

STEELE BEGUILED

Expanded Version of the Submission for the RSFic List Challenge #7, the Role Reversal Challenge

by Peg Daniels

Thanks to my betas: Gary G., Jacqui McKechnie, and Debra Talley. Thanks also to Xenon for answers to questions on British idioms and terminology.

Special thanks to Debra, who not only strongly urged me to expand my original piece for the challenge, but also provided comments that enabled me to put a much finer polish on this story than it would have otherwise had.

In my browser, at least, footnotes in the HTML version show up as boxes.

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“Dr. Tulliver, you still haven’t told me what’s wrong with her.” Steele stood outside the heavy wooden door leading to a consultation room in the Irish hospital, trying to conceal his anxiety.

“Well, see for yourself. ” Dr. Tulliver ushered him into the room, which resembled the library of some posh club.

Across from them Laura stood staring out the window, not even turning around at their entrance.

Steele and the doctor moved toward her, stopping about halfway across the room.

“We have a visitor for you,” the doctor announced.

Laura seemed to be more interested in looking out the window, perhaps listening to the birdsong. She sighed and finally turned around, gazing at Steele rather unconcernedly. “Hmm? Oh, hello.” She gave him a whimsical smile.

‘Oh, hello’? She tails me to Ireland and all she has to say is ‘Oh, hello’? “Miss Holt!”

Her smile became one of curiosity. “I’m sorry. Do I know you?”

Stunned, Steele looked at the doctor, who told Laura, “This is Mr. Remington Steele.”

Her smile disappeared. “No, he’s not.”

“What’s going on here?!” *Icy calm, mate, icy calm.*

“Amnesia,” said the doctor.

“Amnesia?” Oh dear God, what movie am I in? ‘Anastasia,’ with Ingrid Berman? ‘As You Desire Me,’ with Greta Garbo? ‘I Love You Again,’ with William Powell and Myrna Loy – no, no, that’s where Powell recovers from amnesia only to discover he’s really a conman –

“You don’t know this man?”

Laura answered the doctor firmly. “No. But I know he’s no ‘Remington Steele.’ ”

Steele laughed nervously. “Obviously, doctor, the damage to her memory is quite extensive. We’ve worked together for nearly three years – ”

Tulliver’s pager went off. “Oh, excuse me. You two carry on talking.” Before leaving the room, he turned to Steele, adding, “Anything she can remember may help.”

Steele looked at her narrowed eyes, her furrowed brow, her twitching left eyebrow. He turned toward the doctor to say something, anything, only to see the door to the escape route firmly close behind the departing figure. He turned back to Laura, putting on his most charming, most suave, exterior –

“Who are you?” she demanded angrily. “ ‘Remington Steele’ doesn’t exist.”

His smile faltered. For once in his life, he was at a loss. “You really don’t remember me?”

She continued to glare at him.

A strangled “oh” escaped him. He bit his lip. He hadn’t meant to sound so . . . pathetic. But it had touched something in her – her look changed back from hostile suspicion to curiosity.

“Who are you?” she asked again, in a whisper. “Where did you come from?”

A memory? He couldn’t help replying, as he’d done so long ago, “Humphrey Bogart to Ingrid Bergman, ‘Casablanca,’ Warner Brothers, 1942.”

Something flickered in her face, but she said nothing.

He searched for something to jog her memory. “You remember you’re a private investigator?”

“Yes – ”

“Who do you work for?”

“I want to know who *you* are.” Her voice was sharp.

He held up a hand. “I’m getting to that. What agency do you work for?”

“Havenhurst Detective Agency. ”

“Ah. You left there and formed Laura Holt Investigations. Your agency faltered, and you opened the Remington Steele Detective Agency based on a fictitious boss. I’m your fictitious boss, actually. You seem to be familiar with the name, so I assume it was a long-standing idea.”

Laura stared at him, clearly at a loss for words. Finally, she asked, “I really did that? That was just a flight of . . . frivolity. But I don’t remember thinking about having someone play ‘Remington Steele’s ’ role – are you a detective?”

He thought it best not to go into details. “Yes.”

“Good,” she said firmly. “Because in the back of my mind there’s a crime. A major crime that has to be stopped. And danger.”

In the silence that followed, he became aware her demeanor was changing again. There was a certain look about her, one he couldn’t quite place –

She came toward him, her eyes roaming freely up and down his body.

Oh, my. “What is it?” he asked her.

“Something. Something about you. Something about the way I feel about you. You say we’ve worked together for nearly – what – three years?”

