



## LOST AND FOUND

*Place:* Dublin

*Time:* Present

*Characters:* Colm, a van driver

Zoe, an actress

The Storyteller

*Glossary:*

**Dublin 6:** the code for Dublin City Centre

**Temple Bar:** rehabbed arts, music, and bohemian neighborhood in center of Dublin, near the river Liffey; nightlife, pubs, and the Irish Film Centre. In 18<sup>th</sup> century, brothels and craftspeople

**Trinity College:** the Irish Republic's most prestigious university, in Dublin near Temple Bar

**Quay:** pronounced "key"; the roads alongside the river Liffey which flows through Dublin with tide coming and going from the Irish Sea to the east.

**O'Connell Street:** Dublin's main north-south route and most busy street; named for Daniel O'Connell, the liberator in pursuit of Catholic emancipation. Site of the General Post Office which in the 1916 Easter Rising was held by Irish patriots proclaiming the Irish Republic before being shelled by the British. Fourteen Irish rebels, including James Connolly (not to be confused with Daniel O'Connell) were caught and shot, and have become venerated as martyrs for Irish independence.

**O'Connell Street Bridge:** built in 1790, this bridge is a symbol of the ground-zero heart of Dublin. *The Irish Times* internet site focuses a camera on this bridge to post live images of Dublin worldwide.

**trainers:** shoes, particularly athletic shoes

BOB CONDRON

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A pint of Guinness in each hand, Colm squeezed through the crush of bodies and wove his way from the bar. Without spilling a drop, he maneuvered his short, stocky physique around animated groups of drunken revelers and between the narrowest gaps of crowd and chairs before finally arriving at our table none the worse for wear.

He had big hands. I noticed how his thick fingers gripped the pint glass he held out towards me whilst taking a gulp from his own. He sat down on the bench beside me, lowering his glass into his lap, and revealing a foamy moustache left by the head of his pint. His soft, pink tongue lapped the residue from his top lip. He grinned. I felt compelled to turn away. The gesture somehow struck me as more intimate than he intended.

The pub was a riot of noise. Cigarette smoke streaked the air thicker than the onset of dense fog. Mackey's Bar was a commercial success at recreating in Dublin the ambience of the traditional Irish pub. Nothing new in that. The theme surely went down a treat with tourists, but Dublin offered us natives way more and I wondered why Colm had asked to meet me at Mackey's. It wasn't one of my regular haunts. In fact, the last time I'd been there was the first time I'd met him.

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The night in question was a Saturday night some ten days before. Then there had been a whole gang of us in Mackey's as part of a group celebration. Friends from university had debuted in workshop a new play three of them had written, a musical, actually, about Oscar Wilde's wife and his mother

titled, *Constance and Speranza*. At the end of its interesting but brief run, I got an invite to the festivities. Colm, whose theatre experience was limited to delivering a heavy piece of scenery by truck one afternoon early on in rehearsals, had got an invite too. Zoe invited him.

Zoe is a cartoon actress. That seems to say it all, but maybe not. She doesn't act in cartoons, she simply behaves like a cartoon. Larger than life, she never stops performing. She's delightful and infuriating. Glamorous and amusing. She will be whatever it takes to remain the center of attention. When it comes to men, her own attention span is strictly limited. She likes them blue-collar, rough, and ready. Colm was clearly her type and, therefore, had my sympathy.

Before we ever spoke, I felt drawn to him. Protective of him. Despite his athletic muscularity, he was no psychic match for Zoe. The way he kept looking around the pub, without really looking at all, gave me the distinct impression that he was out of his depth. Still, I didn't rush to be his savior. On the contrary, I remember holding back, liking watching him drowning, all too beautiful and, therefore, too dangerous. Blue-black hair cropped medium short. Luxuriant eyelashes. Heavy-lidded, liquid brown eyes. A Turkish father and Irish mother leaving him with the body of a young bull, and a second name that I found unpronounceable.

Now and then, he'd relax sufficiently to bare brilliant white teeth in a smile that would charm the pants off a saint. Of one thing I was certain, the last thing I needed was to play the martyr to another tender-hearted straight man. As if I needed reminding, Zoe, having caught me looking in his direction, placed a hand on my shoulder and lent into my ear, "Don't even think about it!" She talked through teeth clenched in a smile like a ventriloquist.

