

Coming Out

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Characters:

Four good friends, all in their early 20's.

Richard: jeans, sweat-shirt, sneakers; an `ordinary guy'

Greg: a mock tough guy exterior; but also an `ordinary guy'

Lindsey: dressed rather punky; the clown of the group

Tasha: the sensitive one; shows signs of being in love with Richard;

A table in a coffee-bar. The 4 characters are sitting at the table.

Richard: [Hesitantly]

You're probably ... wondering why ... I ... invited you here ...

Lindsey:

You want to start paying back all the coffee you owe me ...

Richard: [Sheepishly]

Well, that too ... I guess

Tasha: And ...?

Greg: [Mocking]

Let me guess - you're going to reveal the deepest, darkest, most horrible secret of your life ...

Richard: [Stunned]

Holy smokes! How did you know?

Greg: [Surprised]

I guessed it?

Lindsey: [Mocking, with appropriate hand-gestures]

OOOOO Greg, maybe you're psychic ... Mr. Greg sees all, tells all ...

Greg: [Leaning forward and staring at Lindsey; then in a foreign accent]

Look into my eyes - and I will read your mind like a book ...

Tasha: [Rolling her eyes; slightly annoyed]

O give it a rest would you ...

[Touching Richard's arm]

What's it about, Richard ...?

Richard: [Hangs his head]

Me.

[There is a pause. Just enough to be noticeable, Richard's 3 friends glance at each other.]

Lindsey: [Exasperated]

I think ... we kind of knew that ...

Tasha: [Sympathetically]

And ...?

Richard: [Looking down]

Guys ... I ... I ... don't know how to say this but ...

Tasha: [Sympathetically]

O come on now, we're all friends ...

Lindsey: Just in case you haven't noticed ...

Richard: Well ... it's ... just not ... easy ...

Lindsey: [Impatient]

Come on Ricky-boy, spit it out ...

Greg: Yeah, we're all big, we can take it ...

Richard: [Worried, embarrassed]

I know ... it's just that ... I should have ... told you ... earlier -
months ago ...

Greg: I forgive you.

Lindsey: Hold on there! He doesn't get off that easy. He's got to do
penance. He can buy me more coffee ...

Tasha: Oh cut it, you guys, just let him talk ...

Lindsey: I wish he would ...

Tasha: [Turning to him]

Richard, you said you should have told us months ago -

Richard: Well, I really should have ... but I didn't ... and that makes it
worse ...

Tasha: [Gently coaxing]

O don't worry about that. Just tell us now ... What's it about?

Richard: Me.

Lindsey: [Flops back in her chair, groaning in exasperation]

Greg: [Annoyed]

What's the big secret, man? Look at all the stuff we told each other
before ... Can't be any bigger than some of that ...

Richard: No, no, it's much bigger than anything like that ...

Lindsey: [Now trampling her feet in frustration]

Tasha: You know we're your friends - even though Lindsey's being a bit
of jerk right now. So, why don't you just tell us ... it'll be so much better

...

Richard: I want to ... but it's so ... so different ...

Lindsey: Yeah, we'll understand ... even a jerk like me.

Richard: I know, guys, I know, but it's just not that easy ...

Lindsey: [Suddenly sitting up and looking at Richard]

Tell me, Richard, this wouldn't be a ...a ... male bonding thing
- would it?

Richard: [Thinks for a moment]

Yeah ... in a sort of way ...

[There is a moment of silence as the possible implications of this sink
in.]

Tasha: [Immediately sympathetic]

But that's not a problem - at least not for us girls ...

[Looks at Lindsey]

Lindsey: Definitely not for me ...

Greg: Hey man, I'm open-minded.

Tasha: [A little forced; she has romantic designs on Richard]

Me too ... for sure ...

Lindsey: Whatever floats your boat ... it's fine with me. No big deal here.

Greg: Hey, you're my friend, no matter what. I respect your choice - and you
respect mine -

that's what friends are about ... I may not understand it, but ...

Richard: [Breathing a big sigh of relief]

Oh man, I'm so glad you guys understand. I was so worried. Cause things
will be a a bit different from here on in ...

Tasha: [Obviously disappointed]

Just a bit ...

[She turns away]

Lindsey: [Sees Tasha's disappointment and tries to cheer her up by
sounding cheerful herself]

But it's not the end of the world. It's a start to a whole new
world ... new adventures and all that stuff ...

Richard: Well, you know ... I won't be going to the bar any more

Greg: Are you crazy? Say man, when did all this happen?

Richard: A couple of weeks ago. When I finally got my card ...

Lindsey: [Incredulous]

You need a card for that?

Richard: [Enthusiastic]

Oh yeah ... to get registered and all that kind of stuff ...

Greg: [Suspicious]

What do you mean registered?

Richard: So they know who's part of it ... no big deal ... but it's got to be done ...

