



The Pub Quiz

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It had been George's idea to start the pub quiz team, it had been near Christmas and he'd realised that he had no way to buy Christmas present for his girlfriend, or his parents, or his brother, let alone buy food to fill his fridge or pay his rent. He did have enough money to buy a pint, strange that. And whilst sat in the pub the answer was staring him in the face, quite literally actually as he was sitting next to a poster advertising the pub quiz every Thursday at 8.

Putting the team together was no small feat, he first asked Chris, his best friend and he had to ask his girlfriend Bella and that meant her best friend Karen. He invited Barry, as Barry was the only person at the time George knew, who owned an iphone. And whilst on principal the team were against cheating, in the world of pub quizzes they soon discovered that it was often the cheats who prospered.

George and Bella had been together for 4 years, they'd met during the 1st week of university but then spent the next 3 years skirting round each other until finally at their Leavers Ball, alcohol helped take things to the next level and they ended up passed out next to each other on the same sofa. In the morning George woke up wearing only his trousers, Bella had lost her dress and had only George's shirt and her underwear to protect her modesty. They looked at each other and thought they'd done a lot better than on previous occasions and had been together ever since. You can't argue with fate. George was considering asking Bella to marry him, with his share of the prize money and some savings he'd be able to buy a ring, but he was pretty sure as soon as they got married Bella would want children. And George was not ready for that yet.

Question – How long is the Great Wall of China?

The sixth and final team mate was constantly changing. Some weeks it was Chris's girlfriend Mary, but the other girls didn't like her and so she was often vetoed, Mary didn't mind as she didn't like the other girls and she got to make Chris feel guilty about going out without her and he would often buy her presents the next day with his winnings. Sometimes one of the team mates would bring along a friend from work. A couple of times George's dad had had the chair whilst he was staying with George and Bella. But normally it was just the five of them and that was enough.

And of course finding the perfect pub quiz wasn't as easy as you would think, that first pub quiz in George's local was a disaster, technically they'd won, but the prize was drinks vouchers, which were spent within an hour and wouldn't have been recognised in any shops if they had lasted. The quiz at Snooty Fox was purposely difficult during the world music round, they made a team decision to withdraw and go to pub where they served draft beer and didn't smell of rotisserie chicken. Finally they settled on the Quiz at The Railway where the prize fund could be anything from £30 to £80 and they won more time than they really should have done, putting a few of the locals' noses out of joint.

Question - What is unusual about the expiration date on all packets of crisps?

Chris and George had been friends since they were 4 years old, when Chris had moved in next door and the rest is history. At school they'd played football in the playground and later they'd watch He-Man at Chris's house and made dens in George's garden. They'd hangout during the summer holidays in the local park and later they'd get jobs together at the local supermarket. Their friendship had survived going to different secondary schools, falling in and out of love with the same girl, Melissa and barely seeing each other whilst they were at university. When Chris settled in North London it wasn't long before George followed him and despite not living next door it was like old times again, but without the dens or He-Man. There was a lot of pressure when Chris and Bella met for the first time, George was worried that they wouldn't like each, they were worried that they'd like each other too much. So it was with relief for all 3 that they got on so well, and for Chris and Bella that they didn't fancy each other one bit.

Karen liked her job, she liked changing the clothes on the models, she liked telling a

story with every window displayed, she liked attending meetings in April to discuss what trends would be important at Christmas. She like having staff below her she could boss about, but not too often as she wanted to be popular

Question - Which famous actress was born on 1st June 1926?

It hadn't meant to get this serious, you do a few quizzes you win a bit of money and you get out, unfortunately they'd been a little too good, they didn't even need to use Barry's iphone and because of their knack for winning they had been asked to represent The Railway in the Brewery Pub Quiz League. Now here they were competing against the crème de la crème of pub quiz team, where the prize was not only a significant cash amount but also the kudos of being the best pub quiz team in the North London area and a trophy that could be displayed behind the bar of the winning pub.

For this quiz of quizzes, Malcolm had joined them as the sixth member, in his 50s Malcolm was the team captain of the team that more often than not came second at The Railway. They used to come first every week, before George and his motley crew came along although once they came fifth, but that was because Malcolm missed the quiz as he was on holiday in Tenerife with his wife.

Question - What or who are the painted ladies in San Francisco?

George was the team captain at first it was a given after all the team had been his idea, and he was the one who could be bothered to send the emails organising it and he always bought the first round, but lately George had been questioning his credentials, when looking over an answer paper the next day he realised he had only answered 10 of the questions correctly. During a tie break a couple of weeks ago he had given the wrong answer, the fact that it had come to a tie break at all was surely a sign that something was amiss, after this he'd considered asking the team if they would like to take a vote on the captaincy, but if he lost he'd have to leave the team. To be fair losing the tie break wasn't entirely his fault, the question had been "What is the population of Luxembourg?" George knew there was about 7 million people in London, Barry said Luxembourg was about half the size of London so they decided on 3 million as a conservative estimate. The population is actually only 487,000 George knew that now, but now wasn't any good.

