DONAL. Well you seemed pretty like me that week in this house. You seemed pretty like me the other night in that field, or all the other times over the years you couldn't wait to see my cock.

COLM. I didn't love you, alright… The way that you loved me. I didn't. And I'm sorry if that's – hurtful or whatever but it's just a fact.

DONAL. So it was just sex?

COLM. No. No it wasn't just sex…

DONAL. You could fuck me but you didn't want to go out with me, is that it? The idea of a relationship just turned your stomach?

COLM. Yes actually it kind of did.

DONAL *steps back, wounded.*

COLM *rubs his eyes, stressed.*

Why are we even talking about this? It was *so* long ago Donal, I mean haven't we moved on?

DONAL. It was the other night.

COLM. But aren't there more important things happening right now? My wife being fucking missing for one.

DONAL. Or your parents splitting up, or your mom meeting another woman or your dad –

COLM. Disappearing at sea? (*Voice rising.*) Yes! This is my messed-up life, I'm sorry if it's inconvenient.

DONAL. You have never taken any risks.

COLM. What?

DONAL. You have no idea what it's like to be a kid in a place like this and be different.

COLM. Oh for fuck's sake, Donal, it's the twenty-first century, gays could not be more celebrated now, especially here – where they voted for you to get fucking married. People like *you* are not victims any more.

DONAL. People like me?

COLM. I know you want to be, but you're not. It's over.

DONAL….Easy for you to say.

DONAL *stares at him, disgust.*

COLM *takes a deep breath, tries to steady himself.*

COLM. Look… you were good to me, Donal. At a time, at *times* when I really needed someone to be good to me. You were… and yes we had a sexual – connection and yes we still have it, I can't explain it but it's there – you're right, it's there… But you and me?… that's never going to happen. It's not what I wanted for my life or my future or – ever. And I'm sorry about that. I'm really sorry if I gave you the wrong impression *when we were kids, Donal*. But I don't know how I can be any more explicit. I don't want to be with you like that. I never did.

DONAL….except in the dark.

COLM *looks at him. Shrugs. He has no more answers.*

Beat.

You know when I came up to Dublin that time – after leaving my course and everything and you said – well basically you said the same thing you've said just now… Beiv was the one who took me in.

COLM *looks up, surprised.*

I didn't have anywhere to go, see, cos I didn't actually know anyone in Dublin, apart from ye. So the only person I could think to call, was Beiv. She'd just come back from whatever shit she'd been doing down here, and had gotten herself a flat in Ringsend. She told me to come straight over. So I did. Stayed a few months actually. Got a job in a bar. You weren't speaking to her, you didn't know… She begged me to go back to college. Begged me not to throw my life away over 'a man', she said. Said I should think of the bigger picture. 'Someday you'll look back on this and it'll mean nothing,' that's what she said.

He looks at COLM.

Funny how all this time's gone by… and that's still not true.

Beat.

Anyway, I am going back. To finish my degree. I'm going to London this September. Got a place and everything.

COLM *looks up.*

COLM. That's – great.

DONAL *nods.*

No, that's really –

DONAL. Beiv's paying for it.

COLM*'s visibly taken aback.*

Fees, accommodation, the lot. She's paying for it.

Beat.

She told me not to tell you… It's the money from the house. Your – cut of the money from the house. That you threw back in her face. She's giving it to me, to study.

COLM. She didn't waste much time… I'd be careful. She'll want something for that.

DONAL. She says you owe it to me.

COLM. Oh yeah?

DONAL. You *do* owe it to me.

Beat.

COLM. Well, she's always liked you more than she liked me.

DONAL. She loved your old man, too. In her way.

COLM. Yeah right.

DONAL. You know I don't think you can properly remember what he was like. He used drive you crazy. His silences. His moods – you couldn't wait to get away.

COLM. He wasn't always like that. Only after they split.

DONAL. That week we came down here, and he found us in bed, remember how he laid into you?

COLM *frowns.*

COLM. No.

DONAL. Do you not remember?

COLM. Not really.

COLM *shakes his head.*

DONAL. He dragged you outside in your boxers, held you up against that wall and he was screaming into your face. Just screaming and screaming. Everyone round here would've heard… And don't get me wrong, like, I liked old Mike. I didn't blame him for being – angry. Wasn't about us anyway. Don't think he even cared about that bit. He was just so freaked out that you'd run off without telling him… But the way he was, screaming and hitting you, I was fucking terrified. Terrified for you.

COLM *takes this in.*

COLM. Well he pushed things down… do it myself sometimes. I just bottle it and bottle it and take it and take it. And then something happens and it all comes out in one stupid – explosion, like with Bonnie the other night. And then I hate myself even more. You know?

Beat.

Maybe I am like him in that way. Do you think?

He looks at DONAL*, genuine.*

Do you think I have that – darkness just waiting inside me?

DONAL *shrugs.*

DONAL….I think I've spent far too much time thinking about your pain, Colm. I think it's probably about time I thought of myself for a bit. You know?

Beat.

COLM *nods.*

DONAL *looks at his watch.*

I'm going home to get some kip… if she's not back in another few hours we need to get the guards.