

'Productivity' from Adolescing. Copyright © Hilary Leland 2014.

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Productivity

Weekends I was a care assistant, Thornlea nursing agency. Sunday evenings was looking after Alfred in his home. I washed him and changed his sheets, Roll over Alfred, roll up the sheet, Roll back Alfred, roll out the new sheet. Difficult to do that on a big old double bed, I kept having to run round to the other side of the bed. Meanwhile Deirdre his daughter sneaked out for a quick one. Come nine o'clock, she still wasn't back. Well, another hour's pay but then my mate Alice turned up to collect me. She sat in with me and Alfred. Alfred was dying so I suppose he had the right to be badly behaved. I helped him to wee in a bottle and changed his pyjamas again.

'Don't do that Alfred.'

'You do it then.'

'I told you, we're not allowed to.'

Guess what we were talking about. They're all just little boys! Trouble was, his body was packing up, not only that bit, the whole sandwich. Funny that he still cared about that bit. Poor old sod! Alice watched him and grinned, then she started putting the new pyjamas over his ankles for him.

'We'll be back up in a minute Alfred.'

Grumpily he let her pull up his pyjamas. We covered him up and went down to the kitchen. I told Alice how he'd

offered me fifty pounds to give him a hand job.

'Fifty pounds?'

'I couldn't do it.'

'It's easy.'

'I didn't mean that. Of course I—' I went purple. 'Anyway, even if I did, I couldn't take fifty pounds off an old man.'

Alice looked around. 'He can afford it.'

We took him up a drink. Alice said,

'Still at it Alfred?' He grunted. 'Mind if I look?' No answer.

She folded back the covers. I think he was worrying away at it most of the time when he was awake. I thought of Deirdre. She has to look after him too and he's her dad!

Alice took hold of his hand and held it still.

'Fifty?'

'Fifty? What?'

'Fifty pounds.'

His breathing went shallow. Hey Alice, he's not well!

'Fifty pounds?'

He looked at Alice and nodded. Alice sat down on the bed. She put his hand firmly to one side. Then she picked up his willy in her finger and thumb. When you see a crime being committed in front of your eyes, what do you do? I just stood there. Alfred mumbled,

'I can't get hold of it properly. Get your hand right round it.'

Willy and balls together looked like a heap of crumpled

rag. She used both hands, holding it up away from his balls, trying to uncrumple it.

'Get your hand right round it girl, go on!'

He let his head drop back and closed his eyes, mumbling, 'There's nothing wrong with it.'

She was very patient. I would have given him the thumbs down, This is passed repair, sorry. It's a dignified old age for you chum but I don't talk to patients like that and I wouldn't have got myself into this situation in the first place! Anyway, he's falling asleep but suddenly he jerked up again startled.

'Who are you? What are you doing?'

'It's me. Don't you like it?'

He grinned. His teeth made a wriggly brown line on his yellow face. 'You're a fast girl!'

She nudged me with her elbow.

'Cool eh?'

It was filling up. Pointing the wrong way but prick shaped, more or less. She held the end daintily with her finger and thumb and shook gently up and down. He started shivering. Then she let go.

'Look, no hands!'

Alfred's swollen belly, thighs like bags and his little brown todger bending up. Not so bad. He was just tired, that's all. There's some life left in that unlike his fucking liver!

'Feel it Sandra.'

'Is Sandra still here?' He turned his head to look at me,

alarmed.

'Sandra's a fast girl too Alfred. She's training to be a nurse so she's an expert.'

This is all very well but she said herself that I am training to be a nurse which is, like, professional. I was furious with Alice for putting me in this position. Anyway, she's the one that is always giving the boys hand jobs. What I mean is, I've never done it but only because I prefer the real thing. So I am not an expert, all right? This feels quite springy inside. I looked over at Alice, am I doing it right? Alice yawned, kicked off her shoes, and leaned back against the headboard watching me work. I'm tired too, my arm hurts, change hands, mustn't stop, that's no good. I changed hands back again and leaned over the bed. With my arm on his thigh, I could shake my wrist good and fast. What an achievement if I can make it shoot! I closed my eyes to concentrate.

