

HOPE FADES BUT THE DUCK NEVER DIES

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Characters:

Georgina – mid 30's

Adrian – mid 30's

Setting:

A space that contains both a washing machine and sink. It can represent at various times a laundry or a kitchen but could all take place in the laundry if the sink was actually a laundry sink or trough. There is no intention for an elaborate set and the only prescriptive element of the piece in relation to set is that there should be a representation of a washing machine and a sink/trough.

A HOUSEHOLD LAUNDRY/KITCHEN

THE SPACE IS DIVIDED IN TWO. ON ONE SIDE THERE IS A WASHING MACHINE WITH A SMALL TABLE NEXT TO IT. ON THE TABLE THERE IS A SPORTS BAG. ON THE OTHER SIDE THERE IS A KITCHEN SINK.

*GEORGINA STANDS BY THE WASHING MACHINE SORTING CLOTHES
ADRIAN SITS UNDERNEATH THE SINK TRYING TO UNSCREW A PIPE.*

GEORGINA: When I was 9, I wanted to be a singer. Not a pop singer... I wanted to sing show tunes. I wanted to be in Annie. I remember standing in the backyard with a can of Mr Sheen in my hand belting out "Tomorrow". I had this obsession that I had some kind of misunderstood talent. I watched The Sound of Music over and over again and always wanted to be Liesl. "16 going on 17".

Even at High School I still had this idea that I'd be discovered. I used to go shopping and imagine parting the crowds on the escalator with some elaborate dance routine. I was able to ignore my lack of talent for years...I think I was 20 when I finally realised that Rolf was never going to waltz me around the summer house. I don't think I'm over it even now.

*A MOBILE TELEPHONE BEEP IS HEARD - INDICATING A TEXT MESSAGE.
GEORGINA STOPS FOR A MOMENT AND THEN GOES ON.*

Sometimes I think your mind can become like Teflon. Anything that you don't want to accept just doesn't stick. And if it doesn't stick for long enough, eventually it can't stick. It's like when you get married. When you decide to get married you're saying you can overlook the things in the relationship that don't work so you can have the things that do. But how can you know whether things you overlook when you make the commitment can always be overlooked?

If you were almost certain he could be the love of your life but there were doubts...even from the beginningCould you just forget them and go on?If you don't say things out loud, if you never hear them actually spoken....Are they still true? Isn't there some hope that they're not real?

ADRIAN SLIDES OUT FROM UNDER THE SINK

ADRIAN: I can't unblock a sink. I can't fix anything. I'm bloody useless. I can change a globe but I can't change a washer in a tap. Some days

I pretend to do it but its all bullshit.... Some days I think it might impress her. So I try. She asks me to look at the sink, I look at the sink. Then we'll call a plumber. It's like a ritual. It's a ceremonial thing.

Last month there was a lot of rain and the front door wouldn't lock anymore. She asked me if I wanted to look at it. I had this idea that she wanted to keep me home for the day fixing the door. I liked that idea. That she actually wanted me to be around her. She ended up going to visit her sister.

I looked at the door, unscrewed something and the knob fell out. Then I lost some tiny little screws in a crack in the floorboards. I threw the screw driver at the wall which made a huge hole that will need a plasterer or a painter...or both. I phoned a locksmith. He fixed the doorknob and the deadlock. Game over. Duty done.

GEORGINA:

Hope fades. So do feelings...After time....They just become tired and used like a favourite shirt you wash too many times. On some days... when the light is just right, it looks almost like it used to. It fools you and you can pretend that it's still the shirt it was. But it's not. You just hope that when you wear it in the right light, it fools everyone else as well. You could get rid of it ...but there are no buttons missing... so you may as well hang on to it.

ADRIAN;

When I met her I knew she was different. More serious, more interesting. I loved her and she seemed interested in me.

I looked at her most days and wondered what she was thinking. She almost seemed like one of those Russian dolls.... It was hard to know whether you were at the center....The core of things. And I never asked. Are we there yet? Will we ever be there?

On our wedding day she told me she was certain that I 'could' be the love of her life. I actually got teary ...But then the word "could" hung around. I kept thinking that what she meant was "You could be the love of my life if nothing better comes along". No matter how I tried to get rid of it, that 'could' dogged me. Even on our best days that fucking "could" would smack me upside of the head and tell me to wake up to myself. I 'could' be the love of her life.