"Yes."

She looked him up and down again. "Closely?"

"Yes." *It's awfully warm in this room –*

"How closely?"

He swallowed. "Very closely."

She stood inches away. “A very, . . . very close acquaintance?”

He was bewildered. That seductive tone didn’t belong to the Laura Holt he knew.

“I’d like to jog my memory. . . .” She put her hands on his shoulders, started kissing him.

He closed his eyes. They promptly shot back open in surprise. She hadn’t kissed him like that since that night in the wine cellar. He racked his brain, trying to think of any of the thirty-one movies he knew dealing with amnesia that could account for her atypical amorous behaviour. As waves of pure pleasure coursed through him, however, his brain was forgotten. He took her in his arms, closed his eyes again, and returned the kiss, measure for measure.

Sometime later, they surfaced for air.

“Yes. Yes,” came her lilting voice.

“You remember?” What was he saying? *He* had no memory of anything like *that*. He moaned as she pulled his head down again and took him somewhere he’d always wanted to go.

Sometime later, they resurfaced.

"It's coming now. Yes."

"*Now* you remember?" He could barely gasp the words out.

"How could I forget such a precious moment?"

He smiled uncertainly. Lucky bloke, whoever she’d had that moment with. “Ah, Miss Holt. You and I, we’ve never –”

"Yes. I remember it vividly. I was . . . lying on the floor. You . . . were nearby. Yes, that's it. You were nearby. . . ." She frowned. "Dead. Shot. Except it wasn't you. . . ." She looked at him with both conviction and frustration. "A crime that must be stopped. Danger. Deadly danger."

Steele loosened his hold on her and stared at her in confusion. "I think I should get Mildred."

As he stepped out to do just that, he passed by an orderly bringing medication to Laura. Suddenly realizing the man had dirty fingernails – hardly appropriate in a hospital setting – he burst back into the room, knocking into Laura just as she was about to swallow the concoction, sending her into one of the high-backed velvet chairs as the glass went flying. The orderly shoved him into Laura just as she was rising, and the two of them ended up in a tangle on the chair.

"Are you trying to make a point, Mr. Steele, or are you naturally clumsy?"

Steele heard something sizzling and turned to see the 'medicine' smoking away, burning a hole in the rug. "We've got to get you out of here! Come on!"

Laura was splayed out, and, as he extricated himself to help her up, he noticed something stuck to the bottom of her shoe.

"Wait. Don't move," he instructed as he peeled off a ticket stub. "Ah, a clue. You've been to the Bijou."

He grabbed her hand, collected Mildred, and started hustling them both out to the car.

"Where are we going?"

Steele urged Laura on down the steps of the hospital. "I'm dropping Mildred off at the bed-and-breakfast where I've been staying and taking you to the Bijou."

"You're taking me to a movie?" Laura was indignant.

Steele repressed a smile as they all piled into the car. "No. But since you've been there, let's see if it jogs any memories, eh? "

He accelerated quickly and drove a bit recklessly, partly to shake any tail, partly to forestall any further questions from Laura. He had plenty of his own to ponder. How had Laura learned about the Bijou? Why hadn't O'Rourke met with him there as arranged, and why was the man now nowhere to be found? Why did Laura have amnesia? Who was that phony orderly, and why had he tried to kill Laura?

He hoped they'd find some answers at the theatre.

"Yes." Laura looked around the old fleapit. "Yes, yes, yes. This looks familiar." As she pulled a 'Casablanca' poster away from a curtained alcove, the body of a man fell out.

Steele winced at the sight of the man's bloodstained shirt. "The dead man you were referring to at the hospital?"

"Yes, that's him."

They bent over the man, but further investigation was interrupted by the entrance of two gardaí, members of Ireland's National Police Service.

"If you'd be kind enough to turn around, ever so slowly. The Inspector was right."

"He said you'd come back to dispose of the body," the second policeman added.

Steele started to object. "Oh, but . . . surely you don't think that we . . ."

Further protestations by him and Laura were lost on the gardaí, who handcuffed them together and trundled them into the back of the awaiting patrol car.

Once again, Laura surprised him by putting the moves on him, though more subtly on account of the gardaí. Between that pleasant distraction and the rather unpleasant one of being arrested for murder (maybe he and Laura were in that Joseph Cotten movie 'Love Letters'¹), Steele wasn't paying attention to where they were going.

Finally realizing the trip was taking an awfully long time, he sat forward to address the gardaí. "Ah, which station house are you taking us to?"

