

Some Day Soon
by
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INT. GARDEN SHED / NEWCASTLE, NSW - DAY

The shed is a typical large storage area for a suburban house. The space is lit by two skylights, through which warm, honey-coloured sunlight pours and dapples on the floor and tools. A waist-high bench extends from each side of the closed door to each corner. Along the back of the shed sits a small desk and chair, with notepads, pencils and a clip-on lamp attached to a shelf overhead. The floor is clean, and a broom leans against the door. The bench is covered in half-built guitars, with necks and bodies strewn carelessly across the work surface. An open toolbox, tabletop lathe, sander and pair of industrial earmuffs clutter the bench on the other side.

JACK BRADY, an American, 53, sits on a stool with his head bent over a fully-assembled but not yet strung guitar. He is sanding the instrument by hand, buffing it softly and holding it up to the light to inspect his progress every few strokes. He holds the guitar gently, cradling it in his lap. Jack, dressed in an old t-shirt and shorts, has a the grizzled blond-grey beard of someone who can't be bothered to shave, and a flat mop of hair that has begun to recede at the temples. His hair is plastered against his skull and he is sweating lightly. He wears half-rimmed glasses for the close work, that he pulls from his nose and lets hang loose on a cord around his neck each time he raised the guitar.

Satisfied at last, Jack clears space on the bench with one hand and lays down the guitar. He moves listlessly to the desk, where he drops into the chair. He picks up a pencil, pulls the nearest notebook open and begins to scribble. The pencil point breaks and he gives up. He glances at a half-open newspaper, scanning the 'Help Wanted' ads with his finger. Several of the ads have been circled and crossed out; Jack crumples the paper and drops it to the floor. He stands to leave, then checks his watch and retrieves another guitar from the wall, settling on the stool and strumming nonsense chords for a moment or two. The chords resolve into:

OPENING SONG 2.5 MINUTES ('A Little Blue') / OPENING CREDITS

INT. BRADYS' BEDROOM / NEWCASTLE - NIGHT

JACK lies in bed with the remote control in his hand, flipping past late-night television channels. His wife BARBARA, Australian, 48, is sitting up in bed with her laptop and papers neatly in piles on the bedside table.

Even in this casual setting, she looks chic, with a trendy haircut and fresh auburn highlights. They are both dressed in warm pyjamas, with an electric heater beside the bed and several layers of blankets. BARBARA absently chews the earpiece of her green-rimmed glasses with her eyes closed, then presses her glasses sharply onto the bridge of her nose and taps for a few seconds into her computer.

BARBARA

I've been on to the agency again. One of the consultants said she's free on Friday at ten. The redundancy money's fine for now, but you'll drive us both mad, alone in that shed all day and half the night, getting up to who knows—

JACK

(softly, shaking his head at the TV)
Damn Knights, up four until the last three minutes and they still can't pull it off. Thought they'd win this one for sure.

Jack turns off the television and twists to switch off his light. Barbara sighs and scowls at her husband's back.

BARBARA

Six weeks since your last day at the steel plant, and you still won't hear of it. Why won't you just talk to her?

Jack lies still, his eyes open. Barbara rustles her papers loudly, and taps hard on the keyboard.

BARBARA

(to herself)

Only trying to help. Not good for you, all that time alone. You haven't even been to the pub with the boys since Graham's 60th birthday bash.

Jack is silent, pretending to sleep.

BARBARA

Like talking to stone. You make that appointment, you hear me? I've done all I can.

INT. BRADYS' KITCHEN - MORNING

BARBARA is standing up, eating a piece of toast with one hand and checking her e-mail on her PDA with the other. JACK is sitting at the breakfast table, playing with his cereal and staring out the window.

BARBARA

Board meeting with the other partners tonight. I'll be late.

JACK

I better see to that tree. One more storm and it'll be on top of us.

Barbara rolls her eyes and swallows the rest of her juice in one gulp.

BARBARA

(mechanically)

Dinner's in the freezer. And for God's sake change your clothes. You've been moping around in those daks for almost a week.

Jack is quiet. Barbara rinses her plate and glass, stacking them neatly on the drying rack. She picks up her blazer, checks the heel of one of her stylish shoes and drops her PDA into her laptop case. On her way out the door, she kisses Jack on the top of his head.

BARBARA

I do worry about you, Jack Brady. Thirty years on the job—course you don't know what to do with yourself. You just have to get up and get out there.

Jack looks up as though seeing her for the first time.

JACK

Time for the music now. And I'm halfway through the first draft of my book.

BARBARA

(nodding vigorously as she dismisses him with a wave)

Connect. Live in the world, instead
of in your own lonely head, all those
chapters and lyrics going nowhere.

