

CHLOE WALSH

Redeeming

BOYS OF TOMMEN #4

ALSO BY CHLOE WALSH

Boys of Tommen

Binding 13

Keeping 13

Saving 6

Redeeming 6

Redeeming

6

CHLOE WALSH

Bloom books

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*Redeeming 6 is dedicated to the boys I went to secondary school with, whose shenanigans, friendship, banter, hilarious antics, and blind loyalty inspired the characters of Johnny, Gibsie, Feely, and Hughie. Walshy, Slash, Al, and Madden: the OG Boys of Tommen.
(And, yeah, I married the first one.)*

Author's Note

Redeeming 6 is the fourth installment in the Boys of Tommen series and the second book for Joey Lynch and Aoife Molloy.

Some scenes in this book may be extremely upsetting; therefore reader discretion is advised. Because of its explicit sexual content, graphic violence, mature themes, triggers, and bad language, it is suitable for readers of 16+.

The book is based in the south of Ireland, set during 1999 to 2005, and contains Irish dialogue and slang. A detailed glossary can be found at the beginning of the book.

Parts, stages, and sections are used instead of the standard chapter headings as the method of navigation in this book.

Thank you so much for joining me on this adventure.

Lots of love,
Chloe, xxx

Name Pronunciations

Aoife: E-fa

Aoif: Eeef

Sean: Shawn

Gardaí: Gar-dee

Caoimhe: Kee-va

Tadhg: Tie-g (like *tiger* but without the "r" at the end)

Glossary

the Angelus: Every evening at six in Ireland, there is a minute of silence for prayer on the television.

bluey: porno movie

bonnet: hood of the car

boot: trunk of the car

camogie: the female version of hurling

Child of Prague: a religious statue farmers place out in a field to encourage good weather (an old Irish superstition)

chipper: a restaurant that sells fast food

cooker: oven/stove/hob

corker: beautiful woman

cracking on: hooking up

craic: fun

culchie: a person from the countryside or a county outside of Dublin. Usually used as a friendly insult

daft: silly

daft as a brush: very silly

Dub: a person from Dublin

eejit: fool/idiot

Fair City: popular Irish television soap

fanny: vagina

fortnight: two weeks

frigit: someone who has never been kissed

GAA: Gaelic Athletic Association

Garda: policeman (plural: Gardaí)

Gardaí Síochána: Irish police force

gas: funny

get your hole: have sex

gobshite: fool/idiot

grinds: tutoring

hatchet craic: Great fun

hole: often said instead of ass/bottom

hurling: a hugely popular amateur Irish sport played with wooden hurleys and sliotars (wooden sticks and small, hard balls)

Jackeen: a person from Dublin. A term sometimes used by people from other counties in Ireland to refer to a person from Dublin.

jammy: lucky

jammiest: luckiest

jumper: sweater

junior cert: the compulsory state exam taken in third year, midway through the six-year cycle of secondary school

langer: idiot

langers: group of idiots and/or to be extremely drunk

leaving cert: the compulsory state exam taken in the final year of secondary school

lifted: arrested

messages: groceries

mickey/willy: penis

mope: idiot

on the hop: skipping school

on the lash: going out drinking

on the piss: going out drinking

poitín: Irish version of moonshine/illegal home-brewed alcohol

pound shop: dollar store

primary school: elementary school, junior infants to sixth class

playschool: preschool/nursery

junior infants: equivalent to kindergarten

senior infants: equivalent to second year of kindergarten

first class: equivalent to first grade

second class: equivalent to second grade

third class: equivalent to third grade

fourth class: equivalent to fourth grade

fifth class: equivalent to fifth grade

sixth class: equivalent to sixth grade

Rebel County: nickname for County Cork

ridey: a good-looking person

Rolos: popular brand of chocolate candy

rosary, removal, burial: the three days of a Catholic funeral in Ireland

runners: trainers/sneakers

Sacred Heart: the name of Shannon, Joey, Darren, Claire, Caoimhe, Lizzie, Tadhg, Ollie, Podge, and Alec's mixed primary school

sap: sad/pathetic

Scoil Eoin: the name of Johnny, Gibsie, Feely, Hughie, and Kevin's all-boys primary school