So I didn't think about it. I partied, pub-paddling in a slow drift toward where Colm, turning around, might discover me. I was standing by the bar when he appeared at my shoulder. He introduced himself with a firm handshake. Pleasantries. A look. Then he caught me unawares.

"Yer gay, aren't yeh?" he asked. His broad Dublin accent collided with his Mediterranean good looks.

I was more startled he asked than that he knew. "How did yeh know?" I stood solid, not wobbling mentally too much at

the question, which was not exactly an opening line between lads at Mackey's, and wondering between *does-it-show* and *what's-it-to-yeh*?

"I'm straight-forward."

"Brilliant. I'm gay. Yer straight...forward."

I checked his guard and he started to backtrack, "I wouldn't have known, only Zoe said..."

"Yeah, well, Zoe spoke the truth for once." I grinned to improve on his discomfort, and then to let him see how some questions feel shoved up his arse, I said, "And yeh?"

"Eh?" Like he was suddenly struck deaf, Colm cupped his ear over the surge of noise from the bar. Was he waiting a beat? Had I struck a chord?

I lent towards him, "Are yeh?"

"What?"

"Straight-forward, straight," I shouted, "or are yeh gay?" Fulfil the good-looking ones' biggest worry: nothing's more crazy-making for a straight man than everyone figuring he's gay, because he's in good shape, or well-dressed, or clever.

Colm was stung. His eyes blinked rapidly like a court witness hesitating between lies over truth. "I don't know." Bingo! "Sometimes, I think...." He focused. He shook his head. "I don't want to talk about it."

"Neither do I," I lied.

"What?"

His innocence, his face, his body, a thousand years of dark Turkish muscle mixed with a thousand years of red Irish blood, erected my...sudden surge of empathy. "If yeh ever do want to talk about whatever yeh don't want to talk about, yeh can talk to me. Okay?"

He turned his dark eyes to meet mine. I had dared speak the oldest seduction-of-virgins line in the world: "Yeh can talk to me." Still, I felt like a rabbit caught and trapped in the dazzle of his headlights. So I smiled implying I had special powers of understanding, harmless to straight men, which was no lie. "Yeh can." I smiled again. "Just talk."

"Thanks," Colm said. He may have been hesitant, but he wasn't weak at all.

Immediately the music and smoke sucked up our secrets and lies. Colm drained his pint and came up all animated and full of banter. Public houses exist to keep private conversations

from becoming theatrical scenes, which is something I learned from Zoe, who believed the opposite. She was always on the prowl for a new venue, bumping her pert little tits right into Colm and me, announcing we all must run on to the latest hip and trendy club, and within minutes several of our theatre party exited through the double doors led by Zoe divinely ready to exhibit us all in the traveling performance-art show starring her.

In the sweep to the exit, pints being emptied on the fly, Colm disappeared from my side in the crowd of drinkers standing in the pub like immovable stone pillars oblivious to our leaving. Against the flow of incoming patrons, I found him waiting for me by the door. Zoe had her arm around him. Colm threw his arm around me and the three of us, cruising along the cobbles in the usual clan of the eight or so of our crowd, set off on the short walk to clubland.

In the streets of Temple Bar, Zoe was all over Colm like a chronic rash, marking her territory with lip-gloss kisses that seemed more for my benefit than for his. Within two blocks, she was distracted by another member of her entourage, who had the pockets of a pharmacist, and, disengaging herself from Colm's arm, slid away.

Stuffing my hands deep in my jeans, I walked silently on beside him.

He broke the silence, not once wiping off Zoe's kisses. "Yeh seem sad," he said.

"Do I?"

He touched my shoulder. "I don't want yeh to be sad."

We both stopped walking.

"Do yeh like me?" My question seemed inappropriate, pathetic even, as it escaped my lips.

His smile was all the more brilliant for my acting so heart-rending human, except I wasn't acting playing-Zoe-playing-a-part, playing coy to get laid.

"Wha"? Yeh mean sexually?"

"No. I mean *me*. As I am. Do yeh like me?"

"Course, I do." His arm slipped around me once again.

Zoe appeared, wedging her divine presence between us, *I'll return him*, she said, as if Colm were her own private Turkish wrestler, and dragged him on ahead, her hand on his buttocks, promising over her shoulder *absolutely, darling, I'm*

*only borrowing him to screw the lid off a jar*, whilst I hung back. It was only once I got into the club I realized they would never arrive. They had, the pair of them, better things to do.

