

The Good Ear Review

a dramatist's literary journal

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MONOLOGUE: The Loser

by Kim Wiltshire

Setting: TOM's bedroom, England

Time: present, mid-morning

Character: TOM, 41 years old

TOM sits on a ruffled bed, he is stuffing clothes into a bag. He wears dirty pajamas and has blood dripping out of his nose and lip.

TOM

(sings) Forty-one today, forty-one today, he's got a smack in the face, oh forty-one is gonna be ace.

(pause)

I'm not a morning person. I know that. My parents know that. In fact every fucker I can think of knows that. So, considering that fact, can someone please tell me why my stupid mother thinks that knocking on my door at eight o'clock in the morning, on my birthday no less, is a good idea? God, that old cow makes my flesh creep. She comes in without a by your leave, and does this over-exaggerated "I'm being quiet" movement as she walks across the room and puts my tea down on the table. Then off she shuffles, and...and, you know, I just wasn't quick enough. The mug smashed into the door just as she shut it—still full of tea. Now that tea is all over my good jeans.

And of course, no house either, fuckers took that. Back home at my age. Back in the room I left when I was seventeen. The stupid flesh creeping cow has for some bizarre reason kept it exactly the same since I left. What for? Who knows. Anyway, about half an hour after the mug smashing incident, I think all's quiet, I'll go get a proper cuppa. I gets down to the kitchen, and the sight that hits me...shocking. There, in the kitchen, some limp balloon stacked up, a plastic banner saying Happy Birthday, and a shop bought cake, cos that's posh that is. My parents with my two disgusting siblings sat round the table, disgusting smiling faces, and suddenly they break into a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday to you, we went to the zoo, we saw a fat monkey and we thought it was you!' Hil-fucking-larious. I blew the candles out, got the back of my sister's head and pushed her face into the cheapo cake, punched my brother in the gob, pulled down the banner and came back up to my room.

(pause)

Well, of course I didn't, but from the reaction I got, I may as well've done. All I did was say "Fuck the lot of you, I'm back to me bed," got another cup of tea and came up here. I settle into me bed, and pops is up here screaming the odds. Now, fair enough, he's hard me pops, been a labourer all his life and that, but he's nearly seventy. If it were going to be a fight between me and him, anyone'd back me, course they would. He comes in, and I says, "Don't start your threats papa, you know I could drop you any..." and wallop! Right in the mush. It fair took me aback, I can tell you. I mean, back in the day, everyone knew me dad was tough, but now he's an old geezer and he's beating shit out of me. *(starts laughing)* When he's furious, oh, it's funny this, his accent goes, right? And you can hardly understand a word he's saying. All I did manage to get was, "'an you'll get outta this 'ouse and you never set foot inside again, bastardo!" *(laughs again, then stops abruptly)* Gave me half an hour to pack and get out. On me birthday. Michael and Teresa, the sibs, were watching from the top of the stairs, bloody useless twats the pair of them. They're so smug and bloody righteous. One's a lawyer, one's a psychologist. I'm in the middle, and I'm... the failed one. Ironic in a way, cos I was almost...well, you know, I used to be in bands, bass player. And I was a stand up for a while, and a designer, and a writer, and an artist. I'm good as well, just never got the breaks. Not like some of those bastards. You know that saying, it's not what you know but who?

(pause)

Well, I don't know fucking anybody.

(pause)

I'll bob down the DSS in a minute, see if I can get a hostel or something for the night. Better than a mates' floors, or maybe I could pull a bird, see how that goes.

(pause)

It's no bother. I've slept rough loads, me. I've been about, you know. There was this one time, right, me and this gay lad I knew called Chris, we were in Dorothy's and we got so pissed, and I mean truly pissed, completely out of it, that I slept in the doorway of the ladies till they opened the next night, some bouncer woke me up, only to find that I was on guard for Chris who was asleep stark bollock naked in one of the cubicles. God, we pissed our pants at that, fucking hilarious, Chris was. Moved on now though, he's all grown up with a house in Saddleworth and a partner who's a fucking teacher of all things. Bloody teachers.

When I was a kid, for birthdays, we'd always get a big present, a little present, and some clothing. There'd be a party too, or a trip out. Three years running we went to Chester Zoo for mine, because I liked the elephants. Everyone hated that bloody trip, but it was the rule that the birthday boy could choose his treat. So that was mine. I loved it there and then one year my parents didn't buy me a big present, they adopted me one of the elephants instead, and I thought, that's no bloody use. I wanted a guitar, or a drum kit, or something I could own. Funny that. Cos I own fuck all now.

(pause)

Best be getting on now, don't want me Pops coming up and doing me over again, do I? Yeah, Happy Birthday to me.

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Kim Wiltshire is a writer based in Manchester. This monologue formed part of her PhD in representations of masculinity at Lancaster University. She currently teaches at Manchester Met University, and writes plays and short stories. Recently her full-length play, *Joy With Child*, was produced by Organised Chaos in Manchester.

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