

Pub Watch 22 & the mystery of the falling man!

By Daniel Parsons



“The constant bewilderment of this place I was in. I was surrounded but as always felt alone. My drink had gone. I was ready to leave and the current musical tune added to this belief. I was no longer welcome here. I looked around and saw people around me living in a slight realm of reality. A place I would never know. All I wanted was to be loved. All I wanted was to be. To have a purpose, to have meaning. I knew that I was working towards this. I knew I was eventually becoming the person I have always wanted to be. I could feel it in myself. I sat and smiled... For once I was happy to feel like this... For once I was happy”.

I wiped away the condensation from the window and looked outside; it had been raining all night and showed no sign of stopping. I could not help to notice the rain falling down amongst the glow of a street light and started to get lost in a gaze. This was a truly beautiful moment.

I was not looking forward to heading out into the bitter cold evening but knew I would soon have to. It was Mid December and I could see that the people walking by outside were wrapped up with winter coats, gloves and scarves.

I turned away from the window and took another sip from my pint; it was my 6th of the evening and was going to be my last. Last pint that was, because also sitting on the table waiting for me was a straight Whisky ‘on the rocks’ that I would begin after my current beverage. The phrase ‘on the rocks’ was still one that puzzled me but I decided not to dwell on it tonight.

The table I sat at was in the centre of the pub, from here I was able to observe all of the things going on around me. To my left were a couple of student looking characters playing darts. Well, trying to play but they did not have the same professional attitude towards the game as I did.

To the right of me was a pool table which had a large gathering (again of students) around it. There were two guys playing and it was obvious that their ‘birds’ were sitting there cheering them on.

The bar was directly in front of me and sat down two tables away from me were what I guessed to be a couple. I assumed this as from the moment they arrived they had hardly spoken to each other and were now talking to separate people on their mobile phones. Either that or they were talking to each other on the phones, which to be honest seemed pretty unlikely.

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I had been looking around the pub and watching everyone for sometime now, I found it ever so amazing, I took one last swig from my pint glass and put down the now empty glass.

“Last orders at the bar” announced the barmaid shortly after. I still had my whisky to go and knew that this would do me for the rest of the evening.

I leaned back into my seat and removed a packet of cigarettes from my right hand trouser pocket, my lighter was still on the table from the last one I had. I light it and for two minutes enjoyed and savoured it more than I had ever done before.

Although I had not been paying much attention to the background music being played so far tonight, the song that had just started sent a shiver down my spine. It was called ‘Fake Plastic Trees’ by a band called Radiohead and had been one of my favourite songs ever. The melody and lyrics had always made me feel touched when I was younger and it had the same effect again tonight. I was glad that this would be the last song that I was going to hear.

As I raised the glass of whisky to my lips the ice gently refreshed them before allowing the liquid to pass by. For some reason it tasted better than any drink I had ever had before.

No sooner had I put the glass down someone came along to take the empty vessel away. I took one last look around at the people I had been drinking with for the last three hours and put on my coat, gloves, hat and scarf. Although the alcohol had indeed warmed me up I knew it was cold outside. I exited shortly after.

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I had been walking for almost an hour, the rain which was still falling refreshed and cooled me down. Underneath my many layers of clothing I was sweating as though I had been running in a marathon.

I had not really thought of it before but it suddenly occurred to me that I had been walking in the complete opposite direction to my house. I was currently heading towards a large block of sky rise flats, I did not know why but for some reason felt drawn towards them. It felt almost like I was possessed and something else was controlling me. There were two tall identical towers next to each other and they reminded me of a mini version of the old World Trade Towers. I had seen them a million times before as they were more or less visible from anywhere in the city but I had never been near them.

At night the glow of lights coming from all of the windows looked like the simultaneous static flicker of 100 TV screens. So many people all contained in little houses heading upwards into the clouds.

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The roads tonight were empty I had not seen anyone since leaving the pub. This was unusual as there were usually always taxis and buses delivering people to their homes after drunken nights out. The rain might have accounted for this I thought as I walked along with my head down to protect my face from the bitter cold downpour.

By now I was probably no more than a three minute walk from the bottom of the flats and I lifted my head to view their dominating height on the otherwise flat skyline. I noticed a silhouette of a man standing on the roof of the left hand tower. What on earth was he doing up there? Had anyone else seen him and had they called the police?

With no time to consider answers to these questions I began running towards the flats, sprinting as fast as I could. As I was running the man looked at me from the top of the flats. It appeared that he was waving, then it looked like he had dropped something, although it was hard to see I believe it was his watch. This prompted me to have a quick glance at my own. It was 22 minutes past midnight.

The rain was coming down heavier than it had been all evening and as I tried to look up all I could see was the rain falling down in the moonlight.

I stopped my running and I was still a good 500 meters or so away from the flats. I could see the man.

“Don’t Jump,” I shouted even though I don’t think it would convince him. He shouted something back but as he did a car drove past and I could not make out what he had just said.

The strangest feeling came across me, we starred at each other in silence for what seemed like a minute and suddenly the whole world appeared to freeze and go in slow motion.

The man at the top of the building nodded at me and stepped over the ledge. There I was watching him fall down and it seemed to take a lifetime until he reached the bottom. I never saw him hit the ground as a row of houses in front of me was obstructing my view.

I could not feel myself any more ... it felt like part of me had just died.

As much as I did not want to, I knew that I had to go and see where he landed. My heart was pounding and I began to come up in a cold sweat, I felt sick and slightly nauseous. When I got to the bottom of the flats I could not find the body at all. I was so scared that I would eventually find a twisted and mangled corpse but it appeared to have just vanished. Surely it was real, surely this had just happened.

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After a few minutes I no longer knew what I was looking for. The door to the block of flats was open and I got the feeling that I should go inside. It felt like everyone was asleep and the unnerving glow of the hall lights reminded me of a hospital ward.

There was an overwhelming smell of piss lingering as I made my way down the corridor towards the lift. The doors were already open and I knew that I was going to head up to the roof and see if I could find any clues in the hunt.

My fingers were shaking as I moved them across the buttons; there was not a direct way to the roof so I selected the 25th and top floor. The journey there was a lot quicker than I thought and this did not give me time to prepare. The doors opened and I stepped out into the hallway.

At the end of this corridor was a fire exit door which had been left open and had been bashing against the door frame. I opened it and was presented with a stair case leading to a door at the top, this door had also been left open so I walked through it and made my way onto the roof.

As I stepped out the wind almost knocked me to the floor and the rain was heavier up here than it had been back on the ground.

I walked towards the ledge that the man had been standing on. I carefully made my way there and looked over the edge – I froze. It suddenly dawned on me that I was petrified of heights and began to feel sick. I was longing to be inside a warm dry pub once more.

Although I felt scared I was amazed by the view from up here, I could see the sea and most of the city. It looked so peaceful. This was the happiest I had felt in sometime. I was experiencing true contentment with life.

Whilst looking at life below I spotted a man walking towards the flats, he was looking at the ground but after a while his gaze switched to viewing the flats he spotted me at the top and began to run as though in some great hurry.

I waved at him and in doing so my watch fell off, I picked it up and looked at the time. It was 22 minutes past midnight. Then the man stopped running. He looked up and shouted at me.

“Don’t jump” is what I think he said but I could not really hear him through all the wind and rain.

“I already have” I said.

But a car drove past him and I don’t think he caught what I had just said.

Then we both stood still staring at each other. All I could hear was the whistling of the wind and I felt the rain freshening my face. It now seemed more peaceful than ever. Time seemed to be standing still.

I nodded at the man and took a step forward....