

Foxes Over Flowers
7. Colby



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Love's Landscapes

An M/M Romance series

FOXES OVER FLOWERS

By J. Colby

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love's Landscapes* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a gift to you.

What Is Love's Landscapes?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what these authors do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love's Landscapes*.

No matter if you are a long-time devotee to M/M Romance, just new to the genre or fall somewhere in between, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

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FOXES OVER FLOWERS

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Photo Description

A man wearing nothing but small black briefs, lying on beige carpeting, arches his back and lifts his hips upwards slowly and sensuously into the touch of a second man's hands.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

This guy is perfection, I want that smooth taut stomach under my hands. But I know not to touch him. Were-foxes aren't the easiest kind to get into bed with; they're tricky and won't be pinned down by anyone until they've met their match. And I'm not the smartest guy around, not a Were either... but if I could just get my hands on this guy. I'd make it so he'd never want to get out from under me.

Come on author, help this guy catch a wily fox ;)

Sincerely,

Alex

Story Info

Genre: contemporary, paranormal

Tags: acts of kindness, blue collar, gardener, implied psychic ability, shifters, slow burn

Word Count: 8,360

FOXES OVER FLOWERS

By J. Colby

Green eyes.

Connor was sure that he'd never seen green eyes on a fox before.

With his knees cushioned by freshly cut grass and strong hands buried in rich, dark dirt, he couldn't look away. He was entranced.

Crouched at the edge of the property, the fox seemed to be watching him with those striking and wary eyes. It wasn't too ridiculous of a thought. With this client's property edging a rather expansive forest there were always animals on or around the gardens he was continually working on.

Still, the way this fox was looking at him was with an expression of far more awareness than any simple animal should have. Connor knew that there was a small chance that the fox was a Were, but Were-creatures were few and far between these days, what with the industrial revolution and all. Even here in Cork there was more than enough city sprawl to push them into numbers that put them on the verge of extinction.

Leaning back on his heels, Connor felt one corner of his mouth lift in a faint and crooked smile.

“Are you just going to stay over there, then?”

The petite animal's green eyes narrowed in a look that Connor would have considered disdainful had the sleek red fox been human. It was so full of emotion that it made him consider the possibility of the animal being a Were-fox even more.

Predictably though, the fox didn't answer. Nor did it choose to move any closer. Shaking his head and smiling fully, Connor gave his attention back to the delicate plants in front of him. He couldn't exactly forget about the fox, but neither was it possible for him to waste a sun-drenched workday trying to coax it closer.

Inhaling the intoxicating scent of the surrounding flora as he worked steadily, Connor paused after a while in order to reach for his nearby bottle of water. Dirt-covered fingers left dark smudges of mud in the condensation as he did so, but it didn't matter to him.

Looking up he noticed that the fox was now on the far side of his small plot of flowers. Its paws were neatly folded beneath its body as it observed him in a seemingly royal and haughty manner.

“Can I help you?” Connor asked after taking a deep drink of his water, throat working steadily as he swallowed. He wondered when it had approached.

The fox blinked slowly as if in direct response to his question.

Again, Connor got the feeling that the animal understood every word he was saying—and that if it had been able to, it would have responded.

Tugging off his dirty gloves, he held out one hand to the fox. He watched patiently as it looked at his hand and then back up into his eyes before it got to its feet and took a few tentative steps forward.

Connor didn't move. He forced himself to keep his breathing soft and even as he kept his hand still, palm up, and watched the fox approach slowly.

Under the heat of the bright summer sun, he was sure that the sweat trickling down the back of his neck and under his arms wasn't the most pleasant of aromas, but hopefully it wasn't enough to send the fox running.

At the soft snuffle of the fox's damp nose against his fingertips and then his palm, Connor felt his lips twitch in a faint grin at the sensation.

“Cute.”

The small animal stilled at his soft word, meeting his gaze with narrowed eyes that seemed to express their disapproval for Connor's choice of adjective. It bumped its head against his hand just faintly before turning and loping away, back into the lush trees that surrounded the property.

Snorting softly at the visible attitude the animal had given him, Connor turned his attention back to his work.

Green eyes again.

Finishing the last of his beer, Connor returned the gaze steadily from across the crowded club. He might have been imagining that the other man was looking at him in particular, but that didn't mean he couldn't encourage him to approach anyway.

It didn't seem possible that he should be able to see the colour of the man's eyes from here, but they were such a clear and sharp shade of green that they acted like a beacon in the dimly lit club.

Maybe it was his imagination, or just wishful thinking, but Connor was sure those eyes were the exact same shade of green that had graced his newfound fox friend.

As he leaned against the hard, polished wood of the bar counter, Connor contemplated the wisdom of getting another beer. It would be his third in less than as many hours, and while he wasn't drunk just yet, he wasn't really looking to be either.

