

RACE ME
Daisy Coyle

Drip drip. Drip. A toilet/changeroom at a swim centre. Morning. A big swim meet is going on outside. The roar of an excited crowd can be heard sometimes. There are only two toilet cubicles. One cubicle is occupied, the other has an out of order sign on it.

ISLA a sixteen-year-old girl stands in her wet navy one-piece cozzie. Goggles and swim cap on. She looks in the mirror. She's frazzled. Angry. Upset. She hops from foot to foot slightly. She's also busting.

She looks at her body. Expands her stomach right out then right back in again. Holds it. In. Out.

ROO (offstage): ISLA? Your race is in 10?

She ignores him. She rips off her swim cap and goggles. Looks at her stomach again. In. Out.

The cubicle door suddenly opens, and a girl rushes out. ISLA turns towards the cubicle when fifteen-year-old girl, HARRY also in navy swimsuit, cap and goggles, enters. She runs through the door and nabs the toilet just before ISLA does. The cubicle door slams shut.

ISLA: HArRRyY!

HARRY talks from behind the toilet door.

HARRY: Apologies. I'll be but a moment.

You've been in here ages.

ISLA: Yeah

HARRY: You hiding?

Drip drip, drip. ISLA ignores HARRY. Doesn't look like she can hold it much longer, she's gonna explode. She looks around, where could she...she looks towards the sink.

HARRY: You know what I want?

ISLA: What?

No...she couldn't. Could She?

HARRY: I want to be the kind of old woman that you can tell was hot when they were younger.

ISLA: But you weren't.

HARRY: I want to be the kind of woman that has a very big handbag full of stuff. And when she gets to work, she slams it on the desk and says: 'I can't believe you did that!'

ISLA: No one does that. Who does that?

HARRY: Janet King.

ISLA: Who?

HARRY: Janet King, it's a very popular television program.

ISLA: I want to be the kind of woman who tends to her garden on weekends and when someone dies, I'll make a lentil curry with fresh lemongrass.

HARRY: I don't care so much about being a woman, I just want to be an adored TV Vet like Dr Harry but with better skin.

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ISLA: Out of the two Dr Harrys he'd still be the most dewy.

HARRY: You've got a right hump today don't you.

ISLA: Fine - I want to go the Olympics...

HARRY: Yeah duh. Boring...come on, play properly. The type of woman who eats pasta but doesn't look like it.

ISLA: Who gets married for a visa?

She really needs to go. Like, really.

HARRY: Who looks so good pregnant she doesn't know she is and one day it just slides out like a sausage out of a bun.

Fed up, ISLA angles herself towards the sink. She pees. ISLA's older brother, ROO enters.

Beat.

ROO: WHOA ISLA: AHHHHHHHHH

ISLA: UHHH I'M PEEING IN THE SINK

ROO: Why? HARRY: Is there a guy in here?

ROO: Well I didn't think I'd walk on my sister peeing in the sink.

HARRY: Are you peeing in the sink Isla?

ISLA: I'm peeing in the sink.

HARRY: That's foul. ROO: You are foul.

ISLA: Can you get lost please Roo? I don't really want my brother anywhere near a sight line of my nunny thanks-

HARRY: Your nunny?

ROO: You're going to miss your race.

ISLA: Nunny, noon, it's polite.

HARRY: It's a bit cute

ROO: Isla-

ISLA: Well what do you call it?

ROO: You've got seven minutes now

HARRY: I just call it a -

ROO: Oi! You two! They've called your division. C'mon-

Finished. ISLA adjusts her cozzie and dismounts the sink.

ISLA: I don't know if I'm gonna do it.

ROO: Do what?

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ISLA: The race.

The toilet flushes. HARRY emerges from the cubicle. Silence. HARRY goes to the other sink in between the siblings. She washes her hands. The soap dispenser is running low though, she has to press the button quite a few times. It squeaks. Drip.

HARRY: I'll uh see you guys later.

HARRY exits. ISLA washes her hands.

ROO: Well has an alien invaded your body?

ISLA: -

ROO: You have to race, you can't even qualify for nationals if you don't race.

ISLA: Yeah, I know.

Drip, drip.

ROO: C'mon you will actually miss it.

ISLA: Just give me a minute!

ROO: You don't have a minute.

ISLA: I just really don't see the point.

ROO: I just really don't know what you're talking about?

ISLA: Look at me out there, I'm slow, I don't know what the hell I'm doing, what I'm gonna do -

ROO: It's not your stroke Isla, you're clearly having an off day, but we don't have time for the theatrics now -

ISLA: We? Why do you care?

ROO: What? This is your life? You're a swimmer. Paris, 2024. That's the big dream isn't it?

ISLA: How is she? I didn't know she was coming.

ROO: Mum? She's fine. Busy. You know mum.

ISLA: Not really, she's not around much.

ROO: She went to Paris for a bit

ISLA laughs.

What?

ISLA: Paris. Sounds good.

ROO: Well I hear it's lovely in summer, four years from now you'll see for yourself. C'mon, enough now, let's go.

ISLA: Dya think she regrets it? Having us.

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ROO: Are you okay? What is this about? What's happened?

ISLA: Maybe it's just me, I don't slot in to CEO life as well as you do.

ROO starts violently searching his pockets.

ISLA: What are you looking for?

ROO: The world's smallest violin.

ISLA groans. He 'finds' the 'tiny violin', 'plays' it for a bit. He makes the screechiest of screeching noises.

ISLA: Okay enough.

He doesn't stop.

ISLA: It's not funny anymore!

ROO: Go out there, go race, then I will.

His violin noises get louder. ISLA 'grabs' the imaginary violin and violently mimes smashing it on the floor.

