

FENG SHUI ON A SUNDAY

by

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A living room containing a kitchenette, a sofa and a table. THOMAS stands in the kitchenette, he has forgotten what he was doing. MARTHA comes out of the wardrobe. It is Sunday morning. They are both dressed in dressing gowns.

THOMAS We need to find somewhere else.

MARTHA Do you think so? Why do you think so?

THOMAS I can't breathe in here. I want coffee. Don't you want a cup?

MARTHA You have a cup.

THOMAS Don't you want some?

MARTHA No.

THOMAS I do.

MARTHA Do you want me to do it for you?

THOMAS No. I'll do it. Don't you ever think we're too old to live like this?

MARTHA What's age got to do with it?

THOMAS Can you pass me the filters, I can't reach them when you are standing there.

MARTHA Do you want me to move?

THOMAS No, just pass me the filters. Or move if you want to. Either move or pass me the filters.

MARTHA I'm happy with things as they are.

THOMAS What?

MARTHA This is all I could ask for. I don't need more space.

THOMAS I do, I can't breathe in here.

MARTHA Yes, you said so.

THOMAS It's already half eleven, we aren't even dressed yet.

MARTHA It's Sunday.

THOMAS I've never understood your ignorance towards Sundays. I consider them the most valuable day of the week.

MARTHA You are sweet Thomas. What do you want for breakfast?

THOMAS Who are you?

MARTHA I'm making toast for myself.

THOMAS I woke up in the middle of the night and I couldn't figure out where I was, or why. Then I saw you and I thought, who is that person.

MARTHA I'm your wife, remember? Sure you don't want some toast?

THOMAS I'm not hungry.

MARTHA I think your coffee is done.

THOMAS Have you ever thought of this room? That it's always been like this? That this is just how we happened to put the furniture when we moved in. But have we ever sat down and thought through what the best solution would be for this room? Have we ever sat down and thought through what the best place would be for every piece of furniture?

Pause.

What?

MARTHA I didn't say anything.

THOMAS You made a sound.

MARTHA You are edgy today.

THOMAS I just think it's about time we rearrange this room. That we enforce a plan on it and don't just let it be the way it is because it's the way it has always been. Do you disagree with me?

MARTHA No, not at all.

THOMAS Good, then we agree in the matter. Where do we begin?

MARTHA Can I have my breakfast first?

THOMAS I think we should have the sofa this way, facing the window, so that you can sit in it and look out. The best would be if we could put it here, but we can't do that because of the stupid wall. (*Refers to the fourth wall.*)

MARTHA I like the wall. It's the only divider in this home. Without it we wouldn't be able to see the difference between you and me anymore.

THOMAS It's a stupid place to put a wall. It makes it nearly impossible to arrange the furniture in a satisfying manner.

MARTHA You can move it if you want to.

THOMAS Can I?

MARTHA As long as it remains somewhere.

THOMAS It's a wall, Martha. How the hell am I supposed to move a wall?

MARTHA Only if you want to.

THOMAS Help me move the sofa, I can't do it on my own.
MARTHA helps THOMAS to move the sofa.

MARTHA Where do you want it?

THOMAS Towards the wall, as I said.

MARTHA I thought you wanted it through the wall.

THOMAS Don't be silly.

MARTHA I thought that's what you were whining about.

THOMAS I'm not whining. Just put it here. And the table.

MARTHA The table as well?

THOMAS Yeah, obviously. It's supposed to be in front of the sofa.

MARTHA That's where it was before.

THOMAS No it stood here before. Where it is still standing, we haven't moved it yet.

MARTHA But the sofa stood there as well. It still stood in front of the sofa.

THOMAS Yes, but now it's going to stand in front of the sofa at the other end of the room.

MARTHA I thought you wanted to rearrange things.

THOMAS That's what I'm doing.

MARTHA No, you are just putting them at the other side of the room.

THOMAS So that they will face the window.

MARTHA So really it's the window we're moving.

THOMAS Yes, if you say so. Should we move the table now?

They move the table.

MARTHA Is this good?

THOMAS Yeah.

MARTHA Do you feel happier now?

THOMAS sits in the sofa, looks out of the window.

THOMAS When did our life become a routine?

MARTHA The same moment we made it one.

THOMAS Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and I don't know who I am. I imagine I can be anyone. Maybe I could. Maybe I could wake up one day and be Arnold Schwarzenegger.

MARTHA Why would you want to be Arnold Schwarzenegger?

THOMAS I'm not saying I want to, just that I could.

