

Semi-Detached

Semi-Detached

By : nastyturnip

A man locked in guilt gains unlikely help from a loyal companion.



Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/nastyturnip

Copyright © nastyturnip, 2015
Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

Semi-Detached

Semi Detached By Craig Baxter

Scene 1 (Man sits at his kitchen table eating an apple as audience enter. Dim lighting, candles scattered about the piles of newspapers and the sound of a ticking clock throughout. He stares blankly. This continues until the audience are seated. A screen displays the quote: "Doing nothing for others is the undoing of one's self. We must be purposely kind and generous, or we miss the best part of existence. The heart that goes out of itself, gets large and full of joy. This is the great secret of the inner life. We do ourselves the most good doing something for others. Horace Mann" Music. Man walks about his house for the duration of the music. He blows out the candles one by one while looking about his house. As the music begins to distort the lighting grows brighter. He makes his way to his bed downstage left. He takes off his dressing gown, hangs it up and then lies down. As the music stops the ticking clock begins again. The Man lies in a bed occasionally moving. He wears a vest and boxer shorts. He is awake. At the head of the bed is a small desk with a glass of water on top next to a lamp pointing upwards. Next to this a railing with many coat hangers. The only thing that hangs is his dressing gown. The ticking is all we hear as we observe the stage. Downstage right in the corner stands a wooden door. Upstage left a pink cot; slightly tattered. Next to this, at an angle, is a ruined couch. Upstage right a kitchen and in the centre a fold up table with a chair either side. The place is dingy. Light is scarce. Pictures hanging along the back wall, a larger picture of three clocks hangs in the middle (the first clock labeled "past", the middle "present" and the last is "future") Over the Man's bed a framed photograph of a wedding photo. This picture is scratched and is barely visible. Surrounding the edges of the stage are buckets, tubs of paint, metal and wooden ladders etc. We

2. listen to the ticking of the clock for at least a minute.) Man: Tick-tock. Tick-tock.(Turning in his bed then turning off the bedside light) (The clock continues to tick, after time the lighting goes to spotlight on the Man in his bed. The clock continues to tick. The Man is still. The ticking stops, the Man laughs for a moment contented and then there is silence and stillness onstage.) (Voiceover) Man: It was the same every night. Night after night after night after night after day. All I wanted was to fall asleep. I end up in this bed every night. I end up awake in this bed every night. I... need... sleep. (Pause) It's not warm when she's away. Tonight something happened. Tonight I remembered. (Silence. A dog begins to cry through the wall. The Man sighs and again moves about in his bed, ending up lying facing the audience with the duvet covering everything but his face.) Man: Stop it. Stop it now. Stop crying! Stop it. Please. Be quiet now, I need to sleep. (He moves about more in his bed, covering his ears with his pillow etc. After a few moments he comes to sitting. His duvet pulled back and looking forward. He looks as if at a wall that is between him and the audience. The dog continues to cry.) Go to sleep. Go to sleep. Go to sleep. (Pause) You should be tied in the garden. Sleep in the cold, mutt. I bet you have a warm bed to sleep on, just use it! Sleep. Muuuuuuuutt. (He scratches his head and coughs, covering his mouth with his forearm. He wipes his lips with his fingers.) Go to sleep. (He stares for a second then picks up the glass of water, holds it up in front of him and looks at it examining the contents in great detail. It could have been there days. Maybe weeks. He sniffs it then drinks the glass in one. He stares at the wall, holding the empty glass between his flattened palms rolling it back and forth. He is quite silent. The dog continues to cry. Man stands.) Listen... (Walking slowly upstage centre) I need to sleep. Understand that. Do you have an important meeting tomorrow? Got something to do? (Laughs) I need to sleep so I can wake up tomorrow. I need to wake up tomorrow so that I can do things. Tomorrow is already today. So sleep sounds like a bit of a pointless idea right now, doesn't it? I thank you for that. Prick. Might as well stay awake. (He coughs again into his forearm) Thank you very much. I don't get it, what's wrong with you? You should be sleeping too, it's late. Go to sleep. I thought I could finally sleep- but no you thought you'd pipe up, so what's wrong? Do you need to go outside? Do you need to take a piss? (Waits for a response then shakes his head) I'd rather you pissed in my hallway. In fact, that's a great idea. Come round and stop your crying! I dare you. Do it in the house. Go on, I'm sure you pissed there

Semi-Detached

when you were a pup. Manâ s best friend. Come over and piss in my vase. Iâ ll even hold it for you. Iâ ll supply for you. Iâ ll help you sort yourself out. (He coughs into his hand then laughs) Fuck that for a laugh, mutt. I donâ t care whatâ s wrong with you. (Pause) Yeah. I canâ t deal with this. (He turns and begins to walk back to his dressing gown; he takes it off the hanger and puts it on. The sound of the dog crying suddenly turns to the cry of a baby for a brief moment until he turns to face the audience. Man looks at the wall confused. He ties his dressing gown then sits on the bed. The dog continues to cry. A rumble begins; building to banging over the cry while Man stares still. This is stretched out for 20 seconds. Rumble suddenly stops and weâ re back to hearing only the cry of the dog as the man sniffs, stands up and turns to walk to the kitchen. He mutters under his breath â shut upâ , â I

4. need to sleepâ etc. He picks up a bottle of water from on top of the kitchen cupboard. He takes a drink then walks and sits down; he looks back at the wall and begins to sarcastically mock the dogâ s crying.)

