

CLOSING HOURS

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

There is a barman behind a bar and a male customer in his mid 40's wearing a blue bandana.

BARMAN

That glass looks half empty.

The man in the bandana holds the glass up to his eyes and swirls what's left of his straight whiskey.

CUSTOMER

It has been for years.

Then the customer in the bandana places it in front of him slowly and gently.

BARMAN

Do you want me to make it full?

CUSTOMER

Unless Dr. Jack Daniels has a cure for cancer in his latest product I don't see it being a possibility. Tonight is nothing more than a liquid fuelled mirage. Well I guess that's the reason we drink only difference is my problem won't follow me to the grave it's going to send me there aswell.

Barman places the bottle of Jack Daniels next to the customer in the bandana.

BARMAN

This is on the house brother.

The customer picks up the bottle and fills his glass to the top with whiskey.

CUSTOMER

Thanks barkeep. The only thing better than kindness from a stranger is kindness from a bartender. That's my moto for tonight anyway.

The customer takes a big gulp from his glass of alcohol and puts it down in front of him slightly harder than the first time. The bartender is drying empty glasses and is putting them away.

BARMAN

Do you mind if I ask your name?

CUSTOMER

Why?

BARMAN

Because I want to know the name of the man who I have the privilege of spending my last night with as a bartender.

CUSTOMER

Ronald. My names Ronald. Would have you given me this bottle if this wasn't your final shift?

The bartender puts away the last glass he was drying off and leans over the bar so he is face to face with Ronald.

BARMAN

Let me answer that question with another question. Would have you disclosed to me that you have cancer if I wasn't a barman but still the same person?

RONALD

I guess not. I suppose this narrow wooden divider could be compared to a therapists chair. But then again not really.

The barman smiles and stops leaning over the bar.

BARMAN

Yeah I don't know of any therapist earning \$12:50 an hour.

The barman pours himself a beer from the tap and Ronald raises his glass as they chink them together.

BARMAN

Cheers.

RONALD

Cheers.

They both take a sip from their drinks and Ronald puts his glass down but the bartender still has his in his hand.

RONALD

What made you decide to stop being a barman?

BARMAN

Believe it or not being on this side of the bar is far more self destructive then any of the regular barflys that buzz in and out of the front door and drink their wallets clean.

RONALD

How so?

The barman takes a deep breath and looks around the pub.

BARMAN

When you contribute to people losing their mind, body and spirit on a regular basis you also lose a part of yourself with every drink you pour until there is nothing left inside but a faulse sense of worth that is shattered every time I lock those doors at night and walk from one nightmare to another.

Ronald picks up the bottle the barman gave him earlier and places it back behind the bar.

RONALD

Your a hypocrite.

BARMAN

I hope for that to change.

RONALD

Well your not off to a good start. I come in here and tell you I'm dying and you throw a bottle of poision my way like your doing me a favour but after what you just told me in your newly found morals that should be the last thing you should do!

BARMAN

You came in here to drink. Did you not? And from where your sitting up until now you were more than happy to empty that bottle.

RONALD

What so your granting a poor dying man his last wish? How noble of you.

Ronald gets up off his barstool and goes to walk out the front door of the pub. The barman chases him and blocks the door.

BARMAN

You can't go yet!

Ronald try's moving the barman with physical force but is unsuccessful as the barman is strong.

RONALD

I have to! I came here for nothing more than a quite drink and now your putting me into a deeper pit of despair which I don't need by the way in case you didn't notice.

Ronald pulls off his bandana and points aggressively to his bald head which is due to his cancer treatment.

BARMAN

Im not a doctor, I'm not a shrink but if you let me I'll be your friend.

RONALD

I don't want your friendship! I don't even want your booze anymore.

The barman gets out of the way of the front door slowly and makes a clear pathway exit for Ronald to leave.

BARMAN

You never asked me my name.

Ronald looks at the barman.

RONALD

It's because it doesn't matter to me. Have a nice life barkeep.

Ronald exits the bar and the bartender is left standing alone.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ronald walks from the bar through a park to make his way home. He is approached by a homeless man.

HOMELESS MAN

Can you spare a buck or two kind sir?

Ronald reaches into his pockets and empties the cash from his wallet into his hand and holds it towards the homeless man.

RONALD

You can have my booze money.

The homeless man does not except it.

HOMELESS MAN

I don't know if I feel comfortable taking a mans liqueur money.

Ronald looks confused.

RONALD

Why?

HOMELESS MAN

It's a cold world and whiskey keeps you warm.

RONALD

What if I'm a beer drinker.

HOMELESS MAN

Beer isn't booze my friend. People like us know that.

RONALD

People like us?

HOMELESS MAN

People who have lived in the shadows of happiness and the light of despair.

Ronald sits next to the homeless man and let's out a massive sigh.

RONALD

What's your name?

HOMELESS MAN

Joe.

JOE

And yours?

RONALD

Ronald... It's been a journey and soon it's going to come to an end.

JOE
We've all died enough times to know
its safe.

They both sit quitly and stare into the abyess.

RONALD
Are we in hell?

JOE
No we're in a park.

Ronald laughs and leans forward and looks at Joe.

RONALD
I think the worst thing about dying
is you run out of time to change.

JOE
Do you mean change or to reinvent
yourself? Because change comes from
the heart reinventing yourself
comes from the ego.

RONALD
What about the mind?

JOE
The mind is what you use to figure
out which one of the two you are
going to choose.

RONALD
How did someone like you end up
somewhere like here?

Joe stands up and does up his shoestring he uses for a belt
to hold his pants up whilst looking down at Ronald.

JOE
I was about to ask you the same
question.

Joe sits down and puts his hands together looking Ronald in
the eyes. Ronald stands up looking down at Joe.

RONALD
Ok I'll play this game. I'm a
narcasist ridden with cancer and I
wallow in self pity trying
desperately to escape my fate and
at the same time trying to obtain
symphathy from people then throwing
it back at them with aggression.

Ronald sits down and looks at Joe.

RONALD

Now you Joe.

JOE

Sit down Ronald and I will tell
you.

Ronald sits down.

JOE

Brace yourself for this one because
it's going to shock you..... I'm
a bum!

Joe laughs uncontrollably and Ronald gets up and walks away.

FADE OUT.