MARTHA Why don't you choose Mahatma Gandhi?

THOMAS Because that's not the point. The point is that I could be anyone. But then I see you and I realise I must be me and that hurts. That hurts all the way into my soul.

MARTHA I can see how that must be a painful realisation.

THOMAS And still I want to live with you. I want to share my life with you. And all I ask for is the smallest bit of recognition. The smallest bit of acknowledgement that I mean something to you. That I fulfil some other meaning in your life than of being the tormentor.

MARTHA What do you want me to say?

THOMAS That you love me.

MARTHA You are the only one I have.

THOMAS Say that you love me.

MARTHA We should make you some breakfast. I'll pop some toast in, do you want that?

THOMAS I want you to say that you love me.

MARTHA And we'll make you another cup of coffee. You need some breakfast, you know you can't think straight before you've eaten.

THOMAS I think you are afraid. I think the reason you don't let me see your inside is that there is nothing to see. The reason you don't let anyone in is that you empty and you don't want anyone to know about it.

MARTHA When did you become so mean?

THOMAS When did you stop loving me?

MARTHA I have never loved you.

Blackout, except for a spotlight on THOMAS.

THOMAS I would like to sing a song.
And now, the end is near
And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear
I'll state my case of which I'm certain

I've lived a life that's full
I've traveled each and every highway
And more, much more than this
I did it my way

Thank you! Thank you!

The normal light comes on again and the spotlight disappears. MARTHA is lying on the sofa, facing the back of it.

THOMAS That was a delicious breakfast. Absolutely delicious. Why are you lying on the sofa, are you tired? It's a wonderful day today, we should do something. Do you know why I love Sundays? Because everyone else hates them. It's the pressure of it. One day of freedom and then you know you're back to work. People hate that. The day is ruined before it starts, but that's what I like. It takes the pressure off it. There are no limit of possibilities for what you can do on a ruined day. I know what you are thinking. That's not logical, you think, I base my arguments on my own conclusions, which I draw from the same arguments, and you are right, but it works for me, so hey, what's the problem? I feel good today. Happy in some way. I got this song in my head. Ah, what's it called? The Frank Sinatra one. The only one everyone knows?

No answer.

THOMAS What? Yeah, that's it. I did it my way. Is it called 'I did it my way' or just 'my way'?

No answer.

THOMAS Neither do I. What does it matter, we know what we are talking about. I think it's just 'My way'. He's dead now, isn't he? Where does time take us?

Pause.

What's up with you today, why are you lying like that?

MARTHA turns around. She is bleeding from her forehead.

THOMAS Oh, my God, you're bleeding. What's happened to you?

MARTHA Stay away from me.

THOMAS When did this happen? Did you fall or something? Did you cut yourself on the bread knife?

MARTHA Stop it.

THOMAS You are bleeding all over the sofa.

MARTHA Stay away from me.

THOMAS I just want to...

MARTHA Don't touch me.

THOMAS I want to help you.

MARTHA Then stay away from me.

THOMAS I didn't even hear you falling.

MARTHA I didn't fall.

THOMAS Then why don't you tell me what happened to you?

MARTHA Do you really want that?

THOMAS Yes.

Pause.

MARTHA Once upon a time there was a sweet little girl.
Everyone who saw her liked her. One day her mother
said to her, 'Here is a piece of cake and a bottle
of wine. Take them to your grandmother. She is sick
and weak, and they will do her well.'

 The grandmother lived out in the woods and when the
girl entered a wolf came up to her. The girl did
not know what a wicked animal he was, and the wolf
thought to himself, 'Now that sweet young thing is
a tasty bite for me'. He had scarcely finished the
thought before he jumped with a single leap and ate
up the poor little girl.

 As soon as the wolf had satisfied his desires, he
climbed back into bed, fell asleep, and began to
snore very loudly.

THOMAS Is that all?

MARTHA Yes.

THOMAS And how does it end?

MARTHA The girl marries the wolf.

THOMAS And they live happily ever after?

MARTHA No, they just live.

THOMAS I want something, no I need something. I want something and I need something. I don't know what.

MARTHA I'll get the bottle.

THOMAS When did our life become a routine?

MARTHA Your life, not mine.

MARTHA goes to the kitchenette and pours two glasses of whiskey. THOMAS stands and looks at the audience.

THOMAS Wasn't there a wall here once upon a time?

MARTHA Where?

THOMAS Right here.

MARTHA No, just you and me.

THOMAS I could have sworn there was a wall here. Right here.

MARTHA There was never a wall. There was just you and me and the big bad wolf.

