

Alleluiah

(a 5 minute monologue)

© Claire Booker 2011

Setting: A family bathroom, Yorkshire.
Props: Body lotion, curling tongs, large bath towel.
Character: BRIDGET, a 40 year old housewife.

As husband Barry carries out his morning ablutions in blissful ignorance, Bridget contemplates an adulterous liaison.

BRIDGET

Nineteen years in the same bed. Nineteen! *(she applies body lotion observes her husband brushing his teeth)* Habits. That's what you marry. Regular as clockwork. Every morning: gargle and spit. Every night: nose whistling, chest pumping. And the snores, the snores! I could ram a pillow over his head and sit on it. Not to kill him, mind. Just to stop the breathing. *(pause)* He thinks he knows everything about me. But do you? Do you know the half of it? *(direct to husband)* Don't brush so hard, Barry; they'll bleed.

(starts to apply body lotion to her arms. Aside) All this flab. Look at it – handfuls. I'll have to keep my arms down. Or covered. Yes. Perhaps it'll be one of those frenzied couplings where there's no time to undress. *(irritated)* Why does he have to brush his teeth so hard? It's like a dog with a bone. *(she checks her face in the mirror)* He never looks at me. Not a real 'feel me over' look. Not anymore. Same as how you stop seeing the pattern on your curtains after a while, only the dirty fingers marks. *(pause)* Whereas Laszlo . . . *(she sighs, then starts to sing an arpeggio)* La di da Da di da da. *(she raises the arpeggio by a tone and flunks the high note)* La di da Da . . . Da . . .

(pause) It was an ordinary Wednesday, like any other. I'd got the dinner done, homework sorted, grabbed my score, no make-up even, only just managed to scrape in on time and suddenly, there he is, all long and lean, sat at the back of St Mary Magdalene's delicately peeling the foil off a Kit Kat. 'He'd better be a tenor' I'm thinking. 'We're low on tenors'. Then he throws me a look - fierce, like flinging down a gauntlet - and bites across all four fingers of the bar. *(pause)* I felt the snap. *(BRIDGET removes her shower cap and lets her hair fall loose)*

Laszlo with his gold tooth deep at the back when he laughs, and eyes like a leopard, patient, dangerous, watching. *(starts to brush her hair)* Well, I've held out long enough - against his hands and the taste of his tongue, the way it licks the side of his mouth, how he kissed my neck, fanged it with a faint aura of whiskey, the promise of a feast, and yesterday . . .

(disbelief) Yesterday? In another life, in another body, I tasted tobacco on his fingers, sucked their warmth one by one, while his other hand conducted me, made music in me. *(joyful sigh, then sings an arpeggio)* La di da Da di da da. *(raises the arpeggio by a tone, reaches the high note perfectly)* La di da Da . . . *(she breaks into the Easter hymn)* Christ . . . the Lord is risen today. Alleluia. Sons of men and angels . . .

(she stops singing suddenly and scrutinises Barry) No. He hasn't noticed. He can't read the signs. He can spot the tiniest scratch on his car bonnet, but his wife of nineteen years, she's just wallpaper, brightens the place up a bit, better than a blank wall. For Pete's sake, Barry, look at me! Just look at me for once. There's a woman in here. Someone with nipples. *(she peers under the towel at her breasts)* I wish they weren't so brown. Is that normal? I haven't seen enough breasts to tell. *(sobering thought)* I bet Laszlo has. Oh God, it's going to be a disaster.

(noticing with irritation) Why does nobody ever remember to change the loo roll? Bums and noses, how many have I wiped? *(direct to her husband)* Use a new blade, Barry. You're going to cut yourself. *(She picks up the curling tongs. Aside)* I've no idea where he'll take me. Not his house, obviously. The park? No, too public. Please God not a hotel. *(pause)* I'll sit in his car. He'll drive. Both of us - washed, deodorised, ready. *(hears noises on the stairs and shouts)* Millie? *(crosses to the door and shouts to her daughter)* Millie! Text me when you get there. I want to know you've arrived safely. *(Aside)* The kids'll never find out. Never. I'd die rather than . . . It's just an interlude. A one-off. An adventure. Yes. That's what it is. Mum's little adventure. A hike up a new peak. An emotional bungee jump. Why not? While there's time. While there's still life. Millie's got her gap year. Well, I've got my gap lover. *(sings an arpeggio successfully)* It feels great. *(raises the arpeggio by a tone, again successfully)* La di da Da di da da. *(pause)* Why shouldn't I hit Top C?

(she applies the tongs to a strand of hair) And afterwards - tonight - when I come home? Will it show? Will I be different? *(she looks in the mirror)* Same face, same nose, same mouth. It's easy to lie with your body. To sit at the same table, share the same bread. But something else changes, surely? It can't just be this. *(direct to her husband)* Barry? *(hesitates)* No. Nothing. It's nothing, love. Don't cut yourself. You're late as it is and we're out of TCP. *(Aside)* No kiss, no time, no TCP. No time, no TCP, no kiss. *(observing Barry)* If he asked me, if he asked me right now, I'd tell him. I'd tell him everything. *(Long pause. She sighs. Direct to her husband)* I'll pop into Boots and get some. We're running low on Paracetamol too. Oh, and Barry. *(pause)* I won't need a lift back from choir practise. Michelle's dropping me off. *(Lights fade to black out)*

© Claire Booker 2011

For permission to perform please contact
bookerplays@yahoo.co.uk
www.bookerplays.co.uk
++44 (0)20 8673 6147