

AUTUMN LEAVES

SCENE 1

FOOTSTEPS COMING DOWN STAIRS. THE KETTLE IS
FILLED FROM THE TAP AND SWITCHED ON. CAT
PURRING QUIETLY, SOUND OF CREAKING DOOR
OPENING AND PURRING
GETS LOUDER

EDIE: Hello sweetie. Oh its cold this morning, wait out side
and I'll get you some milk, go on, outside now there's a good
girl, outside before he sees you,

LOUD FOOTSTEPS COMING DOWN THE STAIRS

TREVOR: Where's my mug of tea? How many times do I have to tell
you I want it ready by the time I come down? What the hell
have you been doing?

EDIE: Nothing the Kettle's on, I can't make it boil any faster,
why don't you read your paper while you're waiting?

TREVOR: I can't read the paper without a mug of tea,

you know that you do this to wind me up I know you do.

FINGERS DRUMMING ON THE TABLE

HOT WATER GUSHING INTO TEAPOT

EDIE: Dont be silly Trevor, Its coming now, just
hold on.

TREVOR: That toast better not be burnt!

EDIE: It's not burnt its just the way you like it, "Done both
sides and buttered to the edges"

TREVOR: But I haven't got my mug of tea, so the toast will be cold by
the time it arrives. How can I get that through your thick
head? (THROUGH CLENCHED TEETH) Tea and toast
together. compendo?

PLATE THROWN AT THE WALL

PAUSE

EDIE: (EDIE IS SNIFFING) There we are Trevor, hot mug of fresh tea and two slices of hot toast, “Done both sides and buttered to the edges”

TREVOR: For Christ sakes, you made a mug of tea and 2 slices of toast, what do you want a medal? Now leave me alone to read the paper.

SCENE 2.

EDIE: I've made you a snack to take with you. Some of that boiled ham, in crusty rolls with a flask of coffee; That should keep you going.

TREVOR: I'm going to the allotment, not Afghanistan.

(LOW) Dopey mare.

Get the cooker cleaned today it's looking grubby.

EDIE: But I've only just cleaned it?

TREVOR: Clean it again, you lazy bitch, instead of spending all day yakking to Martha, I'm sure she's got better things to do, she's an intelligent woman who won't want you hanging around her like a bad smell!

EDIE: She likes me; she's my friend, why can't
you understand that?

TREVOR: She's out of your league, what could
you possibly have to talk about? She is well traveled,
sophisticated, but you, you've never been out of Slough have
you? A woman like Martha would not be interested in you.
You're thick! Thick as mince. Thick and needy. "Needy Edie"
(MOCKING LAUGH)

DOOR SLAMS

EDIE: Yes Trevor, no Trevor, three bags full
Trevor. Bastard! Bastard!

HEAVY SIGH. TAP AT THE DOOR

Hi Martha, come on in.

MARTHA: Just saw him leaving, everything okay?

EDIE: Oh yes same old same old you know. Minky was waiting at the back door for her milk this morning.

MARTHA: You spoil her.

EDIE: I cant help it. I would love a little kitten of my own but Trevor doesn't like cats.

MARTHA: And what about what you like? How much longer can you go on with this Edie? You are an intelligent good looking woman. He doesn't deserve you.

EDIE: Oh thanks Martha, I don't know where I would be without you..... As a friend of course.

MARTHA: (LAUGHS OUT LOUD) I'm not flirting with you silly, I just think you deserve better. I have never really understood what women see in men, which I suppose explains the fact that I am gay, but you know what I mean. All those dangly bits and body hair, ugh!

EDIE: Oh I couldn't agree more, and I think sex is hugely over rated. Fridays and Mondays is "marital

rights night” But to be honest you could blink and miss it,
that’s about the long and short of it.

MARTHA: Good God Edie (MARTHA AND EDIE LAUGH)
Just say no, I mean you have rights, you know.

EDIE: Oh It’s just easier to go along with it, I’m tired of
fighting, (tone changes to more upbeat) and as I always say:
It’s “in, out, and shake it all about”

MARTHA: (SHRIEKS WITH LAUGHTER) how do you put up with him?

EDIE: (LOW) By fantasizing about his death in my head.

MARTHA: Seriously?

EDIE: Oh yes every day. Hemlock, overdose of sleeping
tablets, strangling him in his sleep, getting him drunk and
pushing him down the stairs. You name it I’ve thought about
it. I plan each little detail in my head. I dont think I have what
it takes to actually do it. The only way I will be free from
Trevor is if I kill myself.

MARTHA: What do you mean? Don't be ridiculous.