As he straightened out of his slouch and looked away from those piercing eyes for a moment, Connor glanced around the crush of bodies that filled Sinners tonight.

Sinners was one of Cork's top gay nightclubs, which meant that it was almost always full, especially on a Saturday night. Still, despite the number of subtle and unsubtle overtures he'd received tonight, Connor couldn't completely shake off thoughts of his fox friend and the idea that it was far more human than it had let on.

"You're staring. That's rude, you know."

Startled by the words unexpectedly spoken next to his left ear, he jumped hard enough to be glad that he hadn't had the chance to order another beer, because he definitely would have dropped it. Still, he managed to compose himself quickly before turning.

While the voice had caught him off guard, he was less surprised by the green eyes currently looking up into his brown ones.

"Was I?"

Connor felt his mouth twitch as he tried not to laugh at the way the stranger's eyes narrowed and his lips thinned at his response. The indignation all over his face was cute.

"You were."

"Well, if you say so, then I must have been," Connor said, his voice light and just a little bit playful. He allowed himself to look at the other man properly now that he was right in front of him and not across a crowded room. He had to admit—even if it was just to himself—that he definitely liked what he saw.

Dark red hair that looked just long enough for him to tug, feathered softly around sharp and pale cheekbones and a small, elfin-like jaw was set stubbornly while those captivating eyes held his gaze. It wasn't difficult to see that the other man wasn't quite sure what to make of him.

Connor knew he'd never be considered the sharpest tool in any shed; he'd only barely managed to finish school after all, and he'd had no inclination afterward to further his studies. He'd always been far more comfortable doing physical labour and it hadn't ever bothered him that he was looked down on by a lot of so-called intellectual types.

Still, what he lacked in book smarts he made up for in handiness and people skills. He was good at reading others, and good at sensing feelings. If empathy could be considered a superpower then Connor might have thought himself gifted with it. Which was why he merely smiled in the face of the stranger's obvious confusion and irritation.

"Did you really come all the way over here just to tell me not to stare?" Connor asked as he turned where he stood, resting one arm on the bar top and looking at the other man evenly. "You could have just moved out of my line of sight, you know. Maybe you weren't as bothered by my staring as you say you were."

The man's thin lips curled into a pout, but green eyes never looked away from his. The pout was kind of cute, and it made Connor grin.

"You're really cute. You know that?"

The pout turned into an outright frown and Connor laughed. If the other man was going to be this fun to play with all the time, he definitely wasn't going to give up on trying to lure him in.

A barely audible huff greeted his laughter, and the other man crossed his arms over his chest. He didn't walk away though, so Connor had to take that as a sign of encouragement despite the rather sullen body language.

"Are you going to tell me your name, or should I just make one up for you? I can think of a few things I'd like to call you if you're going to give me the option of choosing."

The man narrowed his eyes at that, as if he could tell exactly what kind of names Connor was thinking of. It was probably the thought of ending up with some sort of ignoble nickname that finally prompted him to speak.

"Lorcán. My name is Lorcán."

His tone was as petulant as his expression and it took all of Connor's willpower not to outwardly laugh again. He was pretty sure that wouldn't go over well at all.

“It’s nice to meet you properly, Lorcán,” Connor said. He couldn’t prove that the pretty redhead in front of him was the fox that had been keeping him company at his client’s gardens over the last week, but there was just something about the other man’s eyes... “I’m Connor, by the way.”

He held out his hand, but he honestly didn’t think that Lorcán would take it. If the other man really was a Were, they were notoriously fickle about who they touched. It was unlikely that someone like him passed muster.

It came as no surprise when Lorcán merely lowered his gaze to look at his extended hand for a brief moment before looking up once more. His expression didn’t show any outward sort of disdain, but neither did he make any attempt to reach for Connor’s outstretched hand.

“Since you did come all the way over here... will you at least dance with me?” Connor asked, though that prospect seemed even more unlikely if Lorcán wasn’t even willing to shake his hand. “Or at least let me get you a drink.”

Thin lips twitched ever so slightly in response to his mildly exasperated tone and Connor returned the not-quite-smile with one of his own.

“So you do have a sense of humour. I was beginning to worry.”

Lorcán’s smile quickly disappeared and Connor couldn’t help but roll his eyes at the man’s mercurial mood changes. “Maybe I was wrong.”

He turned to face the bar anyway and lifted one hand to get the bartender’s attention to order their beers. All the while he felt Lorcán’s gaze on him, like tiny prickles on the back of his neck. Connor wondered briefly as he waited if it was even worth pursuing him.