A few seconds later I felt it collapse. I blinked and looked across at Alice: it's not my fault! Then we heard the front door downstairs. I jumped off the bed so fast I fell against the wall. Alice stood up calmly and started putting on her shoes. I covered Alfred, not calmly.

'His daughter? I'll talk to her,' said Alice.

What? but she had already left the room. Alfred blinked his eyes open.

'What's wrong?'

'Deirdre's here.'

'Who?'

I knelt down and reached under the quilt, not calmly. Yes I know but it wouldn't actually have made it any more ethical if I had stopped then. Think about it. I held the quilt up in a tent with my other hand. I'm just shaking string, what's the point? No I can't let him down now.

Alfred started crooning,

'The mayor of Bridgewater

He has such a pretty daughter

The hairs on her dicky dido hang down to her knees.'

I could hear Alice with Deirdre, what a cheek that girl has! 'I'm Alice, Sandra's colleague' (colleague? Dressed like that? She'll never believe it but she's drunk now. I know Deirdre.)

'We are just cleaning up, no hurry.'

'It takes a Welsh miner

To find her vagina'

'STOP IT ALFRED!'

'Past underground rivers

Of piss when she pees.'

He laughed and choked himself, which stopped him singing for a minute. They were still talking downstairs. 'All right love, thanks for looking after the old sod.' Then Alice was running into the room. She threw back the quilt.

'We've got fifteen minutes. Do you think he's going to make it?'

No. It was smaller than to start with but there was a

shivery look about him. That's impossible or is it? Maybe, yes! Gosh yes, no, I'll believe it when I see it.

'Boys paid or she'd sue them
Two shillings to view them
Each month she'd shampoo them
And comb out the fleas.'

Alice took over. She held it upright with her other hand or else it would just fall over, two fingers shaking fast at the top.

'There's no man could match her
She's thatched by a Devon thatcher'
'SHUT UP ALFRED!'

'Why shouldn't he sing?' Soft thing flapping like cloth between her two hands, 'Hey, nice one!'

He was lying there rigid and spitting. Not breathing. I watched him anxiously. He's got to die some time but not on my shift.

'At least' (pant) 'she will never catch a
Venereal disease
A—men.'

Alice had thick strings between her fingers. It can't be. Yes, shit! (No not shit.) Poke those in the wrong place and Alfred will be a dad again! Alice wiped it off with his tissues.

'Well done Alfred.'

'Don't put those in the bin Alice!' She put the tissues up her sleeve instead. Then we tried to clean him up. It's more

than you think. Straggly white hairs on his old tummy all stuck together. We set to work in a rush. We'll have to change his pyjama trousers again. When I bent down over him, he said quietly in my ear,

'Don't mention this to you know who, we'll never hear the last of it.'

'I don't know what you are talking about Alfred.'

Do you know about older men? They've got to wee after they've come, to wash out all the spunk or else they get sore. They taught us that in our course, not! I held the bottle but there's a more delicate subject to discuss. Alice has gone quiet all of a sudden, she always leaves it to me. Well, I know where he keeps his money. I put the bottle down and handed him the biscuit tin from the third drawer down.

'Alfred, sorry but your Deirdre will be up in a minute. Er, remember what you said? Have you got, er, got it on you?'

Look, it was wrong but I took a like massive risk, okay? Hey, I wasn't about to argue if he refused to pay up! We got ready to go. Pyjamas in the basket with the old sheet. No one looks too close at soiled linen.

'Night Alfred. Erm. See you next week.'

'Goodnight Sandra love.'

I won't do it again, I don't mind how much he pays. I don't want to be struck off before I've even started being a nurse! Shit! If she asks I'll say I just like found it and cleaned it up and she's got absolutely no proof! As we left the house,

Alice said seriously

'I couldn't take fifty but we gave him thirty five quid's worth.'

