

## How I met my Boy... friend?

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*I met my partner; that's what we have to call each other these days, once upon it time it was boyfriend but then that somehow didn't define enough of the depth of the relationship that we had, so we had to change it to "partner" to please the political activists. I met my partner at a beat. He still refuses to acknowledge that he was doing a beat; he says he was just desperate to go to the toilet. For three hours he was desperate... please.*

*It was summer and for some reason I was out near Brighton les Sands. I think I had been taken to see Bernard King's show at his theatre restaurant the night before; anyway, I got so drunk that I had to stay the night at the ex boyfriends. I think Judy Connelli was in the show but that's by the by.*

*I woke up the next morning like Vera Charles, hung darling and not in a good way. (Once upon a time I never knew who Vera Charles was or Mame Dennis). I'm sure I was still drunk and I thought a swim would bring me back to life.*

*Brighton les Sands in summer, on a hot day and with a hangover is not a pleasant place to be. However there is a little amenities block down near the beach that had always been popular with some of the more "ethnic" queens. And god knows I do love a wog boy. So just after lunch, Devon, cheese and pickle on white flushed down with a can of Tab, I found myself in need of a little relief.*

*I had seen this one number, a rather rough looking piece of trade with a plumbers crack, scoping out the toilets and I thought to myself, "now that's right up my boulevard". I headed into the darkness and the smell of men. That's a nice turn of phrase... the smell of men... men smell; even*

*as I sit here I can still feel it wash over me, the aroma of men, a mixture of sweat, adrenalin, cum and with a hint of Old Spice. Where was I, oh yes ... the darkness, the smell etc. Okay so there I am standing at the urinal pretending to pee and in he comes. His head nervously flicking from side to side, checking out the cubicles, scared his mother is hiding in there waiting to jump out and accuse him of crimes against her soul. Remember he's a wog boy and they're always so scared of what their Mummy will think. He sidles up to me and I can see that this one is a hairy number, black curls of coarse hair plastered to his stomach. A five o'clock shadow permanently darkening his chin. His breath is hot and hard in that close room. His trembling hand reaches out and snakes into my pants, he grabs me and I swear I can feel that sigh that rushes from his mouth, my body tensed with expectation. This is what I needed and desired, a real man someone who knew what they wanted and how to take it. No bullshit. Just a primeval grunt and I would be his.*

*So there we were just about to get really heavy when some queen rushes in screaming "run girls it's the bashers". We all button up and run for the door and this creates rather a log jam at the exit. I'm stuck, until I feel one hand on my shoulder push me through and I tumble out into the sun just in time to see ten big burly shire boys barrelling down on us.*

*I'm grabbed from behind and pushed to the car park, thrown into the front seat of a car and then as the wheels squeal (assonance in case you missed it), I'm driven off into the afternoon.*

*Like a real bloke I start to scream "let me out... Let me OUT... "I know people... whatever you do NOT the face".*

*“Oh shoosh” he said. Shoosh is not something a basher usually says. “I’m not going to bash you, you big girl... I’m saving you”.*

*Sitting next to me, his face fixed firmly on the road ahead as we career along General Holmes Drive, is the little queen who had run or more correctly, swished into the toilets, hands flailing, screaming with a slight lisp, (not an easy thing to do) and warned us all of the impending attack of the barbarians. This little number, no bigger than an elf, a refugee from the Myers window dressing department, a hairdresser in search of a blow-dryer is the person we all owed our lives to. Can you believe it? Now I’m no ocker butch queen, I am what they now call a “straight acting gay”, a term I really dislike but that’s another thousand words. However sitting next to this little fem bot made me look like John Wayne or maybe even a Russel Crowe.*

*“Saving me ... you... look at you... how could you save me?” I screamed, in my deepest butchest voice.*

*“I can always drop you back there if that’s what you want” he simpered.*

*He had me there. The last place I wanted to be was back at that beat. Maybe that’s why they call them beats - because eventually you will get beaten up.*

*“So just shoosh and say thank you. My names Leon, what’s yours?” My heart sunk. Of course his name would be Leon. He had Leon written all over his face.*

