

CONSUMED

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Based on a short story, Can You Eat the Wind, by Sian Hughes

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Close on the curve of a woman's waist, her bare stomach exposed. She is lying on plastic sheeting on a hospital bed. A squirt of gel lands on her stomach. This is FAYE (38), having a 12 week pregnancy scan. The SONOGRAPHER leans over Faye, manipulating the transducer probe on her bare belly.

SONOGRAPHER

You haven't lost the pregnancy...
but I can't find a heartbeat.

Time seems to stand still for Faye. She lets out a breath. We see her face in full for the first time.

FAYE

(bleakly)
Can I see?

SONOGRAPHER

(her voice muted - distant
and echoey)
There's the blood flow from the
placenta.
(moving the transducer
around Faye's belly)
But there's no fetal heartbeat.

The reality of Faye's situation begins to dawn on her. She's lost another baby.

SONOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'll get your doctor.

Faye nods and turns back to the image of the foetus on the monitor. The stark hospital lighting is reflected in one of her eyes.

CUT TO:

Faye, from behind, walking down an empty hospital corridor. She reaches the end and stops to catch her breath and stare unseeingly through a frosted glass window. She turns as she hears someone running up steps towards her.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

It is her husband, TOM (smartly dressed, late 30s), out of breath. As he approaches, their eyes meet and she shakes her head.

TOM

Ah, no, no, no...

As Faye reaches Tom she buries her face in his shoulder and breaks down. He hugs her tightly, stroking her hair. Close on her face, partially obscured by his clothing. We hear the rapid beat of his heart, as does Faye.

CUT TO:

3 INT FAYE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT - DAY 1

3

Close on bubbles rising to the surface of the water as Faye comes up for air, eyes closed. She is lying in a milky white bath. She leans her head against the side of the bath and opens her eyes, thinking, then retreats under the water again. As she moves in the water we see one breast with which she won't breastfeed, the space between her legs where she won't give birth. She sinks back down in the water then comes up again with a sigh. A trickle of blood appears in the whiteness between her legs. The redness expands like a crimson carnation, beginning to turn the bath pink. Faye sits up with a sharp intake of breath and looks around. She scoops her hands into the water and brings up a small, bloody, pink-grey embryo sac. She reaches for a large seashell on the side of the bath and puts the foetus into it. She stares at it, transfixed, then leans out of the bath and places the shell on the floor. Out of the bath, now wrapped in a towel she kneels over the shell containing the foetus. Mesmerised, she leans down to take a closer look.

CUT TO:

4 INT HALLWAY - NIGHT - DAY 1

4

Faye emerges from the bathroom into the darkness of the hallway. She is wearing her dressing-gown and carrying the shell which now holds a flannel wrapping the foetus. Tom is coming along the hallway to take his daughter IRIS (4), to the loo. Iris is in her pyjamas.

TOM

Wee wee time, wee monster!

Iris is giggling. She stops when she sees Faye.

(CONTINUED)

IRIS
(of the dish)
What's that?

FAYE
(dazed)
It's a Baby.

IRIS
Can I see?

TOM
(putting Iris down and
gently pushing her into
the bathroom)
Go for a wee wee, darling. I'll be
in in a sec, okay? On ye go.
(to Faye, concerned)
Should I take Iris to her mum's if
you're not feeling well?

FAYE
No, it's fine, it's just...
(hesitating, then
unwrapping the flannel to
expose the foetus)

Tom glances at the embryo sac and quickly looks away.

FAYE (CONT'D)

...I don't know what to do with
this...I can't just throw it away.

TOM
Shouldn't you just flush it down
the loo?

IRIS (O.S.)
Daddy!

FAYE
Flush it down the loo? It's not a
bloody goldfish!

TOM
(realising his error)
Okay, okay, I'm sorry. We can bury
it. We can bury it.

IRIS (O.S.)
Daddy! Come!

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

TOM
(to Iris)
Just a second!

He watches Faye's retreating back as she moves in the direction of the kitchen, taking the dish with her. He looks troubled then takes a beat before opening the bathroom door to attend to his daughter.

TOM (CONT'D)
(Back to jocular dad mode)
Right, where are you?

IRIS
(faintly in the background, prelap)
Can I see the baby?

