**Alleluiah**

(a 5 minute monologue by Claire Booker)

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**Characters:** Bridget, housewife on the cusp of middle age.

**Props and Set:** One set.

*Lights rise on the family bathroom. Sound of teeth being vigorously brushed. Bridget is wrapped in a large towel. Her hair is in a shower cap. She applies lotion to her arms.*

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 does he know the half of it? *(direct to husband)* Don't brush so hard, Barry; they'll bleed.

*(Aside, observing her body fat)* All this flab. 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 you 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 smiles with pleasure*) Laszlo sees everything. (*she sings an arpeggio)* La di da Da di da da.

It was an ordinary Wednesday, like any other. I’d got the dinner done, homework sorted, grabbed my score, only just managed to scrape into choir practice on time and suddenly, there he is, all long and lean, sat at the back of All Saints 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. 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 crease of his mouth, how he kissed my neck, fanged it with that sweet whiskey breath, like a feast, and yesterday . . . *(disbelief)* Yesterday? In another life, in another body, tasting tobacco on his fingers, sucking the warmth of them, 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.

*(scrutinising Barry)* He hasn't noticed. He can’t read the signs. He can spot the tiniest scratch on the car bonnet, but his wife of nineteen years, she’s just wallpaper. For Christ’s sake, Barry, look at me! Just look at me for once. There’s a woman in here. Someone with nipples. Oh God, tonight’s going to be a disaster.

Why does nobody bother to change the loo roll? *(She picks up a fresh toilet roll, then pauses)* I’ve no idea where he'll take me. Not to his house, obviously. Please God not a hotel – strange linen, knowing looks, horrible little bars of soap. *(pause)* We’ll sit in his car. 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. 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. And it feels great.

And afterwards . . . when I come home? Will it show? Will I be different? *(she looks in the mirror)* It’s easy for your body to lie. To sit at the same table – same face, same eyes, same breakfast cereal. But something inside changes, surely? It can’t be this for the rest of my life. *(pause)* Barry. Tell me to stop. Forbid me. Be a man, for once. Be a lion, with a bloody great roar – she’s my wife, I want her, I want, I want her! (*pause*) If you ask me right now, I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you everything.

*(Direct to Barry)* Use a new blade, Barry. We’re out of TCP. *(answering his question)* Yes, of course, love. I’ll pick some up from Boots. I’m going by Mum’s anyway. Anything else? *(pause)* Oh, and I won’t need a lift back from choir practice tonight. *(awkward pause)* We’re having a little get-together at Michelle’s. She’ll drop me home.

*(Black Out)*

TO PERFORM THIS PLAY PLEASE CONTACT:

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