Talk to Me Like the Rain
by Losille

Summary

Lauren is completely stunned when Tom asks her for a huge favor that she’s not exactly prepared to do.

Notes

Written for allthewaytonight.tumblr.com, per her request. Unfortunately, I did not use a Marvel “script”—as much as I think the sex just oozes out of everything Tom says as Loki, I just couldn’t wrap my mind around it. I hope you like what I did choose, however, allthewaytonight!

One act play used: Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen… by Tennessee Williams

If you want to read it, the link will take you to the Google Reads preview, but not all pages are included. I could not find a full free copy of it online. If anyone else can find one, let me know and I will update the link.

“Lauren, we’re friends, right?”

Startled by the strange intrusion into her quiet world, Lauren looked up from the mobile she’d been scanning and into the bright blue eyes of her handsome friend. Except he didn’t look so handsome at the moment. It seemed as though he’d been pulling at his hair, the usually tamed and gelled curls
having sprung from their previous locations, making look like a bedraggled poodle.

“I don’t understand the question,” she said with a frown.

He sighed. “We’re friends? Right? Like we know everything about each other, we’ve got each other’s backs. We can talk about anything. Stuff like that?”

She eyed him for a moment, not sure where this conversation was going, and wondering if she shouldn’t escape while she still had the chance. The thoughtfulness in his words, however, made her curious enough to remain seated on the couch with him. What had he been thinking about that had required such a silly question?

“Of course we are, silly. Why?”

“I really need your help.”


He hesitated.

“A viable ovum? A healthy womb to incubate your baby for ten months?” Lauren meant it as a joke and he laughed at her good naturedly, but something passed across his face that gave her a reason to pause. Shaking her head to rid herself of the interest and disregarding the shiver up her spine, she smiled at him.

“Ten months?” he asked. “I thought it was only nine months.”

“Honestly. For being so educated, you can be really clueless,” she replied with a chuckle.

He pursed his lips at her and rolled his eyes. “I don’t make it a habit or hobby to research the female reproductive process. But really? Ten months?”

“Yeah,” she replied, confused at the way their conversation was going. “It’s forty weeks on average, so you do the math.”

“Huh,” he said, gazing thoughtfully across the room.

When he didn’t immediately continue, she grew anxious. “Please tell me you don’t expect me to carry a child for you. That’s not gonna happen.”

He frowned. “You mean you wouldn’t? Never ever?”

“Tom, if you are ever in a relationship with a man and you want to do surrogacy, we can talk then,” she replied. “But since you are neither gay nor do you have a sterile girlfriend or wife, I’m closed for business.”

He gave her another odd look. “Our conversations always devolve in the weirdest ways.”

“You started it,” Lauren replied and turned back to her mobile and the current level of Angry Birds she needed to beat to move on in the game. “What do you want anyway?”

Tom shuffled some magazines and books around on the table that sat in front of them. From the pile he extracted a packet of paper stapled at the corner. The pages were well worn and crinkled, stained and ripped. “I need you to run lines with me.”

“You’re joking, right?” she asked critically.
He shook his head and gave her a sheepish smile.

“Thomas, you are out of your bloody mind if you think I’m going to run lines with you again.” She clicked off the screen on her mobile and shoved it into her pocket. If he was going to get any more harebrained, she would be forced to leave.

“Come on, it’ll be fine,” he pushed, leaning over and wrapping his arms around her so that she couldn’t get away from him. She breathed in a whiff of his pleasant cologne and the lingering soap from his shower that morning. The scent made her sigh and a tingle spread through her body. It really wasn’t fair. He always seemed to know her weaknesses, and he never shied away from using them all to his advantage.

She didn’t have the same luxury, because as well as she knew him, she just couldn’t find any of his own weak spots.

“No, I won’t,” she said. “I was prepared to give you a kidney or hide a body. But I absolutely refuse to help you run lines again.”

“Why not?”

When she turned to look at him, she cast upon him the most baleful glare manageable. He seemed unfazed by it. “Because I can’t act and you know it.”

“I just need you to make sure I’m saying my lines correctly and you add in the other lines,” he said, brushing the long hair in front of her shoulder back behind it in a strangely intimate gesture. “Just read them.”

“Don’t you realize how much I get lost in watching you do your thing and then I can’t concentrate on reading? Do you even remember what happened the last time I helped?”

His lips curved into a slow, soft smile. He reached up with his right hand and drew his fingers along a tendril of hair still sitting on her shoulder. She watched in fascination as the golden blonde twirled around the tip of one of his long fingers. He wrapped half of its length around his index finger before she dared look up at him.

Tom’s light eyes had turned dark and serious.

“What are you doing?” she asked.

