An Unmade Bed

 A short play

 By

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SCENE 1:

***Dolly 30’s sits at the top of her stairs looking out the window. She speaks to no one in particular.***

“I’ll get help. N.A… or something?”

Me: Or something?

Him: Move to London…

Me: How? They locked the

country down.

Him: Stop blaming the fucking virus. You are too scared

to move. You’ve barely left this room since we moved in.

Me: Not true! You lie about EVERYTHING. We can’t

leave. We’re not allowed.

Him: Allowed? What are you 12? Watch me.

Me; No!

Him: Watch me!

I am screaming now “You can’t! Who the fuck leaves

their girlfriend in the middle of a pandemic?”

You don’t hear me…You’re out the door and down the

Street, clothes spilling out of your ruck sack. Socks

and phone charger fall out, roll under a passing car.

I bang on the widow. But It’s been painted shut so I can’t

open it to beg. Instead I yell through the glass hoping you’ll

hear me.

‘Come back… You’ll get sick…Come back…’

***Beat***

I count umbrella’s instead. Distract from the thud in my

chest. My heart, a weight knocking my lungs into free fall…

One, two, three in a row! Purple. When I tell you this later, you’ll say I made it up. But I swear there were three in a row..THREE! What are the odds. There is no later though is there? ‘Cause now you are a blurry dot in the distance then you turn left at the junction and you’re gone.

A memory hits me like an anxiety attack. Brutal and out of

nowhere.

Sunday, you come in late way after lockdown is announced.

So out of it you open the wardrobe thinking it’s the

bathroom. I wake. What are you doing? Nooooo! My Guitar.

Too late... I imagine the piss running down the wood,

metal, strings and onto the floor. You, try to get into bed

beside me.

Me: Are you mental? Get in the shower. Jesus! You push me off so I get out of bed drag you there. We roll and fall like a couple of clowns.

You: ‘Get off me. Stop telling me what to do’.

Me: You’ll wet the bed!

You: I won’t. I just need to lie down.

Me: No! You always say you won’t and then you always

do. You start taking your clothes off so I push you into

the shower and turn the cold water on you still half dressed

I go and sit on the bed keeping an eye so you don’t fall over

and crack your skull open. I can see your reflection in the

mirror through the open door.

Me: Did you take something?

You: A couple of downers.

***Dolly makes a face.***

You: Don’t!

Me: What?

You: The face?

Me: You’re a dick! You promised.

You: We’re going to die anyway. I’ll just be fucking high

when it happens.

Me: You were always high before the virus.

***Beat***

Sleep on the floor!

You: No! You sleep on the floor.

But then you obediently lie down beside our bed

like a well-trained pup.

Me: Okay stop with the stage shivers. I get it, you’re cold.

Drama Queen…

***Beat and change of tone. Dolly softens***

Me: Are ya really cold? You don’t answer. A flash comes

over me and I think you might have stopped breathing so I

push my foot into the small of your back.

You: Get off! I hate you.

***Beat***

Me: Okay. If you say you are sorry and will never eve

do it again then I might come and keep you company down

there on self-loathing beach?

You: I am not sorry. And I hate purple. I lied to get in to

your pants.

Me: And you lied about your politics and what books you

read. You’re a liar. You’re crying now, or pretending to…But either way I buy it…

***Beat***

Me: Is it safe? You don’t answer. Still pretend crying.

***Dolly goes into role play.***

Me: Can’t see any sharks basking in the shallow water…well not from the bed anyway. Can you? Is the coast clear? Maybe I’d better come down there and check. You never see them in time. Then they attack and in a few seconds it’s all bloody, cloudy, water and exposed muscle and tissue and veins leaking the life out of us and then we have to go to the hospital and the doctor has to

stitch us up again and send us home and we have these

horrible purple mottled scars running down the sides of

our arms and legs. And kind of dents where the biggest,

fattest shark got a good bite. But you love it don’t

ya? ‘Cause the nurse jabs you full of DF118. You like to

make friends with the scars and invent names for them

and build stories around them. Don’t ya?

***Beat***

Don’t ya?

***Beat***

Ya do!

***Long beat…***

Me: Okay|! I’m bored talking to myself. I’m

coming to ‘The Cabana’ … Make room…

Nothing…

***Beat***

Me: I feel like some cold-hearted bitch seeing you lying

there on the floor next to our bed. I get up, mock

swim towards you, ‘cause it makes you laugh. This is the

bit of the game where we make up. But this time you are

passed out so I cover you with the quilt I made in 5th year.

Lie down next to you so I can look at your beautiful face.

Fall asleep holding you. Then it begins, like always.

You jerk and spasm, a fish on the floor of a trawler.

Argggghhhh!...... Arrrggghhh!

***Beat as she strums her guitar…***

Me: I thought you were a weirdo when I met you first. You know sort of… I dunno. You didn’t get a lot of stuff. Thought maybe you were just a dumb stoner.

***Beat***

 Smoked enough skunk to sedate a small country. Then you

ask me what my favourite colour is, and I say purple and

you say ‘same’.

***Beat as Dolly writes in her notebook app on her phone.***

One red, one clear plastic with a white trim, one that says

Aviva insurance and one that says Jury’s hotel group.

