

Story: The Byrne Boys

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Length: 12 chapters

From: Where Dreams Come True Fanfiction – WDCT

Url: <http://www.wdct-fanfiction.eu>

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THE BYRNE BOYS

Chapter 1

“Rocco Byrne, I have had enough of you today.”

Rocco sat and smirked at his twin brother, identical twins who looked just like their father, they had that same naughty smirk.

The Byrne twins were the Bane of every teacher’s life at Plunkett College and this was only their first year but they had a quite a reputation already.

“But Miss he started it.”

Rachel Morrisson leant forwards placing her hands on her desk, she had been teaching teenagers for ten years now but the Byrne twins took the biscuit and this was the first time she had ever regretted being a teacher.

“Rocco sit at this desk here please.”

Rocco got to his feet and dragged his rucksack along the floor, once at the desk at the front of the room he threw himself into the chair making as much noise as possible and the rest of the class laugh at the joker. Rachel tried to ignore him and returned to talking to her class.

This time it was Jay’s turn and he put his rubber on his ruler and flicked it at his brother. It hit Rocco on the back of his head and he turned around glaring at his brother.

“Don’t be such a dick!”

He shouted out at his brother, Rachel couldn’t stand it any longer.

“That’s it, Jay go to Mr Russell’s office and tell him why I have sent you.”

Rocco got to his feet and went to the door. Rachel rolled her light blue eyes.

“Rocco sit down!”

Jay held his hands out to his sides.

“But I am Miss, that’s Jay, I’m Rocco.”

Rachel lost her temper now and shouted loudly at the pair.

“Both of you get to Mr Russell’s office now and you tell him why I have sent you.”

To the sound of cheering from their classmates the twins left the classroom and Rachel returned to teaching the class properly.

Nicky was sat in the studio with the rest of the lads going over the recording for their new single. Nicky’s mobile phone suddenly rang out and just as Nicky went to press the reject button he noticed it was the school. His instant thought was something had happened to one of his boys or they were ill.

“Hold on lads, I gotta take this, it’s Rocco and Jay’s school.”

The lads nodded as he placed the phone up to his ear.

“Yeah, Nicky Byrne.”

Nicky listened for a little while and then his face seemed to pale. Shane elbowed Kian who turned to look at the worried expression on their friends face.

“Er yeah, I can be there..... Four O’clock, yeah I’ll get finished up here and be straight there..... Classroom D6 yeah, I still can remember it

myself.”

Nicky gave a half hearted laugh and then ended his call. He sighed deeply as he sat down running his fingers through his cropped blond locks. Mark was the only one brave enough to ask.

“Are the boys okay Nix?”

Nicky slumped back in the green heavily padded sofa and looked up at the ceiling. “I’ve been summoned by the Headmaster seems the twins have gotten themselves into trouble.”

All three of the lads laughed now, Shane punched Nicky playfully in the arm.

“What again? I thought they promised once they got to Plunkett they would knuckle down and work.”

Nicky shook his head.

“So did I, little sods didn’t even last six months. I’ll kill ‘em I swear to God. If there mother was alive this would all be so different.”

Everyone quietened now as they thought about how Nicky had coped as a single parent since her death from cancer. He had met other girls over the years but either one or both the boys wouldn’t like her and Nicky put his boys before everything and would end the relationship. As a consequence he was still single.

Nicky parked his car and as he got out and locked it he looked up at the building, it held so many memories for him, and he felt very nostalgic until he thought about why he was here.

He made his way up the staircases and along the corridors, it was as if he has never been away, he still remembered it as if it were yesterday. Finally he stopped outside of room D6, the grey painted door looked the same as it had done in his day. He looked through the little square window that had the little square wires running through it to prevent it breaking into tiny pieces if it was broken.

He saw Rocco and Jay sitting on two separate desks at the front of the classroom writing on some paper and a woman, obviously the teacher who wanted to see him watching them. She had shoulder length shiny light hair, she looked friendly enough from what he could see and he felt sorry for her knowing what the boys could be like.

Nicky knocked on the door and both Rocco and Jay looked towards the door smiling at him. Nicky wanted to throttle the pair of them but they had such a hold on him he couldn’t stay angry for long, he always saw their mum in them and he wanted to keep that.

Nicky didn’t look at the teacher he looked directly at the boys and held the car keys out towards them.

“You two get in the car and I will deal with you at home.”

Rocco took the keys and walked past as Jay moved closer to his Dad’s ear and whispered to him.

“Just charm the knickers off her Dad you know you can do it.”

Nicky gave Jay a flick around the back of his head.

“Get in the car!”

The boys walked out and closed the door but they hid round the corner to see what would happen and if their Dad could use his famous Byrne charm. Once they had gone Nicky prepared himself for the backlash from their teacher now but as he turned to look at her he was in for a very pleasant surprise.

His blue eyes met with a very familiar, warm friendly light blue pair of eyes.

“Rachel ? Rachel Morrisson ? No it can’t be?”

Rachel gave a warm smile to her former school friend.

“Yep, smart arse Morrisson , sure is.”

Nicky stopped smiling but Rachel pointed to a chair for Nicky and sat herself down.

Nicky followed suit.

“Oh come on Nicky, I’m sure you knew all the names you were known by too.”

Nicky eased a little as he relaxed back into his chair.

Rocco looked at Jay.

“Oh crap he knows her!”

Jay started to walk off.

“Come on Ro, we’ve had it now, best work on him when he gets back in the car.”

Both boys walked solemnly from the school and towards their Dad’s car.

Rachel was pleased to see Nicky again after all these years; they had known each other and been friends but not close ones. Nicky would always copy Rachel’s maths homework in the playground before the start of school. He was the ultimate charmer even at that age.

“Well I never expected to see you here, a teacher, who would have thought it.”

Rachel gave Nicky a wry smile.

“Wow a Pop star, who would have thought it from Mr Football.”

The pair laughed as for a while they reminisced over their school days. Eventually Nicky broached the subject of the twins.

“Right my sons?”

Rachel placed her arms on the desk and then tidied her hair behind her ears, this brought back memories for Nicky of the smart girl in the class everyone wanted to copy from. “Yes Rocco and Jay... Well, you on a day when you were at your most obnoxious times that by your worst mood ever and then double it and you have Rocco and Jay Byrne. Oh Nicky they are true Byrne’s.”

The conversation continued as Rachel filled Nicky in on all the antics of the boys. Nicky wished he was surprised but he wasn’t.

“So I suggest we work together on the boys, I propose each teacher writes a small report on how they behave in each lesson and then once a week we all get together to go over everything and decide what to do.”

Nicky wasn’t sure, nothing he had ever done had worked so far, being a single parent was tough but a single Dad of two wild boys who had a high profile career albeit a quieter one now was harder.

Rachel leant forwards and touched Nicky’s arm that was rested on her desk.

“Nicky we can do this, work with me and we can sort the boys out, I promise, I’ll be here for you and will help.”

Nicky felt something inside his heart, someone who hadn’t given up on his boys, someone who had seen them at their worst and still had faith in them and wanted to help. She was full of so much compassion.

“Thanks Rachel, you are an angel to me... Right I guess I’d better go before they drive off in the car on their own.”

Nicky took his wallet out and pulled a business card from his pocket.

“Here, take this. It has my mobile, my home number and my email address.”

Rachel took the card and then scribbled down her numbers on a piece of paper which she handed back to Nicky. He looked at it and smiled at the handwriting.

“Still the same neat writing I see.”

Rachel held her hand out to say goodbye to Nicky but Nicky leant forwards and kissed her on the cheek.

“Thanks Rachel And it’s really great to see you again.”

“And you Nicky, I’ll call you soon okay? And any worries just pick up the phone alright?”

Nicky started to walk out of the door when he turned around having a wicked idea

from his school days.

“See you later Morrisson .”

Rachel was collecting her papers together so she didn't look up.

“Not if I see you first Byrne!”

Nicky closed the door behind him and walked down to the car. It had been great to see Rachel again after all these years and to think she was teaching his sons..... Yes he thought to himself, Rocco and Jay Byrne, you boys are in for a shock here.

Chapter 2

Nicky didn't speak to the twins all the way home and his silence bothered them, the last time he had given them the silent treatment was when they had hidden their Granddad's briefcase up that contained some very secret government papers. They were only nine and thought it was hilarious; however it wasn't so funny when the Garda started to search the house to find them. Rocco and Jay both admitted their joke and produced the case which they had buried in the flowerbed at the back of the house. Nicky had given them the silent treatment until they got home and then he was like a volcano erupting. He shouted and read them the riot act which resulted in them being grounded for a month and banned from all television and video games.

As they walked in the house Nicky threw his keys on the dark wood table by the door and walked through to the lounge, both the boys followed him. Nicky stood by the big bay window looking out over the front garden.

“Sit down boys.”

He said in a calm voice, Jay looked at Rocco with wide eyes, this wasn't a good sign at all. Nicky remained silent but folded his arms across his chest as he continued to look out of the window.

Rocco tried to pacify his Dad.

“Dad, it's just.....”

Nicky sighed and again kept his calm and normal voice.

“I don't want to hear it Rocco.....”

Jay went to open his mouth but before a word could leave his lips Nicky spoke again.

“..... That goes for you too Jay.”

After ten minutes Nicky walked across the room and sat himself in the deep leather sofa, resting his arms on the arms of the chair. He looked up at both his sons, he loved them dearly but there were times he didn't like them very much and today was one of them.

“Tomorrow you will go to school and apologise to Miss Morrisson .”

Nicky looked between both boys waiting for them to protest but was surprised when they just sat still looking at him.

“You will also get a book or something you have to take to each lesson and get it signed and a note put in it about your behaviour in each lesson. Rachel will then speak to me each week and we will all have a meeting..... But honestly boys this has to stop.”

Nicky closed his eyes and sighed deeply.

“Carry on like this and I will end up beside your Mam.”

Nicky placed his hand on his forehead and rubbed at an imaginary headache.

Rocco looked at Jay who looked back at him and then they both looked at their Dad.

“We're sorry Dad; can't we have a different teacher though?”

“No Jay you can't, it wouldn't make a blind bit of difference anyway. You boys are

wild, plain and simple and as Rachel reminded me tonight you are true Byrne boys. Part of that is down to me and Uncle Adam but even we weren't such tearaways as you two! It has to stop lads, I'm serious now, you have everything you could ever want and still you do this to me."

Rocco got to his feet and glared at his father, his bright blue eyes burning into Nicky's.

"Not quite Dad, we want Mum."

Nicky felt his stomach lurch, he missed her too, it had been five years now and he still hadn't moved on. She would have wanted him to love again he knew that, but he also owed it to the boys to make sure they were happy with any woman he chose to date too.

