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workshops

## How to Disappear

by MaryPat Campbell

“Hello, hello .....is that you? Ah, It’s been a long time since you...

Oh, really ..... Did you? I don’t remember that, oh well...

Are you ok?

Me? I’m fine, well.....I’ve had these things..... going on, you know, in the rain when it’s wet....I’m sure I’ve told you before. But it’s all fine now. Just so long as it doesn’t happen again, I couldn’t.....manage that again.”

*Amy is standing at the kitchen window, looking into the sunny back garden. She’s watching the clothes billowing and drying on the line, she thinks they look like people dancing and waving their arms and legs about. She’s concentrating on the conversation with her sister Mandy, who doesn’t seem to call her much anymore. Amy looks out expectantly, hoping to see someone she knows. There is a dog she doesn’t recognise, and her husband John who is sitting in the sun reading the paper and drinking a cup of coffee.*

“The children? Yes they’re fine too, Bea is great, and especially Sally. Sally is nine now, a real little gem .... gemmy ..... and her mum, Bea...Bee-Bee, she’s wonderful too. But that other little.....well, he’s seven now and if I had charge of him I would teach him a thing or...

No, no I'm not being hard on him, I'd never say it to his face, no. He just got up and walked out of the room..... he's only seven. It's too much, it really is.

What was it I meant to tell you? I can't remember. Well, she can't come at the moment because she told John her car had been stolen. She comes on .... is today Wednesday? and .....Sundays. It doesn't really matter on Sundays, that's the day the men disappear.....I don't know why she comes, she only comes in the afternoons, three to six, to help us out. She doesn't do much, but she's a nice woman. She won't come now, even though it's Wednesday....

What's that?

Don?

Oh yes, his wife.... Chilly, no, Shell .... Sheila – well she asked me today if we could look after their dog. She's out in the back garden now, maybe John will take her for a walk later on. Chilly has a job now and Don has to drive to work all day to ..... where he works, so ....sometimes.....but she can't come today. I think she's disappeared .....

*Amy is sitting at the kitchen table now, the phone in her hand, looking out the door that opens into the hall with its dark swirly carpet and shoes piled up at the front door. It's all very familiar, the home she and John have lived in since they were married, and where they brought up their children, Bea, Don and Peter. Where are they all now? Grown up and living their own lives, she knows this, but can't quite remember sometimes.*

“Don is having a terrible time ..... He got these two men from .... from that place. They came quickly and said they would help. I was getting out of the car, and what's-his-name was there on the doorstep. I heard him raise his voice to Don, so I said,

What about that lady across the road? I haven't seen her in ages, where is she?

I was very cross. Don was laughing, but I wanted him to say this to Barney, you see? .....I think it's Barney. He grew up .... his family lives at the bottom of our garden. Do you remember? Nobody likes him. He's a real shyster.

Oh, and John was in a bad way a few weeks ago.

Yes, that's right .....

No, he was in for three nights. But he's OK now, he's home again. He's here somewhere I think.....would you like to speak to him? He was here a few minutes ago....

What's the weather like with you? It's lovely and sunny here. A bit cold, the winter is coming soon. I won't be able to go out and ..... I can see Kate though. Kate has to go away sometimes, she just ..... disappears. Not away from here, no. She has a son, a grown up son. His wife left and now he has a new girl, and Kate goes to see them. She's older than me. Funny isn't it..... she loves to have us round and we sit in her garden and she brings us lovely things to drink and eat. I love going there...to see her."