

Legendary

In the aftermath of my wife Irene's lingering death from MS, our son Duncan had invited me to visit him in Perth, Western Australia.

After a chat with my business partners, it was agreed I should take a sabbatical year from our accountancy practice. We all knew this was a euphemism for my early retirement. I'd done my shift for the firm over the previous two decades, building it up from a struggling three-man outfit to a flourishing fifty-partner money-making machine, with offices throughout the UK and the United Arab Emirates. Brian, my Senior Associate, was given his long overdue promotion to Junior Partner with a view to buying out my remaining share of the equity over the next three years.

In Perth, after a few weeks getting under Duncan and Noreen's feet, I took the hint and decided to travel around the coast in a small camper van, extending my trip to include New Zealand, covering nearly 20,000 miles in six months; about half the circumference of the earth. I had always wanted to travel but Irene's long illness had restricted us to short trips around Scotland.

When I got home to Bearsden in June, I was still jet-lagged after the two-day trip. I'd travelled the long way around via Los Angeles and New York, hoping to meet up with my former PA, only to discover Jane had moved to Florida with her new husband.

As I stepped from the taxi and looked up at the rambling old house, it looked tired, uncared for, lonely. I was dreading the days to come. I would not even have the choir as it had finished for the summer. The garden was like a jungle. While I was away, my neighbour Elspeth had volunteered to look after things, clear the mail and so on but she's not much of a gardener. My sister Moira had said, with Irene gone, Elspeth had found herself a new 'project' travelling across Glasgow to East Kilbride every day to care for an aging cousin. It's what Elspeth does best, caring for the sick and infirm.

As I stepped into my hallway, my phone rang.

'Hello, Colin Masterton speaking.'

'Hi, Jenka Markell, Tommo Macintyre's sister.'

'Sorry, I think you must have misdialled.'

'I know. I know. I got your number from . . .'

'No, really, stop! I think you have the wrong person. Goodbye.'

The voice had a South-East of England twang to it but there was a hint of Glasgow there too, something familiar.

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A minute later the phone rang again. I let it go to the answering machine then noticed it was flashing 'Full'. After ten rings, I picked up.

'Hello, Colin Masterton speaking.'

'Hi, Jenka here again. Look, I'm not a sales call, honestly. I've been trying to reach you for ages. Did you not get my messages?'

'No, but I've been away.'

'Yes. I know. I know. Moira posted everything on Facebook.'

'Did you say Tom Macintyre?'

'Yes, so you do remember. Tommo was in your class at Douglaston Academy. He was in your band, right? You used to come to our house to rehearse, in our garage. And play Scalextrics in the attic. I'm his sister. Remember me now? Course you do! I played piano and wanted to be in the band but well, you moved away, remember?'

Even after nearly a forty-year gap, my face turned red with embarrassment at the memory of a tall, slim, red-haired girl playing a piano naked while I watched from a cupboard.

I had been a spotty-faced youth with a cracking voice, newly fourteen, a budding guitarist styling myself on Eric Clapton, my father's favourite singer. In my memory of her, Tom's sister had been sixteen with small, pointed breasts, huge, dark nipples and a dark, curly bush. She had an oddly attractive narrow face with a disturbing inward turn in one eye. Jenny had desperately wanted to join our band but her idea of music was Cliff Richard and The Shadows and I had vetoed it.

The whole scene flashed back, as fresh as if it had happened yesterday. Every time I hear Cliff singing, it sparks this erotic voyeuristic memory. . . .

It had been a hot summer's day, the first of the long holidays from school. Jenny and Moira, my older sister, were friends. Tom and I had tagged along, the four of us ending up swimming in the River Allander. Not exactly swimming, more larking about. Originally, we had just been wading but the splashing and ducking started and soon we were soaked. Jenny had been wearing a thin tee-shirt, no bra. Under his breath, Tom had made ribald remarks at my condition, obvious inside my tight shorts.

As we trailed the two girls back to his house, Tom had promised his sister always played her piano nude. In exchange for a Scalextric's lap counter, (I got two for my birthday), the deal was done.

