Kerry Cottage

A Short Story

By Maryanne Peters

In that part of the West Coast of Ireland the bad weather can come at speed and without warning. He had asked the hotelier if it would rain and had received a typical twinkly eyed Irish response.

“Well this is Ireland, so it will certainly rain. The only question is when, and where, and how much?”

The answers were here and now and a lot.

The worst of it was that he had parked his car at the bottom of the hill and jumped a small brook to climb up to the ruins. By the time the rain came down in sheets the brook had become a surging torrent, and there was no chance of crossing back with any safety. And now from the meagre shelter he had found he could see no sign of any decrease in flow and the light was fading. The sun, wherever that was, was setting.

He saw a light further down the hill, on his side of the stream – a small cottage, and occupied. It seemed as if the rain had stalled to a heavy drizzle and he judged that he should go there for assistance. There would be a road to this house, and perhaps a bridge. It meant walking away from is car but for now that was out of reach.

It was open fields down to the cottage with just two walls, both with unlocked gates. There was a yard and an open garage with an old model Landrover 4-wheel drive truck parked there. It was just what he wanted to see. He went straight to the front door of the house and knocked.

A woman came to the door. He guessed that she was in her late 30’s, so younger than him. She was wearing a loose-fitting dress and an even looser over-sized cardigan displaying a cleavage. Her strawberry blonde hair was tied up in a large messy bun. She wore no makeup, but her skin was smooth and clear, and even though her facial features were large, her eyes were larger and seemed lively and intelligent.

“I am sorry to disturb you, but I find myself in some difficulties,” he said. And just as he did, and to confirm it, the heavens opened again, and there was no porch.

“You had better come inside,” she said in a husky voice, stepping away to let him in.

“You’re American?” he said.

“So are you, I’m guessing,” she said. “No Irishman would be out in this weather.”

“I was up at the ruins on the top of the hill and now I can’t get across the river to my car. It is in flood.”

“I can see it from here,” she said moving over to the window. She was wearing slippers. “I use a ford to cross as well, so I am sorry I will not be able to take you back to your car or the village. We are both stuck for now.”

“I couldn’t impose,” he said.

“You’re not imposing. I have just invited you in. Now I am going to offer you a drink and a meal, if you are hungry. I then I may need to offer you a sofa to sleep on for the night if this keeps up.” She looked at the rain splattering on the window with disdain.

“I really couldn’t …”. But she had already disappeared into the small kitchen.

“To be honest I am happy for the company,” she called out. “I don’t get much of that here. Do you like Irish Whiskey?”

“More every time I drink it,” he said.

She came out with a bottle and two glasses. And poured some of the liquor out. She handed a glass to him and raised hers.

“Here’s to Irish weather,” she said. “No wonder this place is so green.” The glasses met and the liquid was sipped, each matching the other.

“That is good,” he said. “Thank you.” It was good. Warming liquor and a warm home, with the foul weather outside.

“I must look awful, she said. “I was not expecting visitors. You may call me old-fashioned, but before dinner I must put on some lipstick.”

“You look great,” he said. She may have even blushed slightly, but she smiled in gratitude. But he meant it. She was attractive, but not in a girlish pretty way. There was strength in her face. A character.

“I am having pasta tonight,” she said. “There is plenty of sauce so add some more spaghetti and there will be more than enough for two.”

“Not potatoes, then?” he said. They both laughed. “How long have you been here – in Ireland?”

“I came here to write my book,” she said, waving her hand towards the end of the table nearest the window where a laptop lay closed shut. “I have to say that it has stalled a bit.”

“A writer? I am impressed,” he said. “Ireland is blessed with a literary tradition.”

“What about you?” she asked.

“I am a wanderer,” he said. “I have some patents that pay the bills so I travel. A home life is not for me. But I have to say as I sat up there on that hill in those ruins, I did reflect on the loneliness of this kind of life. Old places like that do make you think about who has passed through and how they lived.”

She lifted her glass. She said with a smile – “Irish whiskey makes every man a philosopher.” The glasses chimed and they drank again, emptying the glasses. She refilled them without reference to him. The bottle was not full when they started, but would be emptied after their meal.

The spoke of home and of the world, and of food and drink. They learned that they had much in common. They were both alone, well educated, well-travelled, not old or tired of life, not young and naïve.

“I have no spare bed,” she said as the last glasses were emptied. “I did mention the sofa, but as you may now appreciate, it would not be comfortable to sleep on. I have a large bed in a small warm bedroom. I won’t be offended if you decline, but I would be happy to share, as I feel that we know one another better than many would after only a few hours.”

