

28 Plays Later – Challenge #7

OK, so we focus way too much and worry about writing good stuff... how about writing some shite?

Like, proper total crap. (not literally! You know who you are!)

Not as easy as it sounds.

Just have no filters.

Let yourselves go

SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE

By

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PROLOGUE

TIME: 24 years ago

PLACE: MOM's kitchen.

LIGHTS UP on WOMAN and MOM at the dining room table. They're each drinking coffee, and sharing a single slice of cheesecake.

MOM (concerned): You're moving in with him?

WOMAN (confident): Yes.

MOM: You've only known him for five minutes. You know nothing about him.

WOMAN: Actually, it's been six months.

MOM: Still...

WOMAN (ticking things off on her fingers): I know he likes strawberry-rhubarb pie and singing when he mows the lawn, and wearing socks during sex.

MOM gives WOMAN a gusby-mom look.

BLACKOUT

ACT I – The Early Years

SCENE 1

TIME: 23 years ago

PLACE: Outside a movie theatre.

MAN and WOMAN are just leaving the theatre. WOMAN is teary.

MAN: Sweetheart, are you sure you're okay. You were crying through the end of the movie.

WOMAN (sniffing): I'm sorry. Military funerals remind me of my grandfather. (beat) You would have liked him.

MAN: I'm sure I would've.

WOMAN: So, there's something you should know.

MAN: What?

WOMAN: There are three things guaranteed to make me cry: animals being abandoned, any living creature being abused, and "Taps" being played on a bugle.

MAN (smiling fondly at her): That's why I love you. (captures her hand).

Fade to black.

SCENE 2

TIME: 22 years ago.

PLACE: Living room in a nice, but fairly basic, apartment.

MAN and WOMAN have been watching television. As the credits roll, MAN picks up the remote and clicks to turn it off.

MAN: Do you know what's great about us?

WOMAN: Constant flirting, great sex, the fact that I indulge your video game habits?

MAN: Well, that, but also, neither of us are scientists but we're both nerdy enough that we just watched a show about the physics of the universe, and not only did we understand it, we also made relevant jokes about the second law of thermodynamics.

WOMAN (laughing): Okay, I'll give you that, but I'm not a nerd.

MAN: You're not?

WOMAN: No, I have way too much fashion sense to be a nerd. I'm a geek.

Fade to black.

SCENE 3

Time: 21 years ago.

Place: Kitchen in the couple's apartment.

WOMAN is sitting at the table; MAN has car keys in hand, as if he's about to leave.

WOMAN: If they have nectarines, get some.

MAN: I prefer peaches.

WOMAN: *I prefer that if we buy fruit, it actually gets eaten.*

MAN: I eat fruit.

WOMAN: Barely. I'm actually really concerned that you might drop dead from land scurvy.

MAN makes a HRUMPHing sound.

WOMAN: Also, fruit should not be furry.

Fade to black.

SCENE 4

TIME: 19 years ago

PLACE: The couple's living room.

An oscillating fan has been added. MAN is standing in front of the fan.

MAN (yelling to woman who is off-stage): Okay, whatever house we buy *must* have central air.

WOMAN (off-stage): And a swimming pool.

MAN: I don't swim.

WOMAN (entering, joining MAN in front of fan): Share.

MAN: I think I'm cool enough now.

WOMAN: Mmm. (She begins to unbutton her blouse, turning so that the fan is blowing cool air across her chest.) That's better. It's too hot for clothes.

MAN (flirting): It's always too hot when you're around.

They kiss, and keep kissing as they walk - she backwards - off-stage to the 'bedroom.'

BLACKOUT

ACT II – The Later Years

SCENE 1

TIME: Ten years ago.

PLACE: The couple's new house, kitchen.

They've moved up in the world. This is a kitchen and breakfast nook combo, and they're cleaning up after dinner.

WOMAN takes a used filter out of a coffee maker and dumps it in the trash bin.

WOMAN (nose wrinkled): There should be a super-villain who makes you forget to empty old coffee grounds from the filter-basket.

MAN (moving toward the counter where the coffee maker is, sponge in hand): He should also cause grounds to wind up all over the counter whenever you grind beans.

WOMAN: And he shall be called...

MAN and WOMAN (together): The Grounds Keeper.

Fade to black.

SCENE 2

TIME: Nine years ago.

PLACE: The couple's bedroom.

MAN is reading in bed. WOMAN bursts in, holding a long, cylindrical wooden object with tapered ends.

MAN: Okay, I know you're annoyed with me, but you didn't have to bring a weapon into the bedroom.

WOMAN: It's *not* a weapon. It's a kitchen tool. Specifically, it's a French rolling pin.

MAN: What's wrong with American rolling pins?

WOMAN: This one's better, is all.

MAN: Uh-huh.

WOMAN (testing its weight, speaking in low, dangerous voice): It's also way scarier than your mother's wooden spoon.

MAN shakes his head in disbelief, puts his book down, and tugs WOMAN into bed with him. Both are giggling. The rolling pin falls to the floor.

Fade to black.

SCENE 3

TIME: Five years ago

PLACE: The couple's living room.

MAN and WOMAN are standing in front of the couch, clearly in mid-argument.

MAN: Well, *you* were the one who starte –

WOMAN (cutting him off): Kiss me. (She doesn't wait; she kisses him).

MAN: What was that for?

WOMAN: We've been bickering too much and I'm tired of it. Our marriage is better than this.

MAN: Oh?

WOMAN: Yes. So from now on, instead of arguing, we're going to stop and take a breath and kiss or make-out, or make love instead of ending up in a circular arg –

MAN interrupts WOMAN by lifting her into his arms.

WOMAN (giggling but annoyed): What are you *doing*?

MAN (seductive, growly): Starting an argument, so we can finish it *right now*.

MAN carries WOMAN off-stage to the bedroom.

BLACKOUT

EPILOGUE

TIME: Now.

PLACE: The dining room in a suburban home. NOT the same set as ACT II.

WRITER (played by the same actress as WOMAN, but aged to about 50) is sitting at the dining room table, typing on a laptop. HUSBAND (played by the same actor as MAN, but also aged) enters from their kitchen, bringing a mug. He sets the mug down on the table and leans down to kiss her.

HUSBAND: Here's your tea, love.

WRITER: Thank you. I'm almost done, and then we can watch something on television if you want.

HUSBAND: Take your time. I have a few turns to finish in my game. (peers over her shoulder at the screen, reads a bit) Some of these scenes are about us.

WRITER: Not 'about.' More like 'Inspired by.' (she grins up at him, and adds in a flirty tone) You're not just my husband, you're my muse.

HUSBAND: Well, I seem to amuse you, anyway.

WOMAN makes exasperated noise.

BLACKOUT

THE END

