

March 24th, 1972, a brief encounter of Hubertus and Joanna

The newspaper fell out of Hubertus's trembling hands. He wasn't Irish, he didn't feel Irish, but the Irish woman he was about to meet would have a lot to say about the day's events; it wasn't every day that Belfast wasn't Belfast.

The bench was icy cold, still warming up in the morning sun and as Hubertus thought about how he could avoid the conversation, a taxi pulled up, just outside the tall park gates. She stepped out, one leg at a time, her silver briefcase trailing in isolation behind her long thin legs.

The countdown shot full speed ahead and time evaporated as she started towards him. He didn't have an honest clue, there was absolutely nothing but panic and tumbled emotions floating in the abyss which filled his head. Oh well, he'd wing it, he always did, meeting up with Joanna was always the most, *stressful* and *lovely* and, well, anything and everything which didn't make sense, that's the kind of experience which awaited Hubertus, every single time he met up with the most wonderful woman in the world.

He stood up and casually threw the paper over his shoulder, hoping Joanna wouldn't notice that he'd had it. Her eyes narrowed as she watched the small gesture, opening her arms for a seemingly cold embrace. She wasn't fooled, as per usual, her eyes didn't just narrow, her eyes spoke the truth, her eyes were all knowing, and every time they placed their cold gaze on his face, he felt like a small child, desperately trying to deceive his mother. He never succeeded.

"They went and fecking took me Belfast. All of it, all the north, didn't even ask, they just took and fecking took." Joanna's face was contorted with rage. Calling her a patriot would have certainly been an understatement, she was a little more and a little less, but when the English got involved, she'd never hold back just to be polite.

"Well the weather's nice today," remarked Hubertus quickly, looking from the sun to her dark red lips, "And I brought you that Bagel from Friedrichstrasse". The smile that appeared only stuck around for a moment, but even for that short millisecond, Hubertus's heart raced faster than before. Anything to make her smile, if he had to join in and mock the English, if he had to buy a thousand bloody bagels, he'd do it, in an instance.

“Yeah, well, bagels won’t do me any good if my countrymen are being robbed of their identities. I’d rather be buried alive than bow down to London as the capital.” she roared on, her mouth spitting the razor sharp words one by one, as if she was making some grotesque art work, a sculpture of saliva, the first of its kind.

He didn’t shudder, at the tone of her voice, nor the spittle in the air, nor did he shudder at the shadow of death in her eyes. This was Joanna, Joanna was sitting next to Hubertus, and the sun rising higher into the clear blue sky, smiled at the two despite the harrowing news. For the sun was on Hubertus’s side, if Hubertus was happy then the sun was happy, and as long as Joanna was sitting next to him, Hubertus would be happy regardless what happened.

He liked rubber ducks, and he had many of them, that much was fact.