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I turned to look at Colm. Same pub. Minus Zoe. Ten nights later. His pint was two-thirds empty whilst mine was barely touched.

“So, why the phone call?”

“Yeh said if I needed to talk...”

“Why here? We can’t very well talk in here.”

“Let’s go outside then.” He quickly finished his drink. I pushed mine aside.

Outside, the night over Dublin glowing orange with street lights, I looked up to the heavens but couldn’t see the moon, not above, nor in the dark Liffey flowing below. I could see only my breath turning to vapour, mixing with Colm’s breath as we went silently walking west along Burgh Quay toward O’Connell Street. No words. Nothing other than a heightened awareness of his presence. His shoulder brushing against my shoulder. The back of his hand touching mine. Abruptly he caught hold of my elbow near O’Connell Street Bridge and backed into a darkened shop doorway.

He was trembling as I took him in my arms. He was the way I like ’em—even second-hand from Zoe—short, compact frame, wonderful proportions and rock solid. I looked down into his face. I liked that, being taller. Night and sex so dilated his eyes that the irises appeared jet black. Cars honked.

“Kiss me.” His voice was barely a whisper.

His lips were wet and warm. Timidly, he brushed them against mine.

For a moment I hesitated. “Are yeh sure this is what yeh want, Colm?”

“Sure I’m sure.”

“Yeh don’t sound sure.”

“Gimme time. I’ve never done this before.”

“Yeh sure?”

“I’ve never been more sure.”

He took my face in his hands and, directly and purposefully, began planting tight-lipped kisses in short, noisy smacks.

I let him lead the dance. I slowly worked both my hands down to cup around the strapping globes of his buttocks. Clutching them, I drew his stiffening groin to press against my own. His tongue shot into my mouth. Determined. Hands gripped the back of my head pulling my face by force down to meet his eyes and chin and lips and breath. More ravenous than gluttonous, his appetite was ferocious. His mouth threatened to consume me. Sucking and chewing on my lips and tongue. Licking and gorging himself on my chin, my cheeks, my neck. His hunger bordered on starvation. Hands felt me up and down. Wanton abandon. Virgin excitement. His mouth found my ear.

“Fuck me. I want yeh to fuck me.”

“What...here?” I replied with alarm. The inexperienced lack judgement.

“Anywhere....I need to feel yer cock inside me.”

“Not here.”

“Will yeh come home with me?”

“Taxi!”

“Don’t make a joke of me.” He took my hand and kissed my knuckles. “I can’t wait to get yer pants down.”

Riding at the back of the bus, Colm fondled me under a “To Let” section of *The Irish Times* on the short journey to Rathmines and his attic flat at the top of a Georgian off Leinster Road. No elevator. Climbing the endless narrow stairs, I was winded; but for him, it was a winning sprint to the finish line. Inside his door, passion turned polite. “Yeh want some coffee?” He threw his coat on the bed and his keys on the bedside table. He flicked on the table lamp and turned to the galley kitchen.

I looked around to read his personality. His room was an instant Polaroid. Telling all. Soft lit. One large room arranged around the double bed made up under a couple of soccer posters. A pile of neatly folded towels. A portable CD player. Basic, clean, and comfortable. Still so straight he hadn’t yet started collecting the postcards and beads and tacked-up memorabilia of gay men. Hooked on the door, his work jacket hung with the name of the hauling business on the back.

Pulling off my jean-jacket, I lit the gas fire, and sat myself on the rug before it, warming my hands. He came back with coffee and, handing me mine, sat himself down on the edge of the bed opposite. Big hands toyed with his cup. Knees spread. Narrow waist rising up to the v-neck of his wide shoulders.

A scramble of chest hair rose up his neck, met his throat and cheeks that he hadn't shaved in two days. "Yer the first gay man I've ever known."

"I very much doubt that."

"It's true. I swear."

"I mean, yeh've probably known a lot of gay men. Yeh just didn't know they were gay."

"Yeh can't tell by just looking?"

"Gay men are like toupees...." I paused to measure his cleverness.

"Oh, I see." He laughed. "Yeh only see the bad ones."

"Dublin is full of closets."

"Welcome to mine." He took a swig of coffee. His big beautiful eyes followed his cup as he lowered his hands perfect in that workman way from his lips to his lap. He was a natural.

