



## E-MAIL: REMEMBER WHEN WE WEREN'T QUEENS?

*Place:* The Cyberspace of Emigrants; and England

*Time:* Present

*Characters:* Rory, the Storyteller, an Irish Emigrant

Donal, a man in Dublin

Beth, Donal's girlfriend

Sean, an Irish hustler, a rentboy

*Glossary:*

**Catalina:** a California adult video company

**Stand:** bus stop

**Chunnel:** the tunnel under the English Channel connecting England to France

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[HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE FROM THIS BOOK](#)

**P-P HARTNETT**

## **E-MAIL: REMEMBER WHEN WE WEREN'T QUEENS?**

Dear Donal,

Just ploughed through that gaga Beth-O saga. Poor Beth. Every fag needs a need-I-say-more. I always knew she'd do something breederish like that. Bad girl. And with that bad boy. Bad boy. And on your quilt. You'll just have to buy yourself a new one. Try [www.AuntieGayQuilts.com](http://www.AuntieGayQuilts.com) or [www.Frol-iqueQuilts.com](http://www.Frol-iqueQuilts.com). Right now VernaMays.com has a green and white "Chum Dash" which'd be a good replacement, only \$95. Go on, treat yourself. And don't for heaven's sake be shy to ask re stubborn stains. (Will we ever forget that "Rose-of-Sharon" applique summer spread—circa 1860—that made you heave?)

If, however, you insist on letting that mutt of yours (Bad dog!) anywhere near your bed, (*Urgh!* the thought of all those hairs) then go for a scrappy log-cabin thingamy, something with lots of colour to hide the dog hair and spots. I'm still so pleased with my double-sided brick quilt, but I'm sure some of those sections are recent—more 1999 than c.1900—but at \$65 who's complaining about child labor in Asia. Wouldn't get anything half as nice over here in these London shops. The alternative to those two US websites is that guy in Northumberland, but his prices are way over.

Right, guess what. News. HOT news. And it's juicy. About time, I hear you holler. I *should* be sanding the floors, but it's too damn cold. Maybe in an hour. "I've just got to share,"

as Scottie would put it. Strictly between you, me, and the Internet God, I've discovered I want a Paddy for a boyfriend. Ridiculous, I know, homesick, having ferried myself over here to Merry Old to get away from them that looks like me, but there you have it. Perverse, I am, seeking the island incest I fled. As you know all too well, the edited highlights of my frequently sordid sexual history include an Andy, an Anton, a Felix, a Wawing, and a Phil (R.I.P.), but never an Aidan, Colum, Declan, or Sean.

"Mum, Dad, this is Sean." Can you imagine? Oh, they'd have loved that on the front steps in Dublin back in '85, giving up on controlling my preference but consoling themselves saying, "At least, he's Irish, and Catholic, thank God," but what did I do? Drag in Andy, that Aberdeen Arsehole, for the quickest once-over—never to be welcome within five miles of Mum and Dad again.

The list of introductions has been many(ish) and varied. I'm sure that behind my back it's a family joke: a Scottish man, a Dutch man, a Jamaican, a Chinese, and a Brit. Never a Paddy.

Actually, I can't figure why not? Perversity? After all, my father's one of those. And so's yours. And weren't they a couple of mad men. (Good job we're queer, dear. Imagine passing on that genetic inheritance.)

Anyway, so here I am, Monday morning, 11 AM. Fuckin' freezin' I'm telling you. Heating on MAX. And I'm excited. Very. Scale of 1-10? Um, maybe 8 and that's high for a slapper like me.

Having been here at #10 a month now, I thought I'd go wild and get a bus into Burnley, so I did. Last night. Worked Classic Homo Look #9. We're talking white Gap tee, grey Fruit of the Loom hooded top, old skool Adidas trainers (the ones Johnny Wilson used to favour), black leather jacket and brand new deepest indigo 501's. Considered a Bike jock strap, but decided on the old reliable of no knickers. Took me ages to get that casually dressed, but you know how it is in this neck of the woods, leave the Westwood for London. Oh, and my hair's real short now after a the local barber misinterpreted my directions. Kind of flat-top again, after all these years.

Yikes, age—the things it does to a girl. That mirror-mirror on the wall has dictated that I cut out the booze until

my birthday because I'm doing all the new-year clichés: yup, joined a gym. Lost five pounds already, mainly in the showers.

I'm drifting.

So, last night off I went to The Green Room. Don't think they've heard of House Music in Burnley. If they have, then it's not what they were pumping out in St James Street between 8 and 10. *Boyz* describes the place as "relaxed." What a cod. "Rigor mortis," more like.

I was more than a bit disappointed, to tell the truth, all set to make a grand exit when—here we go, seat-belts on—in walks this guy and my eyes go POP. Tall? Jesus, he had to *stoop* as he came in, *that* tall and you know I like 'em big. Now, I'm 6-2. This guy has got to be 6-5/6-6 at least.

Well, up he went to the bar and I started ticking off the usual criteria thinking Well, what is this we have here?

Butch stride? Yup.

Packet? Mmm.

Rump? Humpy.

Drink? A pint. Lager.

Smoke? No, what a relief. Didn't light up.

I know, you want it in one. OK, close your eyes now and no peepin': he's kind of a really young Clint Eastwood meets Morrissey meets that Versace slayer (whose name I can't think of for the life of me) with Matt Dillon eyebrows. Lord, I'm getting hard.