Rachel arrived at school as normal, last night she had taken the twins files home with her to read through what had happened throughout their school lives. Both boys had similar reports; they had the knowledge and were clever enough but never seemed to want to work. It appeared since their mother died they became more and more wayward which she understood but now it was getting out of hand and it had to be stopped. Both boys were dreadful when together but apart they were a lot more trouble, almost unable to cope without the presence of the other twin. So Rachel ruled out the possibility of separating them in all their classes.

Eventually the children started to fill the classroom for registration and the noise level rose considerably. Rachel went through the names.

"Jamie Adams?"

"Miss."

Jay Byrne?"

No answer Rachel didn't bother looking up; the boys weren't getting off to a very good start.

"Jay Byrne?"

She asked more firmly, again she was met with silence, so she gave up on Jay and move to Rocco. She called his name out twice before she looked up and noticed both the twins' seats were empty. She looked around the whole class.

"Has anyone seen Jay or Rocco this morning?"

No one had seen either of them or at least no one was admitting they had. Rachel knew she would have to call Nicky as soon as her class had left for their first lesson. Once the students left the room Rachel took her mobile phone from her handbag and searched for Nicky's number.

"Good morning Miss Morrisson ."

Recognising the voice Rachel closed her phone up and looked up to see a smiling Nicky Byrne with his hand on Rocco's shoulder and the other on Jay's shoulder.

"Good morning Mr Byrne, Rocco, Jay."

Rachel felt butterflies fill her stomach as she looked at him. She secretly fancied Nicky at school, well most girls did to be honest she had to admit he was better looking as a blond though.

Nicky gently moved Rocco and Jay forwards.

"Boys what do you have to say to Miss Morrisson ?"

"Sorry Miss Morrisson ."

They spoke in unison. Rachel smiled and nodded then she took two small red books from her table.

"Thank you for that, now these are your books, they need to go to every lesson with you and I will be checking them each day. After a week we will all get together and discuss how things are going."

Rocco sneered his nose up at her.

"We are gonna be late for Mr Cope now, he won't give us a good report will he?" Nicky slapped Rocco round the back of his head for being rude and cheeky.

"Rocco!"

Rachel wrote in both the books to explain the boys were late because she had explained the books to them and then she handed them over to the twins.

"You can show me at afternoon registration okay?"

Both groaned and left the room. Nicky smiled at Rachel and perched himself on the edge of one of the students desks.

"How are you?"

Rachel sat on the edge of her own desk so she was facing Nicky. Her white summer dress with little red flowers rested on her legs, the fabric was so light the shape of her legs were clearly visible as the fabric clung to her skin. Nicky was still amazed she had grown into such a beautiful woman. She certainly wasn't a bad looking girl at school but being clever she didn't fit into Nicky's circle of friends who were more 'popular', everyone wanted to be their friends; they were the in-crowd. But he had to admit Rachel had blossomed into a very beautiful young woman, he wondered who she was dating; if it was someone they went to school with?

"Yeah I'm good thanks, how did you get on last night?"

Nicky shrugged.

"It was good while I was playing the angry but calm Dad then I started to tell them how lucky they were and Rocco reminded me they didn't have their Mam."

"Oh Nicky I'm sorry, what about girlfriends, are the boys okay with that?..... Sorry I'm being nosey, forgive me."

Nicky shook his head.

"No it's fine Rachel ; you need to know what's going on if you are going to help my boys. No I've met different women obviously but nothing ever happened you know what its like."

She couldn't understand Nicky still being single, it wasn't right; he was a good guy, beautiful both on the inside as well as in looks.

"And you Rachel , are you married, engaged?"

Rachel blushed and looked down at her feet.

"Oh no, I haven't had time Nicky, the kids take up my time."

Nicky thought maybe this was the time to ask her out for a drink? He could use the boys as an excuse.

"Why don't we meet up, you know, have a drink sometime. Talk about old times?"

Rachel got to her feet now as students started to file into the room.

"Yeah, I'd like that."

Nicky got up and left the room, he exchanged a fleeting glance with Rachel and they both smiled at each other, looking forward to meeting away from school.

Throughout the day word of Nicky asking Rachel out for a drink circulated around the school and eventually got back to the twins. At the end of the day Rachel was walking back to the staff room when she suddenly noticed Jay and Rocco on either side of her, she looked at them both, who looked back. Jay spoke in a very flat tone. "We've heard all about it, and let us tell you, it ain't happening, you and our Dad, it ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN! He only looks at you as our teacher that is the only way you will get near our Dad EVER!"

Chapter 3

Rachel thought about what the boys had said as she sat in the staff room marking the books she had, they were fiercely protective over Nicky and it was obvious they

wanted to keep him for themselves and were not prepared to share him. She tried to think of why they could be feeling the way they did and the only conclusion she could come to was the fact they had lost their mother and were not prepared to lose their father too.

“So, are the rumours true Rachel ?”

Rachel turned around to see Mr Russell the headmaster standing beside her with a concerned look on his face. Rachel felt her stomach lurch at his words and her cheeks became hot and pink.

“No it isn’t Nicky just said maybe we should go for a drink sometime to catch up, that’s all.”

Mr Russell had heard the rumours going around the school and he knew it would cause trouble with the children and even the parents. He could see the next rumour would be that Nicky was dating her to prevent his boys getting expelled.

He pulled up a chair and sat beside her.

“I don’t like to get involved in the staff’s private lives but the thing is Rachel it could be very damaging to the school.”

Rachel really did not want to discuss this with him or anyone to be honest, her private life wasn’t anyone else’s business and not only that nothing was going on, they were old school friends and that was all. Nicky didn’t fancy her, she was the smart kid who the teachers liked and he was the good looking popular one and she didn’t fancy him. Her mind started to wander at that moment as she thought of him in her classroom that morning. The sexy Byrne crooked smile, those naughty blue eyes and incredibly sexy body; she closed her eyes tightly not believing her own thoughts.

“Nicky is an old friend Rocco and Jay are two of my students that is all. It is no different to me helping the parents of any of my students no matter if I know the parent or not.”

She was getting quite angry now, this wasn’t fair at all, and she was being convicted of something she hadn’t even done

Mr Russell shook his head, he felt sorry for her, Rachel was a local girl who had remained loyal to the area and the school, he felt sorry for her because she was a good teacher, he just knew how the parents and possibly other teachers would react.

“Rachel I know that as well as you do but you know what everyone will say, he’s single, good looking, famous and rich. He also has two very way-ward sons who he is trying to keep in school. I am thinking of you too.”

Rachel was fed up with it all now and just wanted to go home. She collected her books and papers up. Some she put back in her locker and others she placed in her bag to take home.

Once she sat in her car she thought about everything and decided it was probably best to warn Nicky what was going on, feeling a little embarrassed about the whole thing she decided to text him, it would be easier for her.

‘Nicky, sorry to do this, rumour going around we are dating, R & J not happy at all. I’ve been warned by headmaster. Sorry Rachel .’

Nicky was yet again with the lads as they were arranging a TV appearance when his mobile blasted out the tune to Match of the Day making Shane laugh.

“Still the same old shit on the phone Nix?”

Nicky laughed and flipped his phone up, he smiled when he saw Rachel ’s name and this wasn’t missed by Shane who cried out in a girly voice.

“Oooo, Byrne has a girlfriend, look at his face!”

Both Kian and Mark now joined in the teasing, As Nicky read the message, his

smile faded and he shook his head, the lads stopped teasing him.

"I'll kill the little fookers!"

Shane rolled his eyes at Kian and Mark as he mouthed "The twins again". Nicky thought long and hard before he text back.

'Nice to see nothing has changed then. Ignore boys, they prob feel silly with their mates. Fancy smart arse Morrisson getting a warning, that's a 1st lol. Do we have to meet in secret like we are having an affair? Nix x'

Nicky gave a little chuckle as he placed his phone back in his jeans pocket, Mark frowned at him.

"You are up to something, I can tell."

Nicky shrugged his shoulders and carried on with what they had been talking about earlier.

When Rachel 's phone beeped she felt her heart jump, she was half scared of what he would say. She thought it would be something along the lines of don't worry I wont talk to you again and that would be awful. With her hands shaking slightly she pressed the button to open the message. As she read his words she felt the excitement build up within her tummy now, her body felt warm and she felt like a teenager full of hope but also knowing inside this was a grown man laughing trying to make her feel easier so she decide to text something funny back.

Nicky's phone sounded out again and as he picked the phone out of his pocket it slipped from his fingers and slid along the floor in front of Mark who happily picked it up and opened it. Nicky jumped up trying to grab it back.

"Fook off Feehily, it's my phone and a private message."

Mark turned his back on Nicky and held the phone up as Nicky jumped up trying to get it back. Enjoying the childish antics Shane and Kian now grabbed hold of Nicky and held him back in the chair as Mark now read the message out.

"That sounds like a good idea, an illicit affair; do you need private lessons from a teacher then? Rachel "

Everyone looked at Nicky now who shook his head.

"Stop it, it's just me and Rachel having a joke that's all."

Mark now scrolled through Nicky's sent messages and found the one he had sent which he also read out to the others. Nicky was now getting angry with Shane and Kian.

"Answer her Mark, go on. Byrne needs his love life sorting out."

Shane cut in quickly.

"No rephrase that..... Nicky NEEDS a love life."

Nicky groaned loudly as Mark typed away and read as he typed.

"That sounds like a plan; you teach me anything you would like me to do, how's that? Meet me....."

Mark looked up now.

"Where is there a nice quiet pub, you know out of the way where they can be alone? " Kian and Shane made various suggestions until they decided on a place Nicky had taken them all once when he wanted to speak to them about his future in the band and wanted them to be 'unknown'. So Mark typed it in and asked Rachel to meet him at nine o'clock and finished the text with a kiss. Once they let go of Nicky he went crazy and snatched his phone away.

"Nice one lads, she won't ever speak to me again now."

They all exchanged looks now knowing that Nicky did like Rachel no matter how much he insisted it was friends. It was about time he met someone and to meet

someone who knew him before Westlife would be perfect. They could deal with Rocco and Jay later if they needed to.

"You like her don't you Nix?"

Shane asked, trying to get Nicky to talk and open up a little bit. Nicky sighed and rested his elbows on his knees and then rested his head on his open hands.

"Yes... No, oh I don't know, we have a shared past, that's nice, I like it."

Shane placed his arm around Nicky's shoulder and shook his shoulder in a friendly way.

"Then just meet up and see what happens, okay maybe it's only friends, then fine but if you don't do something soon Rocco and Jay will have left home and you will be alone."

Nicky knew Shane's words were true and although they had been playing around the lads were being sincere in trying to help him.

"You will have embarrassed her now so I won't be seeing her again anyway....

She's not the sort of girl you can be too rude with."

Shane shook his head now and opened Nicky's phone.

"Read her message Nix, she's flirting with you man, remember that?"

Nicky nodded solemnly, he couldn't deny the fact he was lonely and inside he was breaking up.