Then I saw the theatre programme by the hearth. Picking it up, I flicked through the pages. "Did yeh bring Zoe back here or did yeh go to her place?"

He lifted his eyes, suddenly alert. "Fuck Zoe!"

"So yeh did...at my expense."

He sighed heavily. "I pissed yeh off, standing yeh up at the club, didn't I?"

I repented immediately. "I've no right to complain." No need to introduce him to the queer spin that comes into gay behaviour after sex. "Who am I to bitch."

"I should have stayed with yeh, should have talked...." He took another gulp of coffee and set his cup aside.

"Zoe can be very persuasive."

"Not persuasive enough."

"Eh?" I said. "Why not?"

"Couldn't get it up."

"Yer lying."

"Yer so fuckin' beautiful," he blurted. "Even Zoe says yer fuckin' beautiful. Why are yeh so fuckin' beautiful? If yeh weren't so fuckin' beautiful, yeh wouldn't be fuckin' up my life."

I took a deep breath. "Yeh never been with a man?"

"No," he said.

I did not read him as one of those guys who's been a gay virgin a hundred times.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Scared."



“Yer fuckin’ beautiful yerself.”

“I’m trembling.” The balls of his feet touched the floor. His nervous heels were pumping fast up and down on his toes. His bed shook.

“Shall I come over there, or will yeh come over here?”

He lowered his eyes, “Do what yeh want.”

I crossed the short distance that separated us and, kneeling between his shaking legs, took him in my arms. He clung to me. *Bless me, Father, for I have clung and been clunged.*

His body surrendered in a sigh. “Do what yeh want with me.”

I lay him back on the bed, his feet still on the floor, intent on toying with each moment of undressing him methodically, stripping him slowly, making him naked. Unlacing his trainers, eyelet by eyelet, and pulling them off his feet. Peeling his sports socks down off his beautifully knuckled toes. Large, sturdy feet to match his hands. So far, perfectly formed. Reaching, up, I unbuckled his thick leather belt and top button over the zipper of his pale canvas jeans. His ribbed white teeshirt clung to his narrow waist, fanning out over his muscular chest like a second skin, lifting off the hairiness. I had him easily stripped to the waist, gripped his hard-skinned hand, and eased him up to a seated position. From his hunger in the street, he changed in a way that I knew that he, so far, had been completely docile with men. He smiled like a student. He knew no other way from his nonsexual life with teachers and coaches and bosses who all told him what to do. He was compliant throughout. He had raised his arms in surrender as I had peeled his teeshirt ever so slow-motion up and over his head. Mussing his hair. He looked all the better. He could do no wrong.

He lay back, eyes fixed on my fingers, as they reached for his zipper which was stiff to my little tugs, jerking, unzipping, like pulling a train on a track splitting open its little metal ties and rails over the swollen mound at his crotch. With the parting of his fly, his bulge burst free of his canvas jeans, restrained only by his white cotton jockey shorts defining his strong buttocks and thighs and perfect knees and naked calves.

He was a sight to behold. His squat, brawny body, a cut-away package of muscle and masculinity. I liked his brush

of body hair, black-gold, dark as a raven, covering his broad chest, sturdy legs, and big, beefy forearms. His nipples, round and erect, stood out a shade darker than his natural dark complexion. My mouth watered. I had the hunger to eat him.

I stood, and stripped naked for his pleasure.

“Why are yeh so fuckin’ beautiful?”

I could not answer him but with actions more powerful than words. I fell to my knees between his wrestler thighs. Spreading my fingers, I placed both palms on his quivering belly and swept upwards over the taut mounds of his chest, around hulking shoulders, and down over swollen biceps, towards calloused hands. I sat back on my haunches as he sighed heavily enjoying for the first time riding the other side of the bed.

Slowly licking a path from knee to groin, I buried my face in the crotch of his tented underwear. I inhaled his raw essence. My lips traced the outline of his pulsating organ as the white cotton struggled to contain its risen package. He was trembling again. Trembling as my mouth rolled the sack of both succulent bollocks in turn. Soaking the material with my saliva. Hooking my thumbs under his waistband, I yanked his underwear down over his thighs with one swift pull.