Turning back to hand the redhead one of the pints though, just looking into those sharp green eyes removed any doubt he might have had about walking away. Even if the man in front of him wasn’t the fox from his client’s yard, he still wanted to get to know him. He felt compelled to.

“So... *are* you going to dance with me?” he asked again after taking a deep drink from his beer. He couldn’t seem to look away from those sharp cheekbones and seemingly bottomless green eyes. Even in the dim lighting of the club it was impossible to ignore how beautiful Lorcán was.

Not answering his question, Lorcán looked at him in a way that should have made him squirm uncomfortably. It was piercing, like he was trying to see inside his head. In that moment Connor tried to remember all that he knew about Were-folk, because he couldn’t recall for the life of him if telepathy was among their talents.

“Wouldn't it just be easier to ask me what I'm thinking?” he asked after the silence had stretched long enough to become awkward. Despite the constant music and chatter in the club, it wasn't too loud to be heard regardless of the distance Lorcán insisted on keeping between them.

Connor didn't miss the way his words caused the other man's eyes to widen, and he was left with the impression that whether he was actually able to or not, Lorcán had been trying to read his thoughts.

Despite the opening he'd given him, however, Lorcán remained stubbornly silent. He drank from his beer with a rather put out expression and Connor felt a flash of mild irritation. Why had he come over here if he wasn't even going to talk? Connor was easygoing, but Lorcán was stretching that to its limits.

Suddenly Lorcán stepped closer, and Connor's breath caught in his throat at the unexpected movement. He soon felt like he couldn't breathe at all as Lorcán leaned in to reach past him and set his half-full pint glass on the bar. From this close, Connor imagined he could feel the warmth of Lorcán's breath on his neck, and it caused a faint shiver to run down his spine.

The feelings he had around Lorcán were unsettling. It wasn't like he walked around getting turned on by random people every day, and to be so affected by a near stranger was disconcerting.

“One dance.”

That voice again, so close to his ear. Unwilling to take the time to even smile in triumph at the words when Lorcán could change his mind at any moment, Connor set down his nearly empty glass and stepped forward, letting one hand brush lightly against Lorcán's waist. The other man stiffened faintly at the presumptive touch, but he didn't pull away. Connor took that as a good sign and slipped past him gracefully towards the semi-crowded dance floor. He couldn't seem to stop himself from letting the hand on Lorcán's waist slide across the firmness of his belly as he moved past him.

The feel of hard muscles underneath the soft fabric of the other man's shirt, however, had him thinking less about dancing and more about other things. He almost regretted the touch when he knew it was unlikely Lorcán would be coming home with him tonight. Or ever.

Once on the dance floor, he didn't reach for Lorcán like he would have with anyone else. It wasn't because he didn't want to, because he did. It would just mean more to him if Lorcán made the choice to touch him, rather than merely accepting his touch.

Moving to the heavy beat of the music, Connor watched Lorcán with hot dark eyes. More than anyone he'd ever wanted before, he wanted Lorcán. Whether it was just the lure of the unknown or the fact that the other man was just really attractive, he wasn't sure. It might even have been Lorcán's contrariness, which normally wasn't an attractive quality.

Lorcán pushed him away and pulled him close in equal measures and it was annoying and enticing all at the same time.

He wasn't usually one for games, but Lorcán didn't seem to be playing. He just genuinely seemed interested and repelled simultaneously. That alone was enough to make Connor want him; he felt like he had something to prove.

Keeping his eyes locked with Lorcán's, Connor had to hold back the smug grin that threatened to blossom on his lips when Lorcán gradually moved closer. Gloating before an actual victory was a quick way to lose.

Watching Lorcán dance, Connor felt like he was being hypnotized. Slender but strong limbs moved gracefully, ever so slowly closing the space between them until the fabric of their clothes brushed together with every move they made.

Still, Connor didn't reach out. It didn't matter that it was bordering on painful to ignore his need and want to settle large hands on Lorcán's waist and close that last inch of space between them. He couldn't miss the frustration in the other man's eyes, and that made him wonder. He knew that Were-folk were averse to touching strangers, but he hadn't ever put stock in the rumours that it was because they could feel a person's emotions while doing so. He wasn't sure if it was true, but the thought that he wasn't the only one suffering right then was both pleasing and encouraging.

A low growl escaped Lorcán, and if the music hadn't chosen that moment to lull just slightly before changing to another song, Connor would have missed it.

The noise was soft, and dare he say it, cute. Unable to hold back any longer, Connor allowed himself to grin.

"Did you just *growl* at me?"

"You're not touching me," Lorcán replied, ignoring the question.

Connor's grin widened.

"No. I'm not."

Those magnificent green eyes narrowed, but Connor merely smiled placidly. It felt good to be on the leading side for once.

