

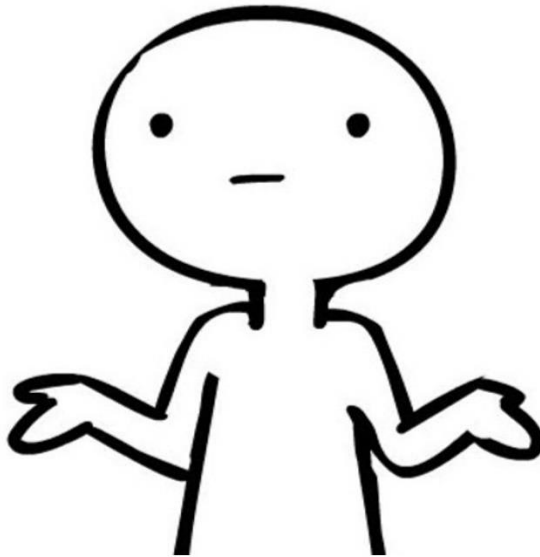
Inkslingers Blended Session

18th November 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“I’m sorry, I thought you were someone else”

And the Visual



Who Cares?

I thought you were someone else

Anna Horgan

Dr Jim Murphy pulled into his drive. He felt again the familiar combination of quiet satisfaction and mild incredulity that he could own this handsome, detached house in the leafy Liverpool suburbs.

He opened the front door to a waft of warm air seasoned with frying lamb chops and rosemary.

He smiled to hear his youngest son massacring some piece of music on the violin.

No need to save up yet for a Stradivarius he thought.

“Hi Jim” said his wife Maire as he came into the Kitchen “Good you’re home for once to eat your dinner before it dries out in the oven. How was your day?”

“The usual, crazy busy”

“Never mind it’s over now, Are you on call?”

“Yes, and the houseman is copped on so I hope I’ll have a quiet....”

His phone rang before his sentence ended,

It was the hospital

He pressed the answer button and spoke

“Yes Dr Campbell, what is it”

He listened for a while, nodding and asking a few clarifying questions

“Sounds like you have done everything you can. I’ll be right in”

As he spoke on the phone Maire had cut up some chops, put the meat in a roll and wrapped it in tinfoil

“You better take this with you” she said.

Her face had settled into the expression of resigned disappointment common to the spouses of people with demanding jobs.

“Thanks Maire, I’m sorry, Maybe I won’t be too long”

“Maybe” she said smiling slightly “and maybe I’ll see flying pigs too”

Jim Murphy met Dr Campbell at the door of A&E. She was a small sturdy woman in her thirties. They walked quickly to the patient’s cubicle while she told him the story

“He was brought in by the police, He seemed like one of the usual drunk down and outs with no-one who cares about them. It was only when his blood tests came back that we realised he was not only drunk but his blood glucose was sky high and that he had ketoacidosis.”

“Have we any old records on him or found anyone to tell us his medical history”

“No records and no luck finding family or friends as he has no phone on him. He seems to be Irish as he has an old Irish driver’s licence.”

“No diabetic bracelet?”

“No”

Jim Murphy entered the cubicle. The patient was drifting in and out of consciousness but his heart tracing was normal- a good sign.

Jim took up the chart at the end of the bed to see the pulse temperature and blood pressure. All were gradually improving.

Now that the patient was stable and his condition was moving in the right direction Jim took notice of the name for the first time

He drew his eyebrows together as he read it.... Andrew Loftus..... A name from his childhood years ago in the small Irish village where he grew up.

Surely not the same man he thought

He looked at him closely Yes it could be him. Looked about the right age, hair grey and sparse but the eyebrows were the inverted V shape of all the Loftus men. He was also tall like those men- his feet and lower calves hung over the edge of the trolley.

I think my imagination is running away with me he thought one of the “lordly Loftuses” is hardly likely to end up on the street in Liverpool.

“You did a good job Dr Campbell” he said “I think he should be ok now. Ill head home but call me as needed”

The following morning was very busy. Jim Murphy had completely forgotten Andrew Loftus until he picked up his chart on the round. He smiled as he recalled his little fantasy of the previous night.

The patient was snoozing so Jim gently touched his shoulder

“Mr Loftus, can you wake up please”

Andrew Loftus opened his eyes and looked at Jim Murphy

He drew his eyebrows together and spoke sharply

“Coats, How the devil did you get into my room, get out!”