His awesome uncut cock sprang free. I grabbed it, retracting the slick foreskin. My mouth consumed the length to the root. He gasped, surprised, suddenly understanding the secret knowledge that a man knows how to suck a cock better than any Zoe. I cupped the fullness of his ball sack, squeezing, rolling, milking his nuts. My saliva drenched his shaft and dribbled over my fingers whilst he gripped my head and boldly dared work his hips towards a deeper penetration at the back ring of my throat. He was activating up out of his passivity, ironically the opposite of the passivity he thought male sex might require.

My mind was blown. Something to be said for how much fun a man can have stepping out of a closet. I ripped his shorts from his ankles and, lifting his legs aloft, fixed my sights on one magnificent ass. Two solid mounds of prime beef steak parted to receive my ravenous tongue. Colm clutched a pillow to his mouth and moaned into it, half fear, half begging, as his free hand clutched one cheek and pried his buttocks wide to my licking of his tight little hole. Loosening him up. Tonguing him

up for that thing all men fear, and many men want, fingering up in the plug of themselves alone when wanking.

“Fuck me.” His request became command. “Just fuckin’ stick it in me.”

“Condoms and lube?”

“In a plastic bag under the bed.”

“Yeh must have been pretty sure of yerself!” Was he a trickster?

“Till now, till yeh, I always wore the condom.” He laughed expectantly until my cockhead pressed against his moist, pulsing ring.

“Just relax....” And so saying I entered in.

“Oh, fuck! Oh! Like that!”

I eased into him effortlessly. Inch by inch. Willingly, eagerly, he swallowed me, whole. I held still, buried deep in unbelievable heat. “That feel okay?”

“It feels fuckin’ brilliant!” he groaned. “This is what I want. What I’ve always wanted. Full up. I feel full up.”

“Don’t be so fuckin’ analytical,” I said. I pumped a slow ram, then bolder, firmer, stronger until my bollocks were slapping his buttocks with every thrust. I could do no wrong. The inexperienced think everything is brilliant. Only the jaded hold up the Olympic judge’s cards to tell you how they think you are doing.

His knees, hooked over my shoulders, began to grip and draw me deep. His big hand encircled his prick and squeezed it up huge. Popping his foreskin open and closed, his thumb spread pre-cum over the engorged tip. He jerked his rod backwards and forwards, slapping its trunk against his belly as his big balls bounced in the left-slung sack hung between his open thighs.

Sweat covered my forehead, my back, my chest. Beads of sweat bathed his dark golden torso. A sex mist shimmered around us in the soft lamplight. We were ourselves and other than ourselves. Words sprang from my lips. “Yeh are one sexy fucker...one sexy fucker.” I gasped, “Take me into yeh. Just take it. Take it.”

“More,” he pleaded. “Fuck me. Fill me up. Do it! No mercy. Fuck me rigid.”

I plunged no mercy into him. Fucking him. Ramming him. Filling him with secrets men realize in themselves, in their

very selves. His eyes squeezed tight shut with tears. His jaw and teeth clenched. An intensity of feeling mapped his face. Intent on orgasm. Whacking his cock. Driving it home. Driving it out of his closet on the fourth floor off Leinster Street in Dublin 6.

"I'm gonna cum," Colm shouted. "I'm gonna cum. Here it is! Here it cums!" True to his word, the fat head of his dick spewed an arc of flume that hit his throat. The second spurt shot pearls across his chest. The third splammed his belly, and the fourth gushed frosting clots over his fingers. In the instant, he stuffed those same fingers in his mouth and began to suck them clean.

His transformation was more shift than I could take.

"Yeh asked for it!" I shouted. "Now yer goin' to fuckin' get it! Here's yer reward, Colm. Take it...Take it!"

I exploded inside him. Out of my head. Gushing on and on into the steaming rubber. Swelling it with a load so copious it threatened to pumping burst. Deep breaths. Big, deep breaths. Filling my lungs to capacity with the gamey smell of our sex. Pulling out slowly, I collapsed down beside him. The condom tip hanging a milk-pod between us. Our breathing remained as one. Outside, a far-off clock tolled the late hour. We lay looking, face to face, nose to nose, knees to knees. Bedside, a digital clock hummed.

"Does this mean I'm gay then?"

I did a double take.

He burst out laughing.

"Colm?" I said.

"Yeah?"

"I wonder what Zoe would say if she could see yeh now?"

"Fuck Zoe!"

I rolled over onto my stomach, "Nah, fuck me. It's my turn."