He is distractedly setting up stuff on his computer.

JUDITH Hi, Jason.

EBON You're late.

TOM It's okay, Ebon. We hadn't really got started.

REBECCA Hi, Jason.

JASON Have I missed anything?

JUDITH We were just trying to work out if there was an 'I' in 'Quiz'.

JASON (*Helpfully*) Yes, there is. Tom?

TOM Yes, Jason?

JASON Can you send me over the link to website?

TOM Which website?

JASON The National Pub Quiz Organisation website.

TOM You mean the Zoom invite?

JASON *(Like he talking to a small child)* No, I got that. That's how I'm here. I now need a link to the organiser's website.

TOM Er...

JASON Look, just forward me any emails you've had from them that contain a hyperlink.

TOM Oh. Okay.

He busies himself for a moment, finding and then forwarding an email.

EBON We've got to bring our top Quizzing brains with us tonight because we're going to be up against some stiff competition.

JUDITH Like who?

EBON I don't know but you can bet they're going to be good. The crème de la best.

JASON Got it. Thanks, Tom.

He goes back to fiddling with his keyboard and ignoring them.

REBECCA So, Tom, who are we the other teams tonight?

TOM Okay. So...

He reads the emails on his screen.

TOM ...according to the email, there are thirty-two teams competing in eight rounds to go forward to the Second, sub-National Knock-out Eliminators. Wow! It's like a who's who of the pub quizzing world. There's the *New Brighton Brainiacs*, *The Nottingham Know-it-alls* and the reigning champions, *The Astoundingly Clever Folk of The New Tigers Head in Lee Green*.

EBON So good they don't even need a decent name. What did I tell you. Legends of the quiz.

REBECCA So who have we got tonight?

TOM Tonight, we're up against *We Built The Pyramids* from The Red Lion in Melton Mowbray, From The Beehive, Totnes, there's *Zaphod Beeblebrox's Underpants...*

EBON Those guys are good.

TOM ...and finally there's *Plan 10 From Outer Space*.

JUDITH Where are they from?

TOM Lampeter.

EBON Jesus!

TOM Exactly. But let's not panic. Because remember we come from the Hare and Billet and...I am Smarticus!

EBON No! *I* am Smarticus!

REBECCA (*Rolling her eyes*) Oh, Jesus.

JUDITH (*Rather meekly*) I am Smarticus.

They wait for REBECCA who stares them down (she hates this and always refuses to join in).

TOM & EBON We! Are! Smarticus!

TERRI appears. She is finishing eating her tea.

TERRI Have we started?

REBECCA No. Tom and Ebon were just doing their bit of pre-quiz shouting.

TERRI Typical.

She carries on eating.

EBON We're actually talking tactics.

TERRI Tactics?

REBECCA (*Shrugging*) I know.

TOM Yes, tactics. We have to be focussed and sharp. Because tonight we're going brain to brain with the top dogs in the quiz world and trust me, people, It's a top dog eat dog world.

EBON *Zaphod Beeblebrox's Underpants* take no prisoners.

TERRI What are they on about?

REBECCA shakes her head and rolls her eyes.

TOM So, it's vital that we all know our areas of responsibility.

REBECCA We all know what we're doing, Tom.

TOM (*Ignoring her*) I'll be taking History as usual. William the Conqueror, 1066, Magna Carta, 1215, Gunpowder Plot, 1605. I'm ready. You can ask me anything.

TERRI Why are you being such an annoying tit, Tom?

TOM (*Refusing to be offended*) That's not History, Terri, and so I can't tell you. Rebecca, you're on Art and Literature.

REBECCA I know.

TOM But do you? Let's see.

REBECCA What?

TOM Who wrote Crime and Punishment?

REBECCA Dostoyevsky.

TOM Canterbury Tales?

REBECCA Chaucer.

TOM Wuthering Heights?

REBECCA Bronte.

TOM Which one?

REBECCA Emily.

JUDITH Tom?

TOM Judith?

JUDITH I was just wondering. What about 1984?

TOM What about it?

JUDITH Well, is that History or Literature?

TERRI Good question.

TOM No, it isn't. It's a stupid questions because it's clearly Literature and the answer is... (*Thinks*)

REBECCA George Orwell.

TOM I knew that. Even though I didn't have to because it's not a History Question. Terri.

TERRI (*With her mouth full*) What?

TOM Sport and Leisure. Ready?

TERRI For what?

TOM How many balls are there on a snooker table?

TERRI There's no such thing as a snooker table.

TOM Isn't there?

TERRI Snooker is played on a billiards table.

TOM Okay. So how many balls are there on a billiards table.

TERRI Depends. Are you playing billiards or snooker?

TOM (*Fighting his irritation*) Snooker! We're playing snooker. Okay? So how many snooker balls are there on a billiards table?

TERRI Depends. At what point is it during the game?

TOM Right. Good point. It's before the game.

TERRI How long before the game? If it's like, 12 hours before the game they might not have put any balls on the table.

REBECCA They don't want to get them nicked.

TERRI Exactly. You can't trust any bugger in Sheffield.

TOM It's *just* before. Okay? Right at the start.

TERRI In that case, 22.

TOM checks this off on his fingers.

TOM That's right.

TERRI I know it is.

TOM Next. How many cards in a pack?

TERRI A pack of what?

TOM A pack of cards.

TERRI Playing cards? Birthday cards? Uno, Happy Families, Top Trumps?

TOM Playing cards.

TERRI Including Jokers?

TOM I don't know.

TERRI In that case, if you don't know, I'll pass.

TOM (*Rattled but pressing on*) Okay, last question. Easy one. Which Premier League Football team plays at Goodison Park?

TERRI They all do.

TOM Do they?

TERRI At least once a season they do.

TOM Right. Yes. Good. Well done, Terri. Moving on. Jason.

JASON has been engrossed in his computer.

JASON Mmm?

TOM Entertainment and All-Round General Knowledge.

REBECCA (*Teasing*) Clever clogs.

JASON (*Smiling*) One tries.

TOM So, Jason. Who played the 6th Doctor Who?

JASON Colin Baker.

TOM Which 1975 Stephen Spielberg film was...

JASON Jaws.

TOM Yes. Who was the original drummer...

JASON Pete Best.

TOM Excellent. Now, Ebon.

EBON Present. (*Smugly*) And *always* correct.

TOM You're covering Science.

EBON Yes, however, Tom, as well as Science, I'm also putting myself forward to do Politics, Famous Murders, Gangsters, Racing Cars and Military History, particularly anything to do with the Nazis or Star Wars.

TOM Thank you, Ebon.

REBECCA 'Anything to do with Nazis or Star Wars'?

EBON That is correct.

JASON (*Looking up from his keyboard*) I don't think that's a recognised quiz subject, Ebon.

EBON You don't know what's going to come up out there.

JASON smiles to himself.

TOM He's got a point.

EBON So, come on, Tom. I'm ready. Quiz me!

TOM Right. What is the study of plants called?

EBON (*Thinks, panics and blurts*) Farming.

TOM (*Pulling a face*) That's not what I was looking for.

EBON What were you looking for?

TERRI The right answer?

JASON Which would be Botany.

EBON Jason! You're not allowed to answer that. It was my question.

REBECCA Which you got wrong.

EBON No. (*Beat*) I'd appeal that. Farmers have to study plants.