Lindsey: [Defiant]

I wouldn't go on some register... there's gotta be a law about that somewhere ... It's like communism or Nazis or something ...

Richard: [Defensive]

Well, they've got to ... administration and all that stuff ...

Greg: [Somewhat angry]

So they can pick you up any time they like ...?

Lindsey: And make you wear a pink triangle ...

Richard: Pink triangle? Are you kidding? These guys use nine-pointed stars ...

Tasha: [Puzzled]

I can't remember reading anything about nine-pointed stars in my history books ...

Greg: [Appalled]

So what do you need all this registration for ?

Richard: Well, once in a while for some of the special meetings ...

Greg: [Stunned]

Meetings?

Tasha: Support group meetings ...

Richard: Not really, it's not a support group ...

Lindsey: OK, get-togethers... call 'em whatever ... for others like you ...

Richard: Exactly. But don't worry, I want you all there! I'll invite you to some of our parties ...

Greg: [Mixed feelings]

You will?

Tasha: Well, I'll be happy to come with you ...

Richard: [Enthusiastic]

That's great! Maybe you'll all join some day ...

There is a shocked silence.]

Greg: [Hesitantly]

Richard, good buddy, I think I better say this up front - I'm not wired that

way ...

Richard: [Enthusiastically]

Uh uh. You're so wrong about that! I think everyone's wired that way - they just don't know it yet ...

Greg: Oh, I know it all right, good buddy. And the answer is no. It's not for me.

Richard: But it's made me so happy! I want to share it with you!

Lindsey: Some things just aren't meant to be shared ...

Tasha: [Hesitantly]

I don't know about you guys, but I'm ... really confused ...

Lindsey: About what?

Tasha: Everything.

Greg: Like what?

Tasha: [To Richard]

Richard, you just told us you're gay - didn't you?

Richard: [Shocked]

Me?!? Are you kidding? Whatever made you think that?

[A long pause as they all glance at each other in confusion.]

Lindsey: [Matter of factly]

So you're not gay ...

Richard: [Protesting]

No, of course not ...

Tasha: [Touching his arm]

That makes things a lot simpler ...

Greg: Yeah, I'll say. Not that we'd care if you were ... a bud is a bud is a bud ...

Tasha: So what are you?

Richard: I'm a Bahá'í.

Greg: Same thing almost, isn't it? Except you like girls too ...

Richard: [Slightly annoyed]

Huh?

Greg: Well, if you're bi you like guys and girls, right? You swing both ways, sort of ... you know what I mean ...

Richard: I said Bahá'í - not bi ...

Lindsey: [Worried]

If this one of those wierdo things, Richard, I hate to say it, but I'm outta here! I'm just a plain simple girl ... guys, and later on babies the old fashioned natural way ...

Tasha: [Despondent again; head in her hand]

Me too.

Richard: You guys are nuts! This has nothing to do with sex!

[He starts laughing.]

Tasha: [Perking up immediately; with increasing desperation]

Richard, I know you don't mean to, but you're jerking us around. So quit it! It's driving me crazy. I want you to come right out and say it - no beating around the bush ...

[Greg and Lindsey voice their support.]

Richard: [Hesitantly]

I sorry guys, but ... it's just not an easy thing to explain.

Tasha: [Sternly]

Well, I think you'd better start ...

Richard: [Taking a deep breath]

I've joined the Bahá'ís. They're a religion.

Lindsey: So when do they shave your head?

Tasha: [Impatient]

Lindsey, would you just listen - before we get all confused again ... I just couldn't stand any more of that ...

Richard: No head shaving, Lindsey. It's simple as ABC. A: All religions and peoples are basically one so the world is really one country. B: Bahá'u'lláh is the manifestation of God for this age. C: Civilization won't progress until we're all working together.

Lindsey: [Slightly disappointed]

That's it? That's the great secret?

Richard: That's it.

Greg: So tell me, good buddy, why all the chicken poop? Why didn't you just come out and say so? That doesn't sound too bad.

Richard: [Hesitant]

Well ... you got to admit ...it's not easy these days - admitting you got religion ...

Lindsey: No kidding ... and maybe for a good reason ...

Greg: Will I burn in hell for not joining?

Richard: There isn't a hell to burn in.

Greg: No hell? Now there's a new twist ...

Lindsey: What do they use to scare you?

Richard: Nothing. Your conscience maybe ... it's up to you ...

Tasha: [With a large sigh of relief]

Guys, I've got to go ... this has been quite a ride ... and I'm just exhausted ...

[She gets up. The others also get up ...and they start leaving, still talking.]

Richard: [Laughing as they exit]

Thanks guys. For understanding. And the misunderstanding. Wait'll I tell them!

[He mimics two different voices.]

`I'm a Bahá'í.'

`Oh. I guess that means you like girls too ...'

[Their laughter fades out as they exit.]

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