

POST-MARITAL  
a spoken word play for dancers

halved  
by  
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challenge 26

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DRAFT 1.0

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

JC  
A MAN  
STEPH

### AT A BUS STOP

(Lights up)

(STEPH sits on a bench. JC enters.)

**STEPH**

You okay!?

**JC**

I'm alright. Howbout you?

**STEPH**

Fine, just fine.

So?  
Did it go well?

**JC**

The date? No, not so well.

**STEPH**

What? Maybe you're just not ready?

**JC**

No. I mean yes that too but—

**STEPH**

But what?! Tell me what happened!!

**JC**

Okay, well,  
the online profile was hot  
the dude was not  
real  
nice  
words  
meant  
little  
attempts to control  
where we might go  
what might be said  
who might be led.

(While JC talks, a man enters stage right and stands front right waiting.)

**JC (CONT'D)**

Smoldering eyes onscreen  
 flattened to rheumy in person,  
 openly intelligent in text  
 materialized as pretense  
 with every exchange  
 a move  
 an effort  
 a grab  
 for a pawn  
 or better  
 a castle  
 or a queen who can move  
 any which way she will.

My email suggested the gallery cafe and he replied  
 Perhaps some walking together,  
 I prefer fresh outside air, he said,  
 to being inside a room or building.

(JC walks up to the man and the pair then dance /walk along in front of the shops while JC continues the telling. The dance/movement will be choreographed to somehow complement the substance of the monologue. The man does not speak.)

**JC (CONT'D)**

so we met outside campus gates  
 to which I walked  
 half an hour,  
 and then we walked  
 two blocks  
 to the mall.

The poor dear was cold  
 so I followed him in  
 through  
 and out again  
 and we walked  
 another two blocks  
 to a movie theatre.

Just a minute, he said,  
 so I followed him in  
 and said, this is a movie theatre.

Yes, he said,  
 looking at me as if I am barmy  
 (which I am).

I don't want to see a movie, I said.  
 No ?! he said, incredulous  
 no, I don't, I said

and I turned  
 so he followed  
*me* out again.

Don't you like movies ?  
 he wanted to know.  
 yes, I said, but we just met,  
 I don't want to sit  
 in the dark  
 with you  
 I want to talk  
 and walk.

But he argued,  
 sometimes silence is nice.  
 yes, I said,  
 sometimes silence is nice  
 with someone you know.

We walked two more blocks  
 or maybe four  
 and he asked many questions  
 and I answered some  
 but also refused to answer  
 questions he should not have asked.

And the poor dear was cold  
 so I followed him in  
 to a bookstore  
 and he wanted to know  
 my favourite section  
 while lacking his own.

I have never read a book  
 from cover to cover, he said,  
 I always open a book at random  
 and read just what is there.

Refusing to identify a favourite section  
 I led him directly to the discount shelves  
 and began skimming the sea for treasures.

I read the back of some novel about some woman  
 in some other place experiencing some hardship  
 while he stood nearby fidgeting spluttering muttering  
 wanting all my answers while offering none of his own.

I was sorry

for the author  
 that her book was reduced  
 to a dollar ninety-nine  
 but I put it down  
 and picked up another.

He did not pick up  
 or even touch

a book

but he wanted to know  
which authors I like.

Pointing to a stack of coffee-table volumes,  
reduced,  
he asked,  
Do you like *him* ?

Him who ?  
I looked away from the novel in my hand  
to glance at a collection of Edgar Allan Poe.  
*Poe* ?  
I said,  
yes, I do.  
setting down the book I held  
I bent to look at lower shelves.

And *Lovecraft*, he asked, do you like *him* ?

Lovecraft ?  
I don't know, I said.

You're not a follower ?  
he wanted to know.

A follower ?            I laughed.

I stood up and looked at him.

No, I've never read his books.  
does he have followers then ?

And are *you* a follower ?

I laughed again.

Yes, he has followers but I am not, he said.

Still laughing I walked out  
and he followed me to the street.