Man: Fucking dog! I want to sleep. No, I suppose Iâ ll have to just listen to you. (Moments pass) Tell me something. (He begins to tap his foot quickly) Tell me something interesting. What do I need to know thatâ s so important? I could be dreaming now. I know, itâ s probably wrong to crazy so much satisfaction from your dreams- but I havenâ t had a dream since she was here. My eyes have never shut. Come on I want to know. I really do. Tell me. Thereâ s no reason youâ re keeping me awake? Yeah, I bet thereâ s something. Are you going to tell me? Please. (He takes another mouthful of the water and drinks it. He then stands and looks at the wall. He then takes another mouthful but does not swallow. Will his mouth full of water it begins to dribble from his mouth. He then he sprays it out in front of him.) ...Shut up then.

(Man laughs. He walks downstage left to his room and rummages through a large bag of laundry at the foot of his bed. He pulls out two odd socks and sits on his bed to put them on, sitting on his bed to do so. He reaches for his slippers and puts them on also. A tune (There Ainâ t No Sunshine When Sheâ s Gone) from a music box gradually builds in the background. Spotlight on cot as the lights dim. Man can hear the music; he looks forward and appears to become overwhelmed by the music. The dog continues to cry. As the music gets louder spotlight gradually builds on the cot. Brighter and brighter. Man stands. The music stops and the spotlight goes out; back to regular dim lighting. He approaches the cot. He places his hand onto it and stares inside, then he brings his eyes up and looks at the wall. Man moves quickly into the kitchen and goes through the cupboards. He finally finds a bottle whiskey in a cupboard along with a glass. He puts the glass on the table but doesnâ t sit down. He immediately pours a glass and takes a mouthful. He keeps it in his mouth like before, staring forward. He laughs, still with the water in his mouth. This time he swallows.)

5. Be quiet now. You cant cry any more. Please. (The clock ticks for ten seconds only. The dog continues to cry.) Good morning. (He laughs) How are you today? (He pours another glass and drinks it. Another more distorted but rhythmical rumble begins to build. The dog continues to cry.) Be quiet! (Rumble builds more. A scratching violin begins. He drinks another glass. He coughs.) Fuck off! (Rumble builds more and more distorted and more scratching. The lights begin to flicker. He drinks another glass.) Letâ s count some sheep. (Rumble builds more. He drinks another glass.) Are you a sheep dog? (Rumble builds to climax as man begins to sway. He finds his way to a seat at the table and sits down. He collapses with his head on the table, the rumble and scratching stop and the sound of breaking glass. All lights go out. The dog continues to cry.)

(Voice over) Man: Okay, Iâ m going to count to five. And when I get to five youâ re going to be quiet. Understood? (Pause) One. Two. Three. Four. Five. (The dog stops crying) Thank you. Scene Two (Silence. The lights come up. Man lies still with his head on the table.) Pause. (A banging on the door. Five knocks. Man does not move. Some time after another three knocks. Man lifts his head and looks around dazed.

Another

6. five loud knocks. He looks at the wall as he climbs to his feet. He staggers to centre stage and stops, staring at the door. A spotlight builds on the door. Two knocks. Man jumps.) Iâ m coming! (Man makes his way to the door and opens it. Tramp enters pushing past Man. He wears no shoes or socks. He is damp and has a cut on his hand which is bleeding badly. He wears a ragged coat and cord pants. He is frustrated and in pain. Man stands and looks at him in shock, speechless. Tramp gazes back. He licks at his wound. Blood around his mouth. Tramps eyes stare at Man strong. He does not blink, but spits out the blood from his mouth.) Tramp: Help. (Pause) Please. Help. Iâ m bleeding. (Man nods. There is a moment, then he replies.) Man: The kitchen is just through there. I have a first aid kit. Tramp: That would be nice wouldnâ t it? (He smiles at his

