

Tears Over Giuliano

Marc Edward DiPaolo (April 28, 2008)



When Colin sees the effect that Eileen's fling with Giuliano has on me, he decides to intervene.



It had been several days since Colin tinkered with the keyboards outside the music shop where he'd impressed the beautiful Italian babes. He'd grown weary of trying to recreate that success after several failed attempts, but he was sure this time he'd be able to draw a few hot chicks out of hiding. There was something in the air tonight. There was an atmosphere of change, as if everything was coming to a head, and he wanted to be a part of it. Besides, he needed something to do to amuse himself while his friend was fooling around with Eileen. (What a frickin' bore that was.) And so, Colin decided to stop off in his room for some sheet music, totally unprepared for the sight that greeted him.

The bedroom was a yin-yang of chaos and order, with Marc's half of the room the picture of destruction, and Colin's half as perfectly pristine as he had left it. The bedcovers had been violently torn off Marc's mattress and hurled into the corner of the room, leaving three empty suitcases in sole possession of the top of the bed. There was clothing hanging from the bedpost, the lamp, the front door, the closet, and the end table. Souvenir posters, postcards, and miniatures were scattered about the floor like spilled bits of candy. One randomly tossed shirt seemed to land at exactly the midpoint of the room, refusing to stray any farther over to Colin's side for fear of being accused of invading Colin's sanctuary and dirtying it up. It was as if a violent storm had briefly erupted in the bedroom, focusing its entire wrath on Marc's possessions while maintaining just enough self-control to stop itself from succumbing to the temptation to vent its fury on Colin's luggage as well.

In the midst of the wreckage sat Marc, his back turned against the side of his bed, his arms hugging his legs to his chest, his forehead resting on his knees. "Sorry about all that," he muttered, his face still buried against his jeans. "Lost a bit of control there. Won't happen again."

"Oh, man." Colin looked first at his side of the room, then at Marc's and scratched his head. He tried to figure out what might have caused Marc to go on this strange rampage. It didn't take long for him to strike on the right answer. "Eileen running hot and cold again?"

Marc looked up at the room, amazed at his own display of frustration. "Look at this place. It's the work of a nut. I don't do things like this normally. This is totally out of character for me. I'm going crazy, aren't I?"

"I don't blame you." Colin walked over to his end table and opened the drawer, rummaging through his music for songs to play.



"Like Baldrick, I had a cunning plan," Marc said, smiling to himself over an inside joke. "It backfired. I tried to provoke Eileen into pursuing me and all it did was chase her farther way."

"What happened?"

Marc chuckled. "Let's put it this way. Me and Eileen aren't speaking each other's language. I'm talking feelings and living for the moment, and she's talking 'reason' and planning for tomorrow. Talk about sense and sensibility! I feel like Dr. McCoy trying to make love to Mr. Spock's more stoic twin sister."

Colin pulled out the three pieces of sheet music he was most interested in and returned the others to the drawer. "Please stop with the Black Adder and Star Trek references so I can understand what you're talking about."

"I dunno. Maybe I'm the problem. Maybe I'm not handsome enough."

"Nonsense," Colin scolded. Suddenly worried about his sword, Colin peered under his bed and found it resting where he had left it, concealed within a large plastic poster tube. Impulsively, he scooped the tube out from its hiding place and decided that he'd be taking his sword out with him. In case any girls showed up to watch him play, he could always impress them further by showing off this lovely weapon that he had purchased at a Florentine antiques store.

"Is it?" Marc asked rhetorically. "Women have given me all kinds of 'reasons' they won't date me. I'm too religious. I'm not religious enough. I move too quickly. I'm too slow. I'm a member of the wrong political party. I don't like the tv show Friends and I should. Unless, of course, those are all rationalizations to explain away a lack of physical chemistry.... Unless, of course, those religious and political tensions are strong enough to defeat a genuine attraction... Unless ... I don't know! How is any of this supposed to make me feel good about myself?"