GEORGINA:

And so, if, hypothetically, you had a really unsatisfactory sexual relationship from the beginning.... That could just be a

compromise because the rest of the relationship should be so perfect. He's loving and you're so close. In every other way you're so close. So invested in each other. If lately, you never have sex does it actually matter that when you did it was never very good? For either of you.

ADRIAN: So then I did the thing that real pricks do. I started rooting around and telling myself it was justified because she "could" love me and made me feel like she was doing me a huge favour whenever we had sex.

Then I began doing things to make her notice what a bastard I am. I wanted her to see it and feel pissed off. I really wanted to rub her nose in it. "Look how absolutely fucking hopeless I am. I'm not the love of your life, and you're stuck with me because you'll never tell me to piss off. If you want me to go, you need to make me. You need to do it. You need to say it. Out loud. So we can both hear it."

THE BEEP FROM THE SPORTS BAG SOUNDS AGAIN. GEORGINA HEARS IT. SHE PUTS THE CLOTHES DOWN GOES OVER AND UNZIPS THE BAG. SHE PULLS OUT A MOBILE TELEPHONE AND LOOKS AT IT. THERE IS A TEXT MESSAGE. SHE READS THE MESSAGE. OPENS THE SPORTS BAG AND EMPTIES THE REST OF THE CONTENTS OUT ON TO THE FLOOR. SHE LOOKS THROUGH THE ITEMS. SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND RESUMES SORTING THE CLOTHES.

GEORGINA: Sometimes it's hard to know what to do. You could confront it. But what if your worst fears are confirmed? The sad part is that you might have to admit to yourself that your worst fear is that don't care about the possibility of him fucking someone else. You care more about what that says about you and the relationship. It would mean that there are definitely buttons missing.....

Don't you just do what you have to...to go on? After all why should it be you who has to make the decisions? .If there's no proof... If nobody says anything, a wrong number can just be a wrong number and not something to change your life over. Not this week.

GEORGINA PUTS DOWN THE CLOTHES AND PICKS UP THE PHONE. SHE OPENS THE WASHING MACHINE DROPS THE PHONE IN AND SWITCHES IT ON.

ADRIAN: I left my phone at home. It wouldn't have mattered but this woman kept texting me. Then she emailed to tell me she was texting me.

I had to tell her to piss off. That's a sign of the true bastard. Someone who screws around on his wife and then treats the people he screws like shit.

When I got home, I found the bag but no phone. She said she hadn't seen it.

A week before I lied about a meeting so I could go for a drink with my mechanic's sister. Nothing happened but I did crash the car in a completely different suburb than I told her I'd be in. That had no effect. She said she had probably misheard me when I had told her where my meeting was.

She's hard to break. She doesn't give in easily. Ever.

GEORGINA: So even with the doubts you have about the exact location of that small bingle That can be wiped away with all the other disappointments that constantly threaten to discolor your day... if you let them. Then it's like nothing happened. After a while you will even ask yourself if it did.

ADRIAN: We might go on like this forever. It's like a movie I used to watch on tv "Journey to the Center of the Earth". I saw it about six times but I never watched past the point where the guy's pet duck gets killed.. From when I was 7, I could never keep watching the movie after the duck died..... In my version, the hero never gets to the center of the earth but at least the duck never dies.

GEORGINA: The truth is that if Leisl had never actually seen Rolf in a Nazi uniform everything would have been fine.

ADRIAN: Some days I wish I just had the balls to let the duck die and see how it all ends. And then when the sink blocks up like today and we talk about what to do about it and how we'll spend the rest of the weekend in our compatible, envied and settled existence, I look at her and realize that this sink could potentially stay blocked forever. I can't clear it. I want to but I can't.

The thing is... I think she would be content to just leave it blocked.

ADRIAN SLIDES BACK UNDER THE SINK

Hope Fades But The Duck Never Dies

GEORGINA: And that's the beauty of nothing ever sticking. If it never sticks it can be overlooked...forever.

GEORGINA PICKS UP THE EMPTY BASKET AND LEAVES THE ROOM.

LIGHTS DOWN