

EMPTY SHELVES
By
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EMPTY SHELVES
A Short Play for Voices

Characters

HER. Female, young adult.

HIM. Male, young adult.

HER

Did you get them?

HIM

Empty shelves everywhere.

HER

Empty shelves? I can understand hoarding bread, rice, and milk, but no . . .

HIM

No Trojans, no Kimonos, no Astroglides. I went to two Walgreen's and a CVS. Almost no condoms anywhere.

HER

And I can understand toilet paper, too. But no condoms?

HIM

Actually, it makes sense. There are a lot of couples like us locked down indefinitely and you can binge-watch *Breaking Bad* and *Homeland* only so many times.

HER

I was watching *Roots* all afternoon.

HIM

See what I mean? Or play so many games of chess.

HER

Yeah, and checkers gets stale real quick.

HIM

So, people have been buying up their Trojans for the long haul, and unlike checkers, they don't go stale so quick.

HER

Just before, you said "*almost* no condoms anywhere"?

HIM

Well, they have all sorts with bells and whistles. You know, ticklers, studded, ribbed, glow-in-the-dark . . . I found one package of "seasoned with red hot chili pepper" still on a shelf. I bought it.

HER

"Seasoned with red hot chili pepper?"

HIM

It takes all kinds.

HER

Not this kind it doesn't. No goddamned way.

HIM

Well, I could go bareback and pull it out just in time.

HER

Mom and Dad did it that way. That's why I've got eight brothers and sisters.

HIM

And that brings me to another point. You know, we have been talking about a family. Maybe this is all a sign.

HER

A sign? Meaning what?

HIM

Maybe it's time.

HER

You want to talk about kids. Now?

HIM

I don't want to sound morbid, but the world might soon need a new generation. What better way to deal with all this than to provide some real hope for the future.

HER

Honey, the economy's tanking. I've just been laid off. You're working shorter hours at home. . . .

HIM

The more dire the circumstances, the more precious the hope.

HER

Who said that?

HIM

I just made it up.

HER

You know . . . I just got a call from Jerry. He's fine, by the way. And Kathy, Tom, and Kevin called this morning. I was writing a long email to Laurie when you came in.

HIM

Sometimes big families can be quite a comfort when things get tough.

HER

Still . . .

HIM

There's always the red hot chili pepper.

HER

No goddamned way.

HIM

So?

HER

You know what . . . turn out the lights . . .

Ok. And?

HIM

. . . and come here.

HER

(End of play)