"O'Connell Street."

"Ah." Sitting back, he looked out all the windows, then pitched his voice so only Laura would hear. "O'Connell Street's in the heart of Dublin." He gave an ironic smile. "They're not the police."

A railroad stop came into view, the crossing guard closing the gates as a train whistled nearby. The patrol car was forced to stop, and one of the fake gardaí got out to argue with the guard about reopening the gates. Under the cover of the train noise, Steele and Laura sprang forward and looped the chain of the handcuffs around the other garda's neck, choking him until he passed out.

¹Joseph Cotten becomes involved with an amnesiac accused of murder

They took flight, dashing down a back road, plunging through a creek, and hightailing it through some woods into a field, with bullets whizzing about them and Laura nearly taking Steele's arm off by insisting on trying to lead.

I must have died.

I must have died and been sent to hell.

I must have died, been sent to hell, and now I must pay for every sinful thought, word, and deed of my life.

It's the only explanation for what I'm about to do.

Steele groaned, pushed the warm, soft, willing body off him, and struggled to sit up, only to have her push him back down, climb back on top of him, and stifle his moan by sealing her mouth over his.

Please, God. I'm not this good a person. Forgive me my trespasses.

He felt her hands, trapped between their bodies, pushing his jacket open.

Strains of music filled the air.

With her hands on his chest, she pushed herself up a little and looked at him with teasing eyes, her soft brown hair tickling his face. "When I hold you close, I hear music."

As I forgive those who trespass against me. He sighed and again rolled her off of his body onto the hay and again forced himself to sit up. This time, even though the faint sound escaping her lips held a note of mild exasperation, or maybe it was disappointment, she complied, sitting herself up, as well. *Thank you, God. There's only so much a man can take.*

"So do I." He looked into her eyes, willing her to understand he meant it for all those times he'd ever held her, for all those times of which she was no longer aware . . . willing her to understand he just couldn't do this.

The corners of her mouth lifted in a faint smile; she gave a little shrug.

Message received but not comprehended. Dropping his eyes, he sighed heavily, reached into his jacket, and took out the pocket watch, playing its tune, oblivious to his troubles.

Laura took the watch from him, examined the inscription, and began to softly sing the words of

the song. When she got to the end of the chorus, 'And when Irish eyes are smiling/Sure, they steal your heart away,' looking at him with her own playful eyes, he couldn't take any more. He reached out, put his hand over hers, closed the watch, then took it from her hand and put it back in his pocket.

" 'To S.J. from K.L.' Who's 'S.J.'? "

Steele shrugged and tried to sound flip, but there was an ache in his heart. "I don't know. Someone who knows 'K.L.,' I suppose." Why did everything have to be so damned difficult? Why couldn't O'Rourke have simply told him who his father was, instead of sending this watch with a cryptic note?

For that matter, why were they now hiding in a hayloft with fake gardaí after them? And what, exactly, had happened to Laura? He glanced at her, bits of hay in her hair and stuck to her clothing, studying his face intently. He blew out a breath. It was her own fault she was in this fix. Why did she have to follow him over here? Why did she always have to be so suspicious of him? OK, he admitted it. It was just a couple of weeks ago he'd snuck off to London with Daniel. But he'd been trying to get himself out of the jam his old mentor had put him in, nothing more. Why did he always have to prove himself to her? Why did she always automatically assume he was up to no good?

When would she remember he had to prove himself to her and he might be up to no good?

He started to reach for her hand but stopped. She'd misinterpret, again attempt to renew the 'very, very, close acquaintance' he'd denied with his words if not quite with his deeds. And this time he'd be undone.

Then what would she think of him if – no! – when – she regained her memory? That he'd taken advantage of her. *This* Laura, this Acapulco Laura, was not a woman he was privy to.

Besides, he wanted *his* Laura, not just her body. He wanted the Laura who challenged him with her impossible standards. The Laura who fought with him, fought for him, enchanted him, maddened him –

Oh God, she'd remember him, wouldn't she?

He'd spent most of his life being forgettable, unidentifiable.

Now the one person he wanted to know him had forgotten him.

The one time he came to find his true identity, it eluded him.

"Oh!" Laura jumped.

"Have you thought of something?" He searched her face, hoping.

"No. Someone just kissed my leg."

He looked over the edge of the hayloft to see a horse with a star-shaped blaze on its forehead, nuzzling Laura's leg as she laughed. "Well, he has taste, I'll give him that." His own laugh was strained.