While Jenny was taking a shower, Tom had smuggled me into the tiny cupboard in an eaves space in her room beside the water tank and handed me the door key which I used to lock myself in. Closeted in the dusty darkness with the resident spiders and their webs, I waited for her, kneeling high on an old cushion, one eye glued to the keyhole, my

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heart thumping, my mouth dry, my hand rubbing against the bulge inside my shorts, already aroused in anticipation.

When Jenny entered the room, wrapped in a towel, her hair was wet and I could see rivulets of water trickling sinuously down the curves of her long neck, disappearing behind the towel. After passing my hiding place, she rose to her tiptoes and, holding the towel high against her throat like a veil, pirouetted away from me to the far side of the room, revealing only her semi-naked back at each turn. Stopping short of her dressing table, holding a corner of the towel, she stretched one arm above her head, twirled slowly, wrapping herself in the towel then let it slip across her as it headed for the floor, leaving her naked. Frustratingly, because of the way the towel had moved as she turned, I saw only her back.

Unexpectedly, she skipped sideways across the towel in a quick knee-lifting Irish dancing movement before slowly stooping, reaching down elegantly with one hand to pick it up, the other arm reaching upwards behind her in what I took to be a ballet movement. During this slow retrieval, I was treated to a full view of her pink backside and one small, firm, pointed, creamy breast and the large purple-brown circle of swollen flesh which surrounded her left nipple. As she rose to her full height, she then turned towards me but, at the same time lifting the towel, again concealing her body.

My penis was rock hard and I was afraid I would spoil the moment by pre-ejaculating before I saw the full nakedness Tom had promised.

Using both hands, she lifted the towel up to her head and rubbed her long hair vigorously for several minutes. As she did so, I wondered if she might be enjoying the sensation of her breasts jiggling against the roughness of the towel. In response, I began to rub myself again, being careful to move across the fabric of my shorts only lightly and slowly. The sensation was amazing, making me feel slightly dizzy.

When she was satisfied her hair was dry, she twisted away from me, throwing the towel casually onto her bed, ending the turn in a dramatic pose, her hands meeting high above her head. After a few seconds, she leapt upwards, landing with her legs wide apart before leaning slowly forwards away from me. This revealed the splayed curves of her upper thighs and her dark purple-brown anus with its pink lips. Beyond, in shadow, I thought I could see a hint of dark pubic hair but, as this may have been wishful thinking, I could not be sure. She moved slightly, dropping a shoulder, revealing the warm brown tip of her right nipple. At this point I stopped rubbing, saving myself, certain I would soon see what I was hoping for.

Jenny held this position for what may have only been a minute but seemed much longer. As I watched, her head rotated slowly over her shoulder towards me. When it seemed as if she was looking directly at me, I rocked back on my heels into the darkness,

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cracking the back of my skull against the timber of the roof truss. In panic, I stopped breathing and waited in the silence. A bird thudded onto the roof above me and scratched across the slates before uttering a scolding cry and flying off; probably a magpie. When I dared to look again, her face was still angled towards me but her eyes were closed and there was a tiny, smug smile playing on her lips.

It was at this point I began to think she knew I was in the tank room watching her and she was performing her tease for my benefit. Yet again I searched for a clue in her eyes but they remained firmly closed. This notion she knew I was there all along has haunted me since.

With a sigh, she collapsed onto a stool in front of her dressing table mirror. As she was brushing out her wiry reddish hair, she reached to switch on a tape player and sang along in a sweet, high voice to a selection of Cliff Richard songs.

I was grateful for the masking cover provided by this singing as I wriggled out of my shorts and Y-fronts and spread my knees slightly apart to free up my hand movement.

Still naked, Jenny kept brushing until her hair was shining then carefully pleated it into a single pigtail which she tied off with a small, black ribbon bow. With her hair done, I watched her reflection in the mirror as she applied make-up, quite garishly, using dark eyeshadow then a slash of crimson lipstick before squirting perfume lavishly, filling the room with a heady, spicy scent which leaked through the keyhole into the cupboard, causing me to fight off then duck down to stifle a sneeze into my Y-fronts.

When I recovered and looked again, I gasped, stunned. Jenny was standing naked in full view of the keyhole, so close I could have touched her by pushing open the door. Immediately my heart was thumping, my breath rasping, my penis throbbing, leaping. I think I grunted, aware this sound might have been loud enough to be heard.