***Beat***

It was such a beautiful morning. Like, the sun was pouring

through the window at 7am. and the birds were singing so

loudly it sounded fake. You start jerking and

flipping around under the blanket like an epileptic. I think

you are having a heart attack and might be dying.

Me: I’m calling an ambulance.

You: What can they do for me?

Me: Take you to a hospital, you fucking eejet.

The spasms stop for a bit. I stare at the wardrobe. Seeing

our reflection in the mirrored doors. The two of us in this

unmade bed on the floor. Out of nowhere….

You: “I should get help”.

Me: Should? And so, we go back to the beginning…

***Beat as*** ***Dolly looks at her phone. Distracted by a clip on youtube of ‘The Blue Planet’***

I love nature programmes, watch them on my phone to

pass the time on a dry day as there is nothing to count.

Mackerel are so cool. Like underwater tiger cubs. Their

markings I mean. I used to follow the

shoals when they came inshore as a kid. Every July. Or

maybe it was August. I’d hang over the quayside trying

to catch them on my line.Watching the water glittering

off their scales as they darken the shore. It all turns black

and cloudy just below the surface. Suddenly, they dart in

all directions and that’s when they sparkle

as the light and water bounces off their backs. Magic…

All dead now, even the ones that escaped my fishhook.

Must be. I mean no mackerel lives for 10 years. Wonder

what that would be like living under water, weight-less.

Maybe that’s what you wanted. To live weightless like a

fish.

***Beat as Dolly stares out the window. Humming to***

***herself for a moment.***

We used to watch them together.

You would try to get me going by saying that Pilot fish

were stupid.

You: I mean wouldn’t ya think evolution would have

taught them something? Why do they swim so close to the

bloody shark? He’s bound to turn on them. It’s like buying

a kebab at 2.00am on a fri. night after the club and

someone saying don’t eat it ‘meat is murder’. I’d probably

eat the kebab.

But you only say this to start an argument. I go quiet

and you rescue the mood by telling me that

octopus are as clever as monkeys.

Me: I know!!! They have long and short-term memory.

 ***Beat Dolly looks out the window as clouds gather.***

Rain clouds…

***Beat***

Me: I feel really shit about the amount of calamari I ate in

Ibiza! I may as well be a cannibal. I only eat fish ‘cause

I’m really worried about the lack of protein in my diet and

I thought fish were one step up from grass in terms of the

evolutionary scale, but I would never have eaten octopus

if I had known about their memory and that they can work

out problems. You know, like we do? Stand

back rethink their strategy. Go at it again from a different

angle. Now they are on the list of animals that have to be

anesthetized, like primates. Oh! Yeah! And Dolphins.

***Beat as Dolly’s eyes well up***

I may has well have eaten a little monkey. A little monkey.

***Dolly dries her eyes and sees it has started to rain again so she begins to count.***

It’s raining! Six, seven, eight, nine. That’s nine purple.

And that’s what? In the last 4 days. I need to start writing

the colours down so I don’t forget. My maths are

terrible. I could tell you the capital of every state in

America. But could I tell you a single theorem? …No.

Wait, I can ‘The square on the hypotenuse is equal to the

sum of the squares on the other two sides. The

mathematical equivalent of playing chopsticks on the

piano.

***Beat***

We didn’t have a piano at home. I’d go to a neighbour’s

house to practice. But instead of doing scales I would just

end up staring at the tea set and glass in their corner

cabinet. Lost in the little scenes from Japan painted on the

tea sets…I think they were, Japanese or maybe Chinese.

***Beat***

Is that why it’s called China? Did china originally com

from China. I mean did they invent it? Maybe…

***Beat***

One tea set was so delicate, they must have used tiny brush

strokes to paint little scenes on it. Like maybe two hairs on it. The entire tea set made up a story of some sort, ‘cause each cup had a different scene with the same characters on it. A love story, I think... The two young lovers struggle for a life together. Their passion winning out over the evil emperor’s plan to keep them apart. I decided that he wanted his daughter to marry the prince instead. But she loves the little poet or actor or something. I kind of couldn’t really make out what he did for a living exactly. But it was definitely something where he didn’t make any money. I changed his job from day to day to keep the story fresh. Some days he had no job at all and suffered some terrible disability. But the little princess loved him anyway. Every time I went to ‘piano practice’I imagined I was going to Japan instead. I’m off to Japan. Ha! Off to Japan. Funny. Oh! there’s another one.

 ***Dolly sees another purple umbrella.***

Ten...

***Beat.***

No point in telling anyone you left. What if you come back.

You did before. Feeling in the moment like I can’t live

without you. So much to miss…You get my fish obsession.

The little melted plastic craters all over the kitchen table, fag burns from when you nod out. Hours spent here beside me looking out the window counting, umbrella’s or bird’s nests in the bare branches. You call them little mistakes.

Him: They look like, little mistakes. Inky dark stains pressed against the rain clouds.

***Beat***

Before all this I’d watch you sometimes from the window, picking up handfuls of fallen blossom from the trees outside the flat, as if it was snow, or someone had split a pillow. White feathery petals, flying everywhere. You, throwing fistfuls of it into the air to make me laugh. Putting on a show. You knew I was watching.

***Beat***

Eleven! Or maybe that one doesn’t count ‘cause it has

white polka dots and a frill…No, it’s purple, so it counts…

***Beat as Dolly looks straight down the lens.***

Blue tomorrow….maybe.

**End**

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