When the text came in Rachel almost dropped her phone, he wasn't joking, he was flirting with her and now he wanted to meet up. Could she take the risk of being seen with him? She felt like she had an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other one. The angel was saying. 'no Rachel , you can't meet him, he's an old school friend and you need to be professional about all this now.' The devil on the other hand seemed to be shouting a bit louder. 'Go on Rachel , all those years you fancied him and he wouldn't look at you any other way than the smart girl who would give him the answers to his homework. Now he's flirting and you fancy the pants off him, go for it and flirt like hell back' so she did, she felt so naughty and it felt good and every exciting.

"Ok meet u at 9. What shall I wear, casual or smart?"

Nicky smiled when the phone went again and when he read her message this time he looked up at the lads and read it out. Mark held his hands up this time.

"You call this time mate, I've done my interfering."

For a while Nicky looked around the room and tried to think of what he should put. So far she had played along with the flirty texts so maybe he should carry on a little and see what happened.

'Something sexy and as little as possible, in case you get too hot and Byrne! Xx'
Shane was in fits of laughter now.

"That is so corny, if she turns you down flat now, you asked for it with that!"

As Rachel read the text her whole body felt like it was on fire now, how the hell could she feel desire through a stupid joking text? Well she would give him something to think about now.

'I don't have anything on now, I'm now about to step into the shower and regards your last words, best hope you get lucky then hadn't you! Rachel x'

When Nicky received the text and read it his jaw dropped open at her blatant flirting. He couldn't believe the words in front of him and now all he could think of was Rachel , images of her sitting in her desk in her white summer dress filled his

mind, his body started to react to his thoughts now. Shane read the message over his shoulder and one by one they all offered friendly advice to him, all being very sensible now, wanting him to find a woman he could finally connect with on every level, he deserved it after all these years alone. As they left Mark still had to get one more joke in. "Right now remember what we have told you!" Nicky frowned at Mark. "Remember condoms, practise safe sex!" Nicky hit Mark playfully in the shoulder actually enjoying the banter now and Shane jumped on Nicky's back now as he shouted loudly for everyone in the street to hear. "And if you aren't in bed by midnight..... Come home!" All four lads erupted into fits of laughter and everything was just like it used to be years ago.

Chapter 4

Nicky couldn't help but feel a little excited, the flirty texts between them made it seem like a real date. He jumped in the shower singing to himself, he liked Rachel a lot; it was nice they had so much in common but she had also blossomed into a beautiful woman and he had to admit he fancied her too. Once showered he started to go through his wardrobe, jeans, definitely jeans he decided and pulled on a pair and looked in the full length mirror, he looked at himself from the front and then turned to the side looking at his bum. He frowned and then turned around so his back faced the mirror and looked over his shoulder at himself. Jay was about to walk into the bedroom to ask Nicky for help with his maths homework when he saw his dad looking at himself in the mirror. This wasn't a normal night out he knew that much. "Dad?" Nicky jumped and looked up at his some. "What's up Jay?" Jay sat on the bed pulling his book out so Nicky could see it. Nicky sat on the bed and father and son worked through the problem together. Nicky suddenly looked at his watch and noticed the time. "FOOK!" He jumped up and started to throw shirts and T-shirts over the bed. He would hold one up to himself then shake his head and it would be thrown on the bed. Jay picked up a black shirt. "Try this Dad." Nicky put the shirt on and looked at himself, he was about to tuck it in when Jay shook his head. "Leave it, or ye will look like an old man!" Nicky threw a T-shirt at him and then chose some aftershave which he splashed on his face. He fiddled with his hair trying to get his hair just right. "Who is she then?" Nicky stopped playing with his hair and turned to look at Jay. "I told you, I'm going out with the lads." Jay laughed and shook his head at Nicky. "Yeah right dad, you always go to that much trouble for Shane don't you!" Nicky slapped Jay playfully around the back of his head. "Make sure you're both in bed by eleven, its school tomorrow." Nicky said goodbye to the twins then got into his car and drove to the pub to meet Rachel .

Rachel had gone right through her wardrobe too, she wanted to wear something sexy but not too obvious, she needed something a little special to match their flirting. Finally after two hours she settled on a black knee length pencil skirt with a low cut purple baby doll top which showed off her impressive cleavage. She applied minimal make up so she looked natural and lots of lip gloss making her lips look full and kissable. Once she had put on her black strappy high heels she looked at herself, she just hoped Nicky would be impressed, she couldn't help but feel excited inside, it had been ages since she had been on a date and to be going on a date with Nicky Byrne, not Nicky Byrne of Westlife fame but Nicky Byrne the most fancied boy at Plunkett College. With a spring in her step she got into the waiting taxi and re read the texts he had sent her earlier.

Nicky sat up the bar with his pint of lager; he ran his fingers up and down the glass catching the drips as the cold lager warmed on the glass. He wondered what he was going to say to her, it was best not to mention the twins tonight he would like it to be about Rachel and himself tonight. He had dreadful butterflies in his stomach, what if she didn't turn up?

Rachel got out of the taxi and paid the driver; she looked up at the pub and held her clutch bag close to her body.

"He will love you."

Rachel turned and half smiled at the driver who then nodded and drove off leaving her alone outside now feeling her stomach twist into knots.

As the latch on the old fashioned wooden door clicked Nicky spun round and the sight that met his eyes made his stomach flip and his trousers tighten, she looked breathtaking, and why hadn't she looked like that in school?

Rachel walked over toward him, she gave a sweet but nervous smile, and Nicky got to his feet, ever the gentleman.

"You look fantastic, what would you like to drink?"

Rachel asked for a glass of white wine which Nicky got and then they sat at a quick table by the fire. Rachel looked around the pub, there were about thirty people there but no one took any notice of Nicky at all. Nicky noticed her looking and knew what she was looking at.

"It's nice here, they don't care who I am and I'm treated the same as anyone so I can relax."

Rachel still sat forwards in her chair while Nicky relaxed back and crossed his legs so his left ankle rested on his right knee. Rachel knew she had to talk because she was now sitting there like a love struck teenager not being able to strike up a conversation. "I told you I'd been warned to keep away from you didn't I?"

Nicky gave her a wry smile.

"Anyone would think I'm a womaniser."

Rachel blushed a little as she looked at him, he was flirting again and she knew it. "No one could accuse you of that one, well maybe during your days at Plunkett but not now. No the headmaster thinks the other parents will think I am being too lenient with Jay and Rocco."

Nicky grinned and sat himself forwards now placing his pint glass on the low table between them, he then leant forwards and placed his hand on her knee, the jolt of electricity flowed up his arm and Rachel felt the heat from his hand flow up her leg. "Maybe he thinks I will seduce you and he is jealous he secretly wants to keep you for himself."

He whispered huskily, Rachel surprised herself by leaning forwards and placing

one of her hands on top of his.

“Let’s just say I doubt it very much and that won’t happen!”

She giggled like a schoolgirl and Nicky took this opportunity to move the flirting up a notch, he was sure she liked him as much as he did her.

“What do you doubt that I can seduce you, or that he wants to keep you for himself?” Rachel wasn’t sure how to answer that at all so she got a little bit flustered.

“I er, no, erm, he’s not interested in me.”

Nicky now moved to the seat beside her and whispered in her ear.

“Good because I would love to seduce you.”

Rachel turned to face Nicky and they were so close she could feel his hot breath wash over her lips, the effect was so strong on her she had to lick her lips as they instantly dried, Nicky’s eyes instantly zoned in on her tongue as he now felt his heart thumping wildly in his chest. He felt his hands shake slightly as he raised a hand to her hair and run his fingers through her light silky tresses.

“I should have taken more notice of you at school Rachel .”

He brushed the back of his fingers over her warm cheeks; Rachel closed her eyes revelling in his touch.

“I was just the geeky kid at school Nicky, not like you.”

Their eyes met and locked as they both felt the connection between them, they both wanted each other and soon.

“I was an arrogant shite; I couldn’t see what was right in front of me.”

Rachel couldn’t stand it any longer her whole body felt like it was on fire and burning for Nicky now. She leaned in and placed both her palms either side of his face and brought her lips toward his own, just before their lips touched Nicky touched her hands.

“Are you sure Rachel ? I don’t want you to regret anything.”

Rachel smiled and looked directly into his eyes.

“The only thing I will regret is if I don’t do this.”

Their lips touched as the fire ignited between them, both could feel the flames of desire sweeping around their bodies as their lips melded and the kiss became stronger now. Nicky suddenly remembered where they were and gently pulled away clasping her hands in his.

“Maybe not here.”

He whispered, kissing her hands as he held them. Rachel looked around but no one was taking any notice of them which was nice.

“I can’t take you to mine, my house mates are at home and they are notorious gossips.”

Nicky shrugged.

“Mine it is then.”

Rachel was unsure now and her eyes widened slightly.

“Jay and Rocco?”

Nicky looked at his watch.

“They should be in bed and asleep in about an hour so if we have another drink and chat then.....”

Rachel didn’t give him a chance to finish.

“You can take me home and make love to me.”

Nicky’s breath caught in his throat now, he stood up and gave her a slow kiss on her lips.

“That is something that will be worth waiting for.”

He winked as he walked to the bar; he ordered their drinks and pulled his phone out of his pocket to text the boys. He sent the message to both just to make sure one of them got it, this had to go right tonight, he had such a feeling about Rachel , he actually saw a future for them.

Both Jay and Rocco's phone's buzzed at the same time and they looked at each other and laughed.

"Dad!"

Rocco opened his phone and read the message.

"I will be home in an hour and half I want you both in bed because it's school tomorrow."

Jay was still watching the television and eating a bag of crisps as he spoke.

"See I told you he had a date tonight."

Rocco groaned.

"Oh God that means he's bringing her back here!"

Jay smiled fiendishly.

"Don't worry Ro, he's not that stupid and anyway we just get upset tomorrow and she will be history."

Chapter 5

Nicky drove Rachel back to his house, both of them feeling nervous and excited. Once they arrived at his luxurious house Nicky parked the car at the top of the long gravel driveway in front of the house door. Rachel tensed up instantly knowing the boys were inside, Nicky noticed straight away and understood her concerns. He patted her knee. "It's alright; wait here and I'll make sure they are in bed."

He gave her his famous crooked smile and removed his seatbelt, got out of the car and entered his house. Placing his keys on the table by the door he peeped into the lounge but found it empty and in darkness, he breathed a deep sigh of relief. They had to be in bed and he didn't want to wake them so he crept up the large staircase, each step seemed to creak where it never had done before.

Opening each door he found them sleeping soundly, Jay was asleep with his maths book and pens on the bed and his mobile phone in his hand and Rocco was asleep with his ipod on and his mobile in his hand too. It never ceased to amaze Nicky his boys were as close as could be. Separated by a wall and they still felt the need to text each other to talk.

Nicky headed downstairs and opened the car door for Rachel ; he held his hand out to help her out of the car, admiring her legs as she exited gracefully.

"They are both out for the count; I think it would take a bomb to wake them."

Rachel relaxed slightly now, the last thing she needed was trouble at school, everyone was talking anyway after seeing her with Nicky.