Her hands were cupping her breasts, rolling her thumbs across her nipples then squeezing them into points, as if presenting them to me. I checked her face. Her eyes were closed, her mouth slightly open, her tongue licking across the inside edge of her upper lip. She began to tug at her nipples. I removed my hand from my penis and waited.

After a minute or so, her right hand wandered away from its nipple and feathered down to her thick, dark auburn bush. Using her fingers, she combed upwards through the still damp pubic hair and, while doing so, heel-toed her feet apart. I felt a seepage from my penis drip onto the back of my wrist. I sobbed, grateful that Cliff was in full song. Yet again, I looked at her face but she had leaned back. Perhaps her eyes were closed, I'm not sure. Her lips were moving and I thought she whispered "Colin, Colin" but perhaps I imagined this. More wishful thinking.

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With her body arched back, away from me, her knees bent and angled wide apart, Jenny moved her hand down and slipped her two middle fingers onto the lips of her vagina, stroking up and down gently as she began to rock her hips towards me, slowly thrusting backwards and forwards. It was time to put my hand to work again, which I did, gently at first. Soon she was stroking faster, rocking her hips into her hand, her wrist arched, her fingers probing deep inside. I was also stroking faster and could feel the surge coming and I had to lean back to get proper purchase. When she gave a squealy moan, I'm almost certain I grunted. My eyes closed, my head spinning, I wanted the moment to last for ever, squeezing and tugging at my penis through the ecstasy, pumping out semen by the gallon, splashing against the inside of the tank room door.

I always liked to think we climaxed together.

I leaned forward to check through the keyhole, searching her face but her eyes were still closed. All I saw was a cheeky smile; a smile which has stayed with me, recalled to my lonely bed during the years of celibacy forced on us by Irene's illness.

Next, Jenny leapt up onto her toes, pirouetted away, clicked off the tape player and moved to her piano, sitting in profile, playing slowly through her practise pieces, naked as Tom had predicted. In my memory, she was note-perfect. However, her piano session was cut short by a call from downstairs:

"Jennifer Macintyre, will you hurry up! It's time to go to Granny's birthday party."

At this summons, she thumped down the lid and standing facing me, sashayed into tiny, dark purple knickers which had a pink heart embroidered on the front panel above the crotch. She then bent forward to finger her perfect creamy breasts into the cups of a black lacy bra. At this I could feel my penis stirring, becoming ready again for action. My ardour was deflated when her perfect slim body was covered by a figure-hugging red tee-shirt, followed by skin-tight three-quarter-length yellow trousers. She climbed onto bright red spiked heels and, after a final moue and slow twirl in front of her wardrobe mirror, applied a final slick of lipstick and turned away, flying through the door and out of my life.

Sex on perfect legs was the phrase which popped into my mind as I cajoled my penis for another go, my eyes shut, reliving the whole scene from the top.

When I heard the car wheels crunch on the driveway, I scabbled out, loped through to the shower room, cleaned myself up, enjoyed a long, long pee, put on my shorts and stuffed my stained undies into my pocket, locked the tank room door, dropped the key into Tom's Scalextric's box as agreed and scuttled home, my head filled with lustful thoughts and already planning another encounter with Jenny. Perhaps we could find a way

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of meeting somewhere alone, perhaps if she came to ours to stay over with Moira, I could sneak her into my room in the middle of the night.

Later that afternoon, closeted in my bedroom with the curtains drawn and my door wedged shut, Eric Clapton playing at low volume, I re-lived the whole scene time after time, eventually deciding Jenny had sung whimsically, longingly.

Our possible romance was not to be. Jenny had spent the rest of the summer at a special music school in Yorkshire. My father, who was in the Army, was sent to Fort George in Inverness and my connection with Tom, Jenny and Milngavie had been broken.

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'Colin. Colin. Are you still there?'

'Ah, em, yes. Yes, Jenny. How are you?'

'Very well, thanks. Look, I'm so, so sorry about Irene. Did Moira say the three of us were Facebook friends?'

'No. No actually, she didn't. Irene was on Facebook constantly. Not my scene, really. Towards her end, it was her greatest solace, I suppose.'