Karen liked cooking, her signature dish was pancetta and pea risotto with lots of parmesan, Karen liked drinking white wine and red wine but not rose, she liked cider and spirits with mixers, but most of all she liked a hot cup of tea.

Question - What is the alligator pear more commonly known as?

Barry and George had worked together in the same office of an insurance company for 3 months before they actually spoke, they'd exchanged pleasantries of course, occasionally chatted about the football but never really spoke. It was Barry's fault, George had been the new guy and it was Barry's place to make him feel welcome, but Barry was a bit shy and he'd left it too late. He was surprised that George invited him to be a part of the team, but he'd had nothing to do on that particular Thursday and thought why not. At first things had been a bit awkward, but conversation had hit its stride when Barry revealed he had spent his gap year travelling around Australia, Chris too had made the same trip at roughly the same time and they reminisced about the food and local nutters until Karen asked him to shut up as they were making her jealous.

No one really understood what Chris did for a living, on meeting a person for the first time he would patiently explain what he did only to be met with a glazed expression. Even George wasn't completely sure and Chris has discussed his job at length with George in the past. Generally Chris had now taken to telling people he worked in a Bank and letting them draw their own conclusions.

Karen liked making lists, she liked eating carrots as an in-between meals snack, she liked to keep shoes in the boxes they came in when she wasn't wearing them

Question – What was Madonna's 1st UK number 1?

Of course they had always been aware of the Brewery Pub Quiz League, when it became clear that their team were here to stay and win at The Railway, the landlord had befriended them. First it was to establish they weren't cheating, he would come and stand by them during the quiz joining in their small talk in between questions. He would occasionally ask them to try a new flavour of alcho pop the brewery rep had brought round that day. And at least once a month he would mention the Brewery

Pub Quiz League, and how the previous year they had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of their rivals The Snooty Fox. It had been the first year they had been asked to compete, the Landlord blamed himself as he'd insisted on captaining the team and had picked the rest of it's members from his close circle of friends, whilst the team fielded by The Snooty Fox had of course been their pub quiz champions and this year the Landlord intended to follow suit. And so he insisted that all members of George's team and Malcolm's team kept the 5th July free just in case they were called up for duty.

As a child Bella had dreamed of being either a flower fairy or a tractor driver when she grew up, in the end she opted for a PA at a French Hedge Fund, although she hadn't given up on her dream of being a flower fairy and at the back of her wardrobe was hidden a pair of wings made from silk and wire that she would wear from time to time when she was doing the cleaning alone in the house.

Question - Which Musical contains the song "I'm gonna wash that Man right outta my Hair"?

When asked Barry always declared that his favourite film of all time had to be the Star Wars trilogy not just one film of course but all 3, his favourite was Return of the Jedi, he didn't care for the newer films. He first watched The New Hope when he was 14, it was around the time his parents were divorcing and to drown out the rows and the anger when Barry was home from school he would immerse himself in the rebellion against the Galactic Empire, often quoting the film word for word as he watched along. One year he watched Return of the Jedi a record 56 times, the following year he got a girlfriend and only managed 13.

Chris life was dominated by his obsessive compulsive disorder, it started harmlessly enough, everyday before he left for work, he would check that all the lights were turned off and that the door was locked. Then he added, checking the tapes were turned off to the list, then the gas hob and the electric oven and then that the fridge door was shut and all the windows were locked. On bad days he would get half way to the tube, turn round and go home to check the front door one last time, sometimes he'd go back inside and check the gas and the freezer door just in case.

Bella and Karen took French together at university, they sat next to each other in

French Literature, and bonded as they were the only two girls in class who were impervious to their lecturer's charms, they failed to become aroused as he seductively sipped his can of coca cola and flashed a nipple due to the lack of buttons done up on his shirt. Karen had been unable to secure accommodation on campus and was renting a room from an old couple miles away from the SU Bar. So it wasn't long before Karen started staying in Bella's room in the Halls of Residence whenever there was a night out, so pretty much every night. She even had a drawer. Both girls were relieved to move into a flat with 2 others girls from their course in the second year and have a room of their own!

Question - Which country won Gold for women's curling at the 2010 winter Olympics?

Malcolm did not care for the younger ones, before they came along he and his friends had been at the top of the quiz food chain, for Malcolm it wasn't about the money it was about the prestige of being the best and it rankled him that a team of children more often than not beat him, of course it didn't help that showbiz questions tended to dominate the first half of most quizzes and try as he might Malcolm just could not bring himself to immerse himself in the world of pop culture.