Sat himself down he did across from me by the door. Enough to say, I gave it a few minutes, not wishing to appear obvious like, then upped. Pretended to look at the jukebox selection, didn't I—that old B-girl trick— then sat a couple of tables down from him. Dead casual.

Kept thinking someone'd waltz in, up he'd get, and they'd go kiss-kiss and that'd be it. But no. As a few people came in, there was the occasional nod, a hiya. He was cool. (Still no sign of a cigarette.)

I kept giving him sidelong glances, but he was stuck into *The Pink Paper*. Then I looked at my watch and thought of the sanding and the locksmith and the coal delivery and my *Things To Do* list which is the length of your Joey's you-know-what (lucky you!) and wished my car weren't still in the garage and, kind of impatiently, just walked out. Just left. Not like me at all.

Traipsing back up towards the bus station (desperate weather, got fierce wet), I was thinking of Mr Tall Dark & Handsome when who the fuck should walk on by only to cruise me over his shoulder confident as ordering pizza, but Mr TD&H himself. He kind of smiled, but I somehow felt it wasn't for me. Doesn't that sound daft? Like it was more of a Hi, yeah, that place was crap tonight. I'm off too. Cheerio.

All I could think of was, How does me hair look? Is me nose shinin'?

So there I was, at the bus stop. Stand C. And he's kind of shuffling between A and B, and I'm wishing he were going Trawden way/wishing he were the coalman/the locksmith/the sodomite next door. I decided to strike a kind of 70's porn pose. You know, you want it—you come and get it. Well tra-la it worked. Up he came for a sniff.

Donal, my little heart was going boom-boom in my ears. This one's the answer to a gobbler's wettest dreams. Ab-so-fuckin'-lutely.

Details omitted thus far: white caucasian, good skin (freckled), light-grey tee (ragged), charcoal v-neck (not cashmere), faded blue denim shirt (Wrangler), big hands (the worst nails; bites 'em), black Levi's (gone grey), black donkey jacket (remarkable in this day and age), Nike trainers on promising big-big-big feet with box-fresh laces.

Basically, Donal, dear, over he strolls like an XXWE stud out of one of your Catalina videos, leans against a lamp-post or bin or something and whips out a pack of Silk Cut. I thought a great big anti-smoking, uh-oh, here we go, if I ever get him round to #10, he's gonna stink the place out. But, in spite of his total gorgeousness, when he shoved his fags my way, I hit him with that spinsterish "Don't smoke" line of mine, said in the usual tone of voice that's half fact, half mother's good advice.

Back they went into his pocket. Zzzzip went the zipper. So filmic.

"Nor do I," he said blushing. "I quit." Then he kind of giggled. "I'm quitting."

Sss-weet, really sweet. Donal, he's too "me" to be true, a real dote. The "me" that's tired of boyfriends named Anton and Felix and Waving and R.I.P. Phil. Tired of foreign meat? Try a homeboy. Get this: Mr TD&H is Irish!

Some facts: born in Kildare but raised in Burnley since

the age of nine. Age: 24. Works in a factory making gas boilers. Name, wait for it...down girl...Sean.

"That's S-E-A-N, not S-H-A-U-N." He actually spelled it out like that. Ooh, I'm telling you...it's the closest I've come to being hypnotised since sexy Felix dropped his drawers. S-E-A-N, alack 'n' alas, could do with a bit of expensive dentistry. What Scottie would call, "a very European look." His eyes make up for that. Ah! Those lashes, really long and thick and curled. Not a thing on 'em. Natural. (Makes ya spit.)

Oh, that reads terribly, so Barbie. DELETE! DELETE! (Remember the time when we weren't queens?)

Just as I was debating internally as to whether or not I'd stab down my phone number on a bit of scrap, along comes the X43. We're talking ten-second sayonara.

Could I get a wink of sleep last night? Answer: giant N giant O.

I was, oh you know, stage-directing it all in me head. He'd come over and we'd have a few beers by the fire, chatting and stuff. Maybe a joint on the go, Pete Tong on the radio. Really matey. Then I'd show him the house, walk him round, and, right on cue up the top, in the room you described as my John-Boy Walton jerk-off haven, it'd go all quiet and we'd hold each other like a couple of honeymooners, then kiss...and it'd be really nice and slow. Special. Ha! You know, like we were in lurve.

Kind of think this S-E-A-N guy might like poppers 'n' things. Now, you know me. I can cope with piercings above the waist, but I hope to God he's not pierced down below or anything. Nothing worse than a Prince Albert banging against one's veneers. How did Vickie ever do that? Take out her choppers?

He does work a bit of over-stylised facial hair in the form of lambchop sideburns. More skinhead than faggot though. (Oh I know, skinhead is faggot. You know what I mean. Evil queen.)

We're meeting same time same place next week. (Bar, not bus stop.)

He's Irish and, if not Catholic by God, me Ma and Da can bite half a loaf. Think of Beth-O's parents desperate-to-be grandparents, but not the unmarried way.

Another thing though, bit of a minus, a somewhat annoying little detail really, he's got a boyfriend. A teeny weeny complication, you'll agree. He says it's an open relationship.

Yeah, right, OPEN as in #1, like the Chunnel; OPEN #2, to the risk of infection; OPEN #3, both the above, and then some: he's a rentboy. (Bad Boy!) Cry me a river.

Any news of Finbar?

XXX Rory