When Lorcán's arms came up and wrapped around his shoulders, warm hands brushing against the bare skin of his neck, Connor felt like he'd won. It may have been a small victory, but it was a victory nonetheless. Not one to brag, he answered the unspoken plea and finally settled his hands on Lorcán's waist, enjoying the feel of firm muscle underneath the soft fabric of the other man's T-shirt.

All it took was that one touch and Lorcán closed that gap of space between them, allowing Connor to feel the press of his body from chest to upper thigh. It was a horrible tease when Connor couldn't even bring to mind the last time he'd gotten off with anyone other than himself.

Leaning down just slightly as they moved to the sultry beat of the new song, Connor inhaled the scent of soft red hair. It smelled like grass in the sunshine and it made him smile. He was rather partial to that scent considering what he did for a living, and he enjoyed it far more than any sort of store bought cologne.

"This doesn't mean anything."

With the other man unable to see his face from this angle, Connor allowed himself to grin faintly at Lorcán's nearly inaudible words.

"I wouldn't dream of thinking it did," he replied, tone even and not giving away the amusement he was feeling. He thought that if he could convince Lorcán to let him walk him home though, he might just have a chance with him.

For now, he was going to take what time Lorcán was willing to give him and enjoy it while he had it.

"What're you doing?"

The words were soft and slurred and it took Connor a moment to process them as he stopped what he was doing and looked up to see Lorcán standing in his now open doorway.

"I'm working on your garden; I would have thought that was rather obvious."

Lorcán glared and Connor just returned the look evenly. He'd learned from walking Lorcán home the other night that he tended to posture when he felt out of his comfort zone. It made Connor inexplicably happy to know that he took him out of his comfort zone quite regularly.

“Why are you working on my garden?” Lorcán asked, each word bitten off like he was talking to either a dimwitted person or a child. Connor wasn't sure which one he'd rather it be, though ideally it would have been neither.

“Because you live in one of the most beautiful cottages I've ever seen,” he said after thinking for a moment. “You have all this land, and yet it had absolutely no garden at all, decent or otherwise. You didn't even have a single bush or flower. It was a tragedy, to be quite honest. I thought I was going to cry at the sight of it when I brought you home on Saturday.”

He hadn't really of course, but it had been quite painful to see a place with so much potential being so resolutely ignored. While Lorcán had allowed him, rather ungraciously he thought, to walk him home from the club on Saturday, he hadn't bothered to try for so much as a kiss at the door.

If he were honest with himself, a part of the reason was because he'd been so taken aback by the neglected bare grass around the cutest cottage he'd ever seen. It was the kind of cottage that was made for postcards or tourist brochures, and yet it didn't have so much as a hanging basket of flowers to add to its allure.

“You're working on my garden?”

The way Lorcán repeated the words prompted Connor to laugh softly. He seemed completely puzzled by it, as if he couldn't understand *why* Connor was doing such a thing. It made Connor wonder if anyone had ever done something for the other man simply because they wanted to, and not because they wanted something for it.

“Yes. I'm working on your garden. I am a professional landscaper after all. I even have one of those custom-painted trucks.”

He gestured to where his pick-up truck, painted a deep blue with his company name and phone number on the side of it, sat out of the way further down the man's long drive.

Lorcán remained silent, and Connor wasn't quite sure what to make of that silence. He didn't seem upset by his taking over of the garden, but he didn't seem exactly thrilled by it either. Connor wondered if maybe he'd overstepped his bounds. Sitting back on his heels, hands covered in dirt, he met Lorcán's gaze.

“I can stop if you'd like. I'm sorry. I just thought that a garden would suit it and I didn't stop to think about how you would feel about me just barging in like this.”

He might not have been the kind of person to speak without thinking, but he was definitely someone who often did things without thinking them through. At the time that he'd had the idea to give Lorcán a garden, Connor hadn't even stopped to consider that he might not like it.

Unable to look away from Lorcán, though the man remained silent, Connor searched sharp features and sleepy eyes for any indication of what he was thinking. The other man was at times both easy and impossible to read. Some thoughts seemed to be printed right on his face, but others, like now, were locked away tight.

"It's fine," Lorcán said after a long moment of silence.

"It doesn't really sound like you think it's fine," Connor said. "If it were truly fine, I doubt you would have taken so long to say so."

"I said it's fine, so it's fine. Do whatever you like. It's plants. I'm not going to argue."

Refraining from pointing out that Lorcán was already arguing, Connor let the matter drop. He wasn't looking to push Lorcán into telling him to stop and go away, but nor did he want to feel like Lorcán was merely letting him do as he wished because he didn't want to start anything by saying no.