"Now, I can't stand talk like that. That's stupid stuff." Colin adjusted his collar, noticing at that moment how hot it was. The weighty conversation was not the only thing making the room stuffy. It was a humid night out. He went over to the window to let a breeze in. His hand was on the lock, primed to open it, when he saw Eileen standing on the street below talking to an Italian paratrooper. Although Colin couldn't hear what Eileen and the soldier were saying to one another, their body language spoke volumes. Friends didn't stand as close together as they were standing. They were already more than friends.

Uh-oh, Colin thought.

"Maybe I'm just boring and sexless," Marc thought aloud, trying to sound as if he were analyzing himself dispassionately, from afar, but each word was soaked in tortured emotion. "I've always known it. That's why I hate reading stuff like *Madame Bovary* and *The Awakening* and *A Room with a View*. I'm the bad guy in all of them: the boring, nerdy bourgeois husband or suitor who the woman tosses over for the dumb handsome guy with the enormous ... sex appeal."

Colin had a moment of hope when the soldier grabbed for Eileen's waist and she pulled away, pointing towards the hotel. Colin couldn't tell if she was objecting to the advance because she wanted to be loyal to Marc or because she was afraid they'd get caught. Colin wondered if he should tell Marc what he was looking at. He didn't relish the thought of being the one to break the news, but he certainly didn't want to be the one to withhold it.

"Unfortunately, it's kind of hard to be an English major and not read four thousand books about why adultery is the greatest thing since sliced bread," Marc rambled on. "Being a middle class nerd myself, these books sure don't make me feel good about my prospects keeping my prospective girlfriend happy and sexually satisfied, that's for sure. They've got me convinced the only way I can make a sexy, independent woman wet is to toss her in a swimming pool."

The soldier grabbed Eileen again, seizing her roughly in his arms and kissing her passionately. All her prospects ended in that moment and her body melted against the paratrooper's.

Marc uncurled himself from his fetal position and pulled his protesting body off the floor. He was already becoming more himself again. It seemed that wrecking the room and complaining to Colin had the therapeutic effect needed to return him slowly to his old self. "But that kind of talk is ridiculous, isn't it? It's defeatist. I should just be happy that I had the time with her that I did. She is



very beautiful after all.”

And a very enthusiastic kisser, Colin thought, watching Eileen and the paratrooper continue exchanging lusty kisses. “Um, Marcus?”

“Yeah?” Marc walked casually over to the window, curious to know what Colin was staring at.

Colin held up a hand to stop Marc from going any closer to the window. “I don’t know if you want to see it, but Eileen’s outside making out with some Italian guy.”

“What are you talking about?” Marc frowned and brushed past Colin to see for himself. He looked down just long enough to identify Eileen and get a good glimpse of the man’s face. Then he retreated from the window as if it reeked of skunk spray.

“You’re right. I really didn’t want to see that.” Marc’s expression told Colin that the recovery his friend had been on the verge of making had just come to a crashing end.

“Come on, man,” Colin said, frustration now filling his usually deadpan voice. “Don’t get depressed. Get angry. Women get depressed about stuff like this and blame themselves. Men get angry and blame other people. That’s what you should be doing. It’s her fault. It’s that frickin’ paratrooper’s fault. It ain’t your fault.”

“I’m gonna go for a walk in a little while and get some air,” Marc announced. “I’ll wait until they’re gone first, of course.”

“Wanna go to that Irish pub?” Colin suggested eagerly. “I haven’t been there yet.”



“Nah,” Marc waved vaguely. “I figure I should just get some time alone.”

“You can’t be alone at a time like this. Come on. Come out with me and get blasted. You’ll feel better if you’re drunk.”

Marc sighed. “Maybe later. Maybe I’ll meet you there later.”

Colin shook his head slowly. “Okay. If that’s what you want. I’m going to tinker with the keyboards a bit. I’ll head over to the Irish pub around ten o’clock. We’ll meet there, okay?”

“Maybe,” Marc replied. “Maybe. You go out and have fun. Forget about me for now.”