Surprise overcame his face and he snatched his hand away like the hair had lit on fire in his grasp. “Sorry… I didn’t…”

Lauren pursed her lips.

He sighed and regrouped quickly. “I won’t make you cry. This is a little different than Loki dressing down Black Widow.”

She shuddered in remembrance. There was little doubt about the man’s acting abilities and once in the “Loki zone” all hallmarks of her beloved, sweet-natured friend had disappeared. Why she had ever agreed to run lines with him that day was still beyond her comprehension.

It was the scene that had made millions of masochistic fangirls sigh in sexual frustration and solidified Tom’s place as a terrifying, unrepentant villain in cinema lore. To Lauren, it was as bad as the day she had failed her first practical exam at uni. She still had nightmares.
She had lost herself in the moment as he inched closer, taunting and berating in his lines. He pounded a fist on a table, rattling the glassware and plates that had previous held their lunch; he’d done it completely out of the blue for the effect of his lines. As much as she had been reading Black Widow’s lines, she had not become the character; she couldn’t divorce herself from the situation and that it was Loki who was violent and cruel to Black Widow, not Tom who intended to hurt Lauren. The action had startled her so much that she had burst into tears like some little girl.

She had gotten over it, mostly, but to this day, she couldn’t even watch that scene without feeling the familiar squeamishness of discomfort in the pit of her belly. Something important had changed between them that day. Even though they hadn’t discussed it when he had attempted to soothe her fears, it was a giant elephant in the room. It was something strange and not altogether unpleasant, but she had vowed never to run lines with him again because she didn’t want the rift to grow larger.

Clearly, he hadn’t felt the same, judging by the pleading expression now in his eyes. Tom moved back a bit, but didn’t release his all encompassing grasp on her body. His bottom lip had jutted out in the most epic pout she’d ever seen on the man. “Please?”

She blew the air from her lungs. “I hate when you do that. You know I can’t resist that look. Just give me the damn script.”

Tom grabbed the packet and handed it to her.

“I don’t see why I have to do this with you,” she said. “Why can’t your costar do it? Where is she?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “Off in America somewhere filming some movie.”

Lauren glanced at the black Courier font on the cover page. “You didn’t say it was Tennessee Williams.”

“You didn’t ask,” Tom replied. He jumped up from the couch and glided across the room toward his kitchen.

“What are you doing?”

Tom reappeared with one of the straight back wooden chairs that surrounded his dining room table and a clear glass of water. “Props.”

“You said I just had to read.”

“You have to do some of the scene directions,” he said. “I need help visualizing it.”

She testily arched her right brow at him, but didn’t verbally protest. Instead, she read the scene direction in a vain attempt to prepare for the un-preparable:
Why don’t you ever do anything fun?” she asked. “Why can’t we get a nice comedy or buddy cop movie or something?”

Tom laughed as he set the chair in front of the window overlooking a bleak London day. It had been threatening to rain for hours. It was why they had decided to stay in rather than get caught in the storm while on a jog. “Because the meat is in the drama.”

“I know, but a little chuckle here and there might be nice.”

She stood from her seat and slowly made her way around the couch to the chair. Tom gazed out the window as if entranced, one hand on the back of the chair. Lauren reached out for him, brushing his fingers with her own.

He looked at her, a small smile curving his lips. “I promise I’ll start looking for a comedy piece… but that means you’ll have to help me with the lines.”

Lauren rolled her eyes and walked around the chair, sitting on it. “What are you going to use for the bed?”

“The what?” he asked, confused.

Talk to Me Like the Rain
And Let Me Listen...

Scene: A furnished room west of Eighth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. On a folding bed lies a Man in crumpled underwear, struggling out of sleep with the sigh of a man who went to bed very drunk. A Woman sits in a straight chair at the room’s single window, outlined dimly against a sky heavy with a rain that has not yet begun to fall. The Woman is holding a tumbler of water from which she takes small, jerky sips like a bird drinking. Both of them have ravaged young faces like the faces of children in a famished country. In their speech there is a sort of politeness, a sort of tender formality like that of two lonely children who want to be friends, and yet there is an impression that they have lived in this intimate situation for a long time and that the present scene between them is the repetition of one that has been repeated so often that its plausible emotional content, such as reproach and contrition, have been completely worn out and there is nothing left but acceptance of something hopelessly inalterable between them.

Man: (hoarsely) What time is it? (The Woman mumbles something inaudible.) What, honey?

Woman: Sunday.

Man: I know it’s Sunday. You never wind the clock.

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She lifted the packet and pointed to the scene direction. “The Man is on the bed.”

“Oh!” he chuckled. “I’ll just lay on the couch.”

