

Before The Light Went Out

by

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Cast of Characters

SAMUEL:

20's

ROISIN:

20's

Place

Hospital grounds.

Time

10:31 AM

Season

Winter

Setting: Samuel is across a short field sitting on a bench overlooking the hospital his mother just died in.

At Rise: Samuel and Roisin talk on a bench.

SAMUEL: I watched her there, through the window. I watched her take her last breath, through that horrible window. I've been here all morning, I couldn't move. I don't know what's more frozen, my heart or my bones.

The window curtains kept blowing. Every now and again I'd see an image of her, propped up on the bed, white as a ghost, staring into space...but, somehow, I could tell she felt my presence, somehow I know she knew I was right there.

I saw her chest heaving and all I could do was wait.

I wanted to go running to her, tell her everything I needed to tell her before the light went out, but I couldn't, you see, not for the way we been treated, you see...not for the way we were raised all those years...less than wounded animals...

Ahh, what's the sense of any of it, really...what sense does any of this matter?

Been cloudy all morning, but the sun decided to show up, just as Mom departed. It was warm, it was inviting, I was embraced by it; by her, the last and only time she had ever given me that; I can still feel the ice left on my cheeks.

She left us safely. It's been still ever since.

ROISIN: No sound, no wind.

SAMUEL: Can't remember a time it was ever this quiet.

ROISIN: Reminds me of the quiet in the house after a major stir.

SAMUEL: Ah, right.

ROISIN: Always so painfully quiet.

SAMUEL: Unnatural.

ROISIN: Yes.

ROISIN: ...What we gonna do about giving her a right burial?

SAMUEL: Working on it.

ROISIN: You said, you'd have things covered.

SAMUEL: Now's not the time to pressure me on it.

ROISIN: You haven't mentioned it.

SAMUEL: I don't see any of you coughing over any dough, neither.

ROISIN: None of us have any.

SAMUEL: And it's on me, cause I'm the oldest of the lot.

ROISIN: We're all contributing whatever we can find.

SAMUEL: If we had an honorable father we wouldn't be in this mess.

ROISIN: Don't start on him.

SAMUEL: All he does is drink! The lousy louse that he is!

ROISIN: Not now, Samuel, please.

SAMUEL: It's true, isn't it? The bastard couldn't even have a proper burial worked out for her. Know where he is? He's at the pub, drinking his filthy face off. Don't even know she died. Hasn't gone to her bedside, not one time. I'm gonna go to that pub and pounce on his head, until he never wakes up. Then, *then* we're gonna have to bury *two* parents. Then we'll need the money for TWO!

Roisin cries. Samuel softens.

...Oh, Roisin, I'm just, I'm all over the place with what I'm feeling. You shouldn't---you don't need to hear my babble. It's useless. I'm useless.

ROISIN: Don't give me that! For once you should be honorable yourself! For once, stop your bitching and moaning about the way things are and try making things the way you wish them to be. You're no better than father, are you? Are you?! Just like him if you don't bear some of this cross. You complain, but you don't do nothing about your complaints.

SAMUEL: I been working double shifts at the plant.

ROISIN: It's not always about the money! Don't you see? Your brothers and sisters need you right now. All you're doing is abandoning us and trying to throw money at the problem instead.

SAMUEL: I can't take this right now.

ROISIN: The only reason why we're talking now is because I spotted you from across the field. Had I not seen you sitting here, God knows what sort of thoughts I'd be having about why you weren't in that room when she passed. (beat) I know you have it in you, I know you care, I know you love, but it's your pride, your pride that stops you---

SAMUEL: It's not the pride Roisin.

ROISIN: What is it, Samuel?!

SAMUEL: I don't know if I know how to be there. (beat) I don't know if what I have to give is the right thing. I—I don't want to do the wrong thing. I don't want things to get worse than they already are, right? It wasn't given to me, I have no way of, of, of...

Roisin hugs her brother tightly.

(pause.)

Roisin and Samuel part slowly and look at one another gently.

SAMUEL: You, ah, you going back inside?

ROISIN: I've said my goodbyes, for now.

SAMUEL: The others?

ROISON: They've all gone home. What about you?

SAMUEL: Not sure.

ROISIN: You going inside?

Samuel shrugs.

Would you like to go in together?

Samuel nods.

We'll go in together.

SAMUEL: You think other families go through this?

ROISIN: Go through what, Sam?

SAMUEL: This scrapping and scraping?

ROISIN: We're a rare breed.

SAMUEL: Ain't we?

(they smile)

How were they?

ROISIN: Connor took it the worst.

SAMUEL: Did he?

ROISIN: He needs you most.

SAMUEL: Do I talk to him?

ROISIN: You should be around him.

SAMUEL: What do I say?

ROISON: Nothing. Just listen.

SAMUEL: Listen?

ROISIN: Sometimes a person needs to be heard. Our brother has a lot on his chest and he's young. He's lost right now but if you and me are present, he should pass through it just fine.

SAMUEL (to himself): ...Listen...

ROISIN: That will go a long way.

SAMUEL: Does he hate me?

ROISON: He loves you, which is why he's angry.

SAMUEL: I'll respond.

ROISON: You didn't have anyone, but Connor has you.

SAMUEL: Okay. Maybe we should arrange a meal at the house and you know, have a meal, right?

Roison smiles at his wording.

ROISON: I think that's a good idea.

SAMUEL: This is all new to me.

ROISON: Then it's something new we can all experience together as a family.

SAMUEL: I'll tell you what, can you gather everyone together? I want to go see Mom...tell 'em I was late coming out from the plant, but I'm at the hospital and want us all to have dinner together.

ROISON: That sounds nice.

SAMUEL: I'm also gonna stop off at the pub, tell father. I want to deal with him.

ROISON: Please, don't have a go---

SAMUEL: Things will be done right.

ROISON: You promise?

SAMUEL: You're a good sister.

ROISON: You're a good brother.

END OF PLAY