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# Antlia Pneumatica

*by* Anne Washburn

SAMUEL FRENCH



*Samuel French Manuscript*

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**The Place:**

A ranch in Texas Hill Country.

**The Cast:**

Nina

Liz

Ula [pron. 'You-la']

Len

Adrian

Bama

All are in their late 30s/early 40s

Casey and Wally, 7 and 5, are only heard, never seen.

And the scenes in which the adults interact with them are also only heard.

**The Set:**

A granite kitchen island. Faced front. Stools.

Floor of polished concrete.

Upstage: the trunk and lower branches of a massive pecan tree.

Words in brackets are thought but not spoken.

*Someone is digging into a metal bowl of ice cubes in the freezer.*

*A pitcher of lemonade with ice cubes is stirred vigorously.*

*Ice cubes jingle gently as a full glass of lemonade is carried across the lodge.*

*The phone rings.*

*The jingling trajectory shifts.*

*The phone rings.*

NINA

Yello.

*Mini Beat.*

Adrian.

Really?

*Mini Beat.*

How did you know I was here?

*Nina has appeared onstage, a cordless phone in one hand, the glass of lemonade in the other.*

Don who?

No.

*Oh.* Yes. Don. Don. Right. How did *Don*...find out?

No not Suzie. Definitely not. (*A sudden thought.*) Don isn't coming is he?

Uh huh. Yeah that's probably better. (*Irrelevantly.*) How *is* Don?

*She hears herself, makes a face.*

Oh, that's great.

*Beat.*

Of course. No of course. You're welcome to. Of course. Do you remember the way?

When do you uh

Okay, great. Yes. (*Again: not relevant:*) We can feed you; we're making a lot of food.

*Hers herself, makes face.*

All right, (*Waves.*) bye.

*She stands there for a moment. Utterly blank.*

*Then turns. Looks offstage. Gears herself up to say something:*

*As she walks offstage*

*(Near panic:)*

Liz!

*Sound of a plunge*

*Sound of someone surfacing, gasping*

LIZ

Cold! Cold cold cold! Good! Cold!

*Sound of splashing.*

*Nina speaks alone to the audience.*

NINA

I was standing in my cabin and the Sphinx...thing, was at the back door.

The curtain was blowing in front of it, I couldn't see it clearly but there was

and I don't know where the light was coming from, but

mane, flank, but then a moment of profile, not maw but sharp: nose, lips, jaw -- a woman.

And I turned and I was surprised to find that the front door, the door to the meadow with the quote unquote Pecan orchard was wide open and the light was just breaking

And I thought it was the wind had blown it open because in the dream there was this incredible wind the night before.

I stepped forward to close the front door, or to walk through it, and I woke up and it was the middle of the night it had cooled off. I pulled the blanket up from the foot of the bed and went back to sleep.

*A bird cheep, very loud, like a small cheep heard right up close, like a little bird leaning into your ear and letting loose.*

*Another cheep.*

*A saucy trill.*

*Lights change.*

*The island is spread with cookbooks, notes, a few bowls and ingredients already in play.*

*Ula and Liz are looking out through the window towards the river, talking about a mostly red bird and what it is.*

ULA

Sometimes birds like that are loud.

LIZ

I think birds which have just the tiniest piece of red on them are the loudest I've noticed that. They're louder than all-red birds.

ULA

I guess they have something to prove.

*Sees Nina, waves list.*

Really? We're really making all this food?

NINA

It's a funeral Ula. Funeral spells food.

ULA

Yeah but who is this for? Just the 8 of us.

9

LIZ

ULA

I love to eat, don't get me wrong.

NINA

I thought you liked cooking.

ULA

I do. I do. I'm thrilled.

NINA

We're going to make a feast.

ULA

We are indeed.

NINA

But get a swim in first. Liz jumped off the edge of the Blue Hole.

ULA

Finally.