"All right then... any requests?" he asked, giving Lorcán what he hoped was a charming smile. He certainly hadn't gained any ground with his attempted favour, so he could only hope that he'd be able to sweet-talk Lorcán into a second date. Or even a first, since he wasn't quite sure that a dance or two and a walk home actually qualified as a date.

Lorcán merely shrugged in response, and it took a great deal of effort for Connor not to sigh. He didn't want to push, but at the same time, neither did he want to spend hours putting together a garden only for Lorcán to decide that he didn't like any of the flowers or bushes he'd picked.

"As long as you're not allergic to anything," he said, trailing off and allowing Lorcán to jump in.

"I'm not. Anything's fine. You probably know better than me what looks good together anyway," Lorcán replied. It was strangely close to a compliment, and it made Connor smile.

Without waiting for a response, Lorcán turned and went back inside. Connor watched him go until the door shut softly and blocked his view. Staring

at the freshly dug earth in front of him, he sighed. He had a feeling it was going to be a long while before Lorcán warmed up to him. It was a good thing he was patient.

“I’m all done.”

It had taken him a week to finish the garden completely, and in that time he’d only seen Lorcán a maximum of once a day. Occasionally he’d seen the front curtain twitch as if the man was checking to see if he was still there, but he’d only ever come out once to check the mail before retreating back inside.

Now Lorcán looked past him to the freshly planted flowers and bushes that edged the small cottage as well as the long and narrow drive that led to the main road.

Connor always felt nervous when a client was giving the finished landscape a once-over, but this time it was different. This time he was sure that if Lorcán didn’t like it, he’d have absolutely no chance with him at all.

“It’s beautiful.”

Lorcán’s softly spoken words were unexpected. He hadn’t said a thing to him on his daily trips to the post box at the end of the drive, nor had he even seemed to notice the slowly burgeoning garden around his cottage.

“You really like it? Because you don’t have to lie to make me feel better. It’s never too late for me to change things if you want.”

Lorcán shook his head. Red hair shivered faintly with the motion, and Connor had to resist the urge he had to reach out and run his fingers through the silky-looking strands.

“No, I mean it. I was worried... but it really does look beautiful.”

Connor was surprised. Not just by the compliment itself, but by how it made him feel. It wasn’t like customers had never told him he’d done a good job before, but somehow this felt a little bit different.

“Thank you. I’m glad you like it.”

Lorcán said nothing in response, and Connor looked over at him. For once the other man was looking directly at him, his expression one of confusion.

“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t know what you want from me,” Lorcán said. His green eyes reflected his bewildered tone.

“Dinner would be nice,” Connor replied, not looking away. He wasn’t going to lie about the fact that he’d done this to get Lorcán’s attention. “Will you?”

“Will I what?”

Connor laughed. “Will you have dinner with me? It doesn’t have to be in public if you’re embarrassed to be seen with me...”

“I’m not. I mean... I wouldn’t be.”

The blush that tinted Lorcán’s cheeks had Connor grinning widely. It was cute to see the other man looking something other than completely calm and collected for once.

“Then will you?” Connor repeated softly.

Lorcán nodded, and Connor just barely managed to contain himself. It would hardly be attractive if he started bouncing all over the place like a hormone-crazed teenager.

“I’ll pick you up later then, around six, if that’s all right?”

“Six is fine.”

That calm and cool demeanor was back again, but now Connor knew what lay beneath it and it was impossible to dampen his excitement. It was enough to know that he was slowly making progress in breaching Lorcán’s defenses.

He could only hope that dinner went well, and that it helped him move forward and not back in his relationship with the prickly redhead.

“Can I kiss you?”

The words came out without conscious thought and Connor could have kicked himself as soon as he said them. Though their dinner had gone well, in his eyes at least, that didn’t mean that Lorcán was ready to take things further. It didn’t even mean that the other man liked him, just that he was able to be polite in public.

Unable to see green eyes clearly when it was dark out, the man’s porch shrouded in shadows, Connor waited nervously for Lorcán to answer. In the meantime, he couldn’t seem to stop himself from reaching out and lightly touching one soft cheek.

Lorcán leaned into the touch of his hand and Connor’s heartbeat sped up. Even though he wanted more, in that moment it was enough for him that Lorcán trusted him and allowed that small touch.

“Just a kiss?”

Connor's eyes widened slightly at Lorcán's soft words. He hadn't expected to be allowed even that much, so the idea that Lorcán might want more was truly surprising. Running his thumb gently across the other man's soft bottom lip, he leaned in slowly.

“A kiss would be a good start,” he said before pressing his lips to Lorcán's. Feeling them soften and part beneath his own was encouragement enough to continue the kiss, his hands coming up to frame Lorcán's face.