The patient then looked about the room then looked back at Jim

His expression relaxed

“Terribly sorry Doctor, for a minute there I thought you were someone else- a funny old chap who worked for us long ago. Never knew his real name but we called him Coats Murphy. imagine mistaking you for that nobody... terribly sorry”

Jim Murphy took a deep breath and kept his thoughts to himself

Yes, to you a nobody but to me my father.

Who Cares?

Angelina Kelly

During the week I took the LUAS into town. It was my first time since surgery, and I was like an excited child.

Getting on the tram that day, selecting my seat and looking out the window at the scenery passing by, I felt like it was the first time ever. Seeing the greenery of the parks, the blue sky above and the people sitting in the seats around me filled me with awe and wonder.

I love people watching and this gave me the perfect opportunity to observe my fellow passengers. I looked at the women and wondered what made them chose their outfits for the journey.

I noticed all the men wore non-descript clothes that simply covered their bodies. I pitied the parents with their disgruntled children trying to distract them and calm them down.

I continued observing the colours around me, the smells of perfume and damp from the passengers' jackets and I wondered how I had never noticed these things before.

When we got to my stop in the inner city, I disembarked and as I stepped on to the platform I noticed a women who looked exactly like my mum. My rational mind told me that this couldn't be possible because my mum died eight years ago.

But in that moment I needed it to be true. I ran up to her and tipped her on the shoulder and, as she turned around, I realised that it wasn't her.

Embarrassed I said, "I'm sorry – I thought you were someone else.

"No problem," she replied. "Anyway, who cares? And she continued walking away from me blending into the crowd. I shook my head and silently wished her a good day and said a prayer for my mum.

I Thought You Were Someone Else

Bernadette O'Reilly

No one can say that about me
I am a spirit you see
When I entered heaven's gate
St Peter was there
He said I had arrived before my time
And had to go back to earth
After returning I discovered they had
Already buried my body
So who cares...

Disco Kiss

Miguel Angel Rivera, jr.

Carlos could not possibly believe he was home after such a long deployment, much less at a club with actual music, people, drinks, and fun that pertained to his age group. The gruesome nature of war had threatened to change him into some sort of killing animal. Now he found it something of a struggle to socialize and “blend in” at this crowded Miami night club. He told himself he was only 21 and that this was the re-adjustment period that they’d warned he and his fellow Marines about. He was determined to overcome this hurdle as he had many in war and life.

He took a few steps in the noisy, crowded place and finally saw a human he both recognized and could identify with. He was standing by the bar. It was Corporal Jerry Atwater, known ludicrously in their unit as “Jerry Juice” for his bad acne and for popping his pimples on other soldiers while they slept, along with his penchant for practical jokes. Carlos felt alive and more connected to the world for a moment.

As he and Jerry conversed, he was suddenly approached from behind by a beautiful dark-haired Latina who unexpectedly planted a long and passionate kiss on his lips while simultaneously squeezing his left bun like it was the last grapefruit on earth.

Carlos pulled away for a second and realized he’d never seen her. “What? Thanks, but who the hell are you?”, He then turned to Jerry, who shrugged his shoulders as though letting Carlos know this was not one of his many gags or set-ups.

“Welcome home, Soldier!”, She said with a salute, as though she’d known him his entire life.

Carlos laughed for a moment and then took one last look at Jerry who was now half way through his Tito’s and Cranberry but giving a “thumbs up” as if approving of Carlos’ sudden luck while simultaneously scanning the crowd in search of his own prospects.

Carlos invited the young woman up to the terrace for a drink, which she accepted. Once sitting he solicited information.

The lovely, olive-skinned beauty began explaining. "My name is Olivia. My husband of six months was killed in Fallujah, and I can always tell a Marine in any crowd. We met at this club and when I saw you from behind you reminded me so much of him. I'm not a loose girl or anything like that, just lonely. The last thing my husband said to me before he died is that he wanted to hang out at this club with me when he returned home. I'm tired of an empty life and of staring at that folded flag on my shelf. This is not a therapy session but seeing you today clicked something in me and so here we are. As for the kiss, who cares, I thought you were someone else?"

One year later Carlos and Olivia were married.

