

THREE OF SWORDS

**By
Sam O'Rourke**

Copyright © 2017 Sam O'Rourke

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below.

samorourke1@yahoo.com

Dedicated to:
My dearest husband, and my two wonderful daughters.
I couldn't have done it without you.

Prologue

July 1984
London

‘C’mon, Matt, get in there. This little lot has cost me a fucking mint so far!’

Matt swallowed hard. He was bricking it, but then why wouldn’t he? Andy and the others may have had little concern about performing in front of a crowd, in fact as far as they were concerned it was all part of the night's entertainment. But now that it was his turn he was wondering if this was such a good idea after all. Initially, when Andy had suggested it, it had excited him to the point of euphoria, promising to be one of the best nights of his life. But now the night had finally arrived, he was suffering from a huge dose of the jitters and not because of what his fiancée Lindsay may have thought.

He hadn’t given her a single thought all evening. What he was worried about was having to perform in front of this lot, all of his best mates. It was bad enough that the few girlfriends he had had to date, had laughed when he had whipped out his equipment and held it at them like some inadequate garden hose. Lindsay had done the same until she showed him the ropes. So the thought of acting out his little fantasy in front of Andy and the crew was softening him by the second, but he knew they would crucify him if he backed out now. Andy wasn’t a complete bastard he reasoned, he had some

hope, with him being best man and all. After all, hadn't he gone and organised this whole event just for him, promising him the night of his dreams? Well in fairness to Andy, he had delivered his end of the bargain, so now finally it was his turn, and knowing Andy he would expect wholehearted participation. Willingness to partake was not the problem, it was the audience that was causing him distress as he knew they would rip his performance apart.

Now that the weekend had arrived, he wanted to make sure he would remember this night for the rest of his life. After all, he needed some sweetener for putting up with the last two years, never mind getting shackled to Lindsay till death they do part. He loved her, that wasn't the issue, but had to admit he had been far more excited about this night than the big day next week. And to be honest who could blame him.

Lindsay and her friends had had a field day choosing that organza, this lilac, that lace. He had been bored to tears by the whole marriage malarkey. So when Andy said he was organising a stag to remember, he knew Andy would deliver. And in fairness he hadn't let him down. Asking straight up what he wanted, *what was his treat...*no strings, no dramas. And he told him...he wanted a red-head. And not your run-of-the-mill "bottle red" types either. He wanted the real McCoy.

He had always wanted to taste red and up until now never quite had the opportunity. Lindsey, though pretty in her own way, didn't quite have the "three amigos" as he liked to call them...tits, legs and ass, she also didn't have the red hair he fantasized so much about. But even so, he could still rise to the occasion when needed. Make no mistake, his Lindsey was lovely, but she had smaller tits than a robin, shorter legs than his Nan's VCR stand, and a nose that entered the room before the rest of her face caught up.

So he wanted his final unmarried shag to be momentous and absolutely unforgettable. How else was he going to perform for the foreseeable with Lindsay, without this sweet little memory to get him through the years ahead? And now that the moment had finally arrived he wanted to savour every moment of it. Watching the creamy-skinned red-head sprawled on the bed, thighs apart, large breasts poured into a tiny green satin bra, he let his hungry eyes devour the image. He couldn't wait to taste her. Slowly at first, before pumping her long and hard. First though, he had to get rid of Andy and the others. Besides, they had had the other girl to entertain

them most of the night, and now it was his turn. Granted, the dark-haired one was prettier than the red head, with her long black hair, hanging down the length of her back and the bluest eyes he had ever seen, but she was sallow and tit-less, just like his Lindsay. Definitely not his type.

‘Well,’ Andy elbowed him, ‘what you waiting for?’

‘Andy, mate, I was wondering...?’

‘Fuck's sake, mate...what?’

‘I'd kind of like to be alone with her...get me?’

‘What...and ruin our fun?’ he laughed.

‘Nah, mate, just fancy a proper bit, on me own. What you reckon?’

Andy looked at him suspiciously, before letting the smile curve his lips.

‘Course, mate, no problem. I'll get rid of the lads...give you some space,’ he winked.

‘You're a, mate,’ Matt nodded, feeling happier. At least now he could really enjoy his little red-head without any interference or piss-take. Watching his friends leave, Matt held his breath until the door closed after them. Finally he was alone with her. He could see the brunette laid out, asleep or high, he couldn't decide which. But the red-head was still wide awake smiling benignly at him. Tearing off his clothes, he climbed onto the bed and knelt on all fours over her naked body.