Once inside the house and the door was shut Nicky placed his hand in her hip and pulled her close to him, so there they stood, hip to hip, chest to breast with their faces millimetres apart. Nicky ran his right hand up her side and over her shoulder until he reached her neck. Rachel's blue eyes met with Nicky's crystal blue ones as he stroked her neck with a lover's gentle touch. His lips brushed over Rachel's as she felt her stomach flip and the temperature in her body raise considerably, she responded to the kiss and sank into his arms, within seconds the kiss became fuelled by a great passion that was consuming them both.

Nicky led Rachel upstairs as they continued to kiss as they climbed each step, once outside of his bedroom door Nicky held his index finger to his lips making Rachel smile and hold her hand over her mouth to stifle her giggles, they both felt like naughty teenagers creeping around behind their parents backs.

Once in the bedroom Nicky quietly closed the door and started to remove his black

shirt as he turned around to face Rachel . Again he closed the gap between them and walked forwards until the back of Rachel 's legs touched the bed and she stopped. Nicky soon had his shirt buttons undone and the shirt cast to the floor. Next he started on his jeans whilst still looking into her eyes. Very quickly his jeans were off and his shoes had been kicked across the room, both of them giggled as the shoes made a thud on one of the walls.

“Shush.”

Nicky giggled and Rachel whispered and giggled back to him.

“Shush”

The lustful mood soon returned as Rachel let her skirt drop to the floor and pool around her feet, Nicky's eyes darkened considerably as he looked up her long shapely legs. Allowing a seductive smile to cross her lips she placed her hands on the hem of her top and teasingly slowly pulled it up her torso and over her head. So here they stood Nicky in his black Calvin Klein boxer shorts and Rachel in her black lace bra and thong. The pair moved together and lay back on the bed. Nicky's hands started to roam across her soft skin, up and down her legs until Rachel raised her leg and hooked it over him. His passion was starting to get out of control as he touched her pert breasts, slowly he dipped his head kissing each one in turn as he skilfully slipped his hands behind her to undo the clasps and allow her breasts to fall free.

“Oh God Rachel , you are beautiful.”

They kissed again and Nicky covered her body with his own as his hands dipped lower down her body.

“DAD!”

Nicky and Rachel froze, Nicky didn't have a lock on his door, it hadn't been anything he had ever needed before, and he had no secrets from his sons. When no answer came from Nicky the knock on the door became louder.

“Dad, can I come in?”

Nicky jumped up quickly from the bed in horror, Rachel for her part thought it was hilarious and grabbed one of the pillows to put over her face to stifle her noise.

“No don't come in Rocco, I've just had a shower I'm now coming.”

Rachel lay on her tummy now as she went into hysterics over his choice of wording. Playfully he tapped her bare buttocks and headed for the door. Rachel turned to see him and whispered loudly so he could hear her.

“Nicky!”

Nicky put his finger against his lips begging her to be quiet but with a playful smile on her lips she pointed down to his boxer shorts, Nicky looked down and his erection was very evident through his boxer shorts.

“Fook, fook!”

He hissed through his teeth as he looked around the room.

“Erm, just a minute Ro, gimme a sec.”

“But Dad, my head is killin' me; it's a real bad headache.”

Nicky raced into the bathroom and wrapped a towel around his waist to hide his embarrassment and walked to the door being careful not to open the door too far. Rocco stood looking at his Dad, he looked a sorrowful state.

“Dad it really hurts, I need some tablets.”

Nicky nodded as he ran a fatherly hand over Rocco's head.

“Yeah come on son, let's go downstairs and get something you don't look good.”

While Nicky closed the door and went downstairs Rachel removed her thong and jumped into the bed to wait for him.

Nicky sorted Rocco out and then made sure he got into bed and left a glass of water on the bedside table for him.

“Night Dad. Thanks.”

Nicky smiled as he closed the door, he loved his son but God could he pick his moments. Walking back into his room his eyes lit up as he saw Rachel already in his bed waiting.

“Oh right you couldn’t wait for me then?”

Nicky removed the towel and his boxers as he jumped back into bed and held Rachel in his arms again.

“Right, now where were we?”

She asked giggling. Nicky looked thoughtful and then flipped Rachel on her back while he rested on his elbows looking down at her.

“Somewhere around here I think.”

His lips crashed down on hers as their arms and bodies entwined. Nicky kissed her neck and then his lips made a fiery trail down her neck, over her collarbone and then to her breasts making Rachel groan as his lips and tongue made contact with her.

Rachel had never felt more alive in her life, never had she ever given herself to a man so quickly and certainly not to a man who could get her into so much trouble and jeopardise her career.

Nicky parted her legs with his hands and placed himself between them. He looked at Rachel again, he saw the fire he had in his own eyes was matched in hers.

Rachel reached up and held his face in her hands; she reached up and kissed him forcefully. Nicky couldn’t hold back any longer and he entered her slowly, pausing for a moment to allow her body to adjust to him, for a while they looked into each others eyes, exchanging so many thoughts without saying a word. They moved together as their bodies and minds became one, both driving closer and closer to brink of where their sweet ecstasy would start to wash over their bodies.

There came a loud knock at the door, once more they froze, Nicky turned his head towards the door.

“Rocco go back to bed.”

Rachel lifted her head up and buried her face in the crook of his neck, Nicky felt her body shaking with her mirth now and he gently poked her in her leg with his finger. He had to admit it was funny, he couldn’t even be alone with a woman he liked, a woman he wanted to carve a future with without his boys causing problems.

“Dad!”

It was Jay’s voice, Rachel lay back down and Nicky was shaking his head trying not to laugh at the absurd situation they were in.

“Jay what ever it is, it can wait until the morning.”

Nicky leant back in to kiss Rachel .

“But Dad Ro’s thrown up everywhere.....it’s on his bed, and the floor, and it’s horrible it’s got all tonight’s pizza bits in it.”

Nicky sighed and Rachel smiled sweetly and whispered.

“You need to help him Nix.”

Nicky kissed her on the lips and got out of bed and put his boxer shorts back on.

“Don’t go anywhere.”

He giggled as he went back for one more kiss before leaving the room.

Just as Jay had told him Rocco had indeed been sick everywhere, the duvet was covered, the floor and his bedside cabinet. Rocco was now in the bathroom still being sick. Nicky was mortified by it all.

“What the hell did you boys eat tonight?”

Jay stood beside his father and looked at the mess.

“That’s disgusting, we ate the same I’m ok.”

Rocco finally came out of the bathroom wiping his face with damp flannel. Nicky felt

his sons face then handed the water over to him. Rocco took the glass and stood next to Jay.

Can I go in Jay's room Dad?"

Nicky nodded as he started to strip the bed.

"Yeah go on, I'll come and see you before I go to bed okay?"

The boys went into Jay's room and closed the door. Jay looked at Rocco and held his hands out.

"How the fook did you do that? It was everywhere."

Rocco handed the glass to Jay who then ran his tongue around the edge and it was then he realised what he had done.

"Fookin' hell man, salt, how much did you use?"

Rocco pulled a face.

"Too much..... But it was worth it, he will be up hours now."

They both laughed together having achieved what they intended to and Rocco washed the glass out thoroughly in Jay's bathroom then filled it with fresh water. Jay got back in his own bed and Rocco got into the one on the opposite side of the room.

The boys were right and it indeed took Nicky over an hour to get the duvet cover in the washing machine and the carpet cleaned a little, he left the duvet outside the back door. He would get someone to sort it out in the morning. He sprayed a generous amount of air freshener in the room then closed the door and headed back into his own bedroom and Rachel . Closing the door he got back into bed and snuggled up to Rachel who was on her side. He kissed her shoulder as he ran his hand up and down her arms, she moaned and moved slightly. Nicky pulled himself up and looked over at her, she was fast asleep, he had to admit she looked cute, he hadn't seen a woman sleep beside him like this since..... Since he had been alone, of course he had one night stands, usually due to the boys not liking the woman but not here in his house and in his own bed.

"Thanks lads."

He moaned and he kissed Rachel lightly and stroked her hair while he relaxed and became sleepy himself and allowed the tiredness to take over his body.

Chapter 6

"DAD!"

Nicky awoke to the sound of banging on his door; he rubbed his weary eyes and ran his fingers through his cropped blond hair.

"Yes Jay."

He sighed.

"Yer coffees on the table come on!"

Nicky turned onto his side and snuggled back under the duvet, as he did his chest touched soft skin and his eyes flew open. He looked at her light hair for a little while and then he remembered... Rachel . Smiling he snuggled up closer to her feeling the warmth radiate from her soft skin. As he kissed her neck she moaned and stirred, turning so she lay on her back.

"Hey."

She whispered and moved her hand to brush the stubble that had formed over night on his chin. Nicky smiled and rested his face against the palm of her hand.

"Morning beautiful."

Leaning in they shared a tender kiss. It was then Rachel realised she had stayed the whole night.

“God what’s the time Nicky?”

Nicky looked over his shoulder at the clock.

“Just after seven thirty, the boys are already up.”

Jumping up in panic Rachel held the duvet close to her.

“I have to get home and ready for school!”

Nicky giggled.

“God that sounds like I’ve got a school girl in my bed..... I’ll take you home, you get dressed and I’ll go see the boys then we can get you out without them knowing.”

Rachel felt her stomach churn, it was awful she sounded like some sordid secret but she wanted this kept quite as much as Nicky did.

Nicky jumped up, he grabbed some clothes out of his wardrobe and then disappeared into the shower. Rachel got up and collected all her clothes, by the time she had done this Nicky was out of the shower and dressed in a white T-shirt and faded blue jeans. He took her breath away just looking at him. How come a sexy guy like him had chosen her? Maybe it had been the flirting and things had gotten a little out of hand, oh well she sighed to herself, time would tell. Nicky fiddled with his hair putting a little bit of wax in and ruffling it up a little.

“You jump in the shower, I’ll sort the boys out and you can come downstairs. If you sneak past the kitchen door and out the front I’ll come and take you home okay?” It was now Rachel ’s turn to giggle, Nicky frowned at her.

“What?”

Rachel shook her head.

“Are you sure Rocco and Jay aren’t the parents here?”

Nicky laughed himself he had to admit the situation was a little absurd but with the twin’s track record with his girlfriends this was the best way to form any kind of a relationship with Rachel before they tried to interfere, little did he know they were already doing so but not knowing the woman in question was their teacher!

Nicky arrived in the kitchen and sat at the table; both boys were eating their cereal and looking through the morning papers. Nicky looked at them both wondering how they would feel about Rachel although he knew it was too soon to break the news to them. He took a sip of his now tepid coffee; he quickly spat the contents back in the mug.

“Erg Jez, that is disgusting!”

Jay screwed his eyes up at his father.

“Should have gotten out of bed then shouldn’t you!”

Nicky slapped him lightly over the back of his head.