He said he wanted to go to a secondhand bookshop  
but did not know where one was.  
I told him there were several  
eight or ten blocks away  
and, pointing to a coffee shop, I said  
I want to go get a coffee now.

You want a coffee ?

Yes, I do.

Oh.  
Well.  
There *is* a Tim Horton's  
over near the metro,

you know where that is,  
right ? he said.

Yes, I said,  
five blocks away  
and *there*  
is a coffee shop  
across the street.

Why don't we go there ?

Aren't you fussy about your coffee ?

I like coffee, I said.

I'd like to get coffee now.

I'd like to drink it while walking  
to the bookshops.

I don't like Starbucks, he said.  
Okay, I said, I'll get my coffee here,  
then we can go to Tim's for your coffee.  
He began to argue but I crossed the street  
and he followed me into the cafe.

Back outside  
coffee in hand  
I reached into my bag  
pulled out the pack of cigarettes  
purchased that morning

my first in days

and I opened it.

I knew from his profile  
that *he* did not smoke.  
He frowned and said,  
So you smoke.

Yes, I said,  
lighting a cigarette.

Sometimes I do.

I guess you don't, I said.  
No, it is not part of my spiritual practice, he said.

Having already heard of many things  
not part of his spiritual practice  
and nothing which was part of it,

I said, I didn't think it would be.

We then walked the five blocks to Tim Horton's.

He wanted to sit inside but I had a coffee  
from Starbuck's  
so suggested walking.

No, he said, I want to sit.  
We will go  
that way  
I know a place.

The bookstores are the other way, I said.

After some discussion, we sat in the university mezzanine  
drank our respective coffees and talked.

So, you read minds, he asked.

Read minds ? I said, what makes you say that ?

Don't all witches read minds, he said, and you are a witch,  
right ?!

ummm.....  
I wouldn't call myself that.

So are you a witch then ?  
Do you read minds ? I asked.

HaHaha, No, No. I just read people, I can see how they are,  
he said.

I see, I said.

Are you finished your coffee, he asked, crumpling his cup.

No, I said, but I can drink while we walk.

Oh no, he said, that's not-

Oh yes, I said.  
I put on my hat and led  
the way out.

Back on the street  
he told me he wanted to stop  
at the dollar store

to buy dogfood.

I felt sorry

for his dog,  
and said,

okay.

We walked a block  
to *another* mall.

he opened the door  
and I said,  
I don't want to go in the mall,  
I'll wait here.

But it's too cold, he said.

I don't find it cold, I told him.  
My coat was open  
and my gloves were off.

But we're supposed to be doing stuff together.  
That's the point, he said.

So do your shopping another time, I replied.

But I need to get this stuff, he said.

Then I will wait here, I repeated.  
I don't want to shop.

Don't you need to buy *anything*? he asked.

No, I said, I'll wait.

The bookshops were all closed.  
So we walked back  
toward the metro.

He asked a lot more questions.  
I answered with more questions.

He wanted to know  
*exactly* how far away I lived.

He wanted to know  
many details about my diet

and wanted to tell me  
what *I* should really eat

and, he said,  
he wanted to meet  
again  
to go book shopping  
together.

So I wished him well  
and said,  
no thanks,  
bye.

(JC goes back to the bus stop and the MAN exits stage right while looking back and waving.)

**STEPH**

So I guess this means you're not going to see him again?!

BLEEP, BLEEP.

(JC looks at the phone and texts something.)

**JC**

No way. Going on that date only made me feel worse about being alone.

**STEPH**

Really?

**JC**

Yeah. It's just so...

**STEPH**

What?

**JC**

It's hard sometimes.

BLEEP, BLEEP.

(JC looks at the phone and texts something.)

**STEPH**

The dating?

**JC**

Yes, I guess. That too.  
But I meant the divorce.  
Divorce is *hard*.

My brother cried  
for a year and a half  
after leaving his wife  
changing his life

and now —  
Oh.

BLEEP, BLEEP.

(JC looks at STEPH and smiles.)

**STEPH**

What?

**JC**

I'm going book shopping after work!

(Blackout. End.)