LIZ  
(*She doesn't love this.*)

It's very high up, and it's very frightening. And, it is not a natural thing to do, to jump into water which you cannot see the bottom of.

NINA

So Major. Your whole life.

LIZ

You were not an early adopter of the Blue Hole leap either, might I add.

NINA

Our whole childhood was our mom telling us absolutely not to jump into the Blue Hole from the edge –

LIZ

Which *she* always did

NINA

Which she always did! And she spent all the years after that telling us to for God's sake jump, just jump, what were we so chicken about.

ULA

It *is* sort of exciting.

NINA

You had the benefit of first coming to it as an adult sized person, and on mushrooms.

LIZ

Oh god oh god oh god don't tell me, I don't want to think, you jumped into the Blue Hole tripping and was it even daytime?

ULA

There wasn't even a moon.

NINA

We had flashlights.

ULA

Yeah but they weren't trained at the water at the time; I sort of guessed.

NINA

Oh did you do that?

LIZ

Okay there's a rocky ledgy thing...

NINA

Yeah I'm glad I didn't know that at the time.

LIZ

And then, but okay but that's fine, that's fine it already happened. Don't tell me any more. You're alive, that's what counts. You're alive. I'm alive.

NINA

*(Going off.)*

No one has ever drowned at the Blue Hole.

LIZ

It probably hasn't been given a real chance.

*Refrigerator door opening.*

NINA

*(From off.)*

Where did all the eggs go??

LIZ

You made that big scramble this morning.

NINA

I didn't use all of the eggs. There was that big pink carton.

ULA

Oh those eggs were very ancient. I tossed them.

NINA

Oh really?

ULA

They were months old, they were from March.

*Coming back into the room.*

NINA

Oh, I didn't realize that. Liz I thought you brought them.

LIZ

Uh uh.

NINA

That must be when our cousin was out here. I guess no one's been out here since then.

ULA

So this place just sits here.

NINA

I know, it is sort of a pity. Well everyone's in LA or New York, and it's a pain to get to.

What do we need eggs for, just about every bakey thing there is

LIZ

Plus big scrambles in the morning

NINA

We have bacon right?

LIZ

Lots and lots of bacon

ULA

You also have 20 jars of mustard.

NINA

20? No.

ULA

You've got 7 in the door. There are probably more in the back. You have doubles of a few brands.

NINA

It's such a pain to drive back and forth. People just shop when they're heading in from the airport. Really what we need is a fridge cam.

ULA

What you need is internet

LIZ

Right?!

NINA

Yeah...

ULA

Should I start by cleaning the fridge of every suspect item? We need the space anyway.

NINA

Mustard doesn't go bad.

ULA

Eggs go bad. All kinds of things go bad. I never know about mayo. You've got like six jars of mayo. I may just cull some of them, to feel like the situation is under control.

NINA

I would have asked you to bring eggs, this is such a bummer.

ULA

Call Len.

NINA

Len's past Kerrville by now, for sure. We'll do another big shop but I thought we could do the baking tonight so the kitchen wouldn't be so hot tomorrow.

LIZ

*(Pointedly.)*

What about Adrian.

ULA

Adrian.

I don't have his number. NINA

I didn't ask.

Adrian? ULA

Adrian's coming. LIZ

Yeah I needed to have mentioned that earlier. NINA

When is he...where is he... ULA

*Arms twirling around in the air in slow mo to indicate more questions than are possible given the limitations of time and space and language*

*finally settles on:*

I didn't realize you were in touch.

We're not. He called me up. On the road. And said he'd be here in a few hours. NINA

He just called you right up. ULA

Uh huh. NINA

And you said....yes?....come on by? ULA

I was flustered. NINA

Adrian's coming. ULA  
(To Liz.)

