

Story for performance #761
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Source: Steven Erlanger, 'In gesture to Abbas, Israel releases 255 Palestinian prisoners', *New York Times online*, 21/07/07.

Tags: [intimacy](#)

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Has this cold marble allowed me to sleep? The light has changed in here. There is a familiarity in this peopled and domed landscape. I recognise the faces, but from where in particular? I have an address book full of names and local addresses. I must have been here before. Certainly these faces conjure a half echo. Perhaps they are all waiting for me?

You. You are called Robin, isn't that right?
You have your own rules. You think they're hard-coded into you. You are not noisy about them but it's obvious that they're there. You may seem warm and safe at first, but you're ready to spring into recoiling. With those tense wires running into you and through you, their metallic twang sounds in your voice. Listen to the wiriness when you speak. You rattle and buzz. You batter and nod. You wind and foil. You prepare for the fall. And here it comes. When someone else brushes you, or, reaching out for something they want, plucks you, you spring back into your solid; into your poise; into your stasis. Without those wires, without your spring-loaded action, you would float. You would be helpless. You would float and bob. You have your own rules, but watch out for the spikes that hold the steel. You think they're hard-coded into you, but they pass right through you.
But you are missing something.

Claudia, it is you, isn't it?
You are, as far as I'm concerned, comprised of two halves, of two bodies that don't fit. I have seen you in the flesh and come to doubt my own judgement. How your curves black your rust old lady, old soul. I am not amused, even as I scrape the dead skin from your surfaces and know that you are wincing. Your façade fades. You tease. You lie. The door to your heart is a painting. It slides back into the oils of its own beginning
But you are missing something.

And Derville. Allow me this.
It's not a tiger and an elephant living inside you. They're pigs. Grubby little pigs. Two of them. Look at it as a game and imagine that you like them being passed around. Why don't you keep score and with your arms folded, keep the results close to your chest? A black exterior reveals a happy interior. You made it even better by drawing wings on their backs. Now they'll be able to fly.
But you are missing something.

Helen:
When I pass my hand over your face to find your eyes, why don't you stop me? When I push my thumbs onto

your eyeballs, eyelids shut, why don't you pull away? When I press onto your eyeball and move it, trying to push it to one side to control your inner view, why don't you grunt disapproval? When I cup one ear with the palm of my hand you don't reach up to pull it away. Do I understand you are permitting? Are you permitting? I take the lobe of your ear, twisting firmly, slowly and with my other hand, press your eyeball more firmly into its socket feeling jelly-like resistance. Yet still you don't refuse. But you are missing something.

Ah, Simon.
I want to hold you. To be held by you. I want to watch you from afar as your playful manner becomes firm and authoritative when confronted by an awkward situation or a stranger who we both find irritating. I want to hold you, to need you for which you will love me more and pretend for my sake that I am in control. I want to be told what to do, to be told what not to do and to test the limits of your patience—watching for the smallest sign that I might have pushed you too far this time.
But you are missing something.

Mark, yes, Mark.
You have started to twist with my mind. You have begun to fuck with me. You can lie there and pretend I haven't touched you intimately, that I haven't soothed you and gently caressed you. Maybe you prefer it when I'm rougher, more spontaneous. Unafraid. Not really minding if I hurt you by holding you too tightly. By fitting all of my fist into you and twisting my fingers till they meet in the middle. Shred by shred I can slowly remove your layers. Tear bits off you. Eventually I will leave you. Lying there useless, torn and tugged and broken. Yet still kind of cute. But you are missing something.

There you are Theron.
I have grown so tired of you. I could tell how old and tired you were when I first touched you. You were easy. You were worn by the world. You were already familiar. Your skin, its hard nubs and toughness. Folding inside you; you, neither resisting nor giving way. You were just matter-of-fact. You were just there. And now when I feel you I keep my eyes closed. You will never change. That heavy familiarity. The intimacy of a close enemy. I am tired of it. And now I let you go, it is such a very light thing to do.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from stories by Robin Bale, Mark Greenwood, Helen Idle, Claudia Jefferies, Simon Porter, Derville Quigley and Theron Schmidt.