

Lock In

Short Stories for Grown Ups submission

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FX: AFTERNOON NOISES OF A QUIET BAR.
LAND-LINE RINGS 4-5 TIMES

RORY Hello, The Ship, Rory Speaking?

NOEL (Wheezy) Hello. The Ship. Rory Speaking. You trying to put manners on my bar?

RORY Naw Da. That's just how you answer a phone when yer a business.

NOEL (Wheezy) By giving out all your details? Say nothing til you hear more and say less when you do always done me grand.

RORY Grand? (SOTTO) You're in prison for receiving stolen goods. And I'm stood behind the bar in wellies again.

NOEL The Ship taking on water?

RORY I'm babysitting the last of the Summer Winos in three inches of water.

NOEL Get down off the cross we need the wood. Put me on loudspeaker. I want to speak with my people.

FX. NORMAL CALL CUTS TO LOUDSPEAKER

Here! Shouldn't half off you be at work?

FX: CHEERY RESPONSE FROM 4-5 REGULARS

(LOUDSPEAKER CONT'D) Thought so! The usual culprits. Quick hello just. I'm out on the veranda to get the signal and you could fry an egg on top of me. Keep her between the ditches! (CHUCKLES) Here am I still on louds-

FX. LOUDSPEAKER CUTS TO NORMAL CALL

NOEL CONT'D) -peaker?

RORY Not now.

NOEL You still putting up the postcards?

RORY Aye. San Sebastian landed the other day. You painted a very evocative picture for someone who's never been.

NOEL (WHEEZY) Look, I need a favour off ye.

RORY You alright? You sound beat to the ropes.

NOEL I'm grand. Just out of the Hot Yoga s'all. The cellmate Morris takes the class. Lethal for flushing the toxins out but you're made to work for it. Turned a corner in here, Son. Got some perspective. Off the coffin nails and all.

RORY You're off the smokes?

NOEL Well I'm Vaping...but it's a start.

RORY Who quits smoking Inside? Is it not the currency?

NOEL Appreciate the support Son.

RORY Sorry Da. Just mind the only time you ever left the bar was for the duty-free run.

NOEL I know. It's mad. I'm down for five. I'll serve two likely but if I can stay off them I'll maybe live an extra ten. Cashback!

RORY Can't fault your logic.

NOEL It's easier in here. There's a bit of a support network. Big Lorenzo got in all these special oils. A pile of different strains and flavours. Mad what they can do now.

RORY You've been smoking Special Oils?

NOEL Oh aye! The whole wing's chilled way out since Lorenzo got in.

RORY Is that right? Next you'll be after Monster Much and chocolate bars in your care package.

NOEL Speaking of which...I told a friend you could sneak something in.

RORY And why would you say a thing like that?

NOEL It's better to ask for forgiveness than permission.

RORY Naw. The expression is "Its EASIER to ask for forgiveness than permission."

NOEL Potato, Tomato.

RORY No chance. I'm already doing you enough of a favour minding the bar for ye. Speaking of which, I was looking something. Paperwork mainly. Like, where is it all?

NOEL The office. Where the mops and that are kept.

RORY The mop cupboard. Da, the closest thing to paperwork I found in there was a number written inside a Wispa wrapper.

NOEL Don't be ringing that!

RORY Da, we need a plumber. One who doesn't want paid in pints. The tab book's bigger than the Magna Carta. I want to put in for a business loan. We need renovations.

NOEL I've always been a cash in hand man. The accounts are all in here. (tap tap)

RORY Are you tapping your own head?

NOEL Aye. Besides, what would anyone want to change about The Ship?

RORY Thought we could hang a door on the cubicle in the gents for a start.

NOEL Internet's made your generation all prudes. Nothing about the Ship needs to change. It's an Institution.

RORY Naw. Most of our regulars have spent time in an institution.
There's a difference. Da, times have changed. People need a reason to go to a pub nowadays.

NOEL Beyond Alcoholism?

RORY There's less and less of it. They aren't making any new Charlie's.

NOEL That's good. (BEAT) I suppose. How is Charlie?

RORY He's started using us as a reference on job applications again. Da. Where's the books? I need to sort this place. We're the only bar in town below sea level. Claire's hardly in.

NOEL Trouble in paradise? Hope not. Here I need to head. Haiku workshop's on in ten.

RORY Haiku Workshop?!

NOEL I know. I swear I'm using muscles in here I never knew I had. Did you know it can take a whole lifetime to get one just right.