Not only that but after ten means two hours extra pay! So we split the cash and had a drink to celebrate. Alice was dashing about the pub stroking dogs and talking to strangers (Oh my God, don't say anything Alice, DON'T YOU DARE!) then coming back to count the money.

'What are we going to spend it on?'

'Don't know.'

'Blow? No, bored of blow, your friend Vince! We'll buy some whizz.'

Oh my God, 'NO! It's his mum's house, Alice, we can't go there.'

'Let's go to Union Street then. You can always get it there.'

Three young men in suits walking down the middle of the road, girls hanging out of upstairs windows in their frilly pyjamas, men in cars driving very slowly, two girls scuttling around in the shadows, one of them in a nurse's uniform, that's Union Street at midnight. Then Alice dragged me out into the light. I thought that she wanted to buy whizz from the men in suits (no!) but she had forgotten about whizz by then.

'Let's get a massage.'

'A massage?'

It was a sign on the stairs in one of those shabby all night cafes, registered masseuse, twenty four hour service.

'Alice, a MASSAGE?'

'Come on, we've got the money.'

Up she went, I followed. She ignored the startled looks of the tarted up girl and the stout middle aged man.

'You can do us both together can't you? We're best friends.'

So he shrugged his shoulders and she led us into the room with the couch. She shut the door and left him outside. She's the masseuse, he must be her minder. Jock strappy sort of smell, the girl shyly asked us to strip down to our underclothes. She was a bit older, twenty, twenty one, and a cut above us too. I guessed she was a university student, doing the night shift to pay off her overdraft. Nice girl, ladylike. Next year she'll be, I don't know, a fashion photographer or like a financial adviser, something posh. Hope that bloke looks after her. I asked her name.

'Antoinette.'

'I'm Alexandra.'

She grinned at me, 'My real name's Sam!' but Alice said bluntly

'We want extras.'

'WHAT?'

'You must do extras, a girl like you in a place like this.'

'Yes.'

They stood looking at each other, Sam in her little black number and short, stocky Alice in her bra and pants. When you think Alice is about to attack she's really going to burst into tears. I prayed that she would manage to hold them back but Sam probably thinks Alice is a tough local girl. Alice turned her bra around the wrong way, still looking Sam in the eyes, and undid the strap.

'Well? Are you going to?'

'Yes.'

I said, 'How much?' but Alice pulled down her knickers and stepped out of them. I was treated to the sight of my best friend's fanny. Etc. So was Sam. After a two minute silence, Alice said,

'Good. Thanks. Do I get up here?'

'Yes. Would you lie on your front please?'

'On my front?'

Back and shoulders, nice massage. If Alice wanted to relax, she came to the right place. She didn't want to relax. She rolled on to her back again.

'We haven't got all night!'

'Sorry.' Sam turned around and went to the sink. She washed her hands and put on a plastic apron. She came back and started to fiddle with Alice's boobs but she didn't look at Alice. She seemed to be reading the health and safety notice on the wall.

'Thanks. Hey, excuse me!' Sam turned to look at her.

'Look, full marks for effort but this doesn't do anything for me.'

Alice spread her tree trunk legs. The final frontier! I sort of wanted to walk round to the front of her then, just out of curiosity but I didn't because I thought we won't be friends any more if I do. Sam took one hand off Alice's boob, and did some stuff with it but she didn't look at what she was doing. She was reading the health and safety notice again. I reckon her finger was about an inch away from the action (look, I wasn't watching but I could tell, all right?) After a few minutes, Alice said,

'Are you okay?'

'Sorry.' She closed the gap to a centimetre.

'Yes but are you okay? You look as if you are going to be sick.'

'I'm all right. Sorry.'

'No problem. Provided you're okay.'

Sam jiggled her hand very fast for a bit and started panting. I mean Sam was panting, not Alice. 'Is that enough now?'

