

A Long Evening Ahead
Bel Pye

Characters

Elsbeth, a woman in her 50/60s and mother of Anna-Marie

Anna-Marie, a woman in her 30/40s

Kellie, a woman in her 30/40s

Anna-Marie is in her kitchen, waiting. She has her coat on ready to go out. As she waits she sips a glass of red wine.

We hear the front door open.

A-M: Is that you mum? Kellie will be here any minute

Elsbeth enters

A-M: Have you got your ticket? The school said it was sold out

Elsbeth: I'm so sorry sweetheart

A-M: We made sure we got our tickets nice and early. Kathleen hasn't stopped talking about this for weeks.

Elsbeth: There is no easy way for me to say this

A-M: I've been through her lines with her so often I'm starting to dream in Shakespeare.

Elsbeth: Your husband is having an affair.

A-M: That's ridiculous! Glen is not having an affair.

Elsbeth: This arrived this morning. *(Elsbeth hands over an amazon box)* I assumed your father had bought some new gadget on a whim but I opened it, and ...
(reading from the attached note) "I cannot wait to spend the weekend with you, the woman I love"
(she holds up a bondage outfit)

A-M: oh shit

Elsbeth: I know it's hard to take in

A-M: Mum there's been a mistake

Elsbeth: I checked the sender's address and it was definitely ordered by someone from this house.

A-M: No, mum, you don't understand

Elsbeth: I would never have thought it of a man like Glen ...

A-M: I sent that package. I must have clicked the wrong address.

Elsbeth: Now darling...

A-M: I realise this is a lot to take in

Elsbeth: I know what's going on here

A-M: you do?

Elsbeth: it's very loyal of you to try and cover up for Glen's shocking behaviour, but really

A-M: no mum, I really did send that package

Elsbeth: what on earth would you be sending packages like this to women for?

A-M: maybe we should sit down

Elsbeth: I was surprised that Glen was into this sort of thing to be honest. He's an accountant.

A-M: I have a girlfriend. I've had one for a rather long time.

Elsbeth: you have a girlfriend?

A-M: yes

Elsbeth: what on earth for?

A-M: Glen knows about our relationship and is happy about it. It's sort of an open-marriage arrangement.

Elsbeth You're telling me that Glen is OK with all ...

Elsbeth gestures at the bondage outfit

A-M: He has other relationships too! He's seeing a lovely couple. They live in Paisley

Elsbeth: Paisley?

A-M: you know all those 'golfing holidays' he started going on a few years ago?

Elsbeth: yes? oh my god!

A-M: They are really lovely people, we all go and visit sometimes. They have a hot tub

Elsbeth: a hot tub.

A-M: yes.

Elsbeth: you're husband, the accountant, whose hobby is researching the history of Scottish rail networks

A-M: yes

Elsbeth: spends his 'golfing weekends' with a couple from paisley,

A-M: yes

Elsbeth: who have a hot tub.

A-M: yes.

Elsbeth: I see. Well.

A-M: I understand if you need to take some time to ...

Elsbeth: Not at all! If this arrangement works for you, then I'm very happy for you

A-M: you are?

Elsbeth: Of course! I'm not the pearl-clutching Boomer you seem to think I am

A-M: I don't think you're old enough to be a boomer

Elsbeth: just a pearl clutcher then?

A-M: No! I mean, I'm just surprised you're taking this so ...

Elsbeth: I am very open minded

A-M: I know

Elsbeth: I am extremely comfortable with this situation

A-M: Kellie will be really glad. She's never liked hiding the nature of our relationship.

Elsbeth: I'm glad to hear ... hang on, Kellie? We're not talking Kellie-Kellie here are we? As in the-woman-who-is-about-to-drive-us-to-your-daughter's-school-play-Kellie?

A-M: Yes, that Kelly

Elsbeth: Kellie, the woman we are about to spend an evening with, is your secret bondage lover ... that's fine. Lovely in fact. Fine and lovely.

A-M: I didn't plan for you to find out like this.

Elsbeth: Everything is fine.

Kellie enters

Kellie: hiya! Ready to go?

Elsbeth: Hello Kellie. Everything is fine.

Kellie: It ... is?

A-M: apparently

Kellie: right, that's ... good. Shall we get going? The play starts at 7, and we want to make sure we get good seats.

Elsbeth: Yes, of course. We can all drive to the school together. Me, my daughter, and her lesbian dominatrix girlfriend

A-M: Mum!

Elsbeth: I'm just stating facts. There's no judgement here

A-M: You cannot just say things that!

Elsbeth: I don't see why you're getting so worked up about it.

Kellie: I'm not a lesbian dominatrix, Mrs Coyle

Elsbeth: I know all about pronouns you know

A-M: mum this really isn't the time

Elsbeth: I'm very sex positive. I listen to Lizzo. I know all the lyrics to WAP

A-M: please, don't

Elsbeth: I don't see why you're being such a prude, Anna-Marie.

Kellie: Are you looking forward to the play tonight, Mrs. Coyle? I've never seen 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' before.

Elsbeth: It's one of my favourite Shakespeares, although I always wondered why it's so often done by schools. It's all about fucking.

A-M: Mum!

Elsbeth: Really Anna Marie, there's no need to get in a state. We're all adults here. Although the story is mostly about straight people having sex which is homophobic and needs to check it's privilege

A-M: We are going to get through this evening. We will drive to the school, and watch Kathleen do her play, and then we can come home and have a nice sensible calm discussion about everything

Elsbeth: What is there to discuss? Most mother's would be upset to find their daughter is committing acts of gimp-related infidelity, but I am absolutely open and non-judgmental about these things. Everything is fine.

Kellie: I'll start the car then, shall I?

Elsbeth: excellent idea Kellie.

Kellie leaves

A-M: It really is OK if you're not Ok with all of this right now, you know

Elsbeth: I don't know what you mean. I am fine. Better than fine, even!

A-M: mum ...

Elsbeth: Lets go! We don't want to be late

Both Anna-Marie and Elsbeth leave.

After a pause, Anna-Marie returns to the kitchen to knock back her glass of red in preparation for the evening ahead. As she is doing this, Elsbeth also comes back in, catching her in the act. Anna-Marie offers her the remains of the wine in her glass, and Elsbeth pushes past her to pick up the rest of the bottle, which she places in her handbag before exiting the kitchen again.

Elsbeth: (offstage) Now Kellie dear, I want to know that I am perfectly comfortable with your leather fetish, and that you have nothing at all to be embarrassed about. I'm very open minded, you know.

AM resigns herself to the evening ahead, finishes her glass, and exits.