RORY Well sure ye've time on your hands.

NOEL Clever. So you're good for the favour then?

RORY Well-

NOEL Good man. Your bloods worth bottling!

RORY Naw Da. I -

FX: NOEL hangs up.

RORY -(DEFEATED) never agreed to anything.

FX: MOBILE PHONE RINGS. CLASSIC NOKIA RINGTONE.

RORY Uh... Hello? Who's this?

NOEL (SOTTO) Keep it down. Morris is experimenting with Lucid Dreaming.

RORY Da is that you? Here how are you ringing me?

NOEL Me and Morris have a wee Nokia 3310 on a timeshare.

RORY Naw, people have timeshares on flats in Tenerife or caravans in Bundoran. Not on Nokias.

NOEL Wee heads up just. Mickey'll drop some oil in to you Sunday.

RORY Tell him not to bother, I never agreed to nothin'.

NOEL Son, I wouldn't normally ask -

RORY You still haven't!

NOEL (IGNORES) -but it's for Lorenzo. Rory...I think the cheese has slid off the cracker with this fella.

RORY In what way?

NOEL Wee things. No one can talk during Bargain Hunt. And I mean not at all. He basically controls the canteen menu. Whatever fad diet he's on, we're all on. Goji berries are not a dessert. What's wrong with a bit of dream topping? Sure he's made Movember compulsory.

RORY It's not even November Da.

NOEL I don't know if he knows that. It's like a Burt Reynolds impersonator society in here. Poor Fitzy has the wispiest mucca ye've ever seen.

RORY You make jail sound like a bad stag do you can't leave.

NOEL Look son, Lorenzo's not a boy you say no to easily. He wants some Special Oil got in. Vanilla Spouse or something.

RORY Can it not be posted in?

NOEL Screws can't know about this. Visitation table job son.

RORY There's more chance of Charlie getting that Deputy Headmaster job.

NOEL Good knowing ye then.

RORY God but you love drama. For a price then. Lorenzo's Oil for the Books.

NOEL Sure they're all in here. (tap tap)

RORY Stop tapping your head when I cannae see ye. Has to be something written down somewhere. Tell me where and I'll do it.

NOEL Yer very ruthless got. I mind the days when you were as innocent as the parish disco.

RORY Apple doesn't fall far I hear. I help you boys trip the light fantastic and you help me keep the lights in the bar on. Deal?

NOEL Deal. Accounts for the Oil..

FX: KNOCK KNOCK ON CELL DOOR

GUARD Lights out means Lights out!

NOEL Here can I not even say my prayers! (SOTTO) Night Son.

FX: Text Alert

NOEL Has the Spy come in from the cold?

FX: Text Alert

RORY If you mean has Mickey dropped off the oil then yes.

FX: Text Alert

NOEL Secretion.

FX: Text Alert (marginally quicker)

NOEL Discretion. Sorry. Autocorrect. Use code from now on.

FX: Text Alert

RORY AYE. The eagle has landed. The Moscow winds blow cold.
I know why the jailbird sings.

FX: Text Alert

NOEL Aye, like that. Smiley Face.

FX: Visiting room. Multiple conversations overlapping.

RORY walking to Noel's table

RORY pulling up a plastic chair over a hard floor.

NOEL Son.

RORY Da.

NOEL Y'alright? You're white as a sheet.

RORY I'm grand. I'm grand. I'm grand. What's with the 'tache?

NOEL Sure I told you. Lorenzo made Movember compulsory.
Though the fact I can grow one in between your visits might
tell ye how infrequent they are

RORY Doesn't suit ye. You look less trustworthy than usual. I see
what you mean but. It's like being in the Ulster Museum of
facial hair in here. Your man's Fu Manchu is good though.

NOEL What's with you anyway? You're pure shook.

RORY Weird vibe just. (BEAT) Usual stuff. Sign in, thumb scan, pat-down. I'm nervous enough with that on me and then the screw winks at us and tells us you have to work at relationships.

NOEL Tall boy? Fifties? Weird Lips?

RORY Aye!

NOEL Officer Clemence. That's my fault. Literally mentioned in passing bout you thinking Claire was going off you. The screws have little to entertain themselves with in here. Ye'd hear less gossip on the back row of the Bingo Bus.

RORY Are you serious? I'm on my last nerve here.

NOEL So you've it on ye?

RORY Casual as that aye? I get the accounts, Lorenzo gets his oil.

FX: Laughter from an adjoining table.