CUT TO:

5 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT 1

5

Faye enters the kitchen. It's a mess, crumbs on the work surface.

FAYE
(mutters)
Fuck's sake.

She puts the soap dish down on the kitchen counter and begins tidying up, sweeping up crumbs, folding the tea towel. She breaks off to take another look at the foetus, unwrapping the flannel to do so, then begins searching for a container in the draining rack, in the kitchen cupboard. She pauses and notices the jar of herbs beside the soap dish and picks it up. She empties its contents into the compost caddy, refilling it with olive oil from the counter top. She gently lifts the embryo sac off the plate and drops it into the jar. She holds up the jar so that it is level with her face. The embryonic sac spreads and expands in the fluid. Faye sees the beginning of legs, a spine curling inwards like a comma, a single eye meeting her own.

CUT TO:

6 INT BEDROOM - FOLLOWING MORNING - DAY 2

6

Faye, again wearing her dressing gown, is staring out of the bedroom window, her face in the gap between the sheer curtains, lit by the early morning light. In the background, Tom is getting ready for work.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
(quietly)
Listen, I'm sorry about last night.
Um, I suppose I was just a bit...
freaked out.
(turning away and shouting
towards the open bedroom
door)
Iris! Iris! Shoes on now, we're
gonna be late!

There's a bulge in the pocket of Faye's silky dressing-gown where she's keeping the spice jar and Faye unconsciously strokes the jar through the fabric. Tom returns to continue packing his work bag.

TOM (CONT'D)
(conciliatory)
Listen, I'll see if I can get the
afternoon off. We could all go out
for a nice lunch if you like, after
you've picked up Iris?

FAYE
Mebbe.

Tom comes over. He puts his hand on the back of Faye's neck and she accepts a kiss on the cheek.

TOM
See you later.

FAYE
(only just audible)
Bye.

TOM
(as he's leaving)
Iris! Shoes!

Faye waits for the sound of the front door closing then takes the jar from her pocket and holds it up to the light to have another look at her lost baby. She moves over to her dressing table and opens the drawer, carefully placing the jar in amongst some linen and closing the drawer then quickly re-opens it, retrieves the jar and gently places it on the dressing table top instead.

CUT TO:

7 INT BEDROOM - DAY 2

7

Close up of the jar on the dressing-table. Now dressed for the day, Faye picks up the jar and goes to put it in the drawer but again changes her mind. Close on her face, light reflecting on her from the jar. She notices that the egg sac is unravelling; silky fibres are unwrapping themselves from around the baby's torso, giving the impression of someone undressing. A range of emotions cross Faye's face, then she carefully places the jar in her handbag and exits the bedroom.

CUT TO:

8 EXT MEADOWS - DAY 2

8

Faye sits alone on a bench on the Meadows, framed by trees and sky. Iris and her friend play football at the edge of the frame.

Faye goes to eat an egg and cress sandwich. She brings the bread to her mouth but she cannot stomach it and puts it aside. She closes her eyes and lifts up her head to the sky. We hear the distant sound of children's voices then she hears her name and opens her eyes. Iris comes tearing over.

IRIS

Faye! Faye! Look!

A drift of bubbles float across Faye's eyeline. She focusses on one particularly large, lone, empty one.

CUT TO:

9 INT SITTING ROOM - DAY 2

9

Faye is lying on the sofa, looking at images of embryos on her phone. She begins watching a video entitled 'How to preserve samples at home' then comes across an article about a woman keeping a foetus in the freezer. She is shocked by her phone suddenly buzzing loudly and she answers it.

FAYE

Hi.

TOM (O.S.)

Hi babe. Sorry I couldn't get away.
Did you go somewhere nice for
lunch?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

Faye has begun looking at the baby again, floating in the jar, and distracted, remains silent.

TOM (CONT'D)
Faye, can you hear me?

FAYE
Er, yeah, yeah.

TOM (O.S.)
(clearing his throat)
Is Iris okay?

FAYE (CONT'D)
(looking towards Iris' bedroom)
Yeah, she's fine.

TOM
And how about you? How's the bleeding?

FAYE
It's okay.
(feeling vengeful)
But I got blood on the sofa and it won't come out.