'Yes, Irene was such a lovely person. She was so kind and wise. She was a great help to me, I can tell you. You must miss her dreadfully. Do you, Colin?'

'Yes, but in some ways, it was a relief, for both of us. Her long years of suffering from MS was like a dreadful nightmare but I'm trying to put it all behind me. I think the initial guilt has almost gone, you know, why me, why was I not the one to suffer. I try only to focus on the happy times. Duncan has been a great help. We have been Skype-ing for years now, such a wonderful invention, don't you agree?'

'Oh yes, and Facetime. Yes. You know, the funeral, I really wanted to be there, for Irene's funeral, to support you, show my respects but I was in Court that morning, settling my divorce. Curt, the bastard, was being awkward and would not agree to a postponement. Anyway, all settled, thank God.'

'Curt Markell? The one whose father owned the printworks? The boy who lived in the big house out at Mugdock with stables and dozens of horses?'

'Yeah, remember our band, *The Mack Marks*? Anyway, all that's in the past. Best forgotten, yeah? More importantly, how are you now? Did you like it, Australia? And how was your son Duncan and his wife? Noreen, is it? Is it six or seven kids they have? I'm sorry, I've lost count.'

'Yes Noreen, lovely girl. Strong opinions, very direct. It's six, all boys with another due in three months, a girl at last, Duncan says. They make a lovely couple and the grandkids, well, they are great, actually, full of beans, all 57 varieties in my opinion. The thing is, the whole family lead such busy lives, I felt I was holding them back, cramping their style so I hired a camper van and took off, to explore.'

'Yeah, I know, I know. Moira posted everything on Facebook. Images of all the postcards you sent her. Legendary!'

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'Yes, it is an amazing place. Such a vast country. But I have to admit, it was a bit lonely. Of course, everyone I met was friendly but well, it's just not the same when you're on your own, is it, Jenny? You need someone to share these experiences with, don't you? Really, it's so nice to hear from you, a lovely friendly voice from the past. So, so nice.'

'Yes, I know, I know. I'd love to hear all about your trip sometime. We toured in Australia once. Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide. Didn't make it over to Perth though. All those nice beaches and luscious red wines. They say they keep the best ones for themselves. Do they, Colin? I mean Australia, it's vast, isn't it? And nearly empty, they say.'

'Yes, there's a lot of it, mostly desert. No, on balance, I liked New Zealand better, although not their Pinot Noir. Oh no, no, no. Of course, their Sauvignon Blancs are stunning but for me, as you said, Jenny, the Aussie reds are hard to beat.'

'D'you know, I've always fancied living in New Zealand, from those amazing documentaries they made when *'Lord of the Rings'* was being filmed. Sadly, we didn't have time to visit it while we were on tour. Maybe someday, eh? So, Colin, you're glad to be home then, are you?'

'Yes, I suppose I am. Moira says I've got to pick up the pieces, make a fresh start. All a bit daunting. And this house, it's well, tired, worn out. With me being away, the garden's a complete riot, out of control. Irene was the gardener, really. I was merely her factotum. I can hardly tell a weed from a proper plant. Elspeth said she would be happy to keep it in order, but hey, ho, I'll have to get someone in to help me.'

'I know. I know. I've never had a garden but I do love gardening. I could give you a hand, if you like.'

'Eh, yes, thanks. Very nice of you to offer. Anyway, how is Tom? Is he still playing drums?'

'No. Ah! So, you haven't heard? Ah, Tommo, Tommo, Tommo. No, no drums for our poor, dear old Tommo, not nowadays. The dreaded arthritis, I'm afraid. Lives in Tunbridge Wells. 'Supported living', they call it. When Tom had to retire from the band, well, that's when it all started to go off the rails, when Curt started taking charge, the sneaky, snidey bastard. He tried to oust me in favour of Henty, a Danish stick insect, a witch with a voice like a Kookaburra on speed. Anyway, ka-boom! *The Mack Marks* are no more. Serves Curt right, the fat toad. But I've got the royalties from the song archive because I wrote them all, all the words and all the music. I sang them too, all of them. The Court saw right through his cock and bull story of how he had written everything. That put his gas at a peep, the snivelling, grovelling bastard. Language! Hey, sorry, sorry. Let's not go there, eh? Look, it's a bit of a long story. But no worries, eh? Hey, did I not say, I'm back home, living in Glasgow now. All that London crap behind me.'

