

# The Affair.

*The symbolism inherent in the affair Zeus has with his wife Hera's handmaiden Io and his subsequent attempt to hide his adultery by turning her into a heifer, sums up the institution of marriage and the damage caused when trust is broken. Io was at the mercy of the gods (Zeus) and was only restored to her former shape when she cried out for release in Egypt. It tells of man's helplessness in the face of the gods which we would translate as fate, the Greek deities were also at the mercy of fate (Moirai).*

*The cultural climate this would have evolved out of was a time of great change when empires rose and fell and the fortunes of the kingdoms depended upon the right sacrifices being made to the gods. To interpret this myth in my own way I have concentrated on the affair of Zeus with Io and the loss of her identity when she was turned into a heifer. A modern day affair between a married man and an unmarried woman is the way I have chosen to retell the story, with the loss of her identity in the process.*

Sally stared wanly across the table at the man opposite. John was caught up in his own world as usual seemingly unaware of the flickering candles she'd taken such care with earlier in the night. The roast had been eaten in relative silence save for the occasional comment about the weather or the football. Jesus!

"Had enough?" Her voice wafted out across the table, he glanced over, picking up the seductive tone a sly smile creeping across his suntanned features. Was that all he could think of after all these months, the fucking football? He was good looking there was no denying that one, a virtual god come to earth was how one of her girlfriends had described him.

“Delicious,” he smiled as he leaned back running a hand up and down the stem of the wine glass, she scowled in reply.

“I’ll bet it was,” she ran a finger down the hem of her blouse stopping at her cleavage, his eyes followed her every move the slender finger still manipulating the wine glass a warm feeling spreading in his groin. She looked delicious in the candlelight, if only his...

“We have to talk John,” she got to her feet abruptly and began clearing away the remains of the meal. He swallowed hard letting his hand fall from the wine glass as she reached for it.

“Talk?”

“Yes John,” steel blue eyes bore into him malevolently. “You know, that thing people do when they’re in love.”

“But we talk all the time darling.”

“You call that talk?” Her eyes blazed, he arched back as if she’d struck him running a shaky hand through his hair as he stared at the wavering flame.

“You kiss my neck, fondle my breasts and tell me how she doesn’t understand you like I do-Jesus John that isn’t communication, that’s the way you talk to a pet!”

John slammed his hand down on the table with such force that the candlestick quivered she shrank back for a moment before going on, taking courage from his discomfort.

“I thought we had an understanding?” He waved his hand to indicate the lavish settings. “You know? Romance, excitement, the chance to start over and not have to repeat the same mistakes, Christ,” he leaned back in his chair.

“I wish I’d met you years ago I’d never have married her.”

Sally placed the plates on the table as she leaned forward her complexion deepened in colour as she spat out the words.

“For the last six fucking months John Faullkner I’ve had to listen to that same shitty sob story every time you come around here! Yes you do love me but no you can’t leave her yet, the shock would kill her you have to do the right thing by her and the kids, When are you going to do the right thing by me!”

John cupped his face in his hands as her words crashed in around him.

“I will darling I promise, tonight,” he looked up pleadingly as she towered above him, a dark shadow seemed to cross her features as she turned away.

“No you won’t John, I’m not your lover I’m your milking cow you just play with my tits and then you go home to your wife, for Christ’s sake you couldn’t even get my birthday right if I tattooed it on your forehead,” she stared angrily at the candle.

“And what do you tell her when you go home at night, that you’ve had another late night at the office?”

“You’re being unreasonable Sally, you know she’s had problems she gets jealous whenever I so much as look at another wo...” He caught himself as she leaned back against the wall a tired expression on her face as the tear trickled down her face.

“God damn you to hell John I had a life once, now that’s all gone,” she glanced over at him the anger dissipating as the despair of the last few months caught up with her.

“I’m not a human being in your eyes, you never once asked my permission before you took the only thing I had and used it to fill your selfish desires,” she brushed the tear away angrily as she straightened up.

“You’re not leaving her John-I’m the one that’s leaving you...”

Sally Hart-now former secretary to John Faullkner leaned back as the familiar voice of her friend came down the line.

“Sally, where have you been for the last few months? I’ve been waiting for your call.”

“Oh nowhere in particular Benny,” she picked at the remains of the meal, John’s sudden departure felt like a load had been lifted from her back. It felt good to be treated like a human being again instead of a side of beef.

Written by Alastair Rosie 31\3\97 ©

Published in Inkshed 1997