

The Banalities

a British Comedy

by Michael Simmons

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The Banalities

Scene

A room. Possibly a living room or a dining room. It is not particularly expensively furnished, but not particularly poorly either. On the wall is a television with a couch facing it. A sideboard stands against one of the walls. In the centre of the room is a table, on it are books and a laptop. A man, Smith, sits at the table facing the audience. He is in his thirties and of medium height and build. He seems somewhat agitated.

Smith Fuck!

(Long pause)

Smith Bollocks!

(Long pause)

Smith Shit!

(Long pause)

He takes his phone out of his pocket and makes a call; there is a sickly smile on his face

Smith Shit, answer phone.

He waits

Smith Hello darling.

The sickly smile reappears

Smith It's me. How are you? Alright? I just thought I'd phone you to say I was missing you and to hurry on home. I love you darling, love you, bye.

He makes some loud kissing noises into the phone and then puts it back in his pocket, he is still smiling. He looks at the books in front of him and the smile swiftly vanishes replaced by a frown.

Smith This is a waste of time this is. A complete waste of bloody time.

He picks up a book, looks at it, and throws it back down again in disgust.

Smith I'm forcing myself to read all this heavy intellectual shit, when I'd rather be watching the football on telly.....It's pathetic! A joke! I'm kidding myself.

He crosses to the sideboard where there is a bottle of whisky. He pours himself a glass.

Smith Shit!

Drinks

Smith Fucking Kierkegaard! Fucking Schopenhauer! Fucking Nietzsche!

Drinks again

Smith Fuck em!

Drinks again.

Smith Bollocks to em

Drinks again. Drains his glass

Smith I'm more interested in Arsenal. That's the truth. Why pretend?

Pours himself another glass, swallows some

Smith I mean, I'm happy aren't I? I am, I'm fucking happy. I'm as happy as a pig in shit. I am as happy as two pigs in shit.

Walks over to his books. Stares at them

Smith I really don't need this crap any more.

Starts flicking through the pages of one book. Stops .Reads

Smith What do I get from existence? If it's full I have only distress, if empty only boredom

Picks up the book and throws it across the table

Smith Bollocks!

Picks up another one, again flicks through it. Stops. Reads

Smith We Philosophers and free spirits feel at the pronouncement of the death of God the rays of a new dawn

Throws this one across the table too

Smith Horseshit!

Goes back again to the whisky bottle, draining the glass as he does. He pours another shot for himself. He quotes

Smith The sea, our sea is open again: perhaps there was never before such an open sea.

Drinks. Laughs

Smith Fuck! The only sea I give a toss about is the one I'll be lying in on my holiday.

Drinks again

Smith And why not eh? I deserve my holiday. I like my holidays. Holidays are fucking important. Why? Because I fucking like them that's why. Good enough reason isn't it? Fucking right!.....Fuck! I'm going to laze on a beach. I'm going to get pissed. I'm going to eat like a pig. I'm going to get pissed again, laze on a beach again, eat like a pig again. Every day mate. Every fucking day.

Finishes his drink. Smiles

Smith And I'm going to do all this with my beloved.

(Pause)

Smith Fucking right!

Picks up the bottle of whisky from the sideboard and goes to sit on a couch.

Smith I'm in love man! I'm fucking in love.

Pours himself a drink. Sings

Smith Love is all you need, love is all you need.

Drinks whisky

Smith Love is all you need. Fucking right, it's true man. Love is all you need.

Finishes whisky

Smith Love is all you need.

Pours himself another whisky. As if remembering

Smith Shit! Arsenal! What's happening with Arsenal man!

He picks up the TV remote from beside the couch and turns the television on. A football match is being played. He sits again and drinks some more whisky. Chants

Smith Ar-se-nal, Ar-se-nal- Ar-se-nal.

Smith proceeds to watch the match. Gradually the set darkens. The sound of the match recedes with light. Eventually the sound and light disappear altogether. Only the light from the television is left. That goes out as well. The set is in complete darkness.

After a while the television lights up again, but there is no sound. The sound gradually increases with the set lights until it is the same as before. Smith is asleep on the couch. A new figure can be seen standing by the couch watching the match which is still playing. It would seem to be Adolph Hitler. From the waist down he is dressed in traditional Nazi uniform. From the waist up he wears a Liverpool F.C. football shirt, a Liverpool Scarf around his neck, and a Liverpool cap sitting on top of a Nazi peaked military cap. He sits down, moving Smith's legs out of the way in the process. This wakes Smith. He opens his eyes and becomes aware of his visitor. He stares at him in complete disbelief. Finally

Smith Who the fuck are you?

Adolph *(Not taking his eyes off the screen)* Me?

Smith Yes you

Adolph I'm Adolph.

Smith Adolph?

