

SEBASTIAN

By Marianne Johns

Inspired by Henrik Ibsen's 'The Wild Duck'

Copyright: Marianne Johns      mariannetjohns@gmail.com

FADE IN

1 INT. BEDROOM - DUTCH BARGE - MORNING

SEBASTIAN (15) is waking up, coughing extensively. He sits up in his bed and takes 4 pills from 4 different jars and washes them down with some water & then looks out of the porthole and starts getting dressed.

2 EXT. DECK - DUTCH BARGE - MORNING

A Dutch barge with a large mast is moored in the harbour. RICHARD (43), is examining the ropes and Sebastian, his son, comes up to join him, looking a bit unwell.

RICHARD

Hey! Go back inside, you look terrible, son!

SEBASTIAN

I'm fine, dad. I took my meds, alright?

(Beat)

C'mon dad, let me help!

Richard smiles at his son and rolls out a big tyre. Sebastian takes a fresh rope and they both start working on it. A beautiful woman steps out onto the deck, NATALIE (42), and passes Richard his mobile phone.

NATALIE

It's your mum honey!

RICHARD

Thanks... What does she want?

Natalie shrugs her shoulders. He takes the phone.

RICHARD

Hey mum, how is it going? Hmm, right! Oh, (beat) when were you thinking?

Richard walks away from Natalie. Concerned, she follows him.

NATALIE

What did she want?

RICHARD  
 (Richard grimaces)  
 Mum wants to grace us with a  
 visit!

NATALIE  
 Oh, when?!

RICHARD  
 Soon!  
 (beat)  
 This coming weekend in fact.

Sebastian watches both of his parents disappear into the  
 hull of the ship.

3 INT. DUTCH BARGE - KITCHEN - DAY

Richard is making tea.

RICHARD  
 You sure?  
 (Mutters )  
 She can be a nightmare  
 sometimes...

NATALIE  
 I know hon, but we can't just  
 turn her away, can we?!

Richard smiles at her warmly and gives her a hug. Their  
 friend & lodger PETER (51) arrives below deck, with some  
 bags of shopping in his hands.

PETER  
 Whehey! Crew and Captain! Got  
 some great stuff for tonight's  
 feast!

He puts the shopping on the counter & pulls out a nice  
 bottle of red with a triumphant expression on his face.

4 INT. DINING ROOM - DUTCH BARGE - EVENING

Everyone sits around a candle-lit table, enjoying their  
 dinner together when Richard's mobile phone rings.

RICHARD  
 Oh hi mum! Sorry, say again?  
 What? Outside?! What, now?

Richard gets up to meet her in the wheelhouse, but AMANDA (66), a glamorous looking woman is already descending the steps to the lower deck. She puts her mobile away and gives Richard a condescending look.

AMANDA

Darling, don't you think you ought graduate to a home made of bricks?

Richard just stares at his mother, unable to respond.

5 INT. DINING ROOM - DUTCH BARGE - WEEKS LATER - DAY

The whole family eats Sunday lunch together.

RICHARD

So mum, your third week here with us! How are you feeling-

AMANDA

You never really get over the death of a loved one, but I'm feeling better thank you, though I need to get certain things off my chest before I go back. That should complete my recovery.

People give her and each other a quizzical look, but nobody says anything.

6 LATER

Lunch is finished. Peter and Sebastian play cards at the dining table. Richard and Natalie are cuddled up on the sofa. Amanda sits in an armchair, pretending to read a book, but secretly observing them.

AMANDA

How about all of us play a game together?

Natalie and Richard are in a world of their own & do not respond. Amanda is visibly annoyed by that.

AMANDA

I say! Let's all of us play a game! How about Truth Or Dare? A great game to spice things up a bit!

NATALIE

(To Amanda, smiling)

Why not! Sounds like good fun!

They all gather around the table. Amanda goes to the kitchen and fetches a dinner knife and puts it in the middle of the table.

AMANDA

Anything that spins will do,  
though a knife is particularly  
suitable for this task! Whoever  
the blade points to, will have to  
answer questions truthfully, or  
choose a dare! Simple really!

(Beat)

However, if the person asked does  
not tell the truth, then anyone  
who knows the truth must say it!

SEBASTIAN

And if you don't do the dare?

AMANDA

Ok, if a dare isn't honoured,  
than that person has to clean the  
kitchen all by themselves.  
Judging by the amount of dishes,  
that'll be quite a job! OK, who  
wants to start?

Sebastian puts his hand up.

SEBASTIAN

I want to go first!

Amanda nods her head, and Sebastian spins the knife and  
it lands on Peter.

PETER

Ooh la la! So what's it going to  
be?

SEBASTIAN

It's gonna be a dare! Go on the  
deck and moon at the passers by!

PETER

No way mate! You've got to be  
joking!

SEBASTIAN

No, I'm serious!

PETER

I'm not doing that, no way!

AMANDA

Then clean the kitchen, darling!

PETER

(Grins)

I'd rather do that than what Seb  
wants me to do! You cheeky  
monkey!

They all have a hearty laugh, except Amanda.

Peter spins the knife and it lands on Amanda.

AMANDA

I see. Well, what's it going be?

PETER

The truth! Tell me my dear? How  
often do you fart in public? And  
we're talking about the smelly  
ones!

NATALIE

Peter!

AMANDA

Oh, honestly! I don't think I  
ever do!

PETER

Nonsense! We all do, we just  
don't like to admit it!

AMANDA

Well how can you prove that I'm  
lying!

PETER

It's simple! I'll throw you  
overboard, and if you float then  
you're a witch and by definition,  
all witches fart! Particularly in  
public!

They're all laughing, but AMANDA has a smirk on her face.

She now spins the knife and it lands on Richard.