Game Over

Steve Huenneke

Knowledge is nothing more
Than what sells
People believe, they don't have to know
Here's the idea that sells in the bungalow
It's cheap beer
Then it's urine
Flowing into a toilet flushing into the meadow
Desecrating the common ground
The ducks are lined up in a row
Pursuing happiness
Each powerless
Versus
Loneliness
Today one more poor guy is practice
A target
Led to believe he is a cowboy
Rough and tough
But take a look
He is a plough boy
More like a Pillsbury dough boy
Getting fat
In a laundromat
Next to Walmart
Eating each and every Dorito
In the middle of Ohio
Where America is great again
And doesn't know
Why might
That carries stun guns and zip ties
Might still be colored white
He's watching The Television
Made for him and his kin
The chatter box on spin
Making a suggestion

About what kind of place he belongs in
Where he can still hang out
Underneath a clothes pin
Where he matters
Where he went to high school
He ends up dreaming
People really do care
He has a dog named Spot
And he gets chosen
Fair and square
As an astronaut.

Kitty and the dragon fly

Heloisa Prieto

Illustrated by Laura Beatriz

(first chapter)



I never knew about my best friend's father's profession. I was never told Rachel's full name. But I never forgot about her mother because that lovely, sweet lady was the first writer I ever met.

As I think about Rachel's family and home, her mother's typing machine, the shelves full of books in English, the scattered pages over the wooden desk, makes me wonder about her family's influence on my own personal choice: becoming a writer.

Rachel was born in Canada. I can still remember our first meeting and our favourite best times. This is the story of a beautiful friendship. And, although I am only left with glimpses and fragments of our time spent together, I felt like sharing these memories as they have remained imprinted in my mind: full of laughter, poetry, wonder and joy.

"Kitty! Kitty Cat!"

I can still remember the moment I heard my new neighbour's voice and wondered:

"How did this new girl find out about my cat's name?"

Kitty was a restless, lovely little cat. I fell in love with her the moment she jumped on my lap. My Dad found her pregnant mummy asleep inside his car engine. She came out of nowhere, during a heavy rain night. We took her inside, fed her, took care of her and she gave birth to four tiny kittens.

Kitty was my favourite, she already could find her way around and play at every corner of the house. She kept on running across the living room, jumping over the couch and armchairs in a sort of feline t of happiness. Our one storey's house had a large backyard. Next to the wall, a tall, leafy mango tree. Soon it became Kitty's favourite hideout. At first, I did not care whenever Kitty chose to climb up to the highest branches. As she grew so fast, in no time my cat could find her way into the top of the tree. It so happens the branches stretched themselves into our neighbour's yard. I can't say I was comfortable seeing my beloved Kitty sleeping on the neighbour's side of the tree. To make matters worse, Kitty realized she could jump out of the tree and walk around the other side of the wall.

"Kitty! Kitty! Come back here!" I called her.

"Kitty! Kitty, kitty cat! - I heard my neighbour say.

I stretched my body as much as I could so that I could see over the wall and my eyes caught the glimpse of a light straight, brown haired girl, walking towards my cat. I quickly realized both of us were probably the same age.

“Oi! Tudo bem?” - I greeted her.

The neighbour held my cat delicately and looked at me with puzzled eyes.

“Hello!”- she said and waved at me.

I thought I should get the ladder and climb it, trying to jump over the wall that divided our yards, but I was still climbing down the tree when I heard the doorbell ring. I ran to the gate and, as I opened it, I saw my new neighbor holding my cat.

“Desculpa” she said, pronouncing the word carefully with a musical voice. *“Sou a Rachel. Aqui está a sua Kitty. Eu não falo português muito bem... Eu cheguei do Canadá faz pouco tempo. Lá eu falo inglês.”*

“Thank you!” I said. I had already learned how to thank people at school. I asked her *“how did you guess my cat’s name?”*

Rachel smiled at me and tried to explain:

“Oh, Kitten means a baby cat in English. Didn’t you learn it? I reached for my cat and after I held her, I explained:

“No, I did not. I am just beginning to learn English.” “And I am just beginning to learn Portuguese”, said Rachel.

I kissed Kitty’s furry, little head and let her jump down to the floor. I remember feeling so happy and grateful! I tried to give Rachel a big hug, but she ran away. When I think about this now, many years later, I realize that, being a Canadian child, Rachel was probably not used to hugging and kissing a new friend.

“Bye! Bye!” she said on the way out.

“Meaow!”

I laughed imagining that my Kitty was also grateful because our new friend had brought her back home. I already knew that, in cat tongue,

each “meow” meant something different. Sometimes, it meant “I am thirsty” or else “I am sleepy”, but it could be just a cute way of expressing cat happiness.

From that day on, Rachel and I visited each other daily. Kitty kept on jumping over the wall to Rachel’s house as if she thought she lived in both our houses.