Suddenly, she stilled beside him. "Horses. It has something to do with horses." Her voice was low, and she stared off into the distance.

He held his breath.

She raised a shaking hand.

He couldn't stand it. "Go on, go on." *Please, let her start remembering.*

Her hand waved in agitation. "I'm trying, I'm trying, I'm trying –" Suddenly she broke off and her next words were soft. "Kerry . . . Kerry . . . Kerry." She looked at him, her eyes shining, her voice rising with excitement at each successive word: "That's it! Kerryclare! I saw you in Kerryclare!"

She's remembering me! He kissed her impulsively, then backed away quickly. "Sorry."

Keeping the hand that was shackled to hers firmly on the loft, he swung down to the floor, knowing she must follow.

And not lead me back into temptation.

Deliver me from evil, amen.

They jounced along in Flanagan's sorry excuse for a car, feeling each bump and pit in the lane. The noises the old wreck emitted made conversation difficult, so Steele instead tried to sort out his feelings.

The hayloft. He sighed and took a quick glance at Laura, who was staring out at the Irish countryside. If anyone had told him there'd come a time when he'd reject Laura's advances, he'd have said they were crazy. But Laura was back in the time in her life when she was, as her old boyfriend had put it to him, impulsive, uninhibited, absurdly passionate, hard to keep in check. A time when the concept of 'Remington Steele' was just a wild fantasy, a gleam in her eye. He'd never felt so all alone as when he'd been kissing her in the loft, not exactly the feeling he'd expected –

“Nice of Flanagan to lend us his car, wasn’t it?”

Laura’s voice, pitched loud enough to be heard over the din, brought him back to the present.

“Hmm? Indeed.”

“I’ve been so caught up in events, I’ve never thought to ask. Why are we here in Ireland in the first place, Mr. Steele?”

He shifted in his seat. Did amnesia work in reverse? If he told her, would she forget what he said when her old memories returned? Somehow he didn’t think he’d be that lucky. How ironic that he’d come here to find *himself*, and, as a result, Laura had lost *herself*. Or was this truly who she was, and Laura Holt of Remington Steele Investigations was as much an invention as Remington Steele?

“Mr. Steele?”

He answered her reluctantly. “There was a note with that watch. ‘Your father wanted you to have this,’ signed ‘Patrick O’Rourke.’ ” He didn’t really want to get into this –

“I don’t understand.”

He sighed, struggling with himself. Finally, he took a deep breath and made a confession he’d never thought he would, it somehow being easier without her remembering the baggage they carried between them. “I don’t know who my father is. I’ve never even seen my birth certificate. . . I don’t even know my real name.” He didn’t look at her. He didn’t want to see pity in her eyes, or worse. He felt her hand touch his leg, but he still couldn’t look at her.

“So we came here to Kerryclare – to Flanagan’s – to find O’Rourke. ”

He felt his shoulders relax as the topic angled off from that rather painful one. “I came to Ireland to find O’Rourke. You obviously followed me over.” Might as well tell her – she’d remember it eventually.

“Why would I do that?”

“Because you don’t trust me.” He glanced at her, taking in her surprise at his answer.

“And should I?”

He gave her a smile, half-sad, half-mischievous. “Not always.”

They hit a big pothole in the road, and he returned his attention to his driving. “Anyway, let’s put

things together from what you just remembered at Flanagan's. You must have snuck into the wake that was going on at the time I first went there – there were so many people you could have easily blended in. You must have overheard Flanagan tell me to see O'Rourke at the Bijou. And now I can guess why all my tyres were flat when I left the wake. You slashed them and beat me to the Bijou, so you could see what I was up to."

"I remember now. I got there and heard a shot. I went into a room and saw that body. Then something hit me on the head, and everything went blank. . . . Except – " she picked up the copy of the Irish Racing News lying between them on the seat, the newspaper that had caught her eye at Flanagan's, and waved it at him – "*that's* where I overheard people talking about Xanadu."

He grinned at her. *She's remembering more and more!*

"Well, by the time *I* got to the Bijou, no one was there. Of course, I was just looking to meet O'Rourke. I didn't search the place."

Laura studied the picture on the newspaper. "I'm sure that horse at the hayloft was Xanadu."

"Let's just hope he's still there."

"How did you find out I was at the hospital?"

