

Ross O'Carroll-Kelly special #1: 'Sorcha, you have a two-seat orse'

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The health nurse does literally nothing for me – if I had to mork her out of ten, I'd describe her as a five – possibly a six, at the very most.

None of which is relevant to the story, but then you know how I like to give you a bit of background colour.

The point is that she is very happy with us. She's saying some amazingly complimentary things about how we're doing as the parents of six-week-old triplets – 'fair focks' being the *general* vibe?



“But you shouldn’t have come to the hospital,” she goes. “We could have arranged a home visit.”

She's a little bit like Hayley from *Coronation Street*, except a Tipperary version.

“The doctor is very happy with how you’re healing,” she goes – this is obviously after the Caesarean. “Like I said, try to take it easy. Let Ross here do all of the housework!”

We all laugh like she said something hilarious. Actually, she did – me doing housework. We have two women who do that. Dolores and Lualhati.

“You definitely checked everything?” Sorcha goes, because she’s a serious worrier.

The nurse is like, “Yes, I checked everything.”

“You weighed them – I saw you weigh them.”

“Weighed them. Measured them. Everything is normal.”

“You took the circumferences of their heads, did you? Because I know that’s a thing.”

“I did and there’s nothing to worry about. I checked their hearing, their vision, their hearts. I checked their arms and their legs, their hands and their feet, for development and motion.”

I’m straight in there: “Is there any one of them who’s more developed than the other two, in terms of, like, co-ordination, reflexes and blah, blah, blah?”

Six weeks old and I’m already trying to work out which one of the three is going to be my number ten. It actually frightens me how much I love my rugby.

“It’s too early to make those kind of determinations,” this nurse one goes. It wouldn’t be too early if we were in New Zealand – that’s all I’m saying. “But their arms and legs are in perfect working order – like everything else.”

"You definitely checked their vision?" Sorcha goes. "Because sometimes it's as if Johnny can't see me and I keep getting it into my head that he's, like, possibly *blind*?"

The nurse smiles. She has unbelievable patience. She’d want to – she’ll be a long time waiting for a husband. “Their eyes are fine,” she goes. “We checked them with a penlight. Their vision is perfectly normal.”

“And their ears – they’re not deaf, are they?”

“No, we checked those with an otoscope, like the nose. Nothing abnormal to report.”

“Their fontanel?” Sorcha goes. “I’ve been reading a lot about fontanel.”

“They’re fine, too. As is their respiratory function.”

“I’m sorry about all the questions. Oh my God, I’m turning into one of those mothers!”

“Don’t apologize. That’s why I’m here. Now, do you want to ask me anything else?”

And that's when *I* go, "So, like, when will the weight start to come off?"

The words are out of my mouth before I realize that I possibly could have phrased it better.

The nurse is like, “Weight? What weight?”

It’s literally the elephant in the room. Sorcha piled it on during the final trimester.

"Are you talking about *my* weight?" Sorcha goes – not a happy rabbit.

I'm like, "You said it yourself, Sorcha, you were worried would you ever lose it. That magazine you were reading said a lot of birds *don't* after triplets? I'm just saying, this woman wants to hear questions from us and I thought I'd put it out there."

“I can recommend various diets and exercises,” the nurse goes, except Sorcha’s too proud slash embarrassed to listen.

She’s like, “No, I have a lot of books and DVDs.”

Then ten seconds later we’ve said our thanks and our goodbyes and we’re gathering up all of our stuff to leave.

We’re carrying more baggage than a travelling circus. See, one kid is bad enough – you wouldn’t believe what comes with three. We’re talking bags of nappies. We’re talking bags of formula. We’re talking bags of toys. I’m like a Sherpa carrying them all, because unfortunately Sorcha’s still not up to any heavy lifting.

We get back to the minivan, which is parked in Merrion Square. I take Johnny, then Leo, then Brian, out of the pram and strap them into their little car seats, then I fold up the pram and put it into the boot along with all of the other stuff. It takes about fifteen minutes and, while I’m doing all of this, Sorcha’s going, “Why did you ask that question about my weight?”

I'm there, "Babes, you're the one who's been going on about it. You have a two-seater car – they were *your* words?"

"Ross, it's okay for *me* to say that. But it's not okay for *you* to say it."

“Okay, I’m hearing you.”

“Unless it bothers you, of course?”

“Bothers me?”

“Me having all this baby weight on me.”

I’m there, “I don’t care what you look like. To me, you’re perfect the way you are.”

Your facial expression is all-important when you deliver a line like that.

She goes, “I *will* lose it, Ross. It’s just that it’s going to take a bit of time. But I am – Oh! My God! – determined to get my wedding and engagement rings back on before the summer.”

She’s got fingers like Elton John at the moment.

I’m there, “Like I said, Babes, I’ll always love you, whatever size you end up.”

We hop into the van and off we head. Ten minutes later, we’re

passing the Tara Towers on the Rock Road and Sorcha goes, “By the way, don’t forget we’ve got this appointment coming up – to see Siofra.”

I’m like, “Okay, who’s Siofra?”

She goes, “Siofra Flynn. This child psychiatrist we’re bringing Honor to see.”

I’m there, “Is that still happening?”

She’s like, “Of course it’s still happening.”

Which is a serious bummer, because I kind of promised Honor that she wouldn’t have to go.

I’m there, “I’m still Scooby Dubious about whether it’s necessary.”

She goes, “She put a hundred and twenty rats into the ventilation system of her school, Ross.”

I’m like, “I’m sticking by my original assessment, which is that we’ve been a brilliant mother and father to the girl. I mean, anything she wants, she instantly gets. We really have been amaz- ing, amazing parents to her.”

We’re on the Blackrock Bypass when I suddenly slam on the brakes just as Sorcha at the same time screams.

She’s like, “Hooonnnooooorrr!”

It turns out we left the girl back at the hospital!

I do a quick U-ey. And I don't even wait until we're at the traffic lights. I do a U-ey over the median between the two sides of the bypass, causing one oncoming car to brake and one to swerve to avoid hitting us. I put the foot down and head for town, breaking every red light along the way.

"She's going to hold this against me," Sorchá goes. "She will, Ross. This will become proof in her mind that we don't give a damn about her."

We swing into Merrion Square again. I throw the minivan into a parking space diagonally and I hop out. I don't even bother feeding the meter. I'm like, "Come on, Sorchá, quick!"

Except she goes, "Ross, wait – we can't leave three babies on their own in the van."

"Why, where are they going to go?"

"Ross, we are not leaving three babies unattended in a car!"

Genuinely, who'd be a parent? I'm like, "Okay, you wait here then and *I'll* go?"

Sorchá goes, "No, because then you'll end up being the hero and Honor will end up blaming me. We'll both go."

So I end up having to take Leo, Brian and Johnny out of their little car seats. Holding one in my left arm – picture this, now – and with the other two pressed against my chest with my right arm, I peg it across the road, with Sorchá running after me, going, "Oh my God, I am *such* a bad mother!" over and over and over again.

We reach the waiting room where we left Honor. She looks up from her iPhone and sees us standing there, out of breath from running but with, like, relief written all over our faces.

She gives Sorchá the serious evils – me, less so, I'm happy to say.

"We saw you were busy," Sorchá automatically goes, "so we decided to leave you to it and bring everything down to the van, then come back and get you and, um . . ."

Honor's not buying it. That much is obvious from her expression. She stands up and walks straight past us, going, "Yeah, *rull* good parenting, you two!"

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