Faye is wearing trousers. She parts her legs briefly and looks down at a fresh bloodstain between her legs on the sofa. It is obvious that she's made no effort to try and remove it.

TOM (O.S.)
(slowly)
You got blood on the sofa.
(He sighs)
Listen, don't worry about that.
I've gotta go. I'll be home at 7.

He ends the call without saying goodbye. Faye lies back against the sofa arm and stares at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

10 INT SITTING ROOM - NIGHT 2

10

Tom is sitting on the sofa. He's scratching in irritation at the stain on the sofa with his little finger. Faye comes into the room in her dressing-gown.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

FAYE
I'm going to bed.

Tom turns and looks at the clock.

TOM
But it's only 8 o'clock.
Don't you wanna watch the end of
this episode? There's not much left
to go.

FAYE
No.

TOM
I'll be up in a bit. I'm just gonna
watch the next one.

FAYE
Do what you like.

She heads out of the room.

CUT TO:

11 INT BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

11

In the bedroom, Faye holds the jar up to the bedside light,
taking time to examine its contents once more.

FAYE
(quietly)
Night night, wee one.

She gives it a gentle kiss before placing it under her
pillow.

CUT TO:

12 INT BEDROOM - DAWN - DAY 3

12

Faye wakes with a gasp. It's the middle of the night. She
wakes with the panicked feeling that the baby is gone but
when she feels under her pillow the container is still there.
She switches on the bedside lamp and studies the contents of
the jar closely. In the dim light the baby looks more
beautiful than ever. Faye spends time inspecting the contours
of its body, the head bent over onto the chest, tiny mounds
where there would have been ears; the suggestion of toes.

(CONTINUED)

FAYE
(softly)

Tom

Tom doesn't stir.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(a bit louder)

Tom!

She moves close to him and nudges him gently. He slowly emerges into consciousness.

FAYE (CONT'D)
I want to show you something.

She holds the jar up, close to his face. He struggles to focus on what she is showing him.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(whispering in the darkness)
Look. Look! It's our baby.

Tom takes the jar and inspects its contents. Faye's face is full of love for the baby. She's excited to share this moment with Tom.

TOM
(after a long pause)
Faye, you're scaring me. Do you think you need to talk to someone about this?

Faye's face falls. She goes to take the jar back but Tom is placing it on his side of the bed. She leans across him.

FAYE
Give it to me!

They begin to tussle, Faye is desperate to get the jar back.

TOM
(as they struggle)
I think you need to calm down.
(raising his voice)
Calm, for God's sake! Alright, alright!

FAYE
Just give it to me!

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

TOM
Alright, alright!

FAYE
(shouting)
We've lost another baby, and you
don't seem to give a fuck!

TOM
Hey! hey! This doesn't have to be
such a big deal! Faye! Women have
miscarriages all the time. We can
try again. You'll fall pregnant
again.

(trying to reason with
Faye as he touches her
hair)
And we have Iris!

Faye pulls away from him.

FAYE
(furious, desperate)
She's not MY child, don't you
understand?

She gets out of bed and turns to face him.

FAYE (CONT'D)
I want a baby of my own!

She storms out of the room and Tom heads after her.

TOM
Faye, Faye. God's sake. Faye!

CUT TO:

13 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3 13

Faye locks herself in the bathroom, crying heavily and sits
down on the closed toilet seat. She rocks herself and cries.

CUT TO:

14 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3 14

Tom's silhouette appears through the frosted glass of the
bathroom door.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

TOM

Faye!

CUT TO:

15 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3

15

Sobbing, Faye stares at the jar, her vision blurred by tears. Tom knocks on the door and tries to reason with Faye to let him in. Faye glances at the door but doesn't respond, speaking instead to her baby.

FAYE

(pained, through her
tears)

I wish I could have kept you safe.
Oh baby.

Tom continues to talk through the door but his voice is muted and Faye's attention is elsewhere. She unscrews the lid of the jar and pours the contents into her hand. Oils spill over her fingers onto the floor. She looks at the tiny baby in her hand and gently touches the top of its head. Taking one last glance at the bathroom door, she calms down as she has a moment of clarity. She lifts her hand to her mouth and swallows the foetus, then closes her eyes and a small smile flits across her mouth.

END