Alice sighed, 'Yeah. Thanks.'

Relieved, Sam went to wash her hands at the basin. Well, wash your hands by all means but don't make such a song and dance about it! In my job it's piss, pus, pooh, puke and sputum, which is a sight worse than a bit of lubrication from your privates I reckon and so is the chip fat where Alice

works. Yawn, did I remember to wash my hands after Alfred?

Piss, Pus, Pooh, Puke and Sputum, that's it! The name for our new band, which of us will be which? Yawn, Gretel can be Sputum, leaving blobs of hers on every street corner and Vince can only be Puke. Dawn is Piss, after Wednesday. Me? No way! Oh yeah, yeah, that's me. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, ouch, splat! Dried up stains all over the bathroom mirror, yawn, I want to go to bed. Alice was talking to me.

'Your turn Sandra. Don't just stand there!'

My turn? You must be joking! but I'll be paying anyway. That bloke won't let us out of here unless we both pay up (or suppose I say I was there as her chaperone?) Hell, I need to relax. I've got a stressful job. Yeah, okay then. Come to think of it, this is a really cool idea! I asked Alice to unclip me at the back. Then Alice turned her back on us to get dressed, bending over to pull up her pants. Hum. Are you trying to be modest Alice? I'm not too keen on showing my bits and pieces from any angle but always face the front, that's my advice, it's even worse if they see the back view!

I caught Sam looking too. Yes Sam we're all the same, even you and me too. Look, isn't it grand to be a girl? Hey! Pus rhymes with fuss, okay? Not that stupid porno word for oh! Freezing cold hands on my puss but yes that's right! Yes, go on, yes, don't stop now! Sam is hopeless at this.

'You're brilliant at this Sam! Just pretend you're tickling a fish.'

Sam is learning fast. God, I needed this and I never knew it. Oh shit! I squeezed my thighs together and made the windows rattle, yes that's right, don't stop! She looked a bit embarrassed but I wasn't going to be any quieter. What is the point of a place like this if you can't make a noise?

'Thanks. You can stop now.

Yes, it's all over Sam. Well done!'

Sam was washing her hands again and me lying back feeling pretty relaxed when I looked round at Alice. She was in a state. I have never been the type to sympathise when they turn on the waterworks but something funny occurred to me. She doesn't know how to come. After all those guys, it must be torture! Sam has never come either, judging by her technique. What a pair! So I eased myself down off the couch and whispered in Sam's ear because it's like her job, not mine. (I reckon the bloke outside would have something to say if I set up a rival business in here!) We walked over to Alice together.

'Your turn again Alice.'

'I've had my turn.'

Alice clung on to me crying helplessly (me still fat arse naked, nothing to soak it up.) There was no time to be tactful about it. I just pushed her knickers down again (yeah, like your boyfriend did last time you cried on his shoulder but I had unselfish motives.) I showed Sam the way with my free hand, waving in the air. It was nearly three (Sam checked

her watch) when Alice started heaving and yelling. I fluttered my middle finger in Sam's face 'Do it faster!' Alice was coming like the clappers. I mouthed at Sam, 'Don't stop now, twat! (Sorry.)' Then Alice threw one arm round Sam's neck and pulled her into a clinch with us (yawn.)

'Insure that finger for a million quid chick, worth every penny.'

'It was all right then?'

'Fantastic!'

'Me too, best I've had all week.'

'Hey, how about coming to Kirsty Anne's Monday night, we'll do the same for you.'

'She could give lessons Sandra.'

'Start an evening class. We can get pupils for you.' I counted on my fingers behind their heads as we were still hugging. 'Eleven girls at least. Call it six quid a girl, ten per cent commission for us or is fifteen all right? That's er—' Sam wasn't interested. I think she just wanted to get rid of us actually.

With her hourly rate, and extra for the extras, and a tip (hell, she earned it) it cost us quite a bit more than we made by doing Alfred but that's only fair if you think about it. One of him, two of us, one of her, it's productivity.