

Italian Women are Difficult to Get Into Bed

Marc Edward DiPaolo (April 28, 2008)



As Colin tries to help me forget Eileen by plying me with drinks at the Irish Pub in Siena, an unexpected series of events taking place back at the Locanda Garibaldi will make our return to the hotel later that evening a memorable one.

"Italian women are very difficult to get into bed," Patrick Dolan said. "They want you to meet their families first."



The red-headed Irish bartender placed a large Guinness in front of Colin as he said this. There was no humor in his voice, but loneliness and resignation.

"Is that true, Marc?" Colin asked me.

I shrugged. "I never had any luck with the Italian girls in Staten Island, but I always assumed it was because I don't look like Ray Liotta. I didn't think their reluctance to go to bed with me meant they had any problem with shagging the guys who lifted weights in gym class at Susan E. Wagner High School."

I was sitting at the bar, on the stool besides Colin, and we were the only two patrons in the Irish Pub in Siena. Since there wasn't a lot of business, Patrick seemed annoyed that I wasn't ordering anything. He had placed some pretzels before me, and as I nibbled on them, I realized that they were his ploy to get me to buy a drink.

"Is it the Catholicism?" Colin asked.

"Can't be," Patrick declared. "I had my fair share of sex with the Catholic girls in Carryduff. It must be something about Italy."

"These pretzels are making me thirsty," I said.

"You want a drink?" Patrick asked.

I had never ordered a drink before and wasn't sure what to ask for. Then I decided to order James Bond's favorite drink. "Vodka martini, shaken not stirred."

"The Vesper!" Colin beamed. "Good one."

Patrick continued his monologue on sex and prudery as he prepared my drink.

"Now the women in Sweden and Denmark and Holland are a different story. The liberalization there is unbelievable. No problem getting laid there. In Italy. Forget it."

He placed the Vesper in front of me and I sipped it. It was dreadful.



"Don't like it?" Colin asked.

"No." I downed it in one gulp to get it out of the way. "How about a Sweet Vermouth on the rocks, with a twist of lemon?"

Patrick nodded and went to work. As he mixed the drink, I noticed his T-shirt for the first time, which read $26 + 6 = 1$, which I assumed was a plea for the unification of Ireland. I wondered what his position was on the IRA, and whether he preferred Michael Collins or Eamon de Valera.

"Now, of course, Italians are also not big drinkers, as you can see." Patrick gestured about him to the empty bar. "They just don't understand beer." He looked at me as he said this, and placed the drink before me. Was he annoyed that I wasn't ordering Guinness?

Colin eyed the concoction. "Dare I ask what movie that drink is from?"

"Andie MacDowell orders it in Groundhog Day, and that is one of my favorite films. I've always been curious to try the drink."

I closed my eyes, said a prayer for world peace, and sipped the drink. I grimaced. I downed it with the next gulp.

"Didn't like that one either?" Patrick asked.

"Nope. Andie MacDowell is hot. Groundhog Day rules. Sweet vermouth is crappy crap. And it doesn't make me think of Rome, either."

"There's always Guinness," he suggested.

"The beer that drinks like a meal?" I asked. "Nah. Too heavy for me. I'll have a White Russian."

"I know what movie that one's from," Patrick said, cutting off Colin. "The Dude's favorite drink from The Big Lebowski."



"I'm hoping the Dude has better taste than James Bond and Andie MacDowell."

Colin smirked and looked at Patrick. "I should tell you something about Marc, here. He's a junior in college and he's never been to a beer party and never been drunk. He once let slip to his friend Smiley that he didn't know what time happy hour was and Smiley went ballistic. 'Are you or are you not in college?' he kept screaming at him. 'What are they teaching you over there at Geneseo?' So we better watch him. He should slow down a bit."

"I'm fine," I said.

As Patrick made me the White Russian, Colin took another look about the bar, which was decorated in a traditional Irish mode. "I finally feel at home," Colin observed. "This place feels safe. Italy is so weird."

"I wish you two Irish guys would stop shitting on my homeland and on its women and its people's ability to hold its liquor," I retorted. "And really. Let's lay off the women, in particular. It is ungentlemanly."

"You've got to admit," Colin said slyly, "Italian women are hot."