As she lay beneath him, he reached out to touch the hair falling in and around her face. Her creamy-white skin, soft yet supple against the inside of his thighs caused him to harden. It was a lust he had never felt with Lindsay, and it overwhelmed him, bringing a hungry smile to his thin wet lips. Finally, his moment had arrived, he was about to taste a real red-head, once and for all, and he had no intention of waiting a single second more. As he closed his eyes with the exquisite taste of anticipation moistening his mouth, he thrust forward penetrating her fast and urgently just as the door burst open.

So deep was he in the moment, he didn't feel Andy and others pile naked onto the bed beside him until one of them slapped his backside as he pushed deep inside her. Feeling himself shrivel up faster than a fig in a desert, he groaned loudly knowing that he would never get to taste his real red now and sighed as he pulled out from her. Kneeling back, he expected her to be surprised, annoyed

even, but all he saw was the same banal smile and glassy green eyes that had been staring through him all evening. It was then he realized that this girl was on a different fucking planet let alone in the same room with them all. Whatever she had taken seemed to have numbed her to the point of comatose. But then, looking around at his laughing friends waiting to take their turn, he didn't blame her one little bit. Just like him, she must have known this was going to be a long-long night.

Chapter 1.

Ten years later Eranmore, Co Cork

Mia stepped into the room and cast her eyes over the stained and scarred mahogany desk. Although cluttered with stacks of files, she saw some movement behind it. It took a moment for her to recognise the navy woollen blazer stretching across the hunched broad shoulders. But it was the tufts of hair, now greying and curling down over the collar that brought a smile to her lips. ‘Doc?’ she called, straining her neck over the desk.

‘Gimme two secs....two secs, now...’ he groaned, rising slowly.

‘Doc, is that you?’ she said. Mirroring her surprise, she watched him squint refocusing on who was standing in front of him.

‘Good God, if it isn’t yourself!’ he flushed heaving himself out of his seat reaching for her hand.

‘You remember me then?’ she said, clutching his hand squeezing tightly.

‘How on earth could I forget?’

‘Well, the prodigal one returns,’ she laughed.

‘So I heard, and a married woman too,’ he smiled, his heavy jowls shaking as he acknowledge her. ‘Mia, how long has it been...?’ he asked.

‘Too long,’ she sat, pulling the chair toward the desk.

‘I’d have known you anywhere,’ he smiled.

‘I thought you’d be long gone by now...from here, I mean.’

‘Ah, you were expecting, Niall, you just missed him actually.

Little fecker has me as his locum now, can you believe that?’

‘Can't imagine where he got that idea,’ her mouth curved.

‘His mother.’

‘Don’t mind that, you couldn’t stay away, I bet,’ she laughed. ‘How’s ever, you’ll have to do,’ she added lightly hoping to hide her deep-rooted gratitude that he had actually remembered her.

‘It wasn’t too long ago when my surgery was full of women queuing to see me.’

‘Maybe the good doctor’s wife hunted them all off to Dr. Hurley’s. You were left with the safe ones.’

‘I’ve never been safe from any of the women in this town.’

‘I can see why.’

‘Stop teasing an old man and tell me what I can do for you?’ he chuckled lowering himself back into his seat.

‘Your prices are gone up for a start.’

‘Again the--’

‘I know-I know, the wife’s idea,’ she rolled her eyes playfully.

‘Golf doesn’t come cheap,’ he added earnestly.

‘A-ha, finally...the truth,’ she teased again.

‘Never mind the truth, make this visit worthwhile and I’ll throw in a discount.’

‘And risk being sent off to Dr. Hurley.’

‘That would make an old man very sad.’

‘It’s really good to see you again,’ she paused.

‘So tell me, have the years been good to you, Mia?’ the sincerity in his voice warmed her.

‘Ah you know, some yes, some no.’

‘And now?’

‘Good. Great in fact...’ her voice trailed off as she saw his brow lift. ‘Really they are. I’d forgotten what a cynic you were,’ she laughed.

‘Cynical no, old yes.’

‘Old meaning all wise, eh?’

‘That and knowing my patients.’

‘What... even after all this time?’

‘A doctor never forgets,’ he smiled kindly.

‘I thought that only applied to elephants?’

‘Them too,’ he added. An easy silence filled the room as they locked briefly onto each other’s gaze, each seeing beyond their effortless words and smiles. The banter almost too easy, without any

hint of the time or distance that had passed. Such was her ease, it was hard to believe that it had been almost nineteen years since she had last sat in this room, across from that same face, and as determined then as she was now, but that was where the similarity ended.