“Oi you cheeky little fooker! For your information I was up late cleaning up after your brother here!”

He pointed at Rocco.

“That reminds me I must get someone to sort your room out Rocco! How do you feel today?”

Rocco nodded.

“Yeah much better this morning Dad, some little bug I expect.”

Nicky nodded and then he got up and kept walking backwards and forwards between the sink and the door trying to look like he was doing something. Jay nodded his head at Rocco who frowned and watched Nicky. He turned to Jay and mouthed silently.

‘She’s still here! It didn’t work.’

Nicky saw Rachel walk past the door and then rushed towards the door.

“Oh we need milk, back in a bit boys.”

He sounded so guilty, like a child who had done wrong. Jay sat back in his chair and folded his arms.

“Dad the milk in the fridge was fresh yesterday and there is half a bottle.”

Nicky's gaze darted around the room as he tried to think.

"Ah yeah but I fancy a lot of milk."

With that he shot out of the room, grabbed his black leather jacket from the coat stand in the hallway and was out of the door quick as a flash.

Rocco and Jay were on their feet and in the lounge within seconds, they both rushed to the window to see who they were competing with this time for their father's undivided attention.

Rocco recognised her first and stood dumbstruck, Jay did the same and they watched as Nicky kissed her quickly on the lips then placed his hand on the base of her spine guiding her into the car and closing the door behind her. Nicky looked back at the house and at all the windows furtively but he didn't see either of the twins as they stood behind the crisp white net curtains.

Jay and Rocco walked upstairs slowly to gather their books up for school, as they stood at their doors they both stopped and turned to look at one and other.

"Rocco tell me that wasn't Morrisson, just tell me she looked like her that's all."

Rocco shook his head.

"Nope, he can't even pick someone like him can he? Has to pick a stupid bloody teacher....."

Jay looked at his brother.

"OUR FOOKIN' TEACHER!"

He shouted as he walked into his room slamming the door behind him. As they both left their bedrooms with their rucksacks on their backs Jay remembered his maths book, he had left it in Nicky's bedroom.

"God, I left me fookin' book in his room last night, like I feel like going in there to get it."

Rocco laughed a little and Jay looked questioningly at him.

"What?"

"Maybe Morrisson took it for ya already!"

Jay punched Rocco in the ribs and Rocco rubbed his chest as he still laughed. Not really wanting to Jay entered the bedroom, he sneered his nose up at the messy bed, he didn't want to think about that at all. Parent's did not have sex that was the worst thought in the world, once they had enough kids that was it no more!"

He searched and found the book on the floor under the bed, as he got back up something caught his eye just sticking out from under the pillow. He reached forwards and picked up the little object, it was a little stud earring with either a diamond or a crystal in it. He came out of Nicky's bedroom smiling like the cat that got the cream. He held the earring up so Rocco could see it; Rocco raised his eyebrows at him.

"It isn't Dad's, God I can't wait for school today. I am gonna give her hell!"

Nicky pulled up outside of Rachel's flat and turned the engine off; he turned around to face her and placed his arm around the back of her seat.

"Look I'm sorry about last night, I... well, I've never taken anyone home before and the boys are always insecure about women near me. I guess they don't want anyone to replace their mum."

Rachel reached out and placed her hand on top of his hand that rested on his knee.

"That's not it Nicky, it's the thought someone will take you away from them. Since you three have been alone it's always been the three of you, your three lives together. Someone else stepping in may take you away from them."

Nicky thought about it, he hadn't thought about it that way before, he always assumed they didn't want someone trying to act like their mother.

"Maybe I dunno, anyway can I see you again?"

Nicky rubbed the back of her hand with his thumb while his other hand stroked her hair. Rachel leant in towards him.

"I'd really like that."

Their lips brushed over each others in a soft and tender kiss.

"I'll phone you later okay?"

Rachel nodded, just then Nicky noticed her earring, and he put his hand up to her ear lobe and rubbed it between his fingers.

"You've lost an earring."

Rachel put her hand up to check and sure enough he was right, she looked on her lap and on the floor.

"My Mum and Dad bought them for my twenty first birthday."

Nicky smiled warmly.

"I'm sure it's at home I'll find it don't worry, I'll check as soon as I've got the boys to school alright?"

Rachel raced into her flat to get changed, apply her make up and then grab her things for school.

Nicky meanwhile took two very quiet and scarily well behaved boys to school.

The whole class were seated and waiting for Rachel to arrive, she had never been late before. Rocco shrugged at Jay.

"Maybe she's sick?"

Once more Jay sneered and then snapped.

"As long as it isn't morning sickness I don't care."

Finally Rachel raced in the classroom; she opened the register before she sat down.

"Sorry I'm late everyone."

Rocco giggled.

"That's okay miss, hot date last night was it?"

"Rocco Byrne!"

She admonished, Rocco just laughed and Jay got to his feet.

"Sit down Jay please."

Jay kept walking right up to her desk and the pair kept eye contact all the time. He placed the earring down on the desk, eventually Rachel looked down and as soon as she saw it she blushed profusely. Silently Jay turned and walked back to his desk; he slumped back in his seat and stared at her.

"Thank you."

She said timidly. Jay shrugged.

"S'okay could have been worse."

Rachel frowned not understanding at all.

"I could have found your bra or knickers under Dad's bed!"

The whole class gasped then looked at Jay who sat back with a smug look on his face and then they started to giggle.

Rachel closed her eyes as her face burnt hotter and redder than it ever had in her whole life.

Chapter 7

Rachel got through what seemed a very slow and painful registration, she was well aware of the class talking and sniggering at her but she managed to hold it together and once the class started to leave she pointed at Jay and Rocco.

"You can stay boys; I need a word with you."

Jay winked at Rocco and sat back down. Once the class had emptied Rachel walked over towards the boys and sat herself on one of the desks in front of them.

"Boys."

Jay put his hands behind his head and looked up at the ceiling in a very nonchalant fashion. Rachel felt her heart beating wildly in her chest as she now looked towards Rocco.

"This isn't what you think."

Rocco sat up in his chair, he liked her less and less each time she opened her mouth.

"So you didn't shag Dad last night then?"

Rachel was now annoyed.

"Stop that Rocco Byrne and wash your mouth out with soap!"

Rocco smirked now and leant towards her, he spoke in a quiet but confident tone.

"No thanks miss, the salt water made me hurl enough last night."

Jay burst out laughing and Rachel looked between the two boys.

"Pardon?"

She asked with a shaky voice.

Rocco looked at Jay and then he decided to finish the spiteful attack on his teacher.

"You ain't ever comin' to our house again, got that, Dad's around sexy, good looking talented women all the times and let's face it you ain't it..... Can we get to our class now?"

Rachel nodded as she bit back the tears that now stung her eyes. What could she do now? Last night had obviously been a big mistake, Rocco and Jay would now make her working life a living hell. It just depended how far this went round the school to see what happened with her job.

Nicky went to work with a spring in his step, okay the evening hadn't gone quite to plan but it had at least gone in the right direction. He had however decided that he would pursue things between himself and Rachel, he felt something very special between them and he didn't intend to spoil anything, he would take it a step at a time and not rush a thing then as time passed he would slowly introduce the boys to the idea and hopefully they would be happy.

As he walked in the TV studio's green room Mark elbowed Shane in the ribs.

"Oi look at that face....."

He whispered, Shane smiled.

"Oh does that face say I got lucky last night?"

Kian leaned into the group now and laughed.

"That face says I got shagged last night!"

Shane slapped Kian's leg and they all sat up instantly being quiet. Nicky screwed his eyes up at them.

"Talking about me lads?"

He asked as he thrust his hands deep into the pockets of his jeans. Mark just had to know.

"So did you go back to hers or was it a quickie in the car?"

Kian and Shane erupted into fits of laughter now but Nicky sat down and didn't even appear the tiniest bit embarrassed at his friend's words. This was very much the Nicky Byrne of years ago, Nicky they had not seen in many years.

"She stayed at mine and I ran her home before I took the boys to school."

Shane's jaw dropped open and Mark and Kian just stared at him. Nicky was so impressed now he smiled at them all.

"Close your mouth Filan ya look ugly."

Shane's mouth snapped shut, Kian was the only one able to think sensibly.

“So, was everything okay, are the twins okay about it?”

Nicky explained the whole series of events, obviously leaving some details out, only the fact they had been disturbed but he told them he wanted it kept away from Rocco and Jay for a while so he had time to see how things went with him and Rachel .

After their interview it was just gone twelve o'clock so Nicky thought he would call Rachel to arrange another date. He moved to a quiet part of the green room while the others chatted and made their own phone calls.

Rachel saw Nicky's name flash up as she sat in the staff room, she couldn't walk out into the corridor because the students weren't allowed to have phones so she was stuck being careful but Nicky did know so it hopefully would be okay.

“Hello.”

“Hey babe, how are ya?”

His voice was warm and sexy as it always had been.

“Yeah not bad, busy day, you?”

Nicky gave a mock huff.

“The lads tried to take the piss but I shut them up which was great.... Have ya seen Rocco and Jay?”

Rachel ran her hand through her light hair, what did she say now? If she told him about the earring it could spoil everything and she wanted to see more of him.

“Yeah this morning in registration and I will do this afternoon when I go back.”

Rachel was aware of eyes watching her and ears twitching, they knew who she was talking to.

“Erm look I need to go, I'll call you later yeah?”

Her voice was uneasy and Nicky could tell why, he knew it was other teachers.

“Are you okay babe? Having problems?”

“Oh you know, just the usual.”

Nicky felt for her at least once the boys found out about her and accepted her everything would settle down nicely for them.

“Oh yeah, I'll look for that earring this afternoon for you.”

Rachel 's whole body started to burn with embarrassment now.

“Oh no, no, that's fine, I found it, it must have fallen into my bag.”

Nicky found this rather strange, how on earth did an earring fall in your bag?

“Okay, can I come and see you tonight?”

Rachel wanted to see him but was worried about the twins and what they would do.

“What about the..... Erm, you know.”

It was so hard not being able to talk properly but she had decided no way would she tell Nicky what had happened or it would cause more trouble with Jay and Rocco and they had enough problems and concerns of their own, it would also spell the end of her and Nicky before they even started.

“I'll tell them I'm going to see Shane or something, maybe even drop them off at Shane's and then get a phone call that I am needed somewhere, don't worry babe, what ever happens I'll get to ya.”

They ended their call and Rachel silently returned to her books she had been marking.

Nicky returned to the others and grabbed a can of Pepsi as he sat down.

“Okay?”

Shane asked, Nicky nodded as he took a swig of the fizzy drink. Shane moved closer, he didn't want to be overheard by anyone.

“Ya like her don't ya?”

Nicky smiled against his can of drink, his lips curling around the edge.

“Yeah I think I do, early days mind.”

Shane nodded, he was pleased to see Nicky happy, they had always been close and Shane had secretly wished Nicky would find someone to love him and the twins in the right way and although he hadn't met Rachel he just had a feeling about her. "Well early days or not, ya just know. Good luck to ya mate."