"They leave me cold," Patrick said.

I tutt-tutted. "Oh, you're just mad they won't sleep with you."

"Am not."

"They beat Irish women."

"Do not!"

"Be honest, who'd you'd rather go to bed with, Maureen O'Hara or Sophia Loren? I say Sophia Loren."

"Neither," Patrick said. "They're old ladies now."



"I think Sophia still looks good," I declared. "You see Grumpier Old Men? va-va-va-voom. But anyway, okay, okay, okay, okay. Some ... um ... I can't think of a new Irish actress. Okay, some modern Irish actress you can think of that I can't ... or Monica Bellucci?"

"I'll take any attractive modern Irish actress over Monica Bellucci," Patrick declared defiantly. "I don't want to meet Monica's family first."

"I'd meet her family first! Hell, yeah! I'd meet her family first! In fact, I'd meet Monica's entire bloodline, her neighborhood, and every member of her entourage and political party to have a crack at her," I said. "I'd climb Everest for her. I'd drink Guinness for her. I'd watch Friends for her. I'd listen to Air Supply for her. I'd re-read The Bell Jar for her. And The Sun Also Rises. Two most depressing books ever written. I'd read them again. With relish. For her."

"I'm not a fan of your knocking Irish women," Colin said suddenly. "My mom's an Irish woman."

"And my mom's an Italian woman," I said sternly. "Still ... I shouldn't run down Irish women cuz Patrick here run'd down Italian women. I actually love Irish women. They are the only ones who are consist-- consist--- they are always nice to me. As opposed to women of other ethnic and racial persuasions. Oh. Except for Eileen. I guess she's Irish. Whatever man. Eileen may stink, but I'm ga ga for Julianne Moore. And she's got red hair, so let's assume she's Irish."

"This bar is really awesome," Colin declared. "I'd love to own a bar like this."

"That's my job, really," Patrick explained. "I go around the world, going from country to country, opening up authentic Irish pubs in all kinds of really, really not Irish countries. I've been to Eastern Europe, Europe, the more liberal countries in the Middle East, parts of Africa. Everywhere. I spend a few months setting the place up, make sure it is on its feet, and I go on to the next country. And I'm so good at it that every bar I have ever opened had been a huge success. EXCEPT THIS BLOODY BAR."

I raised my eyebrows. The White Russian was really good. I downed it in one gulp and ordered another one.

"What's wrong with this bar?" Colin asked.

"Nothing," Patrick declared. "It is Italy that is the problem. And the Italians. They drink wine with dinner. Like soda. They don't get beer. I opened this bar up two years ago, thought it was doing ... okay. I got called back from Sweden, and my five wonderful Swedish girlfriends, back here to try to



save the place from ruin. Back here, to struggle in business and live a celibate lifestyle in Siena. God save me."

"Have you tried marketing and sales and raffles and tag sales and half-offs and all that?" I asked.

"Oh, I've tried. I lowered the price of the large beer to the price of the medium beer to try to hook Italians on drinking mass quantities of Guinness. You know what happened? An Italian guy comes into the bar and asks for a medium beer. I say to him, 'You know, the large beer is the same price as the medium beer.' He says to me, 'No kidding.' I says, 'No kidding.' You know what he says to me? He says, 'I'll have the medium beer. The large beer is too much for me.' And every frickin' Italian who came in after him, all day, I have the same god damn conversation with all of them I have with him. They all buy the medium beer, which is the same price as the large beer."

"Wow," Colin said. "I don't get that at all. Who doesn't like beer?"

"I get it," I said. "I hate beer. You should put wine and White Russians on sale. They'll go, I'll bet. I'll have another White Russian, by the way."

Patrick passed me another White Russian. "Cheers."

I lifted the White Russian in the air and made a toast. "This is to you, Patrick. May you find a nice Italian girl to go to bed with. And may Colin and I find ones of our own. And may we not have to meet their families first. And may Doctor Who come back to television after being cancelled and may it not be campy or crappy, but Gothic and good. And here's to a safe and satisfying end to the Troubles."

Patrick nodded, but did not smile.

"I want to hear some Irish drinking songs," I announce. "You got any Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem?"

Patrick looked apologetic. "Music is on the blink."

