



SAFETY PINS by Sherri Turner.

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]
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Safety Pins by Sherri Turner.

There is never enough time.

I had big plans for today, yet it's four o'clock and we've done nothing. Well, not true. You've watched an 'important' rugby match, a sport you've never followed. I've cleaned out a cupboard that's needed doing for years. It could have waited another few. Avoidance, that's all it is. We've been circling each other.

The sun is out, warm enough to sit outside. We can't keep putting it off.

"Shall we put the chairs out?" I say. "Get some fresh air?"

"All right," you say, wary.

You fetch them and I make tea.

We sit.

"I've mended them," you say. "The headrests on these chairs that were slipping."

I check. You have.

"Thanks," I say. "How did you do that?"

"Safety pins."

"Smart."

I didn't think you knew where they were, the safety pins. You take them off the dry-cleaning and leave them on the dressing table. I tidy them away. I don't pursue it, though, don't want to appear critical.

We drink our tea.

A thrush has landed by the pond. At least, I think it's a thrush.

"What bird is that?"

"Blackbird," you say. "Lady blackbird."

"Not a thrush?"

"Don't think so."

"Oh, right."

It's peaceful here, nice to just sit for a while. We can talk in a minute.

"Do you think that needs cutting back?"

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I look where you are pointing. It's a shrub, covered with tiny pink flowers in the spring. I don't know what it's called. There was one there years ago that died, then a few years later a new one grew in the same place. We didn't know how, we were simply glad it was back.

"Probably," I say.

"I'll do it next weekend."

There are clouds above, but where they are broken the sky is very blue. It's a beautiful colour and I say so. You agree. We drink our tea.

Then somehow we're talking about holidays and where we should go next year. We talk about where we have been, remember food, people, special places. We laugh at the memory of your attempts to speak foreign languages and when we got lost up a Swiss hill in the mist.

Before I know it, the time has ticked away. I need to cook dinner, you need to sort out papers for work.

We haven't talked about the important things at all. Or have we?

We've talked about beauty and laughter; the past and the future; things that die and then grow back again, just by being left alone. We've talked about how you can pin things back together, good as new. We've narrowed the distance between us and no longer seem afraid of each other. The things on the list in my head will still be there tomorrow, but I no longer feel lost in the mist.

"Roast or boiled?" I ask.

"Roast," you say, as usual.

Some questions don't need asking. Sometimes, you just know. And sometimes that is the most important thing of all.