Lauren silently thanked the gods that he hadn’t conned her into doing this in one of the bedrooms. She wasn’t sure how she could have handled that situation. His hands covered her shoulders and squeezed slightly.

“You ready?” he asked.

“I suppose.”

She listened to him lumber back across the room to lay on the couch. Lauren gripped the script packet in one hand and the water in the other, imitating the direction for him.

And then he began the dialogue, which moved quickly. She flipped the page and struggled to read ahead of him while he acted his lines.

“You aren’t doing what the scene direction says,” he replied.

“I’m trying!” she exclaimed. “How am I supposed to do all of this? I didn’t even read it all through.”

Tom didn’t reply, but Lauren read through the next page, extending an arm out of her imaginary kimona to pick the water up again. When she didn’t hear him, she turned to look for him.

“Don’t look back here!”

“Tom!” she said, laughing nervously. “How do I know if you’re doing what you’re supposed to?”

Tom groaned. “Trust me.”

“But the purpose of running lines was so that I could make sure you were doing everything correctly.”

“Lauren! Please! Who’s the professional here?”

She rolled her eyes and shook her head, turning back to the window. “Fine. I’ll just sit here.”

“Thank you,” he replied with no little amount of attitude. “Start from the top of page two.”
Lauren nodded her head, but then a thought occurred to her. "Do I need to hum some Spanish tune or something?"

"Lauren!"

"Geez, fine, Mr. Grumpy Pants," she remarked. "I’d like to remind you that you’re the one who asked me to do this."

He muttered something unintelligible. All Lauren could do was smile and sip the water out of the glass he had prepared for the prop. His lines began again and she leaned forward to drop the glass on the windowsill, giggling just like the scene direction had described.
up and all I got afterwards was a busy signal...

**MAN:** When I woke up I was in a bathtub full of melting ice-cubes and Miller's High Life beer. My skin was blue. I was gasping for breath in a bathtub full of ice-cubes. It was near a river but I don't know if it was the East or the Hudson. People do terrible things to a person when he's unconscious in this city. I'm sore all over like I'd been kicked downstairs, not like I fell but was kicked. One time I remember all my hair was shaved off. Another time they stuffed me into a trash-can in the alley and I've come to with cuts and burns on my body. Vicious people abuse you when you're unconscious. When I woke up I was naked in a bathtub full of melting ice-cubes. I crawled out and went into the parlor and someone was going out of the other door as I came in and I opened the door and heard the door of an elevator shut and saw the doors of a corridor in a hotel. The TV was on and there was a record playing at the same time; the parlor was full of rolling tables loaded with stuff from Room Service, and whole hams, whole turkeys, three-decker sandwiches cold and turning stiff, and bottles and bottles and bottles of all kinds of liquors that hadn't even been opened and buckets of ice-cubes melting... Somebody closed a door as I came in... *(The Woman sets her glass down.)*—All over the floor of this pad near the river—articles—clothing—scattered... *(The Woman gasps as a flight of pigeons sweeps past the open window.)*—Bras!—Panties!—Shirts, ties, socks—and so forth...

**WOMAN:** *(faintly)* Clothes?

**MAN:** Yes, all kinds of personal belongings and broken glass and furniture turned over as if there'd been a free-for-all fight going on and the pad was—raided...

In the middle of a long monologue, she found herself lulled back into the familiar place of peace and contentment that came with listening to him act, even though it was rather strange not being able to look at him while he acted out his lines behind her. But there were some clues as to what he was doing if she paid attention to that, and not on the script. First it was the rustle of clothing on the couch as he sat up on the bed and shifted, followed by the sound of his feet resting on the wood flooring beneath him. Then it was the tired sighs here and there.

Lauren had known he would need no help in learning his lines or portraying a starving drunk in love with a woman. She was fairly certain he could play anything and make it believable. At least to her, it would be believable. There were very few people more proud of him than she that he had made it this far and seen his dreams to fruition. But sometimes it was difficult to comprehend that the man who starred in big movies and was loved by millions of fans the world over was also the same little boy who ran around in nappies with her when they'd been toddlers. The sheer level of awe she felt around him in these situations really could be troublesome.

Like when she lost her place in the middle of everything and he asked for a drink of water. The request jarred her out of her thoughts and the warm, tingling sense of love welling within her heart.

“Huh?” she asked, blinking her eyes and turning. “What?”

“Top of…?” She looked down at her page. Oh, goodness. She hadn’t even turned the page. Rectifying the situation, she read down a bit further.

He cleared his throat. “Give me a drink of that water.”

