

# Girl On Hold

by

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10 minute monologue audio play

## NOTES:

Most of GIRL ON HOLD'S dialogue is direct address to the listener.

Any dialogue in inverted commas is spoken to the unheard call centre guy.

Any occasion of ... on a line by itself indicates a brief pause.

Dialogue in italics is spoken by GIRL ON HOLD in a deeper voice, which signifies her ex-boyfriend's lines in her anecdote.

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GRAMS: TELEPHONE ON-HOLD MUSIC. HANDEL'S WATER MUSIC, A FIFTEEN SECOND SNIPPET, BUT ON A CONTINUOUS LOOP, PLAYING LOW THROUGHOUT AS –

GIRL ON HOLD: Can somebody please explain to me why telephone on-hold systems always play Handel's Water Music?

Handel's bloody Water Music. Every bloody time.

I wouldn't mind so much if it was the piece in its entirety. But it never is. Instead, all I'm ever offered is the same fifteen second snippet repeated over and over again on a continuous frigging loop.

Why can't there be a choice? You know, press 1 for pop music, press 2 for rock music, press 3 for golden oldies, that kind of thing. Sure, include Handel in the list if you must, but making it the only option drives me bonkers. Surely I can't be the only one who feels this way.

GRAMS: THE ON-HOLD MUSIC SUDDENLY STOPS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Oh, thank God, I'm finally through to someb–

...

Oh. Sorry. My mistake. It was Automated Bitch Voice telling me once again: Your call is very important to us. Please hold while we try to connect you.

And three, two, one...

GRAMS: THE ON-HOLD MUSIC RETURNS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Right on cue. Handel's bloody Water Music.

I've been kept on hold now for fifty-nine minutes. Almost one hour of my life gone forever, with no chance of a refund.

Heh. One hour. That particular timescale reminds me of sex with my ex-boyfriend. You see, I'd always reach my orgasm around the fifteen minute mark. Fairly average, I'm sure you'd agree. But not my ex. Oh, no, he'd keep on going, shag, shag, shag, thrust, thrust, thrust, the bed squeaking and squeaking and squeaking.

Meanwhile, I'd simply lay there on my back, getting bored, getting sore, praying for him to bloody hurry up, huh, zero chance of that, shag, shag, shag, thrust, thrust, thrust, squeak, squeak, squeak.

One evening, when we were yet again one hour into sexual intercourse, I asked him: Why do you always take so long to reach your climax? Is there a problem down below?

Placing his shag-thrust-squeak sequence on pause, he said: *No way. This is me being manly.*

Manly?

*Yeah. Sex that lasts ages. Women love it.*

What women?

*All women.*

Not this woman.

Cue the looooooong pause.

And then, looking bruised, he said: *Don't you like having sex with me?*

Of course I do. It's just...

*Just what?*

Too long.

*Too long? I thought women preferred a big one.*

Oh, for God's sake, I'm not talking about your penis. I'm on about the sex itself. You've been huffing and puffing on top of me now for sixty frigging minutes.

*Yes, I know. It proves I have stamina. Women love that.*

What women?

*All women.*

Who told you this?

Cue another loooooooooong pause.

And then he said: *Other men.*

To which I replied: I rest my case. Now, can you please hurry up and finish what you started?

Totally pissed off, he said: *I was hoping to break my record this time and go for a two hour sex marathon.*

Don't you bloody dare.

*Are you saying you want me to rush it?*

Yes please.

*It'll take all the fun out of it.*

You've been shagging me for just over an hour. Isn't that enough fun for you?

*I like to take my time.*

Yes. So I've noticed.

*And I always wait until the woman comes.*

I have already come.

*What? When?*

Forty-five minutes ago.

*Why do you always come so quickly?*

I don't know, I just do.

*Can't you come again?*

What do you think I am, an on-demand orgasm dispenser?  
Please. Get on with it.

And so, for the next few minutes, he reluctantly went at it like a rabbit on acid. Next came his amusing scrunched-up orgasm face, his zillion decibel come cry, and then it was all over.

