

mybooxite.com

Rita and the Muscle

JOHN COLLINGS

CHARACTERS

Rita - as old as possible. Mature.

Muscle - aged around 25. As hard as nails or so he thinks.

Winter afternoon

Rita is dressed in a grubby dressing gown, and sits on a chair in a room (with a window) reading a *Hello* magazine. Next to Rita is another empty chair. Rita reads the magazine for a few moments. Then enters Muscle.

MUSCLE (most of Muscle's lines are said aggressively and with frustration): This place is a pigsty.

RITA: You could help.

MUSCLE: I have to organise things.

RITA: Oh, the times I've prayed.

MUSCLE: Oh yeah... (pause) Go on, say it!

Silence

MUSCLE (continues): Dirty underwear, in the bathroom.

Pause

RITA: It's quiet. I could have done my washing.

MUSCLE: When was the last time you... cleaned the microwave?

RITA: It's not that bad.

MUSCLE: This place, it's not what it used to be. You have let it go. (pause) Your hair could do with a wash, and the way you walk around in that old dressing gown, you're a disgrace.

RITA: I've just got up.

Pause

MUSCLE: Is there a smell of fish in here?

Pause

RITA: I fancied a bit of fish for my tea.

Pause

MUSCLE: You need to smarten up, you're getting in a mess.

RITA: I don't know what I've got into.

Pause

MUSCLE: Take Ruby next door. She always greets you with a smile.

RITA: I pass her on the street. She just ignores me.

MUSCLE: She don't have a hair out of place. Knows how to dress as well. She's got what it takes. She greets you with a smile.

Pause

RITA: I don't know what you do with your life.

Pause

MUSCLE: You could do with a face lift. I know a man who can change your appearance so you're not recognised. You could disappear without a trace, no one would know where you had gone. I could recommend him to you, he could make you disappear.

RITA: But, I don't want to disappear.

MUSCLE: Disappear. Change your location.

Pause

RITA: Is the bell working?

MUSCLE: Yes!

RITA: Are the batteries alright?

MUSCLE: Yes. It's your batteries that are dead.

RITA: My batteries?

MUSCLE: There's no spark left in them. You walk 'round like the living dead.

RITA: Well you're... not what you used to be.

MUSCLE: What do you mean?

RITA: That t-shirt doesn't seem to have been ironed. I always kept your t-shirts cleaned and ironed. Who's looking after you now?

MUSCLE: Never you mind.

RITA: Do you remember...?

MUSCLE: Oh no, don't start reminiscing. I knew an old girl once, she used to just sit there, reminiscing. Most of her day was spent in yesteryear. (pause) In the end, she had sat so still, for so long, she became immobile. She couldn't move a muscle. The only thing she could move were her eyelids, her windows to yesteryear. If you looked into her eyes you could see something was going on. (pause) But her body had stopped moving, she was trapped. (pause) In the end, she had to be carried out of her flat, she had forgotten how to use her limbs.

Pause

RITA: I could have gone shopping.

Rita goes to the window and looks out

RITA (continues): The road's full of cars, it's busy, but no one's on foot.

MUSCLE: I could ring and find out, you wouldn't be lonely. You would be taken care of. They cater for your every need.

RITA: If I've looked out of this window once, I've looked out of it a thousand times.

Pause

RITA (continues): I can remember before the shopping centre was built, the road was full of houses on that side. (pause) 'Til they knocked them down, to make way for the new shopping centre. (pause) There were more people about. (pause) Now it's only this side of the street that's left.

Pause

MUSCLE: I knew a woman once, who refused to move on, they wanted to build a bypass, it was going to run right through her house, but she refused to move. So they built the road to go 'round her house. (pause) She's still there to this day. She's gone deaf, with the noise of the cars passing by, and can't sleep for the cars' headlights shining in through her bedroom window.

Pause

RITA: I had a son once...

MUSCLE: Oh, don't start that again.

RITA: He was such a lovely child...

MUSCLE: Bloody hell!

RITA: He was so beautiful...

MUSCLE: He's dead.

RITA: He was so innocent...

MUSCLE: He's bloody dead!

Blackout