scoring: kissing

secondary school: high school, first year to sixth year

first year: equivalent to seventh grade

second year: equivalent to eighth grade

third year: equivalent to ninth grade

fourth year: Transition Year, equivalent to tenth grade

fifth year: equivalent to eleventh grade

sixth year: equivalent to twelfth grade

shifting: kissing

shifting jacket: lucky piece of clothing, usually a jacket, when trying to pick up a girl

slab of beer: box of 24 bottles of beer

solicitor: lawyer

spanner: idiot

spanner: a wrench

spuds: potatoes

St. Bernadette's: the name of Aoife, Casey, and Katie's all-girls primary school

St. Stephen's Day: Boxing Day/ December 26th

strop: mood-swing/pouting/sulking

swot: nerd/academically gifted

tog off: change into or out of training clothes

wellies: rubber boots worn in the rain

wheelie bin: trash can

yolk: nickname for an illegal drug

PART 1

1

Still Trying

JOEY

"You're fierce quiet, Joey son."

"I'm grand, Tony."

"Are you sure? You're as pale as a ghost and haven't had a whole pile to say for yourself all week."

"It's all good."

"You and Aoife haven't..." He let his words trail off, but kept his worried eyes on me, waiting for an explanation.

"We're grand, Tony." I fed him the lie he wanted to hear before turning my attention back to the racket in my hand. "Everything's grand."

"Thank Jesus for that." Relief flashed in his eyes. "Then you wouldn't happen to have any idea what's after getting into her? She's walking around the house with a face like thunder."

"No clue." *Liar.*

"Really?" He scratched his jaw in confusion. "You're usually the first to know when there's drama."

"Think she had a fight with Casey over the Christmas break."

"Did she now?"

I couldn't explain why the words *We broke up* refused to come out of my mouth. Or worse, why I lied and placed the blame on her best friend instead, but I did it. "Yeah." I nodded, following through on my bullshit. "I think I heard something about that."

"Jaysus, it must have been one hell of a fight," he stated, watching me from the other side of the car we were working on.

"She's been hysterical for days now. Crying herself to sleep most nights."

Fuck. "She has?"

Her father nodded.

My heart sank into my ass. "Jesus."

"You should have a word with her," he added, turning his attention back to the task at hand. "She listens to you. Get her to patch things up with young Casey before she floods the house with tears."

"Yeah, I'll, ah, I'll call her after work," I managed to squeeze out, though it was hard to breathe, let alone talk.

Because this was on me.

Molloy's tears were on me.

This whole damn mess was a result of my inability to resist the pull of my fucked-up DNA.

Feeling like my heart was constricting to the point of explosion, I set the rachet down and moved for the back door. "I'll be back in five."

"Pack those damn cigarettes in for the new year," he called after me, but his tone was jokey enough.

Either way, we both knew that I wasn't going to quit.

Not when I had already given up so much.

Slipping out back, I moved the cigarette balanced on my ear to between my lips and grabbed a lighter from the pocket of my overalls. Sparking up, I inhaled a deep drag and sagged against the wall at my back, feeling a million different emotions rushing through me.

Exhaling a cloud of smoke, I fought an internal battle with myself to *not* throw in the towel and do exactly what I knew I would. In the end, it was only a matter of minutes before I grabbed my phone—the same phone that I'd had to pry from my brother's fingers this morning.

Blowing out a frustrated breath, I unlocked the screen, declined another call from Shane, brought up the name *Molloy* in my contacts, and pressed Call.

She answered on the fourth ring but didn't greet me. I didn't blame her. I didn't deserve to be greeted. If anything, I deserved to be hung up on.

"It's me," I said quietly, taking another drag of my smoke. "Can you talk?"

The hustle and bustle in the background let me know that she was at work. When it grew quieter on the other end, I knew she must have moved to someplace quiet.

"Okay," she finally said down the line. "I can hear you."

"Are you at work?"

"No," she bit out, tone laced with venomous sarcasm. "I'm out on the town with my new boyfriend."

Taking her bitchiness on the chin, I took another drag of my smoke before asking, "And how's he treating you?"