JACK

Finished chapter four last week. A
whole new direction than I thought
it'd be, but it's looking good, I-

BARBARA

Be good for you, to be up and about.
Doing something useful.

Barbara snatches up her car keys and her sunglasses and
sweeps out into the sunshine. After the car leaves the
driveway, Jack shakes his head and stands up slowly.

JACK

(muttering as he dumps the dishes
into the sink)

Do something. Be something. Be
someone. A lifetime doing something I
hate to be someone I'm not.

From his shorts pocket, Jack retrieves a sheaf of papers
and a pencil. He sits down at the table, drumming his
fingers, and after a moment begins to write, furiously.
His hand is almost a blur as he scribbles. Jack starts to
hum, and a SONG 2.5 MINUTES leads us into the next scene.

('Old Lady Crow') OVERLAPPING SCENE

INT. CLARA'S LIVING ROOM / NEWCASTLE - NIGHT

CLARA, 28, Asian-Australian, is draped over a couch with
a mobile phone at her ear. The room is furnished with
mismatched chairs and a bright rug that covers scuffed
hardwood floors. Houseplants fill every surface and in
each corner of the room, tendrils of asparagus fern and
flowering peace lilies. A sliding door to a balcony
leading off in one direction, and a narrow corridor
leading to the rest of the flat. Clara has long dark hair
that swishes past her shoulders and is held in place by a
rainbow headband. She is dressed in swirls of colour,
with flared Thai fisherman's pants and a skimpy singlet
that bares her midriff as she stretches like a cat. Her
movements are languid and she has an open smile.

CLARA

(laughing)

Said no, Callum. Tell your mum to hold the booties for a year or two. I've got to get through my grad work first.

(beat)

CLARA

(her smile tightening)

Been over this a hundred times. My scholarship is here, and with my portfolio already full from the work in Africa, my advisor says eighteen months, tops. Then I'll be back in Adelaide and our mums can plan the baby shower.

Clara listens intently, her face shifting into a frown.

CLARA

I know. Me, too. If you didn't have to work, I'd say fly up next-

As Clara is interrupted by the person on the other end of the phone line, her flatmate rushes in the front door. JESS, 25, short and slightly overweight with several ear and nose piercings, is dressed in a nurse's uniform and carrying an armload of textbooks. She mouths 'hello' to Clara with a big smile, drops the books on the coffee table and kicks off her shoes. Clara returns the wave, pointing to the phone and shaking her head.

CLARA

(her voice rising)

No argument. Work's important, I'm the first one to understand that I-

(beat)

CLARA

Tone? No tone, Callum Gray. I'm not some child, there's no need to scold me like I've left my hat at the playground. You think it's easy, being so far away, wondering how we're going to-

(beat)

CLARA

Yes, I chose it. But we agreed, it's only six months, I'll be back before your birthday in July. Only, I thought there'd be more time to—we're both working so hard, and sometimes it's hard to see the—what?

Clara rakes her fingers through her hair and takes a deep breath)

CLARA

Better than I'd hoped. The project's already recruited forty families for the study, and it looks like the partnership grant with Norway will come through. Should have all the data by the time I'm ready to come home. What did you mean about how I sounded before, I can't believe you think I'd—

Jess disappears into the kitchen and returns with a packet of Tim Tams, which she puts on the coffee table. Standing, she crunches into a biscuit as she leafs through the pile of post on the table. Clara draws her legs up to her chest and sits up.

CLARA

(more quietly)

You're right, let's not. Long hours, ditto. You'll be the youngest partner in your firm yet, Cal. They're lucky to—okay. Okay, text me later. I'll tell her. Me, too.

Clara drops her phone and grabs a biscuit. She glances up at Jess.

CLARA

Callum says hello. Not ready to talk about the rest of it. What's all that?

JESS

Picked these up from the Co-op on the way home from my shift. Remind me to take a backpack next time. Carrying all these on the bus? I've had better ideas.

Seeing Clara's defeated look, Jess stops and sits next to her friend, pulling Clara's feet across her lap.

JESS

You and Callum have another fight?

CLARA

We don't fight. We don't even discuss. It's not a fight if we're on two different topics entirely, y'know?

JESS

Don't be so hard on the boy, Clar. He just wants to settle down.

CLARA

Who's in a hurry? Wasn't enough for him that we got married like a shot, two months after I got back from my work in Malawi. Barely had time to unpack, let alone get over a year in that overcrowded clinic, children dying left right and centre, and he wants to talk kids? Okay, fair enough that his mother's a crazy person and rings him up every three days to make sure he's eating alright now that the bad wife has abandoned him, but this baby thing's ridiculous. We have our whole lives to be parents.