They're enjoying themselves.

NOEL That's Lorenzo and his son. Look at the suit the young fella has on. You're rocking your usual jeans and jumper combo I see.

RORY That's Lorenzo!?

NOEL Aye! Keep it down a bit too.

RORY Ronnie Corbett there! Thon's the boy you can't say no to? You're being bullied by Tiny Tim Da!

NOEL (SOTTO) Naw Son. I'm being bullied by yer man over there... and that boy... and a few others. They all run for Lorenzo. It's his show.

FX: More laughter from Lorenzo's table

RORY Sorry Da. (BEAT) Deal still on?

NOEL Oil for books. Aye.

RORY It's at your feet. Rolled it down me bags as soon as I came in.

NOEL Sneaky Sod. You're a natural.

RORY I googled "contraband - handy tips."

NOEL That's clever. We could get a wee business going.

RORY First and last time Da.

NOEL How am I supposed to get it, if it's at me feet?

RORY Just bend down like you're tying your laces.

NOEL What laces? I'm wearing Velcro.

RORY Course ye are. Figure it out!

NOEL Do a distraction.

RORY Do a distraction?

NOEL Pretend you have asthma! Fake an attack!

RORY I do have asthma! Ye not mind hiding my inhaler every time I played football. Kept telling me to walk it off!

NOEL Did I? Sorry son. I'm not proud of that.

RORY Look Da just tell me where the books are. The Ship is literally sinking and I'm feared Claire is heading for the lifeboat.

NOEL Son. I've a wee confession to make. There's no books.

RORY No books. Nothing at all?

NOEL It genuinely was always (tap tap) in here.

RORY How is seeing you tap your head worse?
You wrote nothing down?

NOEL You've brains to burn. That's your thing. Only thing I can do is get on with ones. So that's what I do. I don't write things down.

RORY Except that number in the Wispa wrapper!

NOEL You still have that?

RORY Binned it.

NOEL Shame.

RORY I risked joining you in here for nothing then?

NOEL I know we've some strange laws in this part of the world,
Son... but I'm pretty sure beard oil is legal.

RORY Beard oil? Ye think I'm simple? You said the whole wing's
"chilled out since Lorenzo got in?!" Ye's are all Vaping hippy
lettuce aren't ye's?

NOEL Son, I would never put you at risk like that. Yer me flesh and
blood.

RORY Beard Oil's legal! Sure it could've been posted in!

NOEL Aye but Lorenzo wanted it a surprise for Fitzy! The wife is
leaving him and his tache' is woeful, the oil will give it volume.
Bit of body like. Just a pick me up for the lad. Sure I told you
the screws are a pack of gossips. Would've ruined the whole
surprise.

RORY You any idea the stress you put me through Da?! I'm only
trying to keep a hold of the woman I love like!

NOEL You've nowt to worry about. She loves the bones of you.

RORY And how would you know that?

NOEL She told me as much when she was sat where you are now
not two days ago.

RORY What? Claire came to visit you?

NOEL She's up twice a week! Son, you might have to live with the fact she was calling into the bar to see me as much as you.

RORY Hardly!

NOEL She's worried about your scunned bake. You used to be good craic.

RORY And that's it? That's why I'm hardly seeing her?

NOEL That's it. That girl is hands down my favourite thing about you by the way. Don't mess it up.

RORY Cheers. What would you and Claire even have to talk about?

NOEL YOU!

FX Chair scrapes back. RORY leaving.

FX TEXT ALERT

RORY

Hey Da. Claire called in. Thanks for putting in the good word.

FX TEXT ALERT

UNKNOWN

Sunday is my day with the phone.

FX TEXT ALERT

RORY

Morris? It's Noel's boy. Rory. My Da get the oil ok?

FX TEXT ALERT

MORRIS

Aye. Fitzy's looking well. Full on Magnum P.I. Glowing he is.

FX TEXT ALERT

RORY

Sorry. Tell my Da the regulars asking after him. I'll be up next week.

FX TEXT ALERT

MORRIS

Will do. Happy to hear about you and Claire.

FX TEXT ALERT

RORY

Thanks Morris. Aye you have to work at relationships.

FX TEXT ALERT

MORRIS You do. The worst jail is a closed heart.

FX TEXT ALERT

MORRIS BTW your Da said you'd have a job for me at the bar in 3 to 6 months.

FX TEXT ALERT

MORRIS Behaviour dependent.

FX TEXT ALERT

RORY Night Morris.

THE END