“The bed sounds great, but I would need to understand exactly what you might expect of me?”

“Sleep if you need to,” she said. “Hold me if you like. Make love if that seems right. I have learned not to expect anything, or even hope for it.”

Her words puzzled him. He said: “Why would any man not want to make love to you? You are so beautiful.”

Before they ate, she had taken just a minute to apply some mascara and lipstick and had returned to the living room looking even more attractive than the moment she had opened the door to him. But after hours of looking at her he had become truly entranced. The way she played with tendrils of her hair as they fell, the way she smoothed her eyebrow, even the way her throat looked as she drank, fascinated him.

“I am surprised that you haven’t noticed,” she said. “Or perhaps you have notice but have not said.” She smiled with a tinge of sadness. “I am trans. I am a transwoman.”

His confusion genuinely surprised her. But it pleased her also. Still, she braced for the reaction. In other places she might have watched him walk out the door, but whether or not the rain had ceased while they ate and drank, it was certainly raining now. The escape route was cut off.

“Just so I know,” he said slowly. “If we were to share a bed, would I expect any surprises? Anything unexpected on a woman?”

“How very delicate of you,” she said. “I have had full surgery. I have a functioning vagina, although rarely used of late.”

“Well, let’s think about putting that right,” he said. He rose from the table.

“You have had women like me before?” she asked, rising with him.

“Not that I know of,” he said, moving towards her.

“I don’t want you to feel sorry for me,” she said. “I have made my choices. I have no regrets.”

“I regretted not crossing back over and getting into my car before the rain came down,” he said. “But now, like you, I do not regret that at all.” He put his hands on her shoulders.

“My name is Donna, by the way,” she said.

“I am Tom,” he said. And he kissed her.

She led him to the bedroom. The bed was large and took up most of the floorspace. She took only a few moments to get ready, including arranging lubrication. He took on seconds to shed his clothes. They made love slowly – not with the impatience of youth, but with just as much passion, or perhaps even more.

They lay together in the light of only the bedside lamp, so that he could explore her body. It was soft and kept more smooth and free of hair than most women. The hands were large and strong and one of them was holding his spent cock, neither tugging it or stroking but holding it as it should be held, to give it warmth and room to grow.

Her hair tumbled about was soft and scented with just a hint of natural curl. Her face was her face, boned but soft, forceful, but with large yielding lips and eyes that sparkled with desire.

They would make love again before they slept, and one more time when the sun rose, as it did marking not just the day but the end of the rain.

She held him and did not want to let go. But she saw the sun and said – “I will be able to drive you back to your car but let me make you breakfast first.”

“And then let me return the favor,” he said, kissing her on the forehead.

“I have given you nothing compared to what you have given me,” she said.

“Wrong,” he said. “Don’t tell me thin s is our first fight? If you will take me to my car then I will go back to the village and get a change of clothes, and by nightfall I will be ready for you to knock on my door. When you do, I will take you to dinner, fill you full of whiskey and then fill you with some of me all night, and then buy you breakfast.”

“I’m not fighting you. That sounds perfect,” she said.

She made coffee and they ate cereal. She dressed and drove him through the ford and up the hill to where his car was parked. She did not want him to get out, and he seemed not to want to go.

“I don’t have to come to you tonight,” she said. “You are a wanderer. You don’t want to be tied down.”

“Finish your book and I’ll make you a wanderer too,” he said.

“If only I could,” she said.

“I arrived yesterday before the sun set,” he said. “If you are not at my hotel before sunset then I will know that it was not meant to be.”

He kissed her tenderly and he was gone.

She drove back to the cottage with tears in her eyes. All she needed to do was finish the book.

She sat at the table and opened her laptop. She watched the cursor at its last full stop. The screen shone as white pixels taunting her with their blankness. It was usually matched by the blankness in her mind. But today there was sun instead of could and rain. She had a memory of laughter and stories. She had been around the world with Tom. And her vagina still tingled with the sense of him. And she felt his eyes as they looked into her soul. All that was missing in her book was love.

She started to type. The words flowed. And they flowed and they flowed. Punctuation and spelling were abandoned. Love ruled.

She did not even notice that the sun had set. She looked up and it was dark.

“Oh my God!” she said out loud.

She was not properly dressed. But she needed to be with him. She had a bag with essential items, and a she took a pair of heels. She rushed to the Landrover. For a moment it seemed that it would not start, but finally it spluttered into life. She crossed the ford and still had a stretch of stony dirt road before the tarmac. She had the name of the hotel, and he was Tom. That would be enough. She drove like fury.

The End

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