*“Tony” I mumbled. Oh the humiliation. Not ten minutes ago I had been about to do the “good deed” with the future Mr. Right and now here I am trapped in a mauve Toyota with a tiny mirror ball hanging from the rear vision mirror and some animal print fabric covering the seats.*

*I had gone from Old Spice to Opium in five fast minutes. From plumbers crack to... really there are no words to describe where I was now.*

*“Hello Tony. Well that was a close shave. Lucky I just happened to be passing by and saw those brutes. I thought that trouble was brewing.*

*Who says “trouble was brewing”, and what does he mean just passing by - I had seen him in the dunes about an hour before. Passing by, yeah right.*

*I found that I was getting more and more irritated by this little number as she prattled on about gossipy titbits and trivia from Broadway shows and then from out the blue she hit me with, “would you like to go out for a cheap eat with me? Not tonight but later in the week”.*

*“Sure” I said. WHAT. How did that happen, why did I say yes, I can’t still be drunk... no one can be that drunk. Before I have a chance to change my mind my phone number tumbled from my mouth. Maybe I was just rattled. I mean it’s not everyday that you are chased out of a public toilet block by a group of thirty, (its growing isn’t it), cricket bat wielding Neanderthals with the sent of blood in their nostrils.*

*“Drop me here” I blurted out, “there’s my car”.*

*I got out of the car confused by what was happening, not so much the riots, (thousands of them now), more the acceptance of a dinner date with this jockey. I leaned into the window to say thanks and as quick as a flash he leaned over gave me a peck on the cheek, flashed a smile, “toodles” he said and drove off.*

*Toodles! Oh god. Toodles.*

*I was left staring at the rear of his Toyota as he drove off into the sunset back to where ever he had come from.*

*Sure enough three days later I got the call. "Hello Tony it's me, Leon... from the other day, I thought it might be nice to have dinner tomorrow night. I know this little place in Paddington behind the Unicorn we could get a bite to eat there and then see Kandy Johnson's new show".*

*"Okay Leon... hi... yeah about that..." I stammered, "You kind of got me unprepared the other day and I wasn't really thinking straight. But I don't think..."*

*"Oh shoosh you, you silly thing", there was the shoosh again, "a dates a date. Now what's your address and I can pick you up".*

*"My address. Look what I am trying to say is... I don't really think that we..."*

*"Darls let's say about 7.30 for dinner, then you can have a beer after the meal while we wait for the show... now what was the address again?"*

*"Flat 5/78 Brougham St." Jesus wept, what am I doing? It's all that Opium he uses it's seeping through the phone lines, drugging me.*

*"Lovely, see you later. Toodles" and then he was gone.*

*So we had dinner and then I had a beer, a few beers actually and then we watched Candy's show. We were the odd couple, him with a scarf and me with a scowl. But you know what after thirty years I don't notice the scarf so much anymore or the indecent amount of perfume that he insists on spraying before he leaves the house and I guess he has learned to put up with certain irritating habits of mine that some people say I have.*

*Every now and then as we drive down to Berry to our weekender we pass that little amenities block at Brighton les Sands and without fail every time we pass it by he says,*

***“I was NOT doing the beat darls”. Yes dear and that’s still your natural hair colour.***

***I sometimes wonder what my life would have been like if I had taken up with the “plumbers crack” that day. I suspect that I wouldn’t be driving to Berry for the weekend.***

***Toodles.***

***Ps. this is Leon now. Tony tends to exaggerate, god love him; allow me to correct some factual errors.***

***I did meet him at Brighton les Sands but I have never done a beat in my life, I mean they’re just so dirty... and that smell. There was no riot, there may have been a cricket bat and yes there was a small group of about three boofheads who wanted to cause some trouble. And yes I did run into the toilet block and shout out a warning.***

***Yes I gave Tony a lift... no I did not ask him out, he asked me out... to thank me, he said. Well I thought that was a nice thing to do and being polite, I agreed. He kissed me. I gave him my number, he phoned me, (three times), he suggested we have dinner and then he wanted to see a drag show. Drag is not really my cup of espresso but I thought why not.***

***So we had dinner, I paid; we saw a drag show and then spent the next thirty years together.***

***I am five foot nine inches tall and I do NOT dye my hair.***