

Luka Well, I start running really fast. I push the treadmill up to its highest speed. Like I was testing him.

James You were testing Willem Dafoe?

Luka If it was Willem Dafoe?

James So it wasn't Willem Dafoe?

Luka Well, he matched me for speed. However hard I ran, he ran faster. We both pushed our treadmills to the maximum speed and he's running faster and faster. I've never seen anyone run so fast. So fast I could hardly see him.

James Was anyone else there?

Luka We were the only people in the gym.

James Ok . . .

Luka I start to slow down. I can't handle it anymore. He slows too. We start to go at a walking pace. Again in tandem. I'm knackered. But Willem Dafoe looks like he hasn't broken a sweat. Throughout this, he's stone-faced. And I'm thinking – I have to say something.

So I turn to him and say, I'm out of breath, but I say:

“Mr Dafoe. I love your work. Thank you for all the joy you've given the people of Scotland over the decades.”

Which was a weird thing to say but I'm not used to meeting celebrities.

James What did he say to that?

Luka Nothing. He just smiled. The biggest most beautiful smile I've ever seen in my life.

He offered me his hand to shake and I took it in mine. He had the most gentle hands, James. Like the hands of an aristocratic lady or a sad child.

James So what happened then?

Luka Can I say something here?

James Yeah?

Luka I feel like you don't believe me.

James Really?

Luka I feel like you're smirking.

James I'm not smirking.

Luka And there's a touch of sarcasm in your tone.

James I'm sorry if I appear sarcastic.

Luka I've had a meaningful experience, James.

James I believe you.

Luka There it is again. Sarcasm!

James I'm not being sarcastic!

Luka I'm allowing myself to be vulnerable for the first time in my life.

James Ok.

Luka And you're spitting in my face and laughing at me.

James Hey. I'm sorry. I wasn't being sarcastic.

I'm not laughing at you.

Please tell me more.

Luka So I was leaving the gym and I turned to the guy at reception and I said:

"Can't believe it, man. Did you see who was in the gym?"

Guy says, "Who?"

I say, "Willem Dafoe."

He looks at me blankly.

I say, "He played the Green Goblin in *Spiderman*." Cos if you're not really a film fan that's where you know him from.

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The guy's no idea who I mean. I get frustrated and he goes, "Dude, calm down, I just started my shift." He turns to the other guy at the desk and says, "Have you seen a movie star come in?"

Other guy goes, "A movie star?"

I said, "I don't know if you'd call him a '*movie star*' as such, he's more of a highly regarded, ubiquitous character actor."

The other guy says, "No one's been in the gym all morning except you."

Pause.

James So . . .

Luka So . . .

James So what are you saying here, Luka?

It wasn't Willem Dafoe?

Luka It wasn't Willem Dafoe.

James So who were you talking to?

Luka That's the question.

James Who do you think you were talking to?

Luka Who do you think I think I was talking to?

James *considers the question.*

James . . . *Jesus?*

Luka I believe I encountered Jesus, yes.

He lifts up a cup and takes a big swig from it. James watches him. He slams the cup on the table.

Now *that's* a spiritual awakening, motherfucker!