Adolph Yeah Adolph

Smith Adolph who?

Adolph regards him as if he might be particularly slow. He speaks in a broad scouse accent

Adolph Adolph who? Adolph bloody who? Adolph bloody Murphy mate, who do you think? That's right, me ould fella came over here from Dublin. Know what I mean? That's how I got the name like.....Jesus wept! Adolph who! I'm Adolph from Austria mate. Ring any bells now?

Smith Not, not Adolph-

Adolph The very one pal.

Adolph returns to watching the football. Smith meanwhile stares at Adolph in total amazement. After some time

Smith Shit! I'm pissed. I'm rally pissed. I'm so pissed I'm hallucinating.

Adolph Don't worry about it mate. Have another drink, I would.

Smith Would you?

Adolph Oh yeah, no trouble. A bit of the hair that bit me and all that.

Smith Right.

Smith grabs the whisky bottle and drinks deeply from it. Choking somewhat as he does so

Adolph Alright pal? Feel any better?

Smith Yeah cheers

(Long pause)

Smith (*Suddenly*) What do I mean yes? I'm ill, I'm seriously ill. I'm talking to Adolph fucking Hitler, and he's wearing a Liverpool football shirt!

Adolph So?

Smith So! So!.... A fucking Liverpool shirt!

Adolph (*Angrily*) Eh eh pal. What's wrong with Liverpool?

Smith Sorry?

Adolph What's wrong with Liverpool? Have you got a problem with that or something? Are you trying to start?

Smith No.

Adolph Good.

Adolph returns his attention to the match while Smith drinks more whisky

Adolph Oh eh, typical Arsenal this. All fancy running around but no end product. Load of shite mate. Give me some of that whisky will you?

Smith hands him the bottle. Adolph takes a long swig

Adolph Ahh this game is bollocks. Do you reckon, it's crap isn't it?

Smith I don't know, I fell asleep during the first half and.....Look! I'm not talking to you. You don't exist! I'm hallucinating alright? I'm hallucinating. I've drunk too much and I'm hallucinating.

Adolph So bleeding hallucinate then. So what? You're not scared of a little trip are you? You're not scared of a little out of body experience are you?

Smith Listen, by talking to you I'm admitting to myself that you are real and so prolonging the-

Adolph Oh do shut up will you? Look at you. You're supposed to be a writer, a philosopher even. How often do you get the chance to me someone like me? How often eh? A world famous historical celebrity right here on your couch. Go with the flow pal, enjoy yourself.

He drinks some more whisky

Smith Are you going to drink all of that?

Adolph Ah that's the spirit son. Get into it. Here you are, have a bang.

Passes the whisky to Smith who swigs from it

Smith Why have you got a Scouse accent?

Adolph Eh? What's that? Is there anything wrong with a Scouse accent?

Smith No not at all. I'm just curious as to why you've got one.

Adolph It's one of me after life persona. We can pick and choose them you know. I love Liverpool me. The footy, the Beatles. It's great. Better than sodding Austria that's for sure. God, what a boring shite hole that is. Have you been there?

Smith No.

Adolph Don't bother mate. It's crap. And you'll never get a shag there. Not a hope.

Smith No?

Adolph Never. Take it from me.

(Pause)

Smith So how do you know I'm a writer?

Adolph Ah that's easy. You look like a wanker.

Smith What!

Adolph You look like a wanker. All writers do. All writers look like wankers. It's a well-known fact.

Smith But you were a writer.

Adolph Yeah I know. I looked like a wanker for a while. I admit it. Adolph Hitler, for a while, looked like a wanker.

(Pause)

There is the sound of cheering and chanting from the match on television. Adolph jumps up. Excitedly

Adolph Fuck that! That was never a goal! No fucking chance! Bloody Arsenal! They've always been lucky bastards, always. Did you see that? Did you? That was fucking offside. It was. As clear as day. Did you see it?

Smith Well actually I thought he looked on-

Adolph (*Furious*) What?

Smith I thought he was onside.

Beside himself now. He advances aggressively towards Smith

Adolph Onside! Onside! Are you mental? That was never onside. Are you some kind of prick or what? Are you some kind of cunt are you? Do you wanna start-

A voice interrupts Adolph in mid flow. John Lennon has just entered through the door. John looks and is dressed as he was in the early 70s. He is carrying a guitar

John Lennon Hey, cut that out will you.

Adolph (*Delighted by Lennon's arrival*) John! Mate! How are you doing? Come in, come in.

Smith Fuck this!

Takes a long swig of whisky.

John Lennon I heard all the cheering. Who scored?

Adolph It was Arsenal John Those dirty fucking lucky-

John Lennon Oh give it a rest will you. It's only a game.

John walks slowly over to the back of the couch and looks at the television

John Lennon It's over.

