

Story for performance #965
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the wrap-around version

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Tags: [child/parent](#), [workplace](#), [intimacy](#)
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I can't tell you enough how hard this has been for me. I'm not there yet, by any means, but believe me, I *will* get there. I really believe that. I've worked so hard. And I didn't go through any of the so-called 'proper channels'. I did it on my own from the ground up. And I've been hammered for what I do too. All sorts of obstacles shoved in my path, heaps of times I've had to give up and start again. But it's too late now to go back and do it different. This is it.

This is how it all began. My parents, bless 'em, are very hardworking folks. They're from good old fashioned migrant stock, and working is the only way they know. All their lives they worked. They worked to make a home, they worked to fill it with kids, they worked to feed us when we came along, and when we moved out, they worked cos they didn't know what else to do. It's not their fault I turned out like I am, but you've got to admit it, there must be some sort of a connection. My brothers, at least some of them, followed in their footsteps, and turned out to be reliable upstanding citizens. Sometimes when we all get together, we laugh about it, imagining me as a baby. There I am, not five minutes out of the womb, I look around left and right and go 'Bloody Hell, there must be more to life than this!' Hah, imagine that, ungrateful little cunt.

The funny thing is, although I dropped out as early as I could, what have I been doing since? Working. Just working. Working really hard actually. And you know the difference? When my dad used to get home from work, even if he'd done a few hours extra of overtime, he would stop, he could turn off, he could sit down on the couch and turn on his black and white TV he'd paid for with his own money and just sink into that couch and switch off. Me, on the other hand, my whole life is work, even though most of the time it doesn't look like it from the outside, but I'm never not really working. So I fucked up big time there. I thought I was being Mr Clever. I thought I was escaping my dad's work ethic trap, but actually I've just expanded it to fill every single goddamn hour of the day. There's a lesson in there. Ha ha, that's ironic: a lesson, coming from me.

Seriously though, I know I work too much, and I know I can't really relax or anything, but I do think I am the best at what I do. Sometimes I'm sure I must bore people with it, harping on all the time about how good I am. But it's true. There's no-one comes close. Some of the guys work really hard, but they've got no good ideas or they just rehash other people's but not as good, and some others have talent but they just

fart around and never really put anything out there, but no-one is combining talent and hard work like I am. And people seem to like hearing me talk about myself. Which is lucky, cos I do it a lot, as I said, ha ha. Funny old world, eh? Anyway, it's not as if anyone else is going to come along and say, 'Hey, c'mon, listen to me, check it out, this guy's great, let me tell you all about him,' or anything. That'd probably freak me out if it happened anyway. So my method's a bit flawed there isn't it, I probably couldn't handle someone singing my praises even if they did, but anyway it's all academic until it happens so there you have it, the reason why I have to keep saying how good I am. And as I said, it's not as if I haven't worked hard for it.

Let me tell you though, I've got myself into a bit of a bind. Up 'til now, I really traded on this idea I was telling you about before, my first idea from just out of the womb, you know, fuck the nine to five, never gonna settle down, get trapped, all that, and it looked good. It's worked pretty well. Everybody still buys it. Shit, they love it, I live it so they don't have to, even though actually I'm probably working harder than them, but they don't know that. They just see the way it all looks from the outside and it means they can look at my life and say yeah man, there's hope for us yet, we can get out of this hell hole, when we're ready, as soon as we finish peeling these potatoes or whatever, we'll join you man, we really will. But in the meantime, here I am, where they reckon they wanna be. But they'll never get here, they don't have what it takes, and good thing too, it's lonely here. Sometimes I just wanna peel potatoes.

See, the thing no-one realises is that I'm actually quite traditional. Like everyone else, I just want love. Good old fashioned Love. You know, holding hands, on the beach, going to the movies, bunch of flowers, all the clichés rolled out one after the other until I disappear in a cloud of 'em so you never even remember you ever heard of me. I'm not talking about Love, you know the hard sharp-edge short-time kind, but Love, the wrap-around version, like I wrap you in me and you wrap me in you and we just, just disappear into each other. That'd be cool. But when I tell people that's what I want they laugh at me and don't believe me, they think I'm taking the piss. So I've never quite gotten there yet. But that's what I want, I reckon.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Lucas Ihlein.