Everytime Kitty moved houses, one of us immediately called upon the other.

Someone Else?

Max McCoubrey

I thought you were someone else
The label wasn't true
I was blinded by love and hope
When I looked at you

I thought you were someone else
I made no judgement call
Did no background check
Heard no alarms at all
My friends said don't' you dare
He's known for breaking hearts
They warned me not to trust
They warned me not to start

But all I saw were eyes
That sparkled in the dark
And all I heard were words
Designed to catch my heart

Next time I'll know more
And take more thoughtful steps
Next time I'll know the score
I thought you were someone else.

Caring

Venus Crow

It was a Tuesday when the heart finally broke into many pieces as it heard laughter and voices behind the old red door.

Fight, flight or freeze?

The heart froze.

The key, still, in the air, moments away from the lock.

Opening wide, the door she had walked through a thousand times before, carrying groceries, logs for their fire, presents for birthday's and many Christmases.

The heart carrying joy, sadness, loss, love and gain across the dusty threshold now become a frame filled with pain and hurt. He hadn't timed it well, within the new leaving as the old entered.

It became clear to the heart, as he looked to the floor and introduced everyone as if it was a soft social moment, the truth.

It became clear to the heart that those Tuesday fires had not been for her.

It became pain when those fragile tendrils of hope shattered like ice in that frozen moment.

It was done, he was a stranger to the heart now. I'm sorry, I thought you were someone else.

The heart doesn't always reap what it sows.

It was a Tuesday, one year and a half later when the heart finally told her to take the key from her bag..

Who Cares?

Clíodhna J Daly

Gary hated mess. In fact, he despised mess. The specks of dirt that littered across the foot

paths, the mucky trainers that paraded filth across the carpets, the bins that overflowed in

his neighbours drive, he scowled at it all.

Gary was a particular person and did not understand why no one else followed suit in

keeping their surroundings pristine. Each day, he went outside to sweep every inch of his

drive only to discover the rubbish of the overflowing bins plummeting along the unmarked

concrete. He lost faith in humanity.

Despite the countless discussions with his neighbours and mutual understanding he

believed they reached, the grime persisted. He was devastated.

Gary's daughter warned if he did not change his ways, he would be isolated in a time of

crisis due to his consistent difficulty. He imagined she was tired of hearing about the

countless rows, irritations and altercations that had arisen due to Gary's obsession with

cleanliness. Every day came a new upheaval and Gary was starting to respond to this

inconveniences like he was preparing for combat. Through his vigorous imagination, he

concocted ideals of stealing the neighbours bins, building a massive fence or just ringing the

county council copious amount of times until they blocked his number.
He was becoming
exhausted.

After his wife passed and retirement sank in, Gary had little else to focus
in on besides the

orbit of the untidiness of his adjoining neighbours. Despite his daughters
help, Gary at times

felt isolated and being upset about the bins allowed the lonesomeness
of missing his wife to

be numbed, even just for a short while.

His daughters understood and sympathised with his dilemma, but still
scolded him when he

chased away some teenagers that were standing too close to his lilies
with a Hoover. Gary

was a loving person despite all his faults and his obsession with
immaculateness and starting

into the neighbour's windows angrily. He just needed another focal
point.

As the fog and rain poured on a particular sour Saturday afternoon, the
pain of his wife's

departure consumed Gary's thoughts as the opportunity to sweep the
drive was

disappearing. He was becoming restless, and attempted to ring his
daughter to project into

another rant about the filth of the estate. In his mist of rage, upset, and
panic – a loud rap

echoed throughout the house – it was the front door.

The knock became louder more pronounced with each hit, as Gary
shuffled his way towards

the latch.

Standing beneath the fading front door light illuminated unforgiving rain and his soaked

daughter. She held uncovered carbon box and pushed herself inside.

Dirty water splashed across the newly shampooed carpet.

“My god Saoirse, I am only after cleaning,” Gary scowled as he watched his daughter shake

off the grime from the sky.

“Christ sake, dad, I am freezing,” Saoirse replied irritated by her dad’s comments. “Besides I

brought you something that might actually be good for you!” She pushed the tattered

soaked cardboard box along the ground.

As Gary peered in, he noticed a white mop of hair and two little golden eyes staring up at

him. Inside the box, was a little golden retriever pup.

“I figured it would give you some company, he is only four months,” Saoirse said. “Now he is

a little mucky, but he is so cute and loveable and friendly.”

“Oh – who cares,” Gary replied. He was delighted with the gesture his daughter provided.