Semi-Detached

own sarcasm) Better find it then. (Man nods as if to go and help Tramp, but stands still. Tramp turns and makes his way into the kitchen. He sits in the same chair Man was sat on previously. He licks his hand again and spits out the blood on the floor. Man begins to walk round to the kitchen; still swaying he makes his way to the cupboard. He takes out the first aid kit and throws it on the table and stumbles to the other chair. He sits slumped.) Youâre not a doctor then I take it? (Man shakes his head.) Guess Iâll do it myself then? Thanks. (He begins cleaning and mending his hand) So what do you do for a living then? (Pause. Man continues to stare in bewilderment and without response) Youâre unemployed then? Yes? No? Or you cant get a job because youâre socially retarded? (He clicks his fingers at Man) (MORE)

7. Listen to me. Youâre either that that or youâre a complete fucking tramp. Man nods Haha! Youâre a tramp? Man: No, Iâm unemployed. Tramp: He has a voice! Praise the loard he has a voice! So youâre unemployed, I see. Well, thatâs unfortunate. I used to be unemployed. Oh no, wait- I still am. Ha-ha! Man sits himself more comfortably in his seat. I like you. Man: Who are you? Tramp: Manâs best friend. Man stares at the tramp. He finishes cleaning his hand and closes the first aid box, sliding it across the table towards Man. Tramp: (Smiling) Thanks for the help. He looks at his hand then stands and walks round the kitchen he looks around and all over. Tramp: Well, this place is a bit of a shit hole. You and I arenât so different you know? Youâre just a tramp with a home. Itâs a shame, I feel sorry for this place. It looks like a fucking crack den. I would call you a tramp for this. Iâd describe you as a tramp. Iâm what I am due to society. Life had it in store for me. You could do with cleaning this place up every once in a while. Might make you feel better. Pause Man: Iâm just passing time. Tramp: (Sarcastically) I see. For what? Man: Everything to go right again. (Tramp nods his head subtly. The clock ticks for a few seconds. Tramp walks over to the cupboards and picks up the knife that is on the top and begins to play it.) Tramp: Whereâs your baby? Tramp indicates with the knife to the room with the cot. Pause. Well? I know thereâs no baby in there. Was it a boy or a girl?

8. Man: Neither, are you done? (Standing and gesturing to Tramp to leave) Tramp: What? Ha. Donât bullshit me and tell me its not yours. I know youâd be lying. I know a lot more than you think, (Staring back at the cot) And this house just ainât no home. I know. (Back at Man) I know you want me to go. Iâm intruding and you want me to leave. Donât worry I know you are. But no, I think Iâll stay. Man: Your handâs fixed, I need to sleep now. Tramp: Youâre not going to sleep. And youâre forgetting something. Man: I would appreciate it if you got out of my home now please! Tramp: No no- itâs important. I donât suppose you could spare some food could you? Man: (Firmly) I donât have any food.

Scene Three (A deep rumble begins to build. The tramp stares. As the rumble begins to build, he walks towards Man till they are face to face. Man begins to panic but his feet remain planted, then silence.)

(Changing the subject and in a lighter tone) Yeah, you are tired. You havenât slept for days, I can see it in your eyes. You look like shit. (Putting the knife back on the counter as he moves back to the seat) Thereâs a lot of pain in those eyes. When was the last time you slept? I bet you donât remember. Itâs whats behind those eyes thatâs keeping you awake. (He smiles) Your mind plays tricks. Man: I know this. Why are you telling me this? I donât need your help. Tramp: (Holding the nearly empty whiskey bottle by its neck and looking at the contents) Your eyes are all squinted.

9. Man: I havenât been able to sleep. Tramp: I know this. Why are you telling me this? (Tramp opens the bottle of whiskey and drinks the remaining contents.) You werenât going to finish that, were you? (Man shakes his head.) Good. It would have been rude of me if you were. Itâs not helpful though, turning to alcohol in an act of depseration. (Tramp wipes his mouth) (Tramp stands up and paces about the kitchen again. He giggles at Man as he passes him. He looks at the photos on the wall, items on the work surface etc. He stops centre stage.) Tramp: You wouldnât have helped me if I hadnât come knocking on your door. Would you? Man: I probably wouldnât have but I did, so could you please leave? Tramp: (Firmly) Iâd be grateful if you had just a bit more patience. (Tramp sits down. He begins to bite his toe nails and lick his feet. He stops. Pause) She was born in this house wasnât she? Man: She was. (A strobe begins to flash from inside the cot, a few seconds gap between each flash. Spotlight (blue) on the cot and a baby begins to cry. Man moves stage left, he stands staring into the cot. The cry grows louder and louder. We hear sounds of a violin. Overcome with fear he runs back into the kitchen. The violin screeches and lights go back to normal as he enters.) Man: What was that? Tramp: Itâs time to accept the past.