Kissing Lorcán was everything he'd thought it would be, and with every second that passed, Connor wanted more. It was that urge that made him pull back, breathing heavily to catch his breath as he rested his forehead against Lorcán's.

“Why... why did you stop?”

It was gratifying to hear that Lorcán was having as much trouble catching his breath as he was, and it made Connor smile. Sliding one hand down from Lorcán's cheek to settle at the back of his neck, he pulled back in order to see what he could of the other man's face.

“Because I don't even know if you like me, Lorcán.”

It hurt a little to say, but if there was any time that Connor needed to be honest it was now. Despite his obvious interest in the other man, Lorcán had been painfully reluctant throughout their whole courtship—if Connor could even call it that. Now more than ever he needed to know where things really stood between them.

The silence seemed to stretch awkwardly between them after his words and Connor wondered if maybe he'd said the wrong thing. He couldn't seem to regret it though, not when it needed to be said.

“Will you come inside?”

Lorcán's voice was soft as he pulled away from his touch, and Connor felt a squeeze in his chest. Just from the hesitancy in his words, Connor wasn't sure whether this was a step forward or a step back.

“Of course. If that's what you want.”

He wasn't going to say no, not if it meant finding out for sure what all of this was to Lorcán and whether he stood any sort of chance with him.

Following Lorcán into the small cottage, Connor allowed himself to look around as he followed the other man's lead and took off his boots just inside the door. Leaving them on the small mat next to Lorcán's, he shut the door behind him and let Lorcán lead the way through the small, cozy kitchen and into the living room.

The inside of the cottage was as beautiful as the outside, and Connor wasn't entirely surprised by how tidy it was. Lorcán didn't seem the type to let anything be outside of his control.

"Thank you for dinner tonight. I had a nice time," Lorcán said, turning to face Connor as he moved to sit on the edge of a chair.

"A nice time?" Connor repeated, wondering if maybe he'd misinterpreted the other man's level of interest. "That doesn't really sound like something you'd want to do again..."

Lorcán laughed.

"I'm sorry. I really did enjoy myself."

Easing himself down on the couch opposite Lorcán, Connor felt relieved by his words. He also realized that this was the first time he'd heard Lorcán laugh.

"Sometimes it's hard to tell with you. You don't say too much, and you're not exactly the emotive type either, *a ghrá*. I don't always know where I stand with you."

"I'm not used to this."

"Used to what, Lorcán?" Connor asked, not having missed the way the other man's expression had changed with his use of the Irish endearment. It was small, but enough to have Connor getting up off the couch and crouching in front of the chair where Lorcán sat. "I can't understand if you won't tell me what's going on."

Meeting his gaze, Lorcán's eyes looked faintly sad. It hurt Connor to see him look like that, especially if it was because of something he'd done.

"I'm not used to being treated like I'm normal."

The words were softly spoken, but as close as Connor was, he couldn't possibly have misheard them. It wasn't an outright confession of what he'd thought Lorcán was, but it was definitely close. Taking one of Lorcán's hands in his, Connor kissed the back of it.

"You seem pretty normal to me."

Lorcán's fingers twitched at the press of lips to his skin, and his breathing quickened noticeably.

"But I'm not."

"How are you not?" Connor asked, trying to gently lead Lorcán into telling him the truth. He could tell that it was something that was weighing on Lorcán's mind, or he wouldn't have tried to push the other man.

"...I'm a Were," Lorcán said, voice nearly inaudible. "A fox."

"I kind of figured that, *a ghrá*. It was one of the things that drew me to you in the first place, I'll admit," Connor replied, giving Lorcán's hand a soft squeeze and smiling reassuringly when the other man met his eyes in surprise. "But it's not why I asked you to dinner."

Lorcán flushed once more, and Connor couldn't stop himself. He pushed up off of his knees just enough to be able to reach Lorcán's mouth, and kissed him softly before speaking against his lips. "It doesn't matter to me what you are, or aren't. I want *you*."

With one hand on Lorcán's thigh, it was impossible for Connor to ignore the slight tremble that shivered through the other man's body. He just didn't know if it was because of his words or his touch. If Lorcán really could feel his emotions, Connor hoped that he could also feel his sincerity.

"Tell me what you want from me, Lorcán. I can't read your mind."

"I..." Lorcán hesitated. "I want you too. I just don't know why."

Relieved to know that this attraction wasn't just on his side, Connor got to his feet and used his grip on Lorcán's hand to heft the other man up and pull him close.

"Does it matter why?" he asked, one hand on the soft skin of Lorcán's neck and the other on the curve of his waist. "I'm not asking for forever if that's not what you're looking for, Lorcán. I'm just looking for a chance. A chance at something. Even if that means it's just a chance for you to enjoy yourself and be happy for once."

