

Synopsis

In a well-worn London pub, three unlikely companions pass the afternoon trading tall tales and avoiding life's complications. A dodgy fish salesman, a husband hiding from his wife, and a regular who never seems to leave find their routines disrupted as misunderstandings, schemes and friendships collide in a warm-hearted comedy for four male leads.

The Godfather

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Characters

TERRY (50s) – A cheerful chancer who is trying to sell fish of questionable origin.

GARY (40s) – Nervous, jumpy, hiding from his wife.

LEN (60s) – A permanent fixture of the pub. Nobody can remember him ever leaving.

PAT (50s) – The landlord. Dry wit. Has seen it all.

Scene

A corner of a traditional London pub. Afternoon.

LEN sits at the same table he always sits at, nursing a pint and reading a newspaper that appears to be several days old.

PAT polishes glasses behind the bar.

TERRY enters carrying a suspiciously large cool box.

PAT immediately spots him.

PAT

No.

TERRY

I haven't even said anything yet.

PAT

You don't need to. Last time you walked in with a cool box, three customers claimed food poisoning and a goldfish identified itself as a salmon.

TERRY

That was an isolated incident.

PAT

It happened six times.

(TERRY places the cool box beside LEN.)

TERRY

Afternoon, Len.

LEN

Morning.

TERRY

It's half past three.

LEN

Then I've missed lunch.

(LEN returns to his paper.)

TERRY

I've got a business opportunity.

LEN

That's usually how it begins.

TERRY

Fresh fish.

LEN

From where?

TERRY

The sea.

LEN

Which sea?

TERRY

A wet one.

(PAT sighs. The pub door bursts open. GARY rushes in, looking over his shoulder.)

PAT

What's happened now?

GARY

Quick. Hide me.

PAT

Where?

GARY

Anywhere.

PAT

You're six foot two Gary!

GARY

In a cupboard?

PAT

You won't fit.

GARY

A barrel?

PAT

You definitely won't fit.

LEN

Try standing still. Nobody will notice.

(GARY sits beside LEN.)

GARY

If my wife comes in, tell her you haven't seen me.

LEN

I see.

GARY

No. You don't.

LEN

Right. right.

I've forgotten already.

(TERRY opens the cool box, a terrible smell emerges, everyone recoils.)

PAT

Good grief.

GARY

What's died?

TERRY

Nothing. That's freshness.

PAT

Freshness shouldn't smell like that.

TERRY

These are premium fish.

LEN

They're looking at me.

TERRY

Fish don't look.

LEN

That one just blinked.

(Everyone looks.)

TERRY

Well... that's a good sign.

PAT

For the fish, maybe.

(GARY nervously peers towards the door.)

GARY

I can't stay long.

LEN

I've been saying that since 1998.

GARY

No, seriously.

PAT

Actually, Len, have you ever left this pub?

LEN

Course I have.

PAT

When?

LEN

During lockdown.

PAT

And?

LEN

I hated it.

TERRY

You know what your problem is, Len? No ambition.

LEN

I've achieved consistency Terry.

PAT

He's got a point.

LEN

People move house. I move tables.

TERRY

You need excitement.

LEN

I'm watching a man attempt to sell haunted cod.

(The pub door opens slightly, GARY ducks beneath the table.)

PAT

What are you doing?

GARY

I thought I heard her.

PAT

That was the wind.

GARY

She's got a very similar walk.

(TERRY suddenly brightens.)

TERRY

I have an idea!

PAT

Dangerous words.

TERRY

Gary buys some fish.

GARY

Why?

TERRY

Take it home.

GARY

Right.

TERRY

Tell your wife you've been shopping.

GARY

That actually sounds sensible.

PAT

Which is how you know it isn't.

TERRY

Everybody wins.

LEN

Except the wife.

TERRY

Exactly.

(GARY considers it.)

GARY

How much?

TERRY

Twenty quid.

GARY

Twenty quid?

TERRY

Premium fish.

PAT

They're breathing.

TERRY

Fresh premium fish.

(Suddenly the door swings open, everyone freezes, a WOMAN'S VOICE is heard from outside.)

VOICE

Gary? Are you in there?

(GARY dives beneath the table again.)

PAT

That's not going to work.

GARY

Shhh.

(The voice fades away, silence.)

GARY

Has she gone?

LEN

It will be hard to tell from under there.

(GARY slowly emerges.)

PAT

Why are you hiding anyway?

GARY

I told her I was decorating.

PAT

And?

GARY

I'm here aren't I?.

LEN

A common decorating mistake.

GARY

She thinks I'm painting the spare room.

PAT

What colour?

GARY

I don't know yet.

(LEN folds his newspaper.)

LEN

You know what your problem is?

GARY

What?

LEN

You lie too much.

GARY

Fair do's.

LEN

And you...

(points to Terry)

...you sell fish nobody trusts.

TERRY

They're perfectly trustworthy.

LEN

Me? I tell the truth.

PAT

Go on then.

LEN

I like this pub.

PAT

Fair enough.

LEN

I like the people.

PAT

Mostly.

LEN

I know where everything is.

PAT

True.

LEN

And if I go home, I've got to do the washing up.

(Everyone nods.)

GARY

That's the wisest thing anyone's said all day.

TERRY

Actually...

(He reaches into the cool box.)

PAT

Don't.

TERRY

I've had another idea.

PAT

Definitely don't.

TERRY

How about a pub mascot?

(He lifts a fish, the fish flaps violently, everyone ducks.)

PAT

Put it back!

TERRY

Look at him!

LEN

He looks bloody angry.

GARY

I'd be angry if somebody was trying to sell me for twenty quid.

(PAT grabs a bucket, after much fumbling, the fish lands inside.)

Silence.

Everyone stares at it.)

PAT

Right.

GARY

Now what?

LEN

Give him a pint.

PAT

You know, one day I'll ban all three of you.

TERRY

You say that every week.

PAT

And every week you're back.

GARY

Not if my wife finds me.

(PAT places fresh pints before them.)

PAT

Here.

TERRY

On the house?

PAT

Don't be ridiculous.

LEN

Worth asking.

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

(They raise their glasses.)

GARY

To friendship.

TERRY

To business.

LEN

To sitting down.

PAT

To surviving another afternoon.

(They clink glasses.)

Blackout.

END

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai

Mille & Mai