It would have been too easy to drift back to that moment and wish that nothing had changed, but it had. It was as if some forgotten part of her had been left behind in this very room, a part she now remembered with stark clarity. The absolute naivety she had about her then, the borderline stupidity even, at how she believed the world worked. What had happened after departing, all those years ago, certainly destroyed any notion of the future she thought she had mapped out.

But with small consolation, having returned here to this very room, she knew she was now finally on the right path back to an ordinary life. A simple, but wonderful, ordinary life. Shrugging at the small triumph she focused again on the ageing blue eyes of the smiling face across at her.

‘So tell me, what do I owe the pleasure?’ he asked, softly interrupting her thoughts.

Letting her eyes drop, her lips twitched. It was an unusual situation for her, if she was honest, and she wasn’t quite sure how to handle it. No one had ever really known her to the extent that this man did, not even Oliver, and yet here he was asking how she was. It was like sitting in front of a mirror and knowing you couldn’t lie.

Not that she wanted to. It was just she was so out of practice at being totally honest with people. So guarded had she become of her past, so fiercely protective of her future, that she had decided a long time ago, the truth was too painful to deal with. But with Doc, it was different. He already knew.

‘Hmm...?’ he gently pressed.

‘It’s not about what you think...y’know...’

‘Sure, how can you know what I’m thinking?’ he smiled kindly ignoring the flash of coolness flickering in her eyes.

‘I’m a woman,’ she toyed.

‘And I’ve been married as long as you’ve been on this earth.’

‘And that makes you...?’

‘Tolerant.’

She smiled at him affectionately. She knew what he was doing, but she was just trying find a way of responding to him.

Again he waited for her to speak.

‘Seeing you has surprised me, Doc, to be honest. Though I’m glad you’re here.’

She so wanted to say it, blurt it all out, but for some strange reason, she found the words died on her lips. Seeing him here was not what she had anticipated, but then what did she expect, moving back home to Eranmore. Wasn’t this all part of her ‘journey’ as she had been told.

Journey...it was the most ridiculous analogy, when she thought about it. An easily spoken word, an offhand balm casually used to soften emotional pain. Making it sound all the more acceptable by calling it something pleasant. Acceptable to whom she didn’t know, but journey, or otherwise, here she was and here *he* was. And now that she was here with him, she suddenly realized that this was exactly who she needed to see. After all, he was the only one who could answer her questions truthfully. ‘So, Doc, why am I here?’ she laughed again lightly.

He didn’t answer.

‘Stop being so bloody pragmatic and indulge me,’ she rolled her eyes.

‘While the sun is shining and the greens are empty?’ he reproached with a smile.

‘Don’t imagine you get many prizes for the old bedside manner, Doc,’ she chuckled scathingly.

Leaning forward on his desk, he rested his chin on his fist cauterizing any further small-talk. He had to know. ‘Tell me, Mia?’ he added letting the humour drift gently from his face.

‘I’m good,’ she shrugged nonchalantly.

‘I can see that. Though I sense there’s a ‘but’ coming.’

‘Like most things in my life, there’s always a ‘but’.’

‘Life’s full of them,’ he replied.

‘Yeah I know...mine more than most,’ darkness spread across her face.

‘So what is it, Mia?’

‘To be honest I came for something else,’ the smile fell from her lips.

‘First things first, then we’ll worry about the other,’ he said.

Turning her face toward the window, she followed the rays of sunshine struggling to shine through decades of dust. Their purity brought an unanticipated smile to her lips as she remembered a time

when a blue sky was the most important reason for getting up in the morning. How long ago that was she really couldn't remember, but she could still recall the simple pleasure of it. Before Doc had a chance to prompt her again, a single cloud drifted across her perfect sky, blocking out the sun and its heat for a few moments. This simple act of nature brought her back to the present. 'I saw him today,' her words tumbled out.

'Who?'

'*Him*,' her lips barely moved.

'Who?' he frowned.

'The reason I left?'

'Oh,' he acknowledged, and his eyes hardened ever so slightly as his thoughts gathered speed. 'Here? You saw him here in Eranmore?' he finally said.

'Yes,' she dragged her gaze from the window back to his face.

'He still lives here in the town?' he added.

'Yes,' she sighed, 'he sure does.'

'Has he always lived here, Mia?' His face creased with concern. She nodded again avoiding his eyes.

'But I thought you said at the time--'

'I lied, Doc. At the time it seemed the right thing to do.'

'And now...? It's never too late, you could always--?'

'What...name him?' her lip curved up in disgust.

'Perhaps.'

'No. I've no intention of going down memory lane with that bastard.'

'Mia!' he exclaimed, puckering his lips and holding a hand up.