AMANDA

Interesting! So... are you  
perchance hiding any secrets from  
your wife?

RICHARD

No, I don't think so!

AMANDA

So how about the big one I told  
you about while you were still  
dating her?

Natalie throws Richard a confused look and he  
reciprocates.

RICHARD

What do you mean?

AMANDA

You know exactly what I mean!

RICHARD

No I don't!  
(freezes)  
Oh no, no you wouldn't!

AMANDA

Yes I would! It's about time that  
the skeleton came out of the  
cupboard!

NATALIE

Richard, what is she talking  
about?!

AMANDA

Tell your sweet wife about the  
family's secret! Come on! Stop  
being a coward!

RICHARD

I'm not a coward.  
(whisperes)  
Mum, please... don't!

AMANDA

If you don't, then I will!

SEBASTIAN

Dad, what's grandma want you to say?

RICHARD

(Snaps)

Nothing that concerns you.

Richards glances at Peter.

PETER

C'mon Seb, let's leave the adults to their silly games and have another game of cards in my room, OK?

Sebastian looks very confused and is visibly worried for his father, but nods and leaves with Peter.

RICHARD

What do you want from me?

AMANDA

I want the truth, son! I'm not going to go to my grave knowing what I know-

NATALIE

Hon, please let her say what she has to say! There shouldn't be any secrets between us anyway!

Richard looks at his wife pleadingly.

AMANDA

I've seen how very close you are. Something Fred and I never had, though our marriage was quite a good one.

(Beat )

But for your marriage - all this tenderness and love of yours to be true, Natalie needs to know!

NATALIE

What does she mean Rich?

RICHARD

Why now? Why on earth would you bring it up now? What good will it do?



AMANDA

With the truth out, you can base  
your marriage on a solid  
foundation, can't you darling?

RICHARD

Since when were you so concerned  
with solid marital foundations,  
when you cheated on my dad with  
Natalie's father, eh? You  
hypocrite!

NATALIE

What?!

7 INT. PETER'S ROOM - DUTCH BARGE - DAY

Sebastian starts playing cards with Peter but can't  
concentrate on the game and throws the cards across  
Peter's desk. Then jumps up and leaves his room.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - DUTCH BARGE - SAME

Unnoticed, Sebastian quietly enters the living room where  
his parents are with Amanda. Peter joins Sebastian  
unnoticed shortly afterwards.

AMANDA

Exactly. And I cheated on him  
when I conceived you!  
(To Natalie)  
Your father - the honourable  
judge - had cystic fibrosis,  
didn't he? Just like Sebastian!  
(Beat)  
You two are half-

NATALIE

Siblings? Oh no, no. That can't  
be!  
(To Richard )  
And you knew all along!?

Richard takes Natalie's hands gently into his.

RICHARD

I wasn't sure, because I could  
have been my dad's. I only  
realised when Sebastian was born.  
Look, I couldn't-

NATALIE

Tell me? How could you have not told me about something so significant, Richard!

RICHARD

Would you have married me if I told you?

NATALIE

(Shakes her head )

Oh God, this is so wrong!

RICHARD

See, that's what I was afraid of, you reacting like that! I married you, because you were always the ONE! I love you Natalie...

NATALIE

(Jumps up)

I could have had a normal child, if I'd married someone else!

(Beat)

I need to get out!

RICHARD

Natalie, wait!

As Natalie walks off, she notices Sebastian sitting in the corner looking stunned by the revelation. She pauses momentarily, before carrying on. Peter stands nearby, also visibly shocked.

AMANDA

Let her go my love! If she loves you, she'll come back.

RICHARD

(Shaking his head)

What's wrong with you, mother?

(Beat)

Why do you hate me so much?

Richard leaves and Peter steps out resolutely.

PETER

Happy Amanda? Mission accomplished?

AMANDA

None of your bloody business!

PETER

Yes, it is my bloody business, because unlike you, I love these people! and care very much about them!

AMANDA

Well tough, the truth had to come out and they'll be better off knowing everything about one another! Their marriage will at last become real! Shame Sebastian had to learn about it this way, but sooner or-

PETER

You don't give a shit about Sebastian! Like you don't give a shit about anyone else but yourself! You're a selfish old woman! But you know what's real? Compassion! To be kind and compassionate to the people in your life! That's what makes a real and good life! If you have that - you have love in your heart!

SEBASTIAN

(Dreamlike)

Grandma doesn't have any love in her heart.

(To Amanda)

My dad didn't ask to be born, you chose to have him! I didn't choose to be born either (starts sobbing), but I love my parents! Though they-

He runs out of the room.

PETER

Look at the damage Amanda! I think you'd better leave!

Holding her head high, Amanda slowly stands up and then starts walking towards the stairs to get ready to leave.

She is unremorseful.

9 EXT. GARDEN AREA - DUTCH BARGE - NIGHT

RICHARD sits on the deck's bench, waiting for Natalie to turn up. She is back now and sits quietly beside him.

NATALIE

I'm sorry, but I can't do this anymore...

I just can't be your wife anymore

(Beat)

not if I'm your sister...

RICHARD

But Natalie! Wasn't our marriage a good one, before the revelation? Haven't I loved you without fail - every single day of our being together?

NATALIE

All that doesn't matter anymore, does it?

(Beat)

I won't be able to look after Sebastian for a while. I'll need some space.

(Beat)

I have to move out...

Richard slowly stands up and looks at Natalie.

RICHARD

Where is my beautiful, loving wife, eh?

(to himself)

It was only a grand illusion, wasn't it?

Sebastian suddenly steps out from his hiding.

SEBASTIAN

Mum! Dad! We are a family! We love each other no matter what! Don't let grandma win! Please...

Natalie and Richard stare at each other silently.

FADE OUT.