"Mildred. I had checked into that bed-and-breakfast, and she tracked me down there, frantic that she hadn't heard any word from you. I figured the intrepid Miss Holt was on my trail. But since I couldn't imagine why you hadn't made contact, I worried something had happened to you and started calling all the hospitals in the area." He glanced at her. "Fortunately, Dr. Tulliver was one of the first people I spoke with, and when I described you, he said that matched the description of the young lady who'd been brought in. You were still unconscious at the time, though. He must not have known of the amnesia until shortly before my arrival at the hospital."

"There's the hayloft." Laura pointed down the road.

Steele nodded. "Yes, the hayloft. Xanadu." He shot her a glance and briefly returned her knowing smile. He'd passed up on his chance there to seize what he might have at one time thought to be a beautiful, idyllic, Xanadu moment, far removed from real-life cares.

Steele and Laura didn't find Xanadu at the hayloft, so went off to the races at Curragh where the horse, the world's most valued stallion, was scheduled to run that day. Checking the board giving the post positions, they saw the horse had been scratched, which, under the circumstances, seemed suspicious.

As they exited to the parking lot, Laura pressed forward, reading off the lettering on a fancy horsebox² that had just started its engine: “The Armdale Racing Association.” She gave him an excited grin. “T. A. R. A. Tara. ‘Gone with the Wind.’ For some strange reason I remember that. They’re involved in the crime.”

Steele had never felt so proud – she’d subconsciously associated a clue with a movie! They shot forward, but it was hopeless. Steele smacked his hands together in frustration as the horsebox pulled away – Flanagan’s car would never catch up to it. All was lost. . . . Unless . . .

His eye was caught by the Rolls just entering the lot. Shooting a quick look at Laura, who, fortunately, was glancing about the lot and not at him, he rushed up to the car’s passengers – an older gentleman, in top hat and tails, and his equally elegantly attired younger companion, in a black dress slit up to here with a neckline plunged down to there.

“Ah!” Steele clapped his hands, then placed them his back. “Good day t’ya sor, uh, I’ll paark y’caar, there.”

“Oh yes, me lad,” the gentleman replied, handing Steele the car keys and some money. “Oh, and get yerself a drink, ah?”

“Oh, pleasure, sor, pleasure.” As his marks strolled away, Steele called after them, “Have a luvly day, have a luvly day.”

Whistling to Laura, he opened the door for her, not yet daring to look her in the eye.

She started to get in, then put her hands on the car door. “This is *stealing*.” Her voice was filled with a mixture of astonishment, admonishment, and disbelief.

“Yes, well, I said I was going to park his car, and I assure you, that’s what I’m going to do. Later.” He motioned her in and started closing the door, not giving her the chance to think about it any further. Fortunately, some combination of being stunned and of wanting to give chase to the horsebox caused her to object no further, and they took off in pursuit.

They were closing the gap when, at a most inopportune moment, a farmer herded his flock of sheep onto a bridge they needed to cross. Having lost the horsebox because of the delay, they stopped at a magnificent country estate to ask if anyone had seen it. Hearing a whinny, they found Xanadu in the barn.

“Well, we can’t put him in the Rolls,” Steele mused. “He’ll play havoc with the upholstery.” He couldn’t help giving Laura a sly grin as an idea occurred to him.

²Horse trailer, British

Laura returned his look with one of apprehension.

“C’mon, now!” Steele whistled and flicked the reins, urging the beautiful chestnut horse on down the narrow road at top speed while trying to maintain control of the pony trap. "This one can run! I wish I had a quid or two riding on him!"

"You'd lose!" Laura yelled back

"Eh?"

"They're gaining on us!"

He threw a look behind him at the blue and white Land Rover. "Get into the back and throw the oil drums into their path!"

"Right!" Laura replied with determination, getting into the back of the trap.

“C’mon, boy, c’mon!”

Laura’s indignant voice came from behind him. "Oil drums? There aren't any oil drums!"

His thoughts checked in momentary disorientation. Why did real life never follow the script?

"There were in ‘From Russia With Love.’ C’mon, boy, c’mon!"

Unfortunately, that little lapse in concentration caused him to realize too late he was coming upon a large tree branch blocking the road.

“Ohhh, boy!” He reigned Xanadu to the left, going into the field. The trap jolted through a deep hole just before returning to the road, and he heard an ominous thump behind him. He looked back to see Laura dangling out the now-opened rear door, her head barely clearing the ground.

“Oh my God, Laura!”

Trusting the horse to stay on the road, he climbed into the back, grabbed her, and pulled her in, laying her to one side and securing the door again. Snatching up the reins once more, he spied up ahead the same troublesome flock of sheep by the same bridge they’d had to cross earlier. Stopping the horse just past the bridge, he leapt a ditch and shooed the sheep back onto the road to block the path of their pursuers. He returned to stand next to the trap, where Laura now sat upright, her eyes glued to the road.