THOMAS It's already dark outside.

MARTHA Another day over and done with.

THOMAS The days are getting shorter and shorter.

MARTHA Technically they are getting longer.

THOMAS Yes, I know. I know they are technically getting longer, that's not what I meant. I want something.

MARTHA Have some more.

THOMAS I want you.

MARTHA You should have thought of that before you killed me.

THOMAS I haven't killed you.

MARTHA Yes, you have.

THOMAS Of course I haven't killed you.

MARTHA How much do you want to bet?

THOMAS I bet my life I haven't killed you. You are standing here in front of me.

MARTHA opens a kitchen drawer and takes out a newspaper clipping. She gives it to THOMAS.

MARTHA I saved the announcement.

THOMAS 'During the final interrogations Thomas Stonewell confessed to the murder of his wife, Martha Stonewell, on Friday the tenth of January two thousand and eight [change this date to the day of the performance].'

 What is this? How did you do that?

MARTHA Read more.

THOMAS 'Judge Edward Peterson sentenced Mr. Stonewell to die by lethal injection for killing his wife with a bread knife, calling the death cruel and heartless.'

MARTHA This is what you killed me with. *(She hands him the bread knife.)*

THOMAS We don't even have the death sentence in this country, this makes no sense.

MARTHA You bet your life and you just lost.

THOMAS Can I have another drink please. I don't like these games of yours.

MARTHA It's not my game.

THOMAS Killing his wife with a bread knife, you have a morbid imagination.

MARTHA It's your game Thomas. It's your imagination.

THOMAS We should move the sofa. What did we think when we put it here? It's literally an inappropriate place for a sofa.

MARTHA You bet your life Thomas.

THOMAS It's a complete irrational position for a sofa. We need some feng shui in this room.

MARTHA And you lost.

THOMAS Feng shui, ever heard of that? Spatial arrangement and orientation in relation to the qi, the flow of energy. Wind and water, heaven and earth. Yin and yang, get it? It's about harmony.

MARTHA A bet is a bet.

THOMAS It's about harmony, but I can't find any harmony when I'm surrounded by chaos.

MARTHA Leave the sofa, I like it where it is.

THOMAS It's a stupid place to have a sofa.

MARTHA I don't think so. I think it's a perfect place. You can sit and look out through the window.

THOMAS When do we ever have time to sit and look out through the window?

MARTHA On Sundays.

THOMAS It's not feng shui.

MARTHA I like it as it is.

MARTHA sits down in the sofa.

THOMAS Don't do that. Get out of the sofa. Get out of it and help me move it.

Pause.

I said get out of it. Get out of it and help me move it.

MARTHA What are you going to do, kill me with the bread knife?

THOMAS realises he is holding the bread knife.

THOMAS Oh, the bread knife. How silly, I didn't even know I was holding it.

MARTHA gets out of the sofa.

THOMAS No wait, you didn't think...

Nervous laugh.

You didn't think I was threatening you, did you? Look, I don't know why I was holding it, I didn't even know I had it in my hand. Stop looking at me like that. Stop looking at me like I was some kind of psychopath. I was going to fix the armrest of the sofa, that was what I was going to do.

THOMAS goes to the sofa and starts carving the armrest with the bread knife. MARTHA takes a step back.

THOMAS This is what I was planing to do, what did you think?

MARTHA Drop the knife.

THOMAS I'm just fixing the armrest.

MARTHA It doesn't need to be fixed.

THOMAS No, no, I'm just... holding it. I will put it away in a second.

MARTHA Drop it.

THOMAS Martha look, I would never harm you. You know I would never harm you.

THOMAS takes a step towards MARTHA. MARTHA runs and hides in the wardrobe.

THOMAS Oh, so you are hiding in the wardrobe now? This relationship is getting weirder every day. You can't hide from the big bad wolf. This is silly. Well, I might as well reposition the sofa while you're in there. It's a stupid place for a sofa.

THOMAS moves the sofa to the middle of the room and puts it standing on its side. He then attacks it with the bread knife.

THOMAS Now that's better. Come out now and I'll show you our new home. Our new feng shui home. Martha? Did you hear me? Have you fallen asleep in there? Time to come out of the wardrobe.

THOMAS opens the wardrobe. It is empty. THOMAS starts singing, but his voice is drowned in the sound of police sirens.

THOMAS I've loved, I've laughed and cried
 I've had my fill, my share of losing
 And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing
 To think I did all that
 And may I say, not in a shy way,
 "Oh, no, oh, no, not me, I did it my way"