

DANCING IN THE RAIN

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My Eddie

Adrian Brooks

Tape?

Check.

We can't run out of tape now, can we? That would not be splendid. Not at all. Thank God he always kept some around. *My Eddie; ever so handy.*

There's always something that needs fixing. A creak in the floorboards, a misplaced bolt, maybe even a rickety fence if he can scrounge up enough. But he always had enough. Enough to fix anything, really. Well, most things. I mean, not *that*. Who could? There isn't enough tape in the world to fix *that*.

That would definitely have been quite splendid though. Fantastic even. But no matter. We work towards a different solution now. I work towards a different solution now. If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself, as Mother would tell me.

'He's no good for you, just wait for another one.' Over and over and over. I oh-so love proving her wrong. Mother was not often right.

I did not catch a cold on my seventeenth birthday when I refused to wear a coat. It was chilly at worst, not freezing.

The boys on Primbleton Street actually did think that I was far prettier with make-up. She never truly forgave me for borrowing her expensive wine red lipstick that night, but no matter. I even met *him* that night. *My Eddie; ever so handsome.*

She told me to listen to the nice doctor. The nice doctor would prescribe me olanzapine. Olanzapine did not work.

He would then prescribe me quetiapine. Quetiapine was better, but quetiapine still did not work.

Mother often does not, in fact, know best.



Bathtub?

Check.

It was ever so clean. Beautiful. Immaculate. It was quite impressive. I only ever spent maybe an hour a day on the bathtub. Nine o'clock to ten o'clock. Usually nine forty-five. It was the perfect time, just after I would drop Donnie off at school. Spray, wipe, repeat. Tetrachloroethylene, ammonia, chlorine. A dreadful smell when used so much, yes, but it would wear off by the time Eddie got home. Six o'clock, just before dinner. I would cook as a wife, and we would eat as a family. Beauty in its simplest form, I would say.

It was Mother who taught me how to cook. The oven. The stove. The microwave. No more than monsters at first. They would only burn. They would only destroy. It was not beautiful. A girl of only eight I was, and a silly one at that.

'Duty.' Over and over and over. 'It's what we have to do.' She was such a good teacher. Practise and practise, and practice makes perfect. It didn't burn as hot as it used to. Soon, I was making meals just as well as mother did. It was beautiful. A girl of only ten I was, and a smart one at that.

Mother didn't believe me, though. She never did. She would never let me be as good as her, not once. If I listened to her, I would still be alone after all. I'd be just like Margaret Foster, who lived down the street, in the old house. The one with the half-broken fence and the overgrown rose bushes dotting the veranda. Margaret Foster did not have an Eddie to help her clean up that cesspit.

Nobody liked Margaret Foster.

One more thing that mother was right about. Margaret Foster, I mean. Not anything else. *Especially* not Eddie.

‘Nothing but trouble, those Primbleton boys.’ I would never have met Eddie if Mother had her way. Thank God he loved me so much. *My Eddie; ever so passionate.*



Gloves?

Check.

A most important piece of attire, and one that I am all too familiar with. I clean up. It’s what I do. Unlike Eddie. He never cleans up. He tries though. If anything, he tries.

Hiding the numbers, but not well enough.

Creating alibis, but not well enough.

Lying to me, but not well enough.

My Eddie; ever so clumsy.

Mother absolutely abhorred lying. She abhorred it from the bottom of her soul. ‘Of good character.’ Over and over and over.

Planned.

Shaped.

Forged.

I soon learned the purity of truth; albeit through rather unconventional methods. Oh well, one cannot forge a masterpiece without chiselling deep into the marble now, can they? It would be most idiotic to pretend that everybody is born perfect.

Eddie was not perfect, I think.

Eddie was not perfect, I know.

Still, though, Mother was wrong about him. Eddie was not just another one of the infamous ‘Primbleton boys’. Eddie was smart, funny, good-looking. The model husband really. One to make all of the Margaret Fosters of the world turn their heads in absolute envy, I would contend.

My Eddie; ever so alluring.



Garbage bags?
Check.

The least appealing of all of my tools, I would say. One purpose: to hold the disgusting, the wretched. If Mother were here, I know what snide comments she would make. She always was one for judgement. Thankfully, Mother is not here right now. There is only me, my tools, and of course; my Eddie.

Oh Eddie, *why?* Why must you try so hard to prove Mother right? You never even liked her, yet all you do is offer merit to her claims.

There is a difference between you and I, Eddie. One crucial difference. We both wear masks, you see. Just as everyone else does.

My mask, embroidered in gold, diamonds and pearls.

Your mask, carved with filth, lies and shame.

Oh Eddie, so handy when it comes to everything but yourself.

Nobody can know. Nobody will know. Our world is a most curious place, is it not? One where we find shame in being a divorcee, yet sympathy in being a widow. Most odd. No matter. If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.

Tetrachloroethylene, ammonia, chlorine.

My Eddie; ever so sleepy.

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Hatchet?
Check.

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Adrian Brooks wrote this in 2015 when he was in Year 12 at Braybrook College in Victoria.