Nicky then asked Shane if he would help with his plan for that evening, which of course Shane was only too happy to help him out. Maybe he could speak to the boys and find out what they thought of Rachel then at least he could tell Nicky what he was looking at.

Rachel took the afternoon registration, then she had half an hour of class time where she could look in their diaries and catch up with each student or notes their parents had left.

One of the popular girls of the school came and sat down beside her and passed her book over as she normally would.

"So Shannon, how is everything with you?"

Shannon nodded then spoke a bit louder than was needed.

"Yeah everything's okay, I was thinking about my future though, after school you know."

Rachel listened intently, she always wanted to help her students, Shannon continued.

"Well I was thinking about finding some rich pop star and sponging off him for the rest of my life but I don't know anyone who knows anything about that..."

Rachel was flustered and tried to answer.

"I well, erm, that is, I...."

Shannon cut her off.

"So would you recommend it, is it difficult to fool them?"

Once more she wanted the ground to open up and swallow her. One thing for sure was she couldn't see Nicky tonight, she just couldn't face him.

Chapter 8

Rachel spent the remainder of the school day worrying how she could tell Nicky she couldn't see him. She felt sad because she wanted to see him, she really liked him. The cheeky Dubliner she had gone through school with was starting to reach her heart and she knew she had to put a stop to this before she got hurt.

Once her class had emptied at the end of the school day she got out her phone and looked at it like it was her worst enemy, sighing deeply she started to text.

Nicky felt the phone vibrate in his pocket, he took it out and smiled as he read 'Text received from Rachel .' He felt all warm and fuzzy inside, he sniggered to himself it was like being a school kid again, flipping the case open he read the message.

'Nicky, sorry had a really bad day, very busy. I can't make tonight too much work to do. Sorry Rachel .'

Nicky was surprised to say the least; he read the message and then re read it, what the hell was going on? Earlier she seemed like she had wanted to see him, he knew she was having trouble talking because of being at work but this was a complete turnaround. He started to reply, every time he wrote a word he deleted it.

Mark moved his foot slightly to knock Shane's shoe, Shane looked at his shoe then up at Mark and frowned. Mark curled his index finger over his top lip as he was trying to think, he then motioned with his eyes towards Shane who hadn't noticed

anything up till now. Shane nodded at Mark appreciatively.

“Right Egan I need a drink.”

Kian looked up from his drawing of the new stage he wanted for the next tour and frowned at his dark haired friend.

“Let me finish this man yeah?”

Mark got to his feet and tried to pick up Kian’s paper. Kian however grabbed them.

“Feck off Mark, what’s your problem?”

Mark stood in front of Kian and between him and Nicky as he mouthed ‘we need to leave them to talk.’ Kian understood and coughed, totally over acting.

“Yeah, you’re right, I’m gagging for a pint man, come on!”

Shane and Mark both tried hard not to laugh at Kian, he was so obvious he was hilarious. Once they had left Shane moved his chair next to Nicky who was oblivious to everything around him.

“Something wrong?”

Nicky looked up at his closest friend.

“I dunno..... I just.....”

He handed his phone to Shane who read it, he handed the phone back and looked into Nicky’s blue eyes that were clouded with confusion.

“That to me looks like a woman who is battling with her nerves.”

Nicky shook his head.

“Nah, it’s me isn’t it, single dad, twins who let’s face it are little shites at times!”

Shane patted Nicky on the shoulder.

“Nix, Nix, Nix..... Think for a minute, she knows the boys, she went out with you, then.... Well, you know..... Were ya that bad?”

Nicky managed a smile now and a small laugh.

“Ya said today apart from being at work she was fine earlier.....”

Nicky nodded at him and Shane continued.

“Well I think this is a work issue, she’s worried about work, worried what people will think and say and I also think she is worried about Jay and Rocco.”

Nicky listened intently to Shane; he knew he wouldn’t give him hope in something he thought impossible.

“So what do I do Shane? What do you suggest?”

Shane got to his feet.

“I suggest you go to a florist..... NOT the petrol station on the way! Buy some nice flowers and get a bottle of wine. You can always get a taxi back if ya need.”

Nicky thought for a moment and was about to open his mouth when Shane smiled and rattled his car keys in front of Nicky’s face.

“I’m now going to get the boys and maybe they can keep Nicole in for the night.”

Nicky got up as they walked to the door.

“Is she still seeing that guy with the motorbike?”

Shane rolled his eyes, a typical concerned dad.

“Oh man, honest, I swear to ya, now it’s this guy who plays drums in a band.”

Both men laughed heartily now and Nicky slapped Shane hard on the back.

“Well what can I say, boys in band? Bad news can’t trust em!”

Both men came out of the building jostling with each other like children.

Rachel had arrived home and taken a long hot bath. Once she was out she got dressed in her oldest and most sloppy pair of grey track suit bottoms and a vest top. She didn’t bother with a bra, there was no point, no one was coming round and she wasn’t going anywhere either and as hard as it was to admit, her fantasy life with Nicky Byrne was over before it had ever begun. She found a nice bottle of red wine from her wine rack, grabbed a nice big glass and settled on the sofa with her legs crossed for an evening of feeling sorry for herself.

Nicky checked his hair in the rear view mirror and tweaked his spikes a little, once satisfied he got out of the car and took hold of the bouquet of roses and lilies he had bought in the florist, just as Shane had suggested and not from a petrol station like some cheap skate. He had got a nice bottle of wine from the nearest off licence and he walked up the five steps to her front door, he took a deep breath and rang the bell.

Rachel swore loudly, some idiot with the wrong house no doubt because she hadn't even ordered her pizza for dinner. Oh well she thought, whoever you are at that door be prepared to look at the bride of Frankenstein.

Chapter 9

Rachel tucked some stray strands of hair behind her ears and pulled the door roughly open. Looking at the ground she noticed a very nice and expensive looking pair of black leather boots, she frowned and slowly looked up, then she saw a bottle of red wine in one hand and a beautiful bouquet in the other, then she saw his face. Rachel took in a sharp breath as her mouth held the shape of an 'O'.

Nicky heard footsteps come to the door and quickly stood up straight and ran everything through his mind once more, he knew what he was going to say and what they needed to sort out before any form of a relationship could move forwards. He smiled as he saw the look of total shock and horror on her face. Right in front of him stood Rachel, the girl who grew into a beautiful swan and here she stood without a scrap of make up and in the most comfortable relaxed 'Sunday lounging around' clothes. Yet she looked as beautiful as she always did, hers was a natural beauty, an inner beauty that radiates itself from within.

"Rachel Hi....."

He held out the flowers towards her and held the bottle of wine up.

"..... Erm, I thought these may help make a bad day a little better?"

Rachel's face coloured up as she thought how gorgeous he looked and what a state she was.

"Excuse my state."

Nicky looked down at her chest as he then noticed she wasn't wearing a bra and due to the cool breeze her erect nipples were showing through her top. Nicky's eyes widened as his trousers tightened. Rachel followed his gaze and realised what he was looking at, she quickly crossed her arms over her chest to hide a little. Nicky looked back up.

"Sorry."

He blushed and Rachel stepped back to allow him entry to her house.

"Thanks."

Nicky walked in straight into the lounge before him, he had a quick scan of the room and just as Shane had predicted there were no books or any sign of work related material anywhere in the room. If anything it was all set out for a nice quiet night in front of the TV.

He handed the wine and flowers over to Rachel who told him to sit down while she put the flowers in water and opened the wine.

Once in the kitchen Rachel went into meltdown over the way she looked. Looking in the window behind her sink it was dark enough outside so she managed to see enough to straighten her hair up at least. She cursed herself for getting up and

answering the door. How the hell was she going to have the courage to lie and tell him she didn't want to see him anymore when all she wanted was for him to always be there?

She arranged the beautiful flowers in a clear cut crystal vase and brought them into the lounge to place on her wooden coffee table in front of where Nicky sat. She stood back once she had put them where she was happy. They were beautiful shades of pink, ranging from delicate baby pink through to almost fuchsia.

"Thank you, they are beautiful."

Nicky smiled pleased with himself.

"Come on, get that wine and you can tell me all about your bad day."

Rachel did so and brought the bottle and two large glasses back with her, she handed Nicky a glass and then she sat beside him on the sofa curling her legs underneath her. Flicking her hair over her shoulder she rest her arm on the back of the sofa and her head on her fist as she sighed deeply.

Nicky reached out to her and ran the back of his hand down her arm lightly.

"Are you getting a hard time from work?"

Rachel gave a faint smile, if only he knew.

"It's hard you know that Nicky, maybe....."

Nicky knew exactly where this conversation was going. Taking her glass of wine and placing it on the table he moved closer to her and put his hand on the outside of her thigh.

"Shush, shush, please, no, listen, just think about it, and please don't be hasty."

Rachel was blown away by his insistence to listen to him and not call day on their relationship just yet.

"I'm sure things with the school will be fine once they know you aren't going to treat the boys any different. Would there seriously be a problem if I wasn't who I am?"

Rachel smiled at him, Nicky blushed slightly, it did sound a little conceited.

"Now you stop teasing me missy....."

He pinched the side of her leg lightly being playful.

"..... You know exactly what I mean, if I was Joe Public, no one would even care."

Rachel moved her hand and placed it on top of Nicky's warm hand, instantly he moved his hand until their fingers entwined with each other. She couldn't remember the last time it felt this good to be with a man. Nicky was always feeling the warmth and connection between them, when they touched it felt so natural, like their touch had always been meant for each other and now they had found one another again.

Nicky tried to speak but Rachel jumped in first.

"It's Rocco and Jay I'm more worried about, I don't think they will like the idea of their Dad dating their teacher."

Nicky moved closer now, their legs touching each other, the warmth of each others bodies penetrating the others skin. An immense heat was rising between them and it was becoming impossible to ignore.

"Let's give it time, I'll talk to the boys and in time they will see you aren't trying to take their mums place, that's all that has ever scared them in the past.."

Rachel pulled her body up straighter now.

"No Nicky, I think you are wrong, they are scared of losing you."

Nicky frowned and cocked his head to one side questioningly, Rachel continued.

"Nicky they were very young when it happened and of course they don't want someone trying to take her place but their big fear is losing you, losing their Dad's attention, time, and love. Having to share you with someone, Nicky they lost their mum you are all they have, you are their stability, they are so scared the one constant in their life will be taken away from them."

Nicky hadn't really thought about it like that, he only saw the gap their mother left when she died, not that he was both mother and father and that if someone else

entered their family then it would all change.

"Maybe you are right, but they won't lose me, they always come first they know that."

It was now Rachel's turn to smile, for a man who had lived a very full life even at this early age he was very naive over his children.

"Nicky, they know that, why do you think they have fought so hard against anyone you dated? ... They love you so much but they are very scared of losing you."

Nicky thought about it.

