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## Make up your mind

by Stuart Carruthers

“It was love at first sight, wasn’t it?” sneered the barmaid as she topped up the half empty glass. But his mind was elsewhere. As the late evening sunshine cast uneven shadows between the buildings, the young man stared intensely out of the window.

The phone conversation the previous afternoon was playing on his mind. The news from home wasn’t what he wanted to hear at such a critical time. He hadn’t slept much the previous night, his inner demons played heavy with his emotions. He was desperate to call her, but he couldn’t as it would reveal his location and he knew Frankie Doyle would find him within days.

Taking a pen from his coat pocket, he scribbled down the number of the only person he could trust. This was his last hope but he couldn’t make the call. Turning to face the bar he grabbed Olga’s attention and indicated that he needed to speak to her outside. She could tell something wasn’t right from the moment she opened the emergency door, as he grabbed her hand and led her away from the passing tourists who had gathered to photograph what they thought was Banksy’s latest masterpiece.

Casually removing a cigarette from her apron, she listened as the words came thick and fast.

“If I go they will kill me, if I don’t they will kill her and I will never know if this whole mess was her fault or mine, but I can’t move on until I know who’s telling the truth.”

“Ok I’ll do it, but not with my phone, I will use the phone in the station,” she replied as her fingers flick the ash from her cigarette into the passing breeze. “Call box’s use outside lines via the operator, it will never be traced,” she said confidently.

Staring deep into her brown eyes he knew she wouldn’t let him down, “One minute that’s all you can stay on the line for or they’ll trace the call, do you understand me?”

“Yes I understand but it’s best if we write down exactly what you need me to say, just in case,” and with that they returned to the bar to finalise their plan.

She had chosen a phone booth behind the station arrivals hall.

“It’s not that busy here so we won’t be disturbed.”

“Remember stick to the script and you’ve only got a minute,” he said, handing Olga some loose change from his pocket.

Placing the receiver between their heads it wasn’t long before he heard the words that sealed his fate. Tapping his watch with his index finger, Olga said goodbye and replaced the receiver.

“That wasn’t what you wanted to hear was it?” she asked.

“Have you got a cigarette, I need a drink,” he replied, anxiously looking over his shoulder, “is there a bar in this place”?

“Do you still love her?”

“I don’t know what to think Olga, it’s all a game to these people,” and for the first time he felt alone.

Placing her hand on his shoulder she ushered him towards the concourse, “Let’s get that drink and you can make up your mind about what you want to do next.”