Watching Lorcán as he shut his eyes and reached out to touch his chest, Connor felt his pulse speed up. He was being completely honest and he could only hope that Lorcán would be able to feel that.

When Lorcán's body softened in his embrace and his arms wrapped around him, Connor felt elated. It seemed only right for him to kiss Lorcán again, though it wasn't as soft or gentle as the first.

Hungry for a touch that he'd been denying himself all night, Connor kissed Lorcán eagerly. He was rewarded by Lorcán pushing up onto his toes and into the kiss, closing any remaining space between their bodies.

Feeling Lorcán hard against him, Connor slipped his hands up under the hem of his shirt. A soft gasp against his mouth at the touch of his work-callused hands against Lorcán's soft and warm skin had his cock swelling inside the tightness of his jeans.

"A *ghrá*, you need to tell me how far this is going," he said, hands stilling on Lorcán's skin. It was difficult to hold back when Lorcán was looking up at him with lust-filled green eyes, lips parted and slightly swollen from the force of their kisses. Seeing Lorcán like that was enough to make him want to push the other man down to the floor and fuck him right then and there.

"Going?"

Amused by the breathless word and dazed tone, Connor smiled and slipped his hands down under the waistband of Lorcán's trousers. Pulling him back against his body and nuzzling his cheek, Connor allowed Lorcán to feel just how much he wanted him. "I want all of you, Lorcán. I just need to know if that's what you want too, or where the line is."

"All of you. I want all of you, please."

Surprised by Lorcán's response, Connor took a moment to search beautiful green eyes. He was relieved when he saw nothing but need and honesty there.

"In that case, I hope you're not tired," he said, though he wasn't really looking for an answer. He simply leaned in and kissed Lorcán once more as he eased them both down to the floor and onto the bright and colourful rug that covered the cottage's smooth hardwood.

Encouraged by the soft moan that Lorcán let out as he kissed his way down the side of his neck, Connor pulled back only to help Lorcán out of his shirt as well as tug off his own. As much as he wanted to just get them both naked right out of the gate, he couldn't quite push Lorcán's earlier hesitancy from his mind.

Admiring smooth and pale skin with his gaze, Connor smoothed rough palms up the flat expanse of Lorcán's stomach. It was gratifying to see the way Lorcán squirmed under his touch, hips lifting and cock tenting the front of his trousers.

Touching the hardness of Lorcán's erection through soft fabric, Connor smirked when Lorcán moaned and opened hooded eyes.

“You’re teasing. Stop it.”

“Yes I am,” Connor said, idly touching himself through his jeans as he popped the button open on Lorcán’s trousers and tugged the zipper down. It was easy enough to pull them down and toss them to the side, and he knelt between Lorcán’s legs to slide his hands up the man’s hips. Watching the other man writhe beneath his touch and push up eagerly into it, Connor shifted just enough to hover over Lorcán.

Pressing a line of kisses down the side of the other man’s neck and drifting down to his chest, Connor paused.

“Lorcán...”

Green eyes narrowed in obvious irritation, and Connor laughed softly.

“Don’t worry *a ghrá*, I’m not changing my mind. As if I could when you’re looking like this...”

“Then why did you stop?” Lorcán asked, voice throaty and a shade lower than normal.

“Because unless you just want me to suck you off...” Connor trailed off, leaving the rest of the sentence implied. By the flush across Lorcán’s cheeks, the implication was clearly understood.

“...night table. Bottom drawer.”

Reluctantly getting to his feet, Connor followed Lorcán’s directions to the bedroom and went straight to the aforementioned night table. At any other time, he might have been interested in looking around Lorcán’s home, especially after being curious about him for so long. However, the reminder that the other man was mostly naked and waiting for him was enough to keep Connor on task.

Returning to the living room as quickly as he could, Connor pushed off his pants and kicked them away before kneeling back between Lorcán’s legs.

“You look beautiful. I hope you know that,” he said, as he set the small bottle of lube and condom off to the side before curling his fingers under the elastic waistband of Lorcán’s underwear. He was rewarded with a blush that blossomed not only across sharp cheekbones, but spilled down the other man’s chest as well.

Lorcán didn’t respond, and Connor smiled. It was seriously cute how shy he was about certain things.

Connor settled on his belly and tugged Loracán's underwear down just enough to reveal the head of his cock. The pressure of the hard floor against his erection was enough to draw a soft hiss from him, but the sight of Loracán's face as he leaned in and sucked the head of his dick between his lips was enough of a reward.

Keeping his eyes on the other man as he slowly swallowed around the length of his erection, Connor was encouraged by the way Loracán's back arched and his eyes slid shut. Taking his time, Connor pressed in close and pulled back in equal measures. He especially loved the way Loracán whimpered just faintly when he held him in his throat and swallowed.