With a great deal of satisfaction, he watched the Land Rover top the hill, swerve to avoid the sheep, and end up overturned next to the creek. A grandmotherly woman and her male cohort

crawled out from underneath the wrecked vehicle.

Laura sighed. "Mr. Steele, I remember it all now."

Ah. Another good clonk on the head had done the trick. Just like in the movies. He looked up at her, wondering how, if at all, this experience would change her. "How do you feel?" he asked, leaving her to answer it in whatever sense she wanted.

"Embarrassed."

He swung himself back up into the trap, pulled her to him, and kissed the top of her head. "Don't be," he whispered. "And as long as the rest of you comes with it, I wouldn't mind if you let that side of you show a bit more." He purposely gave her a salacious grin. "I could learn to like it." He laughed, his heart filling, as she slapped him playfully on the chest. Still chuckling, he got back into the driver's seat and flicked the reigns.

At the Garda station the grandmotherly woman, Mrs. Armdale, and her associate were being led inside just as Steele and Laura were leaving. Steele was taken aback at the look of hate the woman threw at him.

"If my husband were alive, he'd give you a good thrashing!"

Steele flinched, recalling too many such thrashings in Ireland, then moved on, stepping off the kerb into the street.

"Mr. Steele. I found Patrick O'Rourke for you. Your father's old friend." Flanagan stood on the opposite side of the street.

Steele froze, trying with only limited success to hold back the anticipation, the yearning, the rising expectation that flowed through him at Flanagan's words.

Steele swerved the rental car to the right and parked by Healy's, the little corner grocery. Joining Laura on the other side of the car, he nodded toward the white house with the red door across the street. "Well, that must be the house over there." Music and laughter spilt out onto the street. "Sounds like they're having a party."

"Perhaps they know you're coming."

He gave her a questioning look.

"The return of the prodigal?"

There were definite disadvantages to her having her memory back. But he smiled, straightened his tie, and sucked in a breath. "Well, c'mon."

Laura shook her head. "No." She put a hand on his chest. "This is your moment." She patted his back encouragingly.

He swallowed and adjusted his tie again before crossing the street. He knocked on the door, threw a quick glance back at Laura, and entered the house. From a vestibule filled with coats, he entered a room where a crush of people were clapping and dancing as a fiddler played. Making his way across the room, Steele glanced about uncertainly until his eye fell on a coffin set up on a table. He did a double take. The man in the coffin was the same one he and Laura had seen at the Bijou, the one who'd been shot. His heart sinking, he grabbed the first passing man and pointed to the coffin. "Patrick O'Rourke?"

"Aye. Dear ol' Paddy. He'll be soar-ly missed. Are ya a friend of the family?"

Steele shrugged in dismay. "I wish I knew," he said softly. He forced the semblance of a smile in the man's direction and, not knowing what else to do, moved back toward the door, stopping to pull out the watch and look at it, then back at O'Rourke, before leaving. Well, things were back to normal. His identity was re-lost and Laura's was regained. Why should he expect any different?

Once out the door, he saw Laura looking at him expectantly from across the street and started toward her. He stopped as she joined him, casting his eyes down.

"Well?"

He shook his head. "Huh-uh." He glanced at her. "Dead end." He opened the watch and stared at it, listening to the tune.

"I'm sorry," she said gently.

He nodded. "Mm-hmm." He closed the watch and looked at her. "Home, Miss Holt?"

She took his arm, gazing at him sympathetically. "Home, Mr. Steele."

"Indeed." As they walked back toward the car, he kept his eyes straight ahead but patted the arm entwined in his, reassuring both her and himself.

There were definite advantages to her having her memory back.

THE END

The RSFic List Challenge #7 was to pick an episode, or a scene from an episode, and switch 'what happened to whom.' I took a scene from the episode 'Steele Your Heart Away.' Just like that episode's title, the title for that piece, 'A Steele She'd Beguile,' was inspired by a line in the song 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.' The line goes 'With such power in your smile, sure a stone you'd beguile.' Later, encouraged by the response to that story, and egged on by Debra Talley, I expanded that little story into this one, 'Steele Beguiled,' in which not only is Steele still beguiled (charmed, delighted, distracted) by Laura, but he is also somewhat beguiled (misled) by Patrick O'Rourke, possibly even by Flanagan if the latter knew O'Rourke was a corpse at the end!

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