'You're in Glasgow? Where?'

'Yip, in the new flats along at the Allander Sports Centre. But hey, are they in Bearsden, or are they in Milngavie, that's the big question, eh?'

'Definitely Bearsden, I would say.'

'I know. I know. Anyway, whatever. No worries. And guess what, Colin, I just missed you as I moved back here a week or so after you went on your walkabout. You took

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everyone by surprise with that one, eh? Moira kept me in the loop from Inverness. Hey, the wonders of *Facebook*, eh? Anyway, she told me Elsie at No 18 was holding your keys and doing your mail so gave me her number. I phoned and asked her to let me know the instant you got back. But did that woman phone? No, Colin, she did not! I must say, she sounded a bit, well, snooty, mangled vowels, kinda off-hand. What's the word, eh, proprietorial? Yeah, like she's your protector or something. Is she a *special* friend? Is that it, Colin?

'Her name is Elspeth. We sing in a choir together. She has been very, very helpful. I don't know what I would have done without her, really I don't. Elspeth is a saint, really she is.'

'I know. I know. Yeah, Elspeth, whatever. But she did promise to call me the minute you got home but she didn't, did she? And your garden, she said she would look after it, and yet, well. Never mind, I'll help you with it. D'you know it was Moira who told me you're back. Posted it on *Facebook* ten minutes ago. She had said you were due home yesterday and I was up to high doh. But, hey, look, it's great, no worries. You see, Colin, as a matter of fact, I'm in the coffee shop at *Waitrose*, only a mile from you. What I mean to say is, you're just *newly* back, literally only minutes ago. Elspeth isn't there with you, is she?'

'No, I'm here alone. And you're right, I am only through the door just minutes before you called. The place feels, well, so empty. Oh Jenny, it's so nice to hear your friendly voice. I haven't really spoken to anyone properly for weeks and weeks.'

'I know. I know. Great. So, you're definitely alone. Great. So, I thought, well, maybe you need a few messages. Do you? I could easily bring you the basics and maybe a ready meal and a bottle or two of wine. A couple of nice Aussie reds, what do you think? Or maybe I'll grab a few steaks and we could have a barbie? Moira posted on *Facebook* you're a real whizz at barbies. *Legendary*. So, what do you say? A welcome you home party sort of thing but with only the two of us? Do say yes. *Please say yes.*'

"Yes, Jenny, that sounds so very nice. Thanks. Yes, a barbie. Yes, why not?"

'So, you're up for it? Really? Just us?'

'Yes. Why not? We could catch up on all those lost years.'

'I know. I know. Colin, d'you want to know something? D'you remember that day when we went swimming in the Allander?'

'Eh, yes.'

'*So do I, Colin. So - do - I!* D'you know, years later when your name came up, Tom told me about you hiding in the tank room. But hey, I knew anyway. I could hear you, well, doing it to yourself in there. D'you know, Colin, that day, I wanted to tell you to come out and well, do it *properly*, with me, but well, let's just say that was a lost opportunity, eh? Anyway, I want you to know, I'm still quite presentable. I've had my eye fixed. I keep in trim, do Pilates twice a week, swim fifty lengths every day and I'm still doing ballet, would you believe it. My voice is holding up too, still hitting all the notes bang on. Hey, do you remember my Mum used to use the word "perjink"? Well, Colin, I promise you, I'm perjink! Or if you like 'perJenka! D'you want to know a secret? I still wear purple knickers although nowadays I get them from the Ann Summer's online shop. In fact, I'm wearing purple knickers right now. So, what do you say? Will I come along and see you?'

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'Yes, let's catch up on old times, why not?'

'Right! Great! Yeah! See you soon as, OK?'

'So nice. After all those years, it feels like it was yesterday. Thanks, Jenny.'

'D'you know, I'd almost forgotten, I used to be called Jenny. But Colin, please, I prefer Jenka, nowadays. What d'you say?'

'OK! Jenka you shall be. PerJenka! Right, I'll get a move on, shall I? Get the barbie out of the garage, have a shower and freshen up.'

'Legendary!'