"So that's why they are little fookers then?"

Leaning in closer Rachel rubbed her nose against his.

"No Nicky, that isn't why you fool," She spoke softly, nuzzling closer their lips centimetres apart Nicky asked.

"Then why?"

Rachel moved both hands to either side of his face, feeling the small amount of stubble that had grown throughout the day. She couldn't resist this man, she wanted him when they were classmates and she wanted him now.

"Because Nicky, they are Byrne's, real Byrne boys!"

Rachel moved in and her lips crashed down onto his as he wrapped his arms tightly around her waist and pulled her onto his lap, the heat was now rising to an uncontrollable level and Rachel could feel Nicky's desire pressing into her. She pulled away and got to her feet and held her hand out towards him.

"Can you stay for a little while?"

He took her hand and got to his feet, he winked, giving her the famous Byrne smile all the girls fell for.

"For you I have the rest of my life."

Chapter 10

Within minutes Nicky and Rachel were laying naked in her bed. Nicky cupped her face in his hands as he stared loving into her light blue eyes.

"I can't even start to describe how happy you make, I know it's so soon Rachel but you really are making an impact on my life and on me."

Rachel raised her hands up to hold Nicky's as she smiled warmly at him. "Maybe a school girl's fantasy can come true then."

Nicky frowned at her not really understanding, Rachel shook her head and laughed slightly at him.

"Oh Nicky Byrne, still as thick as school custard..... Come on I was just one in a very long line of girls who fancied you."

Nicky shook his head.

"Nah it was the football thing, they all dreamt of being a WAG, nothing to do with me. Anyway you had your own admirers."

Rachel rolled her eyes, he was trying to be kind to her but Nicky knew what she was thinking.

"Seriously, you remember Connor don't you?" Rachel nodded.

"Well then, he liked you, you used to do his homework for him."

"He used to bully me Nicky."

Now it was Nicky's turn to giggle at her.

"What do you expect, you were so smart if he went out with you, and everyone would have taken the piss outta him!"

Rachel slapped his arm hard and Nicky felt the sting, he sat up rubbing his arm.

"Oi Morrisson, that was evil."

Rachel still lay on the bed as she watched Nicky be a total girl, rubbing his arm.

"You asked for that, anyway I wasn't exactly the prettiest thing was I?"

Nicky didn't like to listen to her putting herself down; he lay back down beside her and ran his finger down her arm watching her skin come up in goose bumps as he touched her.

"Rachel stop it, anyway you look at half of those girls at school now, they are either divorced with a ton of plastic surgery or covered in so much fake tan they look stupid."

Nicky moved closer and spoke in hushed sexy tones.

"You are now and always will be a natural beauty, but more than most of those girls at school, you are beautiful inside as well as on the surface and that is why I think I'm falling in love with you."

Rachel's eyes widened and she opened her mouth to speak as Nicky moved forward and captured her lips with his own. It was a hot fiery kiss which Rachel felt throughout her body as she came to life finally admitting her own feelings towards him, and yes she loved him, of course she loved him.

The kiss deepened as Nicky's hands rained burning hot touches to every part of her skin.

Their hands explored each others bodies, Rachel finding the light hair that covered his firm chest and as she gently ran her nails down his back she felt his firm buttocks as he moved on top of her. Every part of him just felt so perfect, more perfect than any dream she had ever had of him.

Nicky was losing himself in the touch of Rachel, he could feel the love and respect flow between them, and he hadn't felt this for years. It was nothing like previous women he had been with, they were nothing and paled into insignificance compared to the beauty he now held in his arms.

He kissed her delicate neck as his kisses moved lower to meet with his hands on her breasts, Nicky felt the urgency in his body as he kissed her firm mounds, Rachel's breath started to quicken as he understood her desire was exactly the same as his own. He looked up into her eyes once more and their gazes locked exchanging so many feelings words could never have expressed.

He moved himself between her legs and waited for her to tell him she was ready and it was okay. Rachel had never known a man like this, so caring and making everything so perfect for her, he smile radiated from her face, even her eyes smiled at him.

"I love you."

She whispered to him, Nicky kissed her tenderly.

"Me too..... Now and forever."

He entered her with infinite care and felt her body arc up into his own as he started to move within her, all the time whispering words of love to her, years of held back emotion had now found a channel for him to let go and feel love once more.

The tempo of their love making increased as they both moved nearer to their completion.

"Don't leave me alone."

He begged her as he reached the crest of his high, Rachel could hear the fear in his voice as he said words that could only be admitted in the height of passion and she understood as she reached up and stroked his damp hair from his face.

"Never Nicky, I'm here with you always, just let it go baby, just let it go."

As his orgasm tore through his body he found tears were forming in his eyes.

Rachel reached her orgasm seconds after Nicky and for a while they just lay in each others arms, Nicky however hid his face from her, feeling embarrassed of the tears he had shed. As Nicky lay on his side Rachel cuddled up behind him and put her arm over his waist.

"Hey, what's wrong?"

Nicky silently sniffed the tears back and quickly wiped his face as he turned to face her, he smiled loving at her.

"No nothing, everything is fine, was fine..... fantastic, you know what I mean."

They both giggled like school children then Rachel knew she had to talk to him.

"You have to let go sometime Nicky, I'm not your family or one of the lads, it's okay you can tell me anything, I will always understand."

Nicky thought for a while before he eventually spilled all his emotions out to her. He had loved and still did love his wife and Rachel said she would hope he still did, it didn't make her feel second best or anything at all, she felt he had enough love for both of them.

He didn't know why but he found himself explaining his few encounters with women since he had been a single father and Rachel just listened to him and answered where she needed to.

"You are a very special woman listening to all this."

Rachel shook her head.

"The best lovers are also best friends."

Her words were so true, he had missed this closeness, someone to share everything with, good and bad, someone he could open up to and cry if he needed to, that someone who accepted him and no matter what happened always loved him implicitly.

"Can I stay tonight?"

Rachel wanted nothing more but she also needed to make this work for Rocco and Jay if it were to work for her and Nicky.

"No Nicky, the boys."

Nicky leant over to the bedside cabinet to pick up his phone.

"Oh that's fine, Shane will keep them, I'm sure they are slagging me and Shane off with Nicole, oh you would love her, hilarious girl, and my god talk about her temper matching her hair.... Phew, she's had a few spats with Shane but she can still wrap him around her little finger, I'm so glad I got boys....."

Nicky was rambling now he felt relaxed but Rachel knew he couldn't stay. She took the phone away from him.

"No Nicky, I want you to stay of course I do, but the twins come first. You have to make them comfortable with everything, they have to know you won't put me before them and if you stay then that is the first thing they will think."

Jumping up out of bed Nicky grabbed his clothes and started to dress while singing to himself. Rachel pulled the covers up to hide her body as she laughed at him, once dressed he leant over the bed and kissed her hard on the lips.

"You are one in a million Rachel Morrisson you know that."

Rachel playfully pushed him away.

"Go on Byrne get your boys home."

Nicky went out of the bedroom door then leant around the door.

"I'll phone when they are in bed okay? I want you to meet the lads, they are gonna love you, I just know it."

Rachel pointed to the door.

"Go on GO!"

She shouted at him. Nicky disappeared then came back yet again.

"Oh by the way....."

He stepped over to the bed and kissed her once more.

"Hmm, I needed that....."

He moved to the door again then stopped and turned.

"Oh yes, I forgot."

Rachel rolled her eyes, what now? Nicky pointed to the duvet she held so tightly to her body.

“No point in that is there? I’ve seen everything and it is beautiful!”

“NICKY!”

Rachel screamed as she threw a pillow at him, Nicky moved away quickly and she heard his laughter as he opened the front door.

“You missed Morrisson , girls are such crap shots!”

Chapter 11

Nicky felt more content than he had done in years, he almost felt like a love struck teenager, but Rachel was right, he had the twins and they needed to feel secure in their own lives.

He arrived at Shane’s and pressed the intercom on the gate. Shane answered quickly.

“That you Nix?”

Nicky smiled to himself.

“Sure is man, back to collect me boys and back to life.”

Shane tutted and half giggled.

“So I take it everything went okay and you got some then?”

Nicky shook his head.

“Just shut the fook up and let me in will ya?”

Nicky waited for the large gates to open and he drove up the long gravel driveway to the house. Shane was waiting at the door when he got out of the car.

“Kettle’s on.”

Nicky and Shane walked into the kitchen and Nicky sat at the breakfast bar while Shane made the coffees.

“So was I right?”

Nicky grinned as he took the hot steaming mug of coffee and cradled it in both his hands.

“You were right, dead right in fact. Work seems a bit of an issue but she is worried about Rocco and Jay.”

Shane nodded as he rested his arms on the breakfast bar and nodded at Nicky.

“You know the fact she thinks about their feelings is a real good thing Nix, lets face it if things work out, she is taking on a ready made family, and not just that but the fact they are teenagers... Well we both know how hard it is and they are our own kids.”

They both nodded knowingly.

“So how do you feel about things, about Rachel and the future, do you see anything yet or is it still too early?”

Nicky leant back in the chair and smiled.

“I can see everything; it’s just if Jay and Rocco accept her that is the biggest problem...”

She doesn’t want to take over or try to be their mum I know that, Rachel thinks they are scared of losing me though.”

As they chatted the twins and Nicole came into the kitchen. Shane smiled at her.

“Well if it isn’t my princess.”

Nicole groaned, anyone would think she was still five, Nicky knew she hated it too. He got up and embraced her in a tight hug.

“Nah, you’re not a princess are ya? More like the three Musketeers aren’t ya? Never know what you three are gonna do next.”

Nicole squirmed out of her favourite ‘uncle’s’ clutches. Shane decided Nicky needed time with the boys and suggested Nicole tried to beat him at snooker and just as any true red-head she couldn’t turn down a challenge.

Nicky motioned to the large wooden kitchen table and they all sat down. Rocco and Jay exchanged glances knowing full well what this was about. Nicky felt awkward and for a while couldn't look at his sons, he fiddled with the cuffs of his jacket and then rubbed at an imaginary mark on the table. Rocco raised his eyebrows.

"We know it's about Miss Morrisson, and yes we know you have been seeing her." Rocco sighed as if he were bored of the subject already, Nicky shocked they knew anything he thought he had been so careful with the whole thing.

"Oh okay, I guess ya Dad was a little slow on that one then...."

He tried a half-hearted laugh but neither of the boys joined in, Nicky coughed and composed himself.

"..... Anyway, yes I've been seeing Rachel, only a few times mind you but things are going well and I know you guys haven't been happy about me seeing people in the past."

Jay laughed.

"You can say that again, all wanted ya money and didn't want us."

Rachel's words rang in his mind, she had been right.

"Rachel is concerned about the three of us, she doesn't want to come between us, and she doesn't want to take the place of your mum either."

Jay shook his head and got to his feet.

"But she doesn't mind us being laughed at does she?"