"Damn," Colin said.

There was a long pause.



I started to sing.

"Maybe some day I'll go back again to Ireland,
if my dear old wife would only pass away.
She nearly got me heart broke wither her naggin'.
She's got a mouth as big as Galway bay."

Colin sniggered. "Nice impression of an Irish accent, dude. But good memory of the lyrics."

Patrick gestured towards me. His eyes weren't twinkling, or anything, but he seemed pleased.
"Continue."

"I forget the next lyrics. It is the bit about Pabst Blue Ribbon, right?"

"Yes." Patrick cleared his throat and took up the reins for me.

"See her drinking sixteen pints of Pabst Blue Ribbon,
And then she can walk home without a sway;
If the sea was beer instead of salty water,
She would live and die in
Galway Bay."

"Oh, my God." Colin was now laughing so hard he was crying into his sleeve.



"I remember the next part," I said.

"See her drinking sixteen pints at Pat Joe Murphy's,
The barman says, "I think it's time you go."
Well, she doesn't try to answer him in Gaelic,
But in language that the clergy do not know."

Then Patrick joined in and finished the song with me.

"On her back she has tattooed a map of
Ireland,

And when she takes her bath on Saturday;

She rubs the Sunlight Soap around by Claddagh,

Just to watch the suds go down by
Galway Bay."

Colin slapped the table with his palm laughing. "That was frickin' beautiful, men. Bravo."

* * *

In the lobby of the Locanda Garibaldi, Drusilla was connected, long-distance, to her boyfriend, Bobby, via the pay phone.

"Hi, Bobby. It's Drusilla. I just wanted to let you know that I've decided that you're too possessive and I need some time to find myself."

Pause.



“No,” Drusilla said, “We’re not breaking up. I just want a hiatus. I just would like to see other people for a little while.”

Pause.

“You see, I’m in Italy and I’m planning on having a fling. Then, when I get home, we can talk about how you need to give me some more ‘me’ time and stop being all possessive.”

Pause.

“An example?” Drusilla asked incredulously. “You wire-tapped my dorm phone to make sure I wasn’t cheating on you.”

Pause.

“Dude! A friggin’ wire tap! What are you, 007 or something? No wait, he isn’t so insecure around women he wire taps their phones. He only wire-taps frickin’ enemies of the state and such.”

Pause.

“Yeah, I found the wire tap alright. Last week.”



Pause.

"It's too late to apologize. That wire tap ticked me off."

Pause.

"It showed a lack of trust. I didn't cheat on you before, but the wire tap is driving me to it. To make a point."

Pause.

"No, the point is not that you were right not to trust me and right to put the wire tap."

Pause.

"Well, if you don't know what you did wrong, I can't tell you. I tell you what... take the wire tap off my dorm phone and I'll be faithful to you from now on."

Pause.

"After I get back from



Italy, that is. I'm having a fling while I'm here. But if I get back and you behave, then you'll have nothing to fear and you won't feel like you have to spy on me any more."

Pause.

"I'm not having this conversation. I'm just letting you know. Tonight and for the rest of the trip, I'm single. Just FYI."

Pause.

"Well, if you must know, I do have my eye on someone already. I've found a nice Italian boy I intend to spend a lot of time making out with."

Pause.

"No sex. Just a lot of smooching. Scout's honor."

Pause.

"Why am I telling you? So you can hire a private detective to follow us to make sure it is only just smooching and take photos so you can look over them with a spy glass to check and see if any penetration is going on."



Pause.

“Yeah, and f-you, too, Bob.”

Pause.

Adnan appeared behind Drusilla, “Tell him what you told me before about the ‘long lead off of third base.’ He’ll like that.”

“Talk to you later, Bob,” Drusilla said.

Drusilla hung up.

She smiled at Adnan. “I’ve decided to take your advice.”

“I can tell,” Adnan said. “Who’s the lucky Italian guy?”

“Well,” Drusilla smirked. “Technically he’s Italian-American.”

“Ah,” Adnan says. “Swooping in and saving our friend Marc from Eileen, are you?”



“Yep.”

“Something tells me he can use the company tonight,” Adnan said.

“Me, too,” Drusilla said. “I’m going upstairs. See you in the morning.”

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