Lauren got up from her seat and paused, finding that he had divested himself of his shirt since she had last turned around. She supposed it was for the scene direction—she was grateful he wasn’t in his boxers only—but she had not been prepared for what she would see. He seemed unconcerned at her startled intake of breath. It wasn’t an entirely terrible sight, she would admit, but it did make her gulp and force a hot blush to her cheeks like she was some simpering teenager.

She met him in the center of the room with the glass. He took it with him to the window where he pretended to sip and spit outside. When he crossed back over, he handed her the glass. She sipped as directed, her eyes going to his smooth chest and ridges of lean muscle. Lauren had to tear her eyes away from him to concentrate on the script in her other hand.
And then she froze, reading the next scene direction. His fingers were already on her throat, light and soft on the column of her neck. She wetted her lips with another drink of water and swallowed what was in her mouth, but it had gone completely dry anyway. She hadn’t expected... she hadn’t...

“Now I’ve recited the litany of my sorrows!” he said as his character. “And what have you got to tell me? Tell me a little something of what’s going on behind your—(His fingers trail across her forehead and eyes. She closes her eyes and lifts a hand in the air as if about to touch him. He takes the hand and examines it upside down and then he presses its fingers to his lips. When he releases her fingers she touches him with them. She touches his thin smooth chest which is smooth as a child’s and then she touches his lips. He raises his hand and lets his fingers slide along her throat and into the opening of the kimona as the mandolin gathers assurance. She turns and leans against him, her throat curving over his shoulder, and he runs his fingers along the curve of her throat and says:—) It’s been so long since we have been together except like a couple of strangers living together. Let’s find each other and maybe we won’t be lost. Talk to me! I’ve been lost!—I thought of you often but couldn’t call you, honey. Thought of you all the time but couldn’t call. What could I say if I called! Could I say, I’m lost? Lost in the city? Passed around like a dirty postcard among people?—And

“For God’s sake, Lauren,” she said, shaking her head to clear the cobwebs that had suddenly formed. “I’m... sorry... I...”

Tom’s smile was slow and knowing. He did know. And he didn’t care. “Lauren, do what the scene direction says. I need you to do it.”

“Tom—,” she breathed.

“Do it,” he replied. “Touch me.”

Swallowing her pride, she reached out for him, not expecting the jolt that went through her arm or his shudder when the pads of her fingers tickled the smooth skin.
“Your fingers are cold.” His voice was thick, deeper.

“I’m, um...” she began. “I’m sorry?”

The left side of his mouth lifted in a rakish grin. “Go on... there’s still...”

“Tom, I don’t think I should.”

“You should,” he said, now breathless. “You definitely should.”

Lauren knew it was a bad idea. But she did it anyway. She dared any woman to refuse an imploring Tom Hiddleston. That was a Herculean task, and even then, she was sure Hercules wouldn’t be able to do it.

She lifted her hand from his chest and then traced her fingers along the thin lines of his lips, her hands quivering from anxiety and sexual frustration. Why was she doing this? His hands raised again, sliding along her throat and down over her shoulders, fingers teasing at the collar of her shirt, dipping lower until she realized the path he was taking.

“Stop!” she exclaimed with a rueful chuckle. “Just... stop! I can’t do this again. I’m getting too wrapped up into the scene and I...”

She pushed away from him and retreated to the furthest corner of the room. He stood completely still, eyeing her from his spot at the center of it all.

“Do you even know what you’re doing to me, Tom?” she asked. “What you hold in your hands every time you do something like this to me?”

Tom sighed and cast his eyes toward the ground. “What do I do to you?”

“If I have to tell you, then you clearly don’t know.” She tossed the script on the table beside her and lunged for her handbag. “I’m going home.”

He grabbed her arm as she passed, spinning her back into his arms. They locked securely around her, his breath warm on her cheek as lips pressed there a moment later. “Lauren, I know exactly what I hold in my hands. I just wanted to know what I did to you. I need... I need confirmation that I’m not...”

Not what? Not what? she screamed in her head.

“Your mobile’s ringing,” he said flatly.

She cringed and let out a heavy sigh. “Fuck.”

“It’s the hospital?” he asked.

“Yes,” she said. “I have to go.”

He nodded curtly. “You have to go. You always have to go.”

His words stung, far deeper than she had ever thought possible. The hurt in his eyes only made it worse. She couldn’t look at him.

“I’m sorry, Tom,” she said. “I’ll ring you later.”

She left through the door, trying to wrap her head around what had just happened so that she could
fully concentrate on the fact that she was needed at the hospital for a delivery. Her patients needed her full attention; they certainly didn’t need some lovesick woman consumed with confusion and lust for her best friend.

When she finally made it outside, it was raining. She shuddered in the damp cold, wishing for the heat upstairs, but sighed, pulled herself together and continued on her way.

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