'Sorry, Doc, but he is a bastard...and more.'

'What I mean is you've come back to live here, right?'

'So?' Her chin jerked up defiantly.

'And you're *okay* with seeing him?'

'No.'

'Then why come back?'

'Closure maybe.'

'It's a word,' he humoured.

'A word that comes closest to the truth.'

'Does he know you're back?'

'He does now.'

'He's seen you,' a heavy frown etched itself across his brow.

'He has,' her eyes hardened.

‘And...?’

‘And he ran like the spineless prick he is,’ she sneered.

‘I don’t know what to say, Mia,’ he added smoothing his finger tips against his forehead.

‘Why do you think I left?’ she asked.

‘I know why you left,’ his voice softened. ‘You had little choice.’

‘No,’ her voice hardened. ‘*He* didn’t give me a choice. Raping me was *his* choice!’

‘I know, Mia,’ he frowned.

‘Don’t get me wrong, Doc, it’s not easy, seeing him walk around not giving a rat’s arse about what happened to me. But I had to do it, y’know...? I had to take something back.’

‘And have you?’

‘In a sense. I can now look at him, I can see him for what he is without running. That’s something, I thought I’d never be able to do.’

‘Well there aren’t many who could do it.’

‘Maybe not,’ she conceded.

‘Don’t get me wrong, Mia, I do understand why you chose to see him again, that can be healing in its own way I suppose...but living here...? Won’t you find it difficult seeing him every day?’ he pressed.

‘Perhaps,’ she agreed, ‘but strangely enough, it’s easier seeing him as he is, for what he is...and, besides, this is *my* home. Why should I stay away? Why should I make it easy for him? It’s just what he wanted isn’t it? Just what he’s had all these years.’

‘Probably, but what about your husband, what does he think about all of this?’

‘Oliver?’ she shook her head. ‘He doesn’t know.’

‘Mia,’ he admonished, ‘surely you have to tell him.’

‘Hmm,’ she placated.

‘Will you?’

‘No.’

‘Why not?’

She shrugged uneasily.

‘You can still press charges...I’ll--’

‘No. Leave it...’ she paused.

‘But--’

‘Please, Doc,’ she pleaded again, ‘in my own time.’

‘Mia?’

‘Hmm?’

‘Did you ever...talk...to anyone about what happened to you?’ he asked gently.

‘Once,’ she faltered.

‘Did it help?’

‘I suppose.’

He acknowledged her lie with a smile, knowing her reticence to elaborate had ended the subject, but made a mental note to press her more on it when the time was right. ‘Well, Mia, I’ll always be here for you.’

‘I know, Doc,’ she smiled lowering her gaze from his. There was a brief, awkward, silence between them before she spoke again. ‘Can I ask you something?’ she said, interrupting his thoughts.

‘Never stopped you before.’

‘Seriously,’ the smile returned to her face.

‘I’m intrigued.’

Leaning back into her chair she crossed her legs before she spoke. ‘How confidential are your files? Y’know...you’re notes?’

His grey brows knitted as his face broke into a frowning smile. ‘I think I know what this is about.’

‘Well?’ she persisted.

‘Haven’t they been to-date?’ he answered.

‘Yeah, but I need to know for certain.’

‘Have you ever heard any information leaked from this surgery?’

‘No, but--’

‘The only way information has ever come out from inside these walls is from the patients themselves, never from me.’

‘Hmm.’

‘You know that, Mia, why ask me now, after all these years?’

‘Because...’ she hesitated.

‘Let me guess? You’re pregnant, aren’t you?’

Her eyes widened with surprise. ‘So you’re psychic now as well, eh?’

‘No, nothing as exciting as that, just in this business too long, I guess. There’s an awful lot I know about this community, and when I go, it’ll go with me.’

‘I know, but...’

‘My wife understands patient confidentiality,’ he said, pre-empting her next question.

‘Does she?’ she looked across at him boldly.

‘Women are noseey by nature, it's genetic, think I don't know that?’

‘Cheeky,’ she smiled.

‘Trust me, Mia,’ he added quite seriously, ‘there are ways and means of maintaining the privacy of every patient that comes through that door. You have nothing to fear being completely open with me. You have in the past and nothing has come to light, so why worry now?’

‘Because maybe I have more to lose now,’ she thought aloud.

‘Not necessarily, perhaps you'll have more to gain.’

‘You think?’

‘I know.’

‘Does being old give you that self assurance?’ she teased.

‘Yep. That and a 13 handicap.’

She studied his furrowed old face with fondness. ‘Don't ever retire, Doc,’ the words fell from her lips, ‘and Doc, you guessed right. I'm pregnant.’

