

Fading Things

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This duologue is intended for reading alone or performance as a screen or stage play.

The piece features an optional song with links to the recorded music suitably licensed for royalty free public performance (see end details). This is intended to be a comic sketch which could be woven into a longer script. An ideal audition piece for an aspiring actress.

Synopsis

A posh lady rings a company to complain, during the course of the conversation it emerges she has many concerns. The action unfolds as her real motives are revealed. Running time 10 minutes.

Characters (One or two female)

Cynthia –well spoken, indeterminate age (older the better)

Doreen- young executive (optional - an off-stage voice would do just as well, could sing)

Interior lounge day
(optional music “Fading Things”)

Cynthia: (Making the telephone call) Hello, Hello!

Doreen: Hello.

Cynthia: Yes, is that Roger? Roger Pertwhistle?

Doreen: No?

Cynthia: No I see.

Both (pause)

Cynthia: May I please ask to whom am I speaking?

Doreen: Right, Yes of -course, please do forgive me, my name is Doreen, Doreen Golf. I've just started you see, I was working in accouts and I have just been promoted to Marketing.

Cynthia: How do I spell that ...Doreen?

Doreen: G...O...L...F like the game.

Cynthia: 'G' for Glossy, 'O' for opulent, 'L' for Luxury and 'F' for Fading, thankyou.

Doreen: And how may I help you this evening?

Cynthia: Evening?

Doreen: I'm sorry. It's evening here , where are you calling from again?

Cynthia: Sorry Doreen, never mind about that, you see I think there has been some mistake.

I was referred to you by Roger Pertwhistle just yesterday...

Doreen: (interrupting) Yes, Yes, I'm terribly sorry about Mister Pertwhistle, but he hasn't been well for some time, and with the reshuffle ad everything...

Cynthia: (pause) ..did you say, *reshuffle*?

Doreen: Yes.

Cynthia: I'm sorry, I must have missed something. I was getting on very well with Mr Pertwhistle. With Roger I mean, has something happened to him?

Doreen: (apologetic) Well, he's gone...

Cynthia:... WHat? ReaLly? But I was just talking to him yesterday, he was such a lovely man, what a tragedy for your business, he must be a great loss for the whole endeavour?

Doreen: Well, there was a reshuffle...

Cynthia: There's that awful word again, do we really just reshuffle people out of existence these days, what on earth does it mean?

Doreen: Well, I can't imagine that this is what you rang about, but he was re-assigned to work in archives. There is no elevator in the archive outbuilding you see, I have worked there myself. There can be a lot of climbing up and down those stairs, and he *wasn't* getting any younger...

Cynthia: Good lord! You mean to say he was just getting irrelevant and you put him out to pasture?

Doreen: No! He's in hospital.

Cynthia: What?

Doreen: Yes, Hospital, he had a heart attack.

Cynthia: You tried to kill him off?

Doreen: May I ask what this is about, I seem to have revealed more about the office than I should.

Cynthia: (composing herself) ...O.K. Doreen, I see. You just started...from the accounts department, Ah Hah. Well it's about the magazine.

Doreen: (quizzical) Magazine? What magazine?

Cynthia: (correcting herself) Catalog! It's a catalog, the fashion edition came out last week.

Doreen: Ahhhhhh! Yes, now I seem to remember someone saying you might call. There is a problem I believe, you were referred to us from complaints. Now I'm with you, there's a note about it around here somewhere...(shuffling paper)...can you refresh me about...

Cynthia: Well, I could go on all day about the catalog. It's not such a matter of what is wrong as to how many things are wrong. I have a list. Where should I start?

Doreen: From the beginning is always best. No, thank you Nigel.

Cynthia: Angel?

Doreen: Nigel. He always brings coffee around in the evening.

Cynthia: How nice for you.

Doreen: Your complaint?

Cynthia: Well for starters, there's the infidelity.

Doreen: Fidelity?

Cynthia: Don't pretend you can't hear me, I know what happens in those offices, with your high heels and your painted nails and your...(exasperated) coffee bringers.

Doreen: All right, all right! Cynthia, I fail to see the relationship between the catalog and peoples domestic affairs, so perhaps you can enlighten me? I am just catching up.

Cynthia: There is a woman in this catalog, wearing a fur. I mean who wears fur nowadays anyway.

Doreen: Actually, It has been a popular item, but not all women wearing fur are unfaithful.

Cynthia: No, No, Doreen I haven't finished yet. The woman wearing the fur. (aside) As far as I can tell she isn't wearing much else either. (To Doreen) The woman on page six is wearing a wedding ring; but when she appears in the family section, posing with a man, she isn't wearing one!

Doreen: Good grief, you are right! That is very observant of you Cynthia, but I hardly think that argument holds much water these days. I mean, what makes you think she was married anyhow?

They're just models after all. Perhaps she was modelling the ring, but not really married in the first place.

Cynthia: Probably cat fur anyway, Look there are a lot of other problems with that edition and probably the new edition too...

Doreen: The new edition, what's the matter with that?

Cynthia: ...um...

Doreen: ...Cynthia?

Cynthia: Yes?

Doreen: Are you alright? What is this really all about? How can I help? I mean, I have just moved here into a new office with a new job and my first day. I want to make a good impression, I would like to help, but I can't see that these things add up to much of a problem really. Tell me, what is wrong with

the new edition?

Cynthia: (sheepishly) I haven't ...got it...

Doreen: What? You mean to say that you rang up to complain about a catalog you haven't got?

Cynthia: Doing all that work on a glossy catalog, I mean it can't be good for the planet and all that. But why does it always have to come down to money?

Doreen: You have lost me again, Cynthia ! Why haven't you got the new catalog, have you changed address?

Cynthia: Is it frightfully expensive to print those things? I've been getting them for, Oh! How many years now?

Doreen: I don't know how many years?

Cynthia: Since I was a youngster, that's all. It isn't right. You just expect it. You just take it for granted that you spend a few bucks on a jersey and the next thing they start coming. You never think it's going to stop...

Doreen: Have you bought anything from the catalog?

Cynthia: Oh, yes! Heaps of things...

Doreen: When?

Cynthia: All the time, I just thought I would look through one more catalog and find the latest...

Doreen: Right, so if I start the computer up again...

Cynthia:...Well, O.K, so it has been a while, but things are a bit tight now you know. The world economy is in recession. I haven't got much to spend on luxuries

Doreen: Like catalogs?

(Doreen and Cynthia sing together) **Music and Fade**

Music

(Royalties are usually more expensive for musicals, especially where sheet scores and/or backing tracks are for hire. *Spectacularly*, lyrics and backing music for this song is also posted at site below. The license permits you to use the guitar music as introduction and then make a punchy exit by singing to the tune in closing. Get the backing by downloading the acoustic guitar MP3 in the 'stems' ZIP file or simply download the whole song and sing over it)

“Fading Things” by Admiral Bob

<http://ccmixter.org/files/admiralbob77/29264>

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On a log down by the shore
The last sunset of the fall
Tells me half my life is over
The crimson afterglow is all
Of the fading things (X2)
There's not a bird up in the sky
Not a ripple on the lake
No breeze from the fire up on high
Just the beauty that you make
In your fading things (X2)
Soon I will have to go back down
To the lights below the hill

I bring the third act curtain down
Knowing that your warmth is in the chill of your fading things (X2)

Chords used for this: verse: F | Gm | Bb | C
Chorus: F Bb C

Suggested credit for the whole work

"Fading things" by Hamish Darby (bedpanner) featuring music by Admiral Bob

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