EDIE: Well if I try to kill myself and it goes wrong, I can always try again, but if I try to kill him and it goes wrong, I won't get a second chance, God I shudder to think.

MARTHA: He hasn't driven you to that has he? I mean he doesn't knock you about does he?

EDIE: His foul abusive tones sometimes ring so loudly in my ears, it's like a fist to the head. He humiliates me. It's how he gets his kicks. He derives pleasure from my fear, my pain. He's like a cat with a mouse, tormenting me until I surrender, but releasing me from his grip just in time.

MARTHA: Why do you stay with him?

EDIE: Where else would I go? and anyway, nice girls don't leave their husbands, that was always drummed into me by my cliché loving mother! "you made your bed blah blah blah."

Behind every good man is a great woman etc . She did give me one good cliché before she died though.

MARTHA: What was that?

EDIE: The best way to a mans' heart is.....straight through the front of his shirt with a sharp knife.

MARTHA GASPS AND THEN LAUGHS

MARTHA: Edie, you are terrible! Anyway I must go and let you get on, thanks for the coffee. Same time tomorrow, at mine?

EDIE: Yes, same time tomorrow.

MARTHA: Okay, see you then.

DOOR SLAMS. PAUSE

SCENE 3.

EDIE: Everything okay Trevor? I've made you some hot
coffee

TREVOR: Pull my socks off, they got a bit damp, and run upstairs and
get me a fresh pair, there's a good girl.

EDIE: I'll get your slippers as well, drink your coffee. (FADE)

TREVOR: Edie hurry up, my feet are getting cold.

EDIE: (OFF) I'm coming, I'm coming.

FOOTSTEPS RUNNING DOWN THE STAIRS

TREVOR: What took you so long, you useless bitch; no not a bitch, a
bitch is useful, a bitch is a female dog, able to bear offspring,
you weren't even able to do that were you?

EDIE: Why are you being so unkind Trevor, I've got your
socks.

TREVOR: Why does everything take you so long? you do it to annoy
me I know you do.

EDIE: No Trevor, I dont, I dont.

TREVOR: Yes Edie you do you do (MOCKINGLY)
God I can't bare to look at you. I'm going up for a kip. Wake me in exactly one hour I've got a little job for you, you're going to go up on that big high ladder and get all those conker leaves out of the gutter. They're a bloody nuisance, I don't know why the council doesn't come and chop the bloody lot down.

EDIE: (VOICE IS BREAKING UP) Can't we leave it until the morning Trevor? You know I don't like heights at the best of times, and its really windy today; it's going to be getting dark in a couple of hours.

TREVOR: (LOW) Scaredy cat, Scaredy cat, don't ya wish you weren't so fat. (LAUGHS) One hour!

SCENE 4

WIND IS WHISTLING WILDLY

TREVOR: (V.O) Right I'll hold the ladder, get up there and get as many leaves in that bucket as you can, when the buckets full, Pass them down and I'll empty them into the compost bin.
Comprendo dumbo? (LAUGHS),

EDIE: (V.O) I really don't want to go up there
Trevor, its very windy, cant we leave it until tomorrow?
Please Trevor (CRYING)

TREVOR: (V.O) Stop winging and get up there, it wont take long. Spare a thought for me holding the ladder and having to take your weight,

EDIE: (V.O) Are you holding it Trevor. Oh my God, It's really windy, the ladder doesn't feel safe, are you sure you've got it? (WIND WHISTLING) Trevor it's not flat against the roof, push it against the roof, the wind is lifting it, I can't hold on, Trevor Aghhhhhh.

LOUD CRASHING NOISE, MURMURING SOUND:

SILENCE

TREVOR: (V.O) Edie, Edie, (GROANING), Edie where are you

WIND HOWLING STORM LIKE CONDITIONS.

MARTHA: (V.O) Minky, Minky, come to mummy darling, where are you

WIND HOWLING

(V.O) Minky, Minky. Ahh there you are, where have you been, come on in. Minky, what are you doing?

(MARTHA CONT'D OVER)

CAT IS MEOWING AS IF DISTRESSED

MARTHA (CONT): (V.O) Minky? What is it? Oh my God Edie, Edie, Trevor what? What has happened? Oh God, I'll call an ambulance don't move.

Hello, emergency? Can you send an ambulance to 28 Lancaster Road? hurry please hurry hurry

AMBULANCE SIRENS

GROANING

MARTHA: Oh my God, is she going to be all right? I'll follow you to Wexham Park Hospital in my car.