When his jaw began to ache from the pressure of being stretched wide around Loracán's dick, he pulled back with a soft and damp pop of noise. Connor grinned wickedly when Loracán's eyes opened and he lifted his head to glare at him.

"Don't worry, there's more," he said, pulling Loracán's underwear down and off before reaching for the lube and slicking it over his fingers. Pressing soft kisses up the inside of one pale thigh, he pulled back in surprise when Loracán began to squirm and let out helpless stifled snorts of laughter.

"You're ticklish there of all places?"

"It's not like I can choose where to be ticklish," Loracán replied with a huff.

It was such a cute expression that Connor couldn't resist. Lowering his head, he rubbed the roughness of his close-cropped beard against the inside of Loracán's thigh, prompting him to dissolve into laughter once more.

That laughter turned into a soft gasp, though, when Connor pressed slick fingers against the entrance to Loracán's body and pushed them slowly inside. Taking the other man's cock back into his mouth as he teased and worked him open, Connor considered for a brief moment just letting Loracán come like this.

The only thing that stopped him was the urge to feel Loracán tightening around him as he came, at least for their first time together.

All traces of laughter were gone from Loracán's face when Connor finally rolled on the condom and began to push slowly inside him. Tight heat combined with the look on Loracán's face, was enough to have Connor's breath catch in his throat as he propped himself up above the other man.

Loracán's normally pale skin was flushed with arousal, and his fine red hair clung to sweaty temples as Connor moved lazily inside of him. Pausing to lean

back and rest on his heels, Connor settled his hands on Lorcán's hips and pulled his body close as he resumed moving slowly inside of him.

After waiting to get to this point, there was nothing he wanted more than to take his time. The only problem with that was how hot Lorcán looked beneath him, and the feel of his body against and around his. Both of those things combined were enough to push him to the edge faster than he would have liked.

Stroking the softness of Lorcán's inner thigh with one hand before wrapping it around the hardness of Lorcán's cock, Connor was pleased by the soft moan the other man let out.

"Will you come for me, *a ghrá*?" he asked softly, callused thumb rubbing over the soft and sticky head. "Because I'm not sure I can hold out much longer, and I think that I'd really like it if you came before then."

Hazy green eyes opened just a slit to meet his brown ones. Enticed by the sight of Lorcán licking dry lips, Connor moved his hand slowly at the unsteady nod the other man gave him. Jerking Lorcán off with a tight and rough grip as he moved inside of him, Connor's breath left him in a soft wheeze when the other man came, body clenching tight around his.

Forced to stop moving until Lorcán's body relaxed, Connor brought come-stained fingers to his lips and licked them clean. At the faintly bitter but pleasant taste of the other man's release, he decided that he was definitely going to suck the other man off until he came next time. He wanted to taste it all, and then to keep sucking even when the man was done coming.

Still painfully hard with Lorcán relaxed and melted beneath him in the wake of his orgasm, Connor settled both hands on the backs of Lorcán's thighs. Spreading him open and keeping him pinned as he began moving once more, hard and fast, it didn't take long for him to be pushed to the brink. With nothing holding him back, Connor closed his eyes as he finally came, hips stuttering and pushing against Lorcán's body as he spilled into the tip of the condom.

It was with shaking arms that he kept himself propped up over Lorcán's prone body as he came down from the high of his release. Letting himself gradually relax on top of the other man, he caught soft lips in a lazy and deep kiss.

"You know... if you really liked it, I'll come and do your back garden too," Connor said softly as he pulled carefully out of Lorcán's body and rolled to lie beside him on the rug.

“Is that a euphemism for something?” Lorcán asked, his voice tired but tinted with humour.

Laughing, Connor reached out to play with red hair that had been enticing him for over a week now. “It’s not, but I’m sure it could be if you wanted. I meant if you liked the front garden I planted.”

“You just want me for my unplowed acreage, don’t you?”

“Among other things,” Connor said, splaying one tanned hand on the soft skin of Lorcán’s pale belly and admiring the vivid contrast in their skin tones. “You were pretty damn cute as a fox, too.”

Lorcán pouted at that. Connor had a feeling he objected to being called cute, in any form, but he refused to take it back. The other man was cute. He was just going to have to make him accept that, no matter how much time it took.

The End

Author Bio

J. Colby has been writing for as long as she could hold a pen, pencil, or crayon in her hand. Her mind never stops creating, which often leads to interesting dreams—and sometimes nightmares.

She has two cats that own her more than she owns them, and a full-time job to pay the bills that owns her more than her cats do.

Food, sleep, the smell of old books, and knitting are all things she loves on top of creating new worlds and the people in them. Though sometimes food more than any of the others.

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