

Hazel and Rose Section 1

P7 -10 Hazel and Rose are meeting up in Hazel and Robin's house after nearly 40 years without contact. Awkward, fractured back and forth dialogue

ROSE. Oh. How many children do you have?

HAZEL. Right yes, after Lauren you mean?

ROSE. Yes

HAZEL. Three more

ROSE. Four children! God, / that's

HAZEL. Another girl and, and two boys. Not children any more / of course

ROSE. Fantastic, no, of course. Because Lauren must be, what?

HAZEL. Thirty-eight

ROSE. Thirty-eight!

HAZEL. Thirty-nine at Christmas.

ROSE. Thirty-nine at Christmas

HAZEL. A grown woman. Did you want to sit down, Rose?

ROSE. I just can't. I can't believe it. Thank you.

ROSE sits in a battered armchair.

Without looking she reaches under it and pulls out a footstool, rests her feet on it.

HAZEL watches her.

HAZEL. What?

ROSE. Lauren. As a baby. She was cuckoo for beards.

HAZEL. I don't.....

HAZEL takes a seat herself.

ROSE. Because yes because every time she saw a man with a beard – d'you remember? She'd stick out her arms and scream with laughter

HAZEL. Well. She was a very friendly little thing at that age.

ROSE. And I spose Robin had one, didn't he?

HAZEL. Probably why she was drawn to them, / would you like some tea?

ROSE. I've always wondered about things like that, (thank you, love one) if there's a study or something, that charts our relationship to the things we're drawn to, as children, and how that changes as we grow up. I mean for instance does Lauren have a husband or partner?

HAZEL. Yes

ROSE. Oh great. Great, no that's great. And so then does her husband or partner / have a

HAZEL. She's clean-shaven.

ROSE. She's clean-shaven is she? Well there you go, no correlation! I mean, an inverse correlation. Of course you'd have to test a much wider sample than just Lauren.

HAZEL. Rose.

ROSE. Yes?

Pause

HAZEL. I'm growing a beard you know.

This morning – I found two hairs on my chin and I looked at them, for a good minute, and I tried to convince myself this is *alright*, it's natural, it's chemical, it's your age, you know?

She takes an apple from the fruit bowl, begins to polish it on her top or a tea towel.

Just oestrogen declining .

Because you know I don't hold with people our age trying to look twenty-two, because you see these women don't you, in the paper, looking like stretched eggs, trying to hide it when all it's doing is shouting it out loud isn't it, "I'm old and I'm frightened of it!" I mean and because I'm *not* frightened of it so so so so but then I thought no. *No* because this is how it starts isn't it, the slow descent into the coffin it starts with two black hairs on your chin that you let run wild one day and you don't even know it but right there, in that moment, you've lost, you've lowered your defences and the enemy's *got in* hasn't it yes so I went at these hairs I went at them ruthlessly with a pair of tweezers and I can't describe to you the sense of triumph.

HAZEL puts the apple on the table. It rolls down away from her.

ROSE catches the apple, returns it to the bowl

ROSE. Grandchildren?

HAZEL. What?

ROSE. Do you have grandchildren?

Pause

HAZEL. Oh. Yes. Yes / Rose

ROSE. Hazel a granny that's insane! I can't / believe it!

HAZEL. Rose I'm sorry. I feel a bit. I might have a glass of water.

ROSE. I'll get it

HAZEL. No, it's fine, I'll –

ROSE finds a glass in the first cupboard she opens.

HAZEL watches her.

ROSE. I guess you're not using the tap?

HAZEL. No. There's clean water / in the

ROSE. Oh yes.

ROSE fills the glass from a large plastic container and gives her the water

HAZEL takes it and looks at it for a beat before drinking.

How many?

HAZEL chokes slightly on her water

Sorry, go ahead.

HAZEL drinks.

Puts the glass down.

How many grandchildren do you have?