

STILL LIVING

A play by Phil Lewis

Additional dialogue by Joy Tilbury

This play requires permission to perform and a performance fee

SHORTENED SAMPLE VERSION

For full version please contact:

publications@phil-lewis.net

Approx. 9 minutes.

CAST:

DAWN: Any age over 40

SET:

Single chair and spotlight.

Or, large sheet on the stage floor.

STILL LIVING

(OPENING MUSIC.

LIGHTS UP ON DAWN ENTERING,

IN A DRESSING GOWN. SHE ARRANGES HERSELF IN A POSE – EITHER ON THE CHAIR, OR ON THE SHEET ON THE FLOOR.

AS SHE SPEAKS, SHE ALTERS THE POSE, AS IF BIDDEN BY AN UNSEEN VOICE. THERE ARE LONG PAUSES BETWEEN SENTENCES, NORMALLY JUST AFTER SHE'S CHANGED A POSE. THIS ADDS TO THE VISUAL ASPECT OF THE PIECE.

IF POSSIBLE, THE LIGHTING CAN CHANGE BETWEEN EACH POSE. SOMETIMES DARK AND SULTRY. AT OTHERS BRIGHT AND GLOWING)

DAWN: It's coming, I can feel it. Have to move.

(SHE SUBTLY MOVES HER LEG OUT STRAIGHT)

Don't change the face. Grit and bear it. The pain will subside. Here it comes.

(SLIGHT GRIMACE)

There it goes.

This doesn't get any easier. Still I'm going to the gym now and trying to get fit again. I felt I needed to. Time is ticking and the longer you leave it, the harder it is to get going again.

I feel better too. Oh, I hate going. I dread walking through that door and seeing those rows of torture machines. But once I get started, its...well, it's okay. By the time I've finished and walking out the door, I feel so much better.

I have more energy, more enthusiasm, more mental strength. And I need it now, more than ever.

This is my last session here, tonight. My last stand, or sit, as a still life model. It all ends tonight.

For decades I've come out at night to sit for thousands of people. None of whom I know their name. But tonight – I retire.

I don't need this as an income stream anymore. I've a really good job now. At the local library. I found myself a nice niche job that suits my talents and abilities. And the pay is not bad at all. I've changed a great deal.

Jeremy says I've changed since I lost the baby. I'VE CHANGED? He has. He walked out.

I thought it was supposed to be the mother that want through all the emotional and chemical changes at times like this. But boy has he handled it badly.

It didn't last long, thank God.

You know, it's a true saying, you don't appreciate something until you no longer have it. Of course feeling a lose after losing a baby goes without saying. God, what a sense of loss that is. But it was the same with Jeffery. I really did miss him. And, thank God, he really missed me. He soon came back.

Of course I forgive him. I didn't see at first, that it was a tremendous emotional trauma for him as well. Us women handle emotion better, don't we? Men – no idea.

We get on better than ever. Perhaps too well

I'm pregnant again. Not without a lot of trauma, I can tell you.

I've a new consultant and have changed my doctor, too. There's so many new medial ideas out there now. Apparentlymy problem is common and can be fixed. If not fixed, certainly curtailed. So...I'm on a course of drugs and a physical regime with Jeffery and ...I got pregnant.

They assure me that it will be a normal and healthy delivery. My sisters are sceptical. Understandably. But let them. I'm positive about it. As I am in all aspects of my life now.

I finished the Open University course and although I didn't do as well as I'd hoped. I did well enough, thank you. I feel proud at what I've achieved. I'm not Rita, but I did very well.

So well, that they could upgrade my position at the library. I'm responsible for my own section and have two other part time people who I manage. One of them, Danielle, is a young model. Just starting out. We have long chats about that, I can tell you. Anyway, she takes over from me after tonight. I got her the job.

I need more time now for my next phase in my life.

I've only just been told I'm pregnant and so we're both still coming to terms with the change of direction, again.

It seems to me that I've led my life like a chameleon. Just sitting on a branch, watching the world go by. Certainly at time like these. Just sitting, staring into space, while those around me, create and achieve.

But now I'm more in control with my own destiny. I'm in charge. And Jeffrey feels the same way, of course.

To say he's delighted is an understatement. He can hardly contain his excitement.

I'm a little more cautious, after the last time. But that's life, eh? You don't know what's around the corner, do you? You have to live for today and plan for tomorrow.

Ten minutes to go and this part of my life will be all over.

I've been sooo still today the spiders have been eyeing me up for bungy-jumping sites.

Do you know what I'm going to be doing this time next week?

(POINTS TO AUDIENCE)

Sitting there. With a pad and pencil and I'm going to be drawing the naked figure of Danielle.

A new hobby, drawing and panting. I've enrolled in a six week course at an evening class. And I'm going to be on the other side of the fence at last. To feel what they feel. See what they see. Knowing all the while what the model is going through, thinking and feeling. What a role reversal, eh?

Jeffery is coming along too. He's probably a better drawer than me, but I do need to do this and his support will help enormously.

One minute to go and its all over.

I'm looking forward to being the one doing the sketching actually, I know how to hold my pencil in the air to measure the proportions right – the strangest thing though will be deciding what to wear to classes – but I suppose it won't matter, this time hardly anyone will be watching me!

EDITED