(Pause)

Adolph (*To Smith*) Turn it off will you? John Lennon's here. John Lennon! We've got to talk, party, you know, enjoy ourselves. John Lennon's here.

Smith shrugs, gets up and goes over to turn off the television

John Lennon *(To Smith)* Alright mate?

Smith *(Shrugs)* Yeah I'm fine. I'm just hallucinating that's all.

John Lennon I did a lot of that myself. I got some good ideas too.

Adolph What for songs and that John?

John Lennon Yeah, sometimes.

Adolph I think you're great.

John Lennon Great's an overused word.

Adolph Too right John, too right. I agree. Too many people get called great.....Great should mean.....well, you know.....great.

(Slight Pause)

Adolph You're great.

(Pause)

Adolph I always wanted to be in a band.

John Lennon I remember Hamburg.

Adolph I never had the chance though. In those days, with all the trouble and that. And Austria! Jesus wept! How could you start a band in frigging Austria! I'll tell you John They don't know their arse from their elbow there. They don't know sod all about music there. Tell me one decent group to come out of Austria? Go on! You can't can you? You can't. Jesus! It was all that frigging waltzing shite. Waltz waltz fucking waltz. *(He performs a little waltz to demonstrate)* Where's the excitement in that eh? Where's the fun there eh? There just isn't any mate. It's boring. It's bleeding bloody boring.

(Pause)

Adolph So, with the band idea a nonstarter I had to try something else. I mean, I was young John I wanted to do something. You know what I mean mate? I wanted to do something with me life. Well, I got into politics didn't I. It seemed an outlet like.

(Pause)

John Lennon Yeah, I remember Hamburg.

(Pause)

John Lennon (*To Adolph*) Do you mind if I sit down?

Smith (By *this stage obviously quite drunk and seeming to accept the presence of Adolph Hitler and John Lennon in his living room*) No, go ahead. Sit.

John Lennon (*Sitting down*) Ta

(Pause)

John Lennon (*To Adolph in a disinterested manner*) So, you're into music?

Adolph (*Delighted that John Lennon is speaking to him about music*) Please, call me Adolph, John

John Lennon (*Shrugs*) Whatever.

(Slight pause)

Adolph Oh yeah John I'm right into it, right into it. As I said, I'm a massive fan of you mate, massive. You and Macca. You were the lads. You were the boys. You had it sussed you. You and Macca.

John Lennon You reckon?

Adolph Oh John John Come on lad. Come on. There's no need to be modest here you know. You were the best. Number one. Nobody could write them like you. Three minute masterpieces that's what they were. Three minute bloody masterpieces.

Adolph starts suddenly to sing in a truly appalling voice with the fervour of a true fan. He plays air guitar simultaneously. "Close your eyes and I'll kiss you, tomorrow I'll miss you. You know that I'll always be true. Even though I'm away, I'll write home every day and I'll send all my loving to you. All my loving, I'll send it to you. All my loving, I'll send it to you."

Adolph Fucking top mate! Fucking top!

(Pause)

Adolph Mind you John You did go off the boil a bit in your later years.

John Lennon Yeah?

Adolph Oh yeah you did mate. You and Macca. You lost it there with that hippy shite.

John Lennon The love years.

Adolph (*Angrily*) The love years my arse. What a load of bollocks!

(Slight *pause*)

Adolph You didn't really believe all that crap did you?

He looks expectantly at John but there is no response

Adolph You didn't did you?

(Slight *pause*)

Adolph (*Dejectedly*) You sounded like you did. (*Angrily again*) Jesus John I'm surprised at you. I am. I really am. I mean, you. You of all people. Believing in all that old pony. How could you eh? How fucking could you? You, you're a genius. A true genius John That old shite isn't for you. It's for idiots. It's for fucking idiots John

(Pause)

Adolph (To *Smith*) Eh you. Have you got any more booze or what? Christ, I'm dying of thirst here.

Smith Oh, sure, yeah. Hang on, I'll get you some.

Smith goes to get some whisky from the cabinet

Adolph (To *John Lennon*) Fuck me but he's some host him isn't he. Frigging dopey there.

Smith walks over and offers Adolph a glass of whisky which Adolph accepts

Adolph Eh dopey! What about John then? What about John Lennon? Are you going to give the great John Lennon a drink there?

Smith Oh sorry. Would you like a drink of something?

John Lennon No, I'm alright mate. Thanks.

Smith Are you sure?

Adolph (Suddenly *angry*) Fuck me! He said so didn't he? Don't pressure the man.

Smith (Angry *himself now*) Look-

Adolph (Cutting *across him, threateningly*) Look what? Look what dopey? What's up dopey? Are you starting som-

John Lennon (Speaking *a little more loudly than usual*) Hey! Will you just cool it? Just cool it yeah man. Okay?