Incidentally, that was the night we split up. Well, when I say split up, he never officially ended it with me. Instead, he tossed aside the duvet, got dressed in silence, made his door-slamming departure and never called me again.

GRAMS: THE ON-HOLD MUSIC SUDDENLY STOPS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Oh, at last. Connection.

...

Oh, it's you, Automated Bitch Voice. I am so glad you've reminded me that I'm on hold. I mean, how would I have known otherwise? Mobile phone pressed against my ear. Zero human interaction. Handel's bloody Water Music. Nowhere near enough clues for me to work it out for myself.

Three, two, one...

GRAMS: THE ON-HOLD MUSIC RETURNS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Call centre hours: 8am to 8pm. That's what it says on their website. I truly thought that phoning them at 8am on the dot would grant me instant access to a fellow human being.

Oh, how wrong I was.

Every single operator in the call centre is busy. Already. How is that even possible? They've only just started their shift.

I must admit, I tried to be crafty by first calling at 7:45am. It didn't work though. Automated Bitch Voice took great pleasure in letting me know that calling the company out of hours is pointless. She then took even greater pleasure in letting me know that call centre hours are 8am to 8pm. Even though I'm fully aware of that fact. Because it's mentioned on the website. The same website I visited this morning to obtain the bloody phone number I'm calling.

(A SIGH, THEN –) Handel's bloody Water Music.

George Frideric Handel.

The only reason I know the composer's full name is because I once Googled: What the fuck is that annoying music you always hear on telephone on-hold systems?

First item in Google's search results: Handel's Water Music.

Wikipedia tells me that Handel came up with the piece following a request from King George I to compose music for a concert on the River Thames.

God, if the poor guy knew, hundreds of years later, how his music would be used, I'm sure he'd tear up his composition in protest and instead get himself a shelf-filling job at Sainsbury's.

Was Sainsbury's around in the 18th century? I'm sure it was. It's been going for a long, long time.

Oh, I haven't let you in on the latest goss, have I? The other evening, I met somebody new. His name's Spencer. We got talking while waiting to be served in my local pub. I asked him what he did for a living and he told me –

GRAMS: THE ON-HOLD MUSIC SUDDENLY STOPS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Oh, please, please, please don't be Automated Bitch Voice. Please, please, please be a human being.

...

"Yes! Hello. Oh, thank God. Sorry, what did you say?"

...

"Security question? Yeah, sure, fire away."

...

"Mother's maiden name? Proctor."

...

"No. Not Doctor. Proctor. Proctor! With a P."

...

"No! Not B! P! Are you deaf or something?"

...

"You want me to spell it? Fine. It's P. R. O. What was that?"

...

"No! P! Right, that's it, I've had enough. Here's a phonetic message, just for you. F for Freddie. U for underwear. C for cauliflower. K for kite. Insert a space here. And then Y for yes. O for orange. U for unicorn."

...

“Yes, I’m fully aware what it spells out, dickhead!”

Oh. He hung up on me.

F/X: A JANGLE OF KEYS, THE CREAK OF A METAL DOOR  
OPENING AND CLOSING, APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

GIRL ON HOLD: Oh, look, here comes the nurse with my daily meds.

What do you mean you’re confused? It’s simple enough when you work it out. The phone call I’ve just had. It didn’t happen. Well, at least not today anyway.

You see, I’ve been sectioned under the Mental Health Act. I’m a danger to the public apparently.

It all started with Spencer in the pub telling me what he did for a living.

Bloody call centre operator.

Okay, I figured I could probably live with that, so I let it go.

Anyway, after we’d both had way too many drinks, he invited me back to his place. Once there, he set the mood by dimming the lights, powering up his stereo and putting on his favourite piece of music.

Handel’s bloody Water Music.

I couldn’t help myself, I totally lost it.

I’ve been told poor Spencer’s in Intensive Care. But I’m sure he’ll pull through. Eventually.

Personally, I don’t recall much about the incident. It’s all a bit of a blur really.

Fuck you, Handel.

GRAMS: \_\_\_\_\_ HANDEL'S WATER MUSIC PLAYS US OUT.

THE END