It was weird doing a pub quiz in a church hall, but it had been decided a few years ago that the Brewery Pub Quiz League should be held on neutral ground. Bella speculated that in the past the locals had perhaps objected to a rival team winning and a fight had broken out, whilst Chris thought it might be something to do with cheating although he wasn't sure what, maybe hidden messages in the toilet graffiti and Barry's idea was possibly closer to the truth, there was an entrance fee of £50 per team, which went towards the prize fund, organisation and hiring of venue etc and Barry thought competing pubs might refuse to pay to enter a quiz if their entrance fee was aiding a competitor. And so they were in a church hall, sitting on uncomfortable plastic chairs, drinking warm beer and cider out of cans and looking at the art on the walls from Brownie and Scout groups hoping that they might conceal secret answers.

Karen liked mango sorbet, and watching TV in her pyjamas on Sunday morning, whilst nursing the hangover from the night before, she liked watching the snow falling from the sky even if it didn't always settle.

Question - What is Lady Gaga's real name?

Bella came from a lucky family, when she was 12 her Grandfather won the pools and Bella got a new bike and winter coat with his winnings. Throughout her childhood she had won many a competition including fabric paints from Fast Forward, a Jason Donovan Cassette from Smash Hits and a £10 book token at School for a poetry competition. Every weekend she applied to play the competition during Live and Kicking, but always failed to get through, but she did once ask Mark from Take That a question when he was in the hot seat and for a week was the most popular girl at school. Even now her parents often won the lottery and were always sending her the odd tenner as her share. So it was no surprise to her that she was now practically the team captain of a winning quiz team. It seemed only natural for her to set her cap on George, one of nature's other lucky people, in the future she saw 2 little blessed children, and if the team was lucky tonight she knew George would soon propose.

Karen liked Barry, and she hugged this secret to herself as if it was the love she so desperately wanted. She promised herself that if they won tonight she would tell him how she felt at some point in the nearish future. She didn't want to pin herself down to an exact day or time. Barry on the other hand was nursing a broken heart of sorts. Through the course of his job he had struck up an acquaintance with Claire a PA for one of his main clients, they started off exchanging work emails and then including personal greeting, then just personal emails. They chatted on the phone first using work as an excuse and then just because they were bored. After 3 months they arranged to go out on their first date. Barry whipped himself up into a state of frenzy, only to discoverer that on meeting Claire she was actually 45 and married.

Question – What year was the Eiffel Tower built?

And then one day, Chris found himself going home on his lunch hour to make sure he had turned the dehumidifier off after his shower. Mary was good for Chris she calmed him down, she reassured him when they were in the supermarket if he began to panic that the hot tap was still running. She worked nearer to their flat and now she would pop home on her lunch hour to check the bathroom window was closed - at least she said she went and Chris felt calmer and when he got home the window

wasn't open so it was all ok. Not all his friends understood why he was living with Mary, but Chris didn't know how he had survived so long without her.

Question - Who wrote the books, the TV series True Blood is based on?

Malcolm wasn't on the top of his game tonight, his daughter was pregnant with her first child which was due any day now. His wife had already left to be with her and tonight he would go home to an empty house, no-one would care if they'd won. His daughter lived in Perthshire with her husband of 2 years, Bill. Malcolm hated that she lived so far away and even though Bill was a nice enough bloke, Malcolm resented him for taking his little girl away. He was looking forward to being a grandfather but was disappointed with the distance between them. His wife wanted them to move and so Malcolm was torn between the life he had made for himself here and the life he could make for himself there.

Karen didn't like being poor, she didn't like going to sleep with an empty stomach, or wearing a badly fitting school uniform bought from a charity shop, or not knowing who her father was, she didn't like being called names or wearing NHS glasses and never being asked to play at school, after school or during school holidays. Karen liked being clever, liked getting into University even though no one thought it would happen, liked the student loan company for their financial support, she even liked paying the loan back now. The thing she liked most was meeting Bella at university and finally having a friend.

Question - Who created Spider Man?

And so this was it, the quiz papers had all been marked the scores had all been totted up and there was nothing they could do now except celebrate or commiserate, of course both had the same rituals and outcomes, copious amounts of booze now, hangover in the morning. As the answers had been revealed George had tried to keep a running total in his head, but adding up had never been his strong suit, he knew they had done well enough to go back with their heads held high, but would they be clutching a trophy.

The quiz master approached the microphone. The tension was bearable, the teams who knew that they had lost were already talking loudly and heading to the makeshift

bar, and so at first George thought he had misheard. Of course it would have been too easy if they had been outright winners, instead their team had come joint first and the glory of a nation well a pub, would be down to the Tie Break

Question - What is the population of Luxembourg?