Nicky could hear the anger in his sons' voice, this is how things had been in the past, they either got angry or upset and he let women go. How long could he let this carry on?

Shane was right he needed to build a life for himself, he couldn't be alone for the rest of his life, and she wouldn't have wanted that. Nicky found the strength for the first time ever to be strong and firm with the boys over his personal life.

"Right lads, you've had it your way since we lost ya mum but this is it now. I think I have a future with Rachel and we want to try and make this work. Now you can either try like me and Rachel will do, or you can try to make me as unhappy as possible. The choice boys is yours!..... Right get in the car we are going home."

They travelled home in silence, Nicky wanted so much to tell them not to worry and had this not been Rachel he would have caved in and let the boys have what they wanted for their own happiness but he had to stop all this, maybe his behaviour with them and always giving in had made them this way. Okay they were Byrne boys like Rachel had said but had his giving in to them all the time made them worse? They got indoors and Nicky locked the door behind them. Jay and Rocco looked at him waiting for him to apologise but it didn't come. Nicky hung his keys up on the rack by the door and removed his jacket.

"Go on lads, bed."

Rocco tried to protest.

"But Dad, you can't do this to us, think about us..."

Nicky looked into his sons blue eyes as his own hardened.

"I am thinking of ya and I am also thinking about me, I need to be happy, I need someone in my life....."

Jay tried the guilt approach.

"You have us and we love ya, we don't need anyone else."

Nicky rubbed his face, this was hard.

"Yes and I love you too, dearly, but I need more, I need someone to share my life. This isn't negotiable. We all have to adjust, maybe it won't work out but I deserve the chance to see don't I?"

Rocco and Jay nodded silently; they were defeated for the moment. Nicky called

after them.

"I'm inviting Rachel for dinner tomorrow night so we can all get to know each other better and you will behave."

Once at the top of the stairs Rocco shrugged his shoulders as he looked at Jay.

"What now?"

Jay patted his brother on the back.

"We may have lost the battle but we haven't lost the war."

Once in bed Nicky phoned Rachel . Rachel jumped at the sound of her phone and picked it up as she heard his warm Irish tones she relaxed back into her bed where they had made love only hours earlier.

"Hey babe."

"Hey", she replied her whole body felt his warmth.

"I spoke to the boys, and I've told them, I told them what you said and I told them I deserve to be happy."

Nicky's voice wavered slightly with his concern. Rachel placed her hand on the phone as if he could feel it and he would know she was with him.

"We can wait a while you know, I'll still be here."

"I know ya will but I don't want that. I want you to come to dinner tomorrow night so we can all be together."

"Let me cook Nicky, I'd love to do that, maybe show the boys I don't want to take anything away from them but try to give."

They chatted for a while longer before they decided it was time for them both to get some sleep to prepare for what would probably be a tough evening.

"Oh yeah, ya know I said I thought I was falling in love with ya?"

Rachel smiled and nodded.

"Yeah I do."

"I was wrong."

Rachel sat bolt upright in bed, what kind of a game was he playing? Nicky knew she was panicking but he couldn't resist it.

"I am in love with you."

"You wont ever change will you Byrne?"

"Nope and that's what ya love, the cheeky lad ya knew all those years ago."

Rachel shook her head, as she laughed at him.

"Goodnight Nicky."

She hung up and slid back under the covers feeling totally happy and most of all, loved.

In his own house Nicky was doing and thinking exactly the same.

Chapter 12

The day passed without any major events except when Nicky decided the boys should go and meet Rachel to help her bring everything she wanted to cook to the house, plus he thought it would help them all get to know each other on a different basis to teacher and pupil. The twins however were not impressed at all by this but they told Nicky they would go to meet her just to save him getting angry.

They caught a bus and headed towards the address Nicky had given them, they rang to the bell and waited, then they rang again and then knocked loudly. It was obvious she wasn't at home. Jay looked at Rocco.

"Now what, do we just go home and tell Dad she wasn't there?"

Rocco thought for a moment as he looked around the street and there right in front of the house was her car, he recognised it from school, he stuck his elbow in Jay's

side. Jay pushed his brother's shoulder.

"Fook off!"

Rocco nodded towards the small red car.

"That's Morrisson 's car isn't it?"

Jay screwed his eyes up as he thought, then he nodded at his brother.

"Yeah, I'm sure it is why?"

Rocco walked up and down the pavement looking at the ground, and then he stopped and bent down by the kerbside. Jay watched as his brother turned around smiling holding a piece of stone in his hand. Jay really wasn't sure about this and started to lose his bottle, he shook his head as he looked up and down the street.

"Ro, don't do it, Dad will go off his fookin rocker this time!"

Rocco walked around the car and stood in the road beside it. Jay quickly followed trying to talk his brother out of what he was about to do but to no avail. Without checking again Rocco took the stone and gouged a deep line along the driver's door.

"Now then lads, what do you think you are up to?"

The twins turned around slowly to see a very tall Gard looking down at them. Rocco dropped the stone and the Gard looked at the mark he had made.

"Something tells me you boys are in a lot of trouble, not only from the owner of this car when they press charges but from your parents too."

Very soon Rocco and Jay found themselves sitting in the police station.

Only seconds after the twins were taken into custody Rachel appeared around the corner with bags of shopping from the supermarket. She saw the Gard looking at her car registration number and she rushed over to see what had happened.

He explained she had been the victim of vandals, two young lads. Rachel knew it was the twins it had to be, she knew they wouldn't be happy now Nicky had told them officially they were dating. So she described the boys and the Gard nodded very surprised. She quickly explained she was their teacher, and then told a little lie and said she was their step mother.

The Gard radioed ahead and told the station that the twins step mother was on her way who was also the person whose car had been vandalised.

Rocco and Jay were told their step mother was on her way and they both looked very confused, the Gard was annoyed.

"Oh I see you are the type of lads that won't accept a step mother, that's why you scratched her car isn't it?"

They looked at each other not speaking and not needing to, they both were asking themselves why Rachel had said she was their step mother?

Rachel arrived at the police station and was taken through to one of the interview rooms to see the twins.

They were both sat at a desk looking rather pale with a very tall Gard standing against the wall with his arms folded across his chest silently looking at the pair. Rachel came into the room with a female officer who nodded at the man and he left. Both women sat opposite the boys, the female Gard was amazed the boys said nothing.

"Have you nothing to say to your step mum then?"

Jay looked down at the table his cheeks burning partly in embarrassment and partly in fear of what was going to happen to them. Rocco looked directly at Rachel and as the pair made eye contact she could see there was remorse in his eyes.

"I'm sorry....."

His voice faded away, Rachel took a deep breath.

"Right both of you listen to me and this is the final time I am saying it right?"

They both looked at her and nodded as for once they did actually listen to her. "I don't want your mum to ever be forgotten, I knew her and I liked her, she was a lovely warm person. I want to see photos of her in the house, where they belong okay?"

Both boys nodded.

"Now your Dad, I don't intend to take him away from you, if anything I don't think you guys do enough alone, so in that respect I would be encouraging him to take more time with you on boys only time."

Jay's face lit up with a smile as he looked at Rocco, once again they both knew the other thought it was worth giving her the chance, and she wasn't trying to get in the middle of anyone or anything at all.

"Your Dad deserves a break, seriously, he loves you and he still loves your mum, he always will. He doesn't want to push you aside or forget her he just wants to be happy that's all..... most of all he wants you happy and you know that I know you do!"

It was Jay's turn to talk now as he felt a little more confident.

"So what happens now?"

Rachel looked at the Gard sat beside her and then back at the twins.

"I am not pressing charges; this is something we need to work out between us not with the Garda right?"

Both boys nodded, Rocco looked at Rachel .

"Does that mean we can go home?"

The Gard spoke looking at both of them in turn.

"Well all I can say is you have a very understanding step mother and hearing what she has just said about your mum and Dad then I think you are very lucky. Go home; I don't want to see either of you back here is that understood..... Oh yes and I think you should be washing the family cars for a couple of months don't you?"

Rachel thanked the Gard and took the boys out to her car, she opened the door and looked at them both.

"Come on get in we are really late, your Dad will kill us."

They travelled in silence to their home and once they arrived Rachel got out and handed them the bags of food she had bought for their dinner.

The door opened and a very distraught looking Nicky stood at the door, Rocco mouthed 'we are so dead now' to Jay, Nicky looked at them all one by one.

"What the hell happened? You should have been here over an hour ago and Rachel your phone was off!"

Rachel fumbled in her handbag; she knew it was still turned off from when she went into the station.

"Oh Nicky my battery died, I'm sorry it's been awful this afternoon we had to go to the Garda!"

Nicky glared at Rocco then at Jay as both boys went deathly white.

"Right I think it's time for something serious now don't you boys?"

His face was sterner than they had ever seen in their lives and they felt scared although they knew they had asked for this.

Rachel moved forwards placing her hand on Nicky's arm.

"No Nicky, not them, they saw a group of lads scratching my car so they came and told me and they agreed to go give statements and descriptions of the lads they saw, if anything you should be very proud of them."

Nicky now felt amazed and proud that his sons had done something so brave and responsible.

"Is that right lads?"

Rachel turned around so her back was to Nicky and she gave the boys a sweet

smile and nodded at them.

Rocco walked towards Nicky with his bags of shopping.

“Yeah ‘course it is Dad, Jez, do ya really think we are that bad?”

Jay walked up to Rachel and held up his bags, smiling his thanks to her for what she had done for them.

“Shall we take these in Miss Morrisson?”

“That’s lovely Jay, I’ll come and sort them out in a minute okay?..... And please both of you; at school it’s Miss Morrisson , here it is Rachel .”

The boys took the bags into the kitchen and Nicky put his arm around Rachel as they walked into the house.

“I have no idea what happened this afternoon and I think maybe I don’t want to know but I’m so happy you guys can try and get on..... I just know we all have a future together, the four of us, I can feel it.”

Rachel leant forwards and ran her fingers down his cheek.

“Me too, I know we can all make this work out.”

Their lips touched in a tender kiss and they became lost in their warm embrace as Rocco walked into the hallway.

“Oh God Dad put Rachel down, it’s disgusting!”

Nicky broke their kiss and laughed lightly at his son, he knew this was Rocco’s joking way of saying he accepted them. Nicky pointed to the kitchen.

“Get back in there with Jay and sort the shopping out ya cheeky sod!”

Nicky held Rachel tightly in his arms knowing his life was about to start again, the house was going to be filled with love and laughter.

Rocco tapped Jay on the back as he put some vegetables into.

“Hey Jay man, she was in there snogging Dad’s face off.... It was gross!!!!”

Jay laughed but sneered at the thought of it, but then he had a thought.

“Hey this isn’t too bad really, think about it a teacher in the family, she can help with the homework, inside info on exams.....”

They both laughed, they knew although it would be much more subtle and in a fun and good natured way their naughty little tricks would live on for many more years.....

After all they were their father’s sons..... They were the Byrne boys!

THE END