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Eileen slipped furtively into the hotel, casting her eyes about to see if anyone was about who might have caught her with Giuliano. She hadn’t intended to kiss the swarthy soldier, even though she had been attracted to him from the outset, because she didn’t want to do anything that would make her feel as if she’d done something unfair to Marc. She had dodged several of Giuliano’s advances, including his none-too-subtle invitations to go straight to bed, out of respect for Marc, but her resolve had broken down at the last possible instant in the worst possible location. Giuliano had pleaded for a goodnight kiss, and she could not turn him down, no matter how hard she tried.

Much to her dismay, Eileen discovered Drusilla and Adnan dining together at a table right by the entrance display window. Given that they were both staring at her with odd expressions on their faces, Eileen knew that they had seen everything. “Hello,” Eileen said bashfully.



"Hi," Drusilla said.

Adnan remained silent.

"That was Giuliano," Eileen explained.

"Looks like a handsome guy." The coolness in Drusilla's tone brought all the nausea that Giuliano had dispelled from Eileen's stomach return in one great rush. She thinks I'm scum, thought Eileen. She thinks I've betrayed Marc. But how could she jump to that conclusion without hearing my side of the story?

Knowing that the longer she lingered in the restaurant the more panicked she'd become, Eileen left the couple behind and proceeded upstairs to her room. She wasn't looking forward to it, but she knew she'd have to finish things with Marc, break it off cleanly so that she could pursue Giuliano without any feelings of guilt. Giuliano would only be able to receive her for the next two days before having to return to his post, but that would be enough. She had arranged to meet him in two hours before the D'Uomo and she hoped her conversation with Marc would be over before then. Giuliano had promised to write to her when she returned to America, so even though it would be a long distance relationship, and somewhat impractical, she was already planning to fight to keep in contact with him once she returned to America.

Her mind was still reeling from everything that had happened to her when she met Colin on the steps. He was clutching a large plastic tube in his left hand and had a folder of music pinned under his arm. She tried to squeeze past him with a mere, "hello," but he blocked her with his arm.

"I just want to say, you really are a dumb slut, you know that?"



Eileen's breath caught in her mouth and her eyes widened. "What?"

"You think that guy's interested in anything more than just screwing you and dumping you out on the street?" Colin sneered. "There's no difference between him and all the other horny Italian guys that have been muscling in on you and Drusilla all month. 'Hello, beautiful American ladies. Would you like a rose for a beautiful American ladies?' He's only handsomer than those oversexed stalkers, that's all."

What, did the whole hotel see me with Giuliano? Are they all going to vilify me and stand in Marc's corner? Am I going to get crucified for this one little mistake? "You don't know what you're talking about," Eileen shot back. "Now let me pass."

"All Marc wanted to do was make you happy. And he would have. He's a real gentleman, with a real interest in getting to know who you really are. This other guy doesn't give a flying frig about you. He won't be buying you flowers, I can guarantee it. He ain't the type. But you're willing to ditch Marc for this gigolo. You're a real moron, you know that?"

"You have no right to say those things to me!" Eileen yelled. "Who do you think you are, talking to me like that?"

Colin leaned forward, nearly touching his enraged face to Eileen's. "Did I hurt your feelings? Good. I want to see you look crushed and miserable."

Eileen grit her teeth together angrily. "You bastard."

"What? Do I sound mean and heartless? Maybe it's because I saw the look on Marc's face when he found out about you and the soldier. It's kind of hard to feel anything but disgust for you after seeing the consequences of your stupidity firsthand."



“Consequences?” Hot tears flushed Eileen’s eyes. “He knows already? It just happened!”

“He knows.”

Eileen slumped against the wall, mortified that she couldn’t stop from crying in front of her antagonist.

Colin paused to look with satisfaction at her miserable expression. Then, scowling again, he walked down the rest of the stairs and headed outside to play his music.

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Twenty minutes later, when Eileen knocked on Marc’s bedroom door, he wouldn’t answer. She tried for several minutes to get him to open up, but he was resolute.

Distressed, she left the hotel and took a long evening walk once again, speaking to no one as she went out into the night...

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