SOUND OF METAL TROLLEY LOADED INTO
AMBULANCE. DOORS SLAM CLOSED AND
SIREN STARTS. (FADE)

SCENE 5

HOSPITAL A& E DEPARTMENT

DOCTOR: Relatives of Mr and Mrs Trevor Jones?

MARTHA: Yes doctor? I'm a close friend of Mr and Mrs Jones.

DOCTOR: I am sorry, we have been trying to resuscitate for the last hour, but have been unsuccessful, I am very sorry.

MARTHA: Oh God no! Edie, Edie (CRYING)

DOCTOR: Is there someone else I can call, a family member maybe?

MARTHA: No there is no one else, no family. I will come back to make all the arrangements, Oh wait a minute, Oh God, Trevor! Her husband, I think he is still being checked over in one of the cubicles, he doesn't know.

DOCTOR: Her husband? No, I don't think you understand, it's the husband Mr. Trevor Jones that could not be resuscitated, Mrs. Edith Jones is doing well. She's just getting cleaned up for a few cuts and bruises and a nasty bump on the head. She'll be in overnight, but should be fine by the morning. Mr. Jones was DOA I'm afraid, broken neck. Seems he took the full weight of his wife; internal bleeding.

MARTHA: Thank you doctor, thank you for all you've done. (PAUSE)

SCENE 6

CHAMPAGNE BEING Poured INTO

GLASSES

EDIE: Would you like a cheesy nibble Martha?

MARTHA: Love one Edie thanks, mmm, lovely. So Edie, what now?
You are a relatively wealthy woman, single.

EDIE: Widowed!

MARTHA: Sorry widowed. What are your plans? Will you be I
leaving Slough?

EDIE: No never, I was born here and I love everything about
it. its diverse and cosmopolitan, I dont know anywhere else
like it , and frankly I don't want to. I have everything I want
right here, but now is my time. Just listen to that peace and
quiet. I just want to spend some time with my little friend
(Purring and meowing) and be free. You don't know how
good that feels.

MARTHA: She is gorgeous such a pretty cat.
Can I ask you something Edie? Something that's been
bothering me.

EDIE: Sounds ominous? Ask away

MARTHA: Why were you clearing leaves from the gutter at 6pm on a
cold dark windy November evening? Little late wasn't it?

EDIE: We weren't clearing leaves at 6pm, we were clearing leaves at 4pm. you just found us at 6pm.

MARTHA: My God, you mean you were lying there for two hours. I don't understand?

EDIE: When Trevor sent me up that ladder, I was distraught. He knew I hated heights and he used to watch me squirming, he was a sadistic bastard, anyway, as I climbed the ladder, I wanted it to end, and as I told you before, I had thought this through, and it was easier to end my life than his. I had bought a half bottle of brandy from the village shop last Thursday, and I hid it in my

(EDIE CONT'D OVER)

EDIE: (CONT) coat. Just before we went outside, I drank it, partly for courage and partly because I knew it would numb the pain when I jumped.

MARTHA: You jumped? Oh God Eddie, I knew you were desperate, but I never thought....

EDIE:

Never thought what? That I would do it? Oh yes, I would do it. I would rather lose my life than live in his. Can you understand that Martha? Well, a twist of fate intervened and turned everything upside down. Just as I started to hyperventilate I braced myself to make that jump, it was high, so high, I knew I could die. Just then a gust of wind lifted the ladder high up into the air and as it came down: Bang! The ladder hit him and I bounced off. I was flat on my back. I guess I was in shock because I started to shake uncontrollably, after that I don't remember a thing. I must have passed out. When I came around I had a pain in my left temple. At first, I was afraid to move, but then I heard him groaning, and I knew I had to do something. I looked over at him and he was lying on his back sort of propped up slightly by the conker tree stump he had fallen against when the ladder hit him.

(TREVOR CONT

OVER)

TREVOR (CONT) I knew his neck was broken by the way his head was. He had a lot of blood coming out of his ear and mouth. I knew it was serious. I knew what I should have done, but this was fate.

MARTHA:

Fate? Edie, you left him to die?

EDIE: I may have watched him, slowly slipping away, but he lost consciousness quite soon after that and I watched as he drew his last breath. It was not distressing, in fact it was quite surreal, but despite the conditions, it was very peaceful. I didn't know the ladder was going to fall on him Martha. It was fate, meant to be. So that was how it all ended, and now it's just me, and my little kitten.

MARTHA: Oh Edie, I do understand, I really do.

She is beautiful. What are you going to call her?

EDIE: I was thinking...“Conkers” what do you think?

MARTHA: Edie, I think you may have committed the perfect crime. All rather clever I must say.

CLINK OF GLASSES

EDIE: A toast to life and to Conkers

END

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