‘How far along?’

‘Far enough to know that I'm pregnant.’

‘Happy?’

‘Very.’

‘Good,’ he nodded.

‘Bet you never thought you'd hear me say that.’

‘What?’

‘That I'm happy about being pregnant.’

‘Stop fishing, Mia, told you long ago, I'm not your judge and jury. Life shoots arrows at people, some get hit and die, others pull out the arrow and patch up the wound.’

‘And I'm a patcher-upper, eh?’

‘Yes you are. Stop beating yourself up over past decisions and enjoy what you have?’

‘And Oliver...?’ she asked.

‘You need be honest with him. These things have a nasty habit of rearing--’

‘Their ugly head, I know,’ she finished his sentence.

‘Does he know about this pregnancy?’

‘Yes,’ her mouth softened into a smile.

‘You're concerned about the delivery, aren't you?’

She nodded.

‘Well, Mia, I'll have a word with the Justin Corbett...you're

having the baby at St. Francis`?’

‘I’d like to.’

‘Justin’s a good man, I’ll make an appointment for you.’

‘And confidentiality?’

‘Of course.’

‘And you’ll have a chat with him?’

‘I will.’

‘When do you want to see me next?’

‘After your scan sometime. Come in for a check-up and we’ll take it from there.’

She looked around the room as he picked up his pen to write.

‘How come you’ve always stayed?’ she asked.

‘Stayed?’

‘Here. I mean, it’s a place people come back to retire.’

‘You’re not retired, are you?’ he smirked.

‘No. But I came back for...well, to move forward. You stayed, how come?’

‘I had a very good reason to stay.’

‘What?’ she rushed curiously.

‘The climate,’ he shrugged.

‘Tuh!’

‘The people.’

‘Now I know you’re lying.’

‘The golf then.’

‘Tell me.’

‘I just did.’

‘Oh I get it...Dr. Walsh has his own skeletons, eh?’

‘There’s no one in this town who doesn’t,’ he added seriously.

‘Tell me.’

‘Golf.’

‘Okay-okay, I won’t ask anymore. Blackheart!’ she teased.

‘That my dear, Mia, is true.’

‘So...what first? Blood pressure? Weight? Diet? What...?’ she asked.

‘This...’ he held up an empty plastic phial.

Grabbing the empty urine bottle she stood up exiting through an internal door in his office.

‘Hope you’ve Andrex, Doc, none of that cheapo Pound Shop stuff!’ she called from inside the toilet.

A small laugh escaped from his mouth as he leant against his fist,

doodling her name on his desk pad. As his hand circled her name with an easy flow, a flicker of genuine concern sparked behind his eyes. If he was honest he had to admit to being overwhelmed by her visit. And it was not because of the manner of her exit, years earlier, from this room and his practice. Rather it was because of the time that had passed and the memories, seeing her, evoked. He really hadn't expected to ever see her again. It had been his perception back then that the beautiful flame-haired girl had been traumatized beyond his experience to help. He recalled, with shame, how he had naively treated her physical injuries only. He had no idea how to deal with the immediate aftermath of that night. Except to make the right soothing noises and follow, step by step, medical procedures on how to document forensic evidence. While muttering foolish, and upon reflection, insensitive predictions on how she would soon recover from her ordeal. Older, wiser, and worn from years of being witness to the depths to which humanity is capable of plunging, made him feel shame and regret at his foolish arrogance that night. Yes, she had recovered, physically at least. But even now he could see the pain in her eyes that had never healed. Could he have done more? He always felt he could have, mainly because she was one of the few patients, he had encountered, who had walked away without any follow-up treatment. Abandoned at such a vulnerable time, so raw, so in need of help. Either he mended them, referred them, or death claimed them, but few if any had walked away from his practice unaided, traumatized and without help. He had failed her in the worst possible way really, not just as a doctor, but as her only friend that night. Perhaps she saw his glaring inability to deal with the ugliness, and in his own way he suspected that her exit from Eranmore was partially down to him. And yet she came back. Hearing the flush of the toilet, he let his pen drop and glanced toward the door. Something had bothered him about her return, and now he knew exactly what it was. He knew that this wasn't over for her yet. Experience had taught him enough to know that the truth would come out and sooner than Mia would expect. But this time he would be ready. Fixing a large smile to his lips as she returned, he reached out taking the bottle from her.

'I'm going to make sure I see what you do with it this time, Doc. Bet you're bottling it and selling it to Mulcahy's as beer.'

'And how else does a poor locum supplement his green fees? He laughed.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