Jess reaches for another biscuit and pats her friend on the leg.

JESS

Does he know?

Clara shrugs, raising her eyebrows.

JESS

That you may want to go back?

CLARA

Jess, I don't even know if I want to go back. Not sure I have it in me.

JESS

But then all your work here, your research?

CLARA

Can be applied perfectly well to teaching in Adelaide, or at the hospital there. As for Africa-

JESS

It's not just Africa. I'm your best friend, Clara. Remember me? I'm the one who pushed you so high on the swings in Kindy that you sailed off and broke your arm. I'm the one who dragged you away from that Schoolies party in Brisbane when you'd had one too many rum and Cokes. Kept you away from Brian what's-his-face. The sleaze from St. Luke's.

Clara giggles, helping herself to another biscuit and popping it whole into her mouth.

CLARA

Complete wanker, agreed. Thanks for that.

Jess points to the music stand.

JESS

Have you told him? About the Saturday gig?

CLARA

(shrugging)

What's to tell? It's nothing. Not a 'gig,' not some grand entrance onto the scene. Just a stupid anniversary party at the RSL, Jess, which I never would have been roped into if it weren't for you and your big mouth to your gran. There's excitement for you on a Saturday night, old farts in too-tight suits and wrinkled women in high heels and girdles. It's me and the pianist, a half-hour for cocktails and through til dessert. The real action kicks in with the big band after dinner. I'm just lift music in the background. Filler. And I'll be home by half-past nine. Besides, half of them won't be able to hear me even with their hearing aids. Anyway, the music isn't Callum's thing.

JESS

But it's your first time in public.
The only person on the planet who's
heard those songs other than our
downstairs neighbour when you're
rehearsing is me. Now it'll be a room
full of people. Strangers. That
should count for something. Why don't
you want him to know?

CLARA

(standing up and getting annoyed)

You know what I don't need right now?
My smartarse friend telling me she
knows best.

Clara looks at her watch.

CLARA

I've got lab at four. Professor
Johnson locks you out if you're late.

Clara touches Jess on the arm.

CLARA

Don't want to argue with you, either.
I'll pick up dinner on my way home.

Jess starts to look through her books as Clara
gathers her things.

JESS

You've got the voice, Clara. No
denying that. You really could make
something of it. But not if you keep
it from Callum. As long as he doesn't
know, it's not real. Not a
possibility, not a future.

Clara retrieves her shoes and socks from next to the
couch and pulls them on.

CLARA

It's not some big secret—not
something I'm hiding from him at all.
I know he wouldn't be interested, the
way I know that he'll never get me
out on the golf course with his
solicitor mates on a Sunday

afternoon. This is something that's just mine.

JESS

He's not about to turn pro.

Clara walks out of the room, calling over her shoulder as she rummages through a large pile of washing to retrieve a button-down shirt. She rushes back, pulling on the shirt and picking up her backpack.

CLARA

And I am? Have you gone mental? In case you haven't noticed, Jessica Marie Cleary, I'm a gynae nurse working too many shifts to pay her rent and get through her biology masters degree. Not living fifteen hundred kilometres away from her husband so that she can skive off to sing in dingy jazz bars, or hole up in a music room and learn to play the clarinet.

Jess walks to the kitchen, pours a glass of milk and leans on the kitchen bench.

JESS

Not dingy, as a rule. Jazz bars, I mean. They're usually classy little joints, all soft lighting and heavy velvet curtains on the windows. Clarinet's passé, anyway. Your voice is your best bet.

Clara opens her backpack and checks her lab supplies: coat, goggles, latex gloves. She doesn't look up.

CLARA

Your point?

Jess rinses her glass.

JESS

My point is that you can stay the course with your science—be the do-gooder research genius who comes up with the next big thing in reproductive health, publish in all those fancy journals you keep talking about, spend a week a year

volunteering in some camp in the middle of a war zone, without letting go of your voice.

CLARA

I already know what he'll say. Stay out of trouble. Don't have too much fun. Thesis comes first. Like I've got my priorities all screwed up. Like I don't know what I'm doing here in the first place.

Clara picks up her bag and heads to the front door. Jess meets her halfway, putting a hand on her friend's elbow.

JESS

Ever sing into the mirror?

CLARA

What are you talking about?

JESS

Try it sometime, Clar. You might be surprised to see who's staring back.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY

CLARA runs out of her apartment block, gracefully avoiding the other people on the footpath who are moving more slowly. Up ahead, she sees the bus pull away from the curb, and she stops, breathing easily and deeply. She checks her watch again and starts to jog, cutting across the road and through an adjacent park. As she runs, another song:

SONG 2.5 MINUTES ('xxx')