"A hell of a lot better than the last asshole I made the mistake of falling for," came her smart-ass response. "What do you want, Joe?"

"I just..." Shaking my head, I blew out a pained breath before saying, "I wanted to check in on you."

"Why?"

"You know why, Molloy." Shrugging helplessly, I concentrated on a spot of dirt on the path. "I didn't flip a switch and turn my feelings off—"

"Don't," she choked out. "Not when I have three more hours at work to get through."

I bit back a pained growl and steered the conversation in another direction. "Tony said that you've been crying."

"And?"

"And?" I shook my head. "It fucking guts me to hear that. I don't want you to cry, Molloy."

"Well, unfortunately, that's usually what happens to a girl when her boyfriend sacks her off."

"Stop." I flinched, hating both the words and the pain in her voice. "I didn't sack you off."

"You broke up with me, Joey," she replied, tone thick. "You can wrap it up as sweetly as you want, but in the end, that's exactly what you did."

"I still love you."

I heard her sudden intake of breath, but she didn't say anything for a long beat. "Don't."

"I fucking love you, Aoife Molloy," I repeated, focusing on an oil stain on the back wall of the garage. "I always will."

"Then take it back."

"I can't." I shook my head, feeling like my heart was splitting clean down the center. "I'm not good for you."

All I wanted to do was sprint over to the Dinniman and wrap her up in my arms, but I couldn't afford to make another mistake with this girl. Not when I'd already crushed her.

"Are you clean?"

I closed my eyes and nodded weakly. "Yes."

"Since when?"

"I haven't touched anything since that night."

"Because you're turning over a new leaf?"

"Because I'm fucking ashamed of myself," I came right out and told her. "Of what I exposed you to. How I treated you."

There was a long stretch of silence, where I swear I could hear the sound of my own heart thundering in my ears, before she spoke again. "So, two weeks without anything, huh?"

I nodded again. "Yes."

"Yeah, I'll be back in five," I heard her say. "I'm owed a cigarette break... Yes, Julie, I know I don't smoke, but I cover for you at least seven times a day when you take yours, so I'm having one." The line was muffled for a few moments before she returned. "Okay, I'm back. Julie's just being a greedy bitch."

"Picking fights with coworkers, Molloy?"

"No more than usual." There was a bite to her tone that she didn't try to conceal. "And Shane Holland? How many weeks have you been *clean* of him?"

"The same."

"How can I believe you?"

"I don't know." I exhaled a heavy sigh. "All I have is my word."

"I want to believe you, Joe," she whispered down the line. "So badly."

But you can't. "I get it," I replied, roughly clearing my throat. "We both know that I haven't been the kind of fella you could put your faith in."

"You didn't call." The accusation was there in her voice. "Not once."

"I couldn't." Grimacing in what felt like physical pain, I forced myself to give her my truth. "I only got my phone back this morning."

"From who?"

"From Tadhg."

There was a pause. "Why did Tadhg have your phone?"

"Because I needed to *not* have it."

"Because?"

I grimaced. "You know why."

"Joe." She breathed heavily into the phone, and I didn't have to be there to know there was a tremor running through her body. I knew because the same tremor was running through mine. "You're really clean?"

"Yeah, Molloy." *For you.* "I really am."

"Then what are we doing here? Why am I here and you're *not*?"

"I need more time."

"To do what?" she snapped. "To fuck around?"

"To get myself straightened out," I corrected gruffly, narrowing my eyes. "Don't even fucking go there when you *know* that I'm not looking at anyone else."

"Well, if you're clean, then why can't we just..." Stopping short, she blew out a shaky breath and said, "You know what? Forget it. I won't beg you again. If you're not calling to get back together, then hang up the phone."

"Molloy."

"I mean it, Joe. Don't call me again. Not unless you've changed your tune."

The line went dead, and I let my head fall back against the concrete wall.

"Fuck."

Breathing hard and fast, I resisted redialing her number and giving her exactly what she wanted. The only way I was able to stop myself from doing just that was the knowledge that while she might want me, she certainly didn't need me.

Not now.

Not yet.

Not at all if I couldn't get a handle on myself.