Semi-Detached

10. Scene Three Man becomes emotional and makes his way to the table and sits down. Tramp takes out a packet of cigarettes; he passes man one across the table. Man puts the cigarette in his mouth, picks up the box of matches and lights it. Tramp does the same. They begin to smoke. Tramp:(Indicating towards Man's wedding ring) Married? Man: (Covering his hand) Not for a while now. Tramp: I know. And you loved her too didn't you? Man: Of course I did. Tramp: I know you did. I heard it all. An unexpected home birth would be quite a challenge I imagine. Scary. But you took charge. And you loved the life you created. You did good. (Man stares at Tramp. He nods. Tramp smokes) I've never been married myself. Now, I'm not saying I've never loved anyone of course. I guess I haven't had much luck with women. Bitches. I think I would have to feel something much more than the lust to fuck them to call it a love. I think I know what I should be feeling but it's not there, just empty space. I'm loyal, and I strive for love, but that can only be if the feeling is mutual. Maybe I'm selfish, but so are you. Everyone is. Take what you felt though, I bet you would have done anything in the world for her. Wouldn't you? It can crush a man, to do everything in the name of love and not have it reciprocated. That's when it all changed. You got used to her and didn't really know how to make her happy anymore. Man: I did love her. (Pause) Tramp: Yeah. Man: I knew how to make her happy. Tramp: You thought you did. But you did love her, that's certain. Man: I still do. (Pause) Tramp: Ha, she's still in your head. Isn't she. You sit around alone in the house tormented by the memories of (MORE)

11. your past. This house is quiet you know? It has been for some time. Fuck- I wouldn't be wanting that. I'd have rammed a spoon into my head and scooped her out a long time ago. Ain't no sunshine when she's gone. (Pause) She isn't here. You've imprisoned yourself by guilt and locked your door with it. I sympathise with your loss, but it's not healthy. How often do you think of her? Man: All of the time. Tramp: Every night? Every day? Man: Every second. (Pause) Tramp: You need to accept she's gone. She's in your head loosening screws. It won't be long and you'll have lost your mind. Man: I don't see her face anymore. But I know it's her. I can still remember what she looks like but she never looks at me. And when she does her face is black- she wears everything black. I see her. She stands about the house. I've seen her. Vividly. It's like she's still here. Sometimes she doesn't move. Sometimes she's in more than one place at more than one time. Sometimes she stands looking away from the baby. I can feel it- her hate. I can feel her presence, like a weight. But I just want to hold her. I feel as though I can make everything right again just by holding her. And at the same time I accept that this won't change anything. At first I can't touch her. Every time I reach out it stings. She sends a sharp pain up my arm that clangs in my head. I know what it is. Her hate. Every bad thought she had about me and all the pain I caused her fired back at me. (Pause) Then it all goes away. I put my arms around her and she melts inside me. Good memories emerge from the fog. Then for a moment I feel happy, like I could sleep. I feel like everything is how it used to be. (Pause) Then I'm left alone again. (Tramp laughs hysterically and puts out his cigarette) Tramp: You need to forget her mate! (MORE)

12. Man: I can't forget her. (He too puts out his cigarette) I know what I've done, but I don't want to believe it. Tramp: You need to forget her. You know what you did- believe it. How could you blame her? Are you dreaming? (A sudden strum of a violin. Wife enters stage right and stands facing off stage, still. She has a black emotionless mask and black night gown.) Everything was going fine until? What happened? It will be better if you tell me- Get it off your chest. (White lights come up slowly on Wife and the cot, and dim on Man and Tramp) Man makes his way over to wife. At first he is reluctant to touch her; he reaches out but doesn't touch her. He touches her and there is a loud strum of a violin. He jumps and moves his hand back. This happens two more times. He steps forward and puts his arms around her and music begins to play. They hug passionately and slowly, the Wife continues to face away. Wife moves quickly offstage. Lights return to normal and Man stands empty handed. He becomes emotional but holds back from crying. Tramp stands from his seat, and makes his way over to Man. He stands behind Man; he puts his hand on his shoulder.) Man: (Frantically) It's time to leave now. I have to sleep. Tramp: We all know you're not going to sleep. Man: You have to leave now. (He makes his way to the front door and opens it. Tramp remains where he is stood.) Get out now. Please, you have to go. (A rumble begins; the light begins to dim on stage left. The rumble builds. Slowly from stage left walks Wife and leaves through the door. Man pulls Heeholds ontoetheehandleeforna few momentssthen. turns and slides down the door to sitting. Tramp moves into the

Semi-Detached

kitchen and takes a seat.) Tramp: She's gone now, keep it closed.

13. (Man is still. Emotionless.) So, tell me what happened? Man: I didn't help her. I keep thinking she'll come back. I sometimes hope you know? I hope that this is all a dream. I can't sleep because I'm already dead. I might as well be dead. (Pause) Her mother was ill. Quite seriously, and it was getting worse. She went to stay the weekend, to look after her. I was here with our daughter. I felt proud. We used to spend days out at the park and to the seaside. It was like every day was summer. But it didn't last

Semi-Detached

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2015-11-30 13:46:57