ROO: That was very expensive.

ISLA: Oh sorry, did mum buy that for you too?

ROO: Dya know what? I'll leave you to it.

He goes to leave. Isla goes into the cubicle.

ROO: You just peed in the sink. What's wrong with your bladder?

ISLA: I'm an athlete. I hydrate.

Drip.

You seem to care a lot about me going to Olympics, is that what you cling onto, due to lack of your own talent and dreams?

ROO: Why are you such a bitch?

ISLA: Don't call me that. I thought you were better than that.

ROO: Me too but turns out you're a bitch.

ISLA pokes her head out of the cubicle holding a bit of toilet paper. It looks wet.

ISLA: Say it again. Say it again and I'll stuff my pee in your mouth.

ROO: Fight me bitch.

ISLA sprints out of the cubicle in a flash, carrying a pee covered toilet paper in hand. They wrestle and struggle, ending up on the ground, ISLA on top with all the power. She pins him down. She pulls his head back by his hair, about to wipe his face with the tissue.

ROO: YOU ARE SUCH A CHILD

ISLA: Yeah?

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ROO: STOP now.

ISLA pushes harder.

ROO: I'm over it, Isla! I can't wait to get away from you.

He pushes her away. They both sit upright.

ISLA: Away?

ROO: Yeah. I'm moving. To Perth actually, to study. Not that you'd know.

ISLA: -

ROO: You know that's been my whole life, right? Not this week Roo, yeah after practice maybe Roo, because someone has to take Isla somewhere so she can be the best thing since sliced bread.

ISLA: Perth?? Why Perth?

ROO: I dunno. Because it's not here.
Do you even know what I'm gonna study? Hey?

Pause.

ISLA: Accounting?

Roo just stares at her. Doesn't find it funny.

ROO: Nursing. I'm gonna be a nurse.

ISLA: Nursing? Why don't I know that? Why didn't you tell me?

ROO: You don't ask.
Anyway, do race, don't race. Who cares? I mean probably everyone. But not me, not anymore.

She goes to the toilet, puts the toilet paper in, flushes it. Wooosh. She comes back out.

ISLA: I'm having a baby.

Beat.

HARRY bursts through the door.

HARRY: OH MY GOD. Luke Meiring is doing the 200m breast stroke with nothing on, NOTHING. His short, skin things fell clean off. IT IS AMAZING.

Silence.

HARRY: Amazing!

Another awkward pause. Drip.

Did someone die?
What's with you guys?? Luke Meiring's BUM Isla!

Still nothing.

His bare ass breast stroking along. He's winning! The adrenaline, the freedom, it's making him quick-

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ISLA: Harry!! For Christ's sake - grow up for a sec would ya?

HARRY: -

ISLA: I'm just... I'm sorry, I'm sorry, just I need a sec.

HARRY: Okay.

HARRY goes to leave.

But you're coming with right?

ISLA I... I'm gonna - yeah, I'm coming with.

HARRY: Good.

Luke Meiring. Bum Cheeks. 200 metres.
Just saying. He's gonna have to get out of the pool.

She leaves.

ROO: Did you say?

ISLA: I'm pregnant. Ten weeks.

ROO: What? I don't...what are you gonna do?

ISLA: Well I've stuffed it haven't I?

ROO: -

ISLA: I've gotten up at 5 o'clock in the morning every day before school since I was eight. I wanted to be that girl that people talked about. The girl that did it, she was gone. Out of here, killing it.
I just went to a clinic in the end. I already knew it was in there. Cause, I was slower. Like today. I was losing.
I wanted it gone. It would be gone, and it would be like it didn't happen. I'd get to be that girl again.
I don't get why, but when you go, they look at it. Check that it's where it's supposed to be I guess. Woosh Woosh. There's this big noise: Woosh Woosh. Then: (*she makes the noise of a heartbeat*). Just like off the tv.
'Is that it?' I say
and she goes, 'yeah.'
'But it's mostly you,' she says, 'your heart beat reverberating through the uterine wall.'

I think I'll still get to be that girl that people talk about.

Silence.

ROO: Are you okay?

ISLA: I'm fine, I'm good.

She's not good. She sits down on the bathroom floor. ROO joins her.

ISLA: Me and Harry sometimes play this game. We ask each other, 'you know what I want?' And then the other person goes, 'what do you want?' and then you say what type of woman you want to be. The idea is to outdo each other.

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I think I want to be the type of woman who's at the tee ball games. Who tucks her kids in. Who doesn't just think about herself. I didn't know Mum was gonna come today. She never comes.

ROO: I want to be the type of person who sees his sister more than every other swim meet.

ISLA: That'll be hard if you're in Perth

ROO: It'll be harder if you're pushing a pram around.

ISLA: You don't know-

ROO: Isla-

ISLA: I've thought about it a lot-

ROO: Isla-

ISLA: I don't want to be like mum, I-

ROO: Isla look at me

She looks at him.

ROO: I know no one who can swim like you-

ISLA: I-

ROO: I know no one who's brave like you are. You give up your life now and you'll never get to see for yourself.

ISLA: I'm not giving up my life, it's just a different one.

ROO: You're sixteen. And I'm leaving, I'm not going to be here.

ISLA looks at ROO for a long time.

You can't have a baby Isla.

Beat.

ISLA: It's gone. I got rid of it. It's gone

ROO: You did?

She nods. He hugs her.

ROO: You're already the type of woman who freestyles like nobody's seen before.

She nods. He squeezes her hand.

ROO: I'll be out there.

ISLA: Tell Mum I'm coming.

He exits.

She takes a moment, breathes and looks down. Holds it. In. Out.

ISLA: C'mon baby, let's go race.