I *know*. LIZ

It's been 16 years. Who cares. NINA

Time is an illusion, my friend. ULA

She's right. Time *is* an illusion. LIZ

Oh fuck you. NINA

You haven't one bit talked with him in 16 years. ULA

Well I a bit of; no. NINA

You ULA

No. I haven't NINA

You what. ULA

When was it? LIZ

No. Basically no. I got drunk one night, two years after. NINA

14 years ago. LIZ  
(*Helpfully.*)

And I called him. (*To Liz, stricken.*) How did I have his number? *Amelia.* NINA

Amelia gave it to you. Cause she's an enabler. LIZ

ULA  
*(Remembering Amelia.)*

*Amelia*, right. Amelia.

NINA  
 And we had a really bad conversation. And *that* was the last time I spoke with him. But that was, yes, 14 years ago.

ULA  
 Those never go well. You didn't please tell me you didn't...

NINA  
 In my head it was: you know, I've healed, I've moved on, I'm dating this very nice man

ULA  
 Was that Adam?

NINA  
 That was Trent.

LIZ  
*(Still helpful.)*  
 Right before Adam.

ULA  
 Why don't I remember Trent?

LIZ  
 Trent was like:  
*She snaps.*

ULA  
 Oh right. Trent. Of course. Trent.

NINA  
 Trent was great.

ULA  
 Yees. So you were like I'm dating this Trent person, I don't care --

NINA  
 -- can't we talk about this like adults. I believe I used the word closure.

ULA

Yeah I know that phone call. Uh. So awful.

NINA

Yeah, he wasn't having it. He was like: this is bullshit. I was like: *you're* bullshit.

ULA

Which is accurate.

NINA

Which, yes. Yes. So that was that phone call.

ULA

And now he's here.

NINA

Yup. In a few hours.

ULA

Excellent. Really great.

NINA

He's here for the funeral.

ULA

Oh.

NINA

They were so close.

ULA

Were they back in touch??

NINA

He heard about it from Don.

ULA

Don?

NINA

You remember, Don was Adrian's kind of strange creepy housemate for a while, back in Austin.

LIZ

Oh Don Don Don with the *hair*, right?

NINA

Right.

ULA

He didn't hear about it from Don. Don's dead.

NINA

Don?

ULA

Don's dead he died...*(Ticking it back.)* you guys had left town already. 14 years ago? 15 years ago?

NINA

Don *died*?

ULA

He got tangled up with...it wasn't a drug deal but it was with drug deal type of people – was it, did it have something to do with ticket scalping? I can't remember. I just remember it was shady, and kind of strange, and he went off in a car with someone and that was the last anyone saw of him.

NINA

How come I don't know this?

ULA

I think this was when you and I weren't speaking.

*Liz has been tracking something internally.*

LIZ

*(This is only a very mild crisis.)*

Oh you guys, this is awful: I don't care.

NINA

*(Only mildly engaged by this.)*

You might be kind of in shock or something.

LIZ

Maybe. I think I just don't care.

ULA

I know. His parents were super sad. That was the strange thing. Barely knowing Don and not liking him at all and then seeing his super sad parents.

NINA

Adrian said Don was selling real estate in Corpus Christie. And all over the Gulf. He said he was doing really well.

ULA

Maybe he didn't mean the same Don.

NINA

Maybe...there isn't another Don. Did they find the body? Or did he just go off in a car?

ULA

Oh, um...yeah. They did find the body. They did it was. I don't remember how. It was some kind of a bad way and, I think I might be getting it mixed up with a movie, how they found his body.

NINA

And it was definitely his body.

ULA

Oh, yeah, I mean, he still had a face.

NINA

That's so...strange. I mean, isn't it?

*Car horn. Tires on gravel. They all jump a little.*

ULA

Think that's him?

*Little beat.*

NINA

I think that's Len. Adrian was never a honker.

ULA

16 years. A person can *become* a honker.

*Len enters.*

LEN

*(This is general the last bit directed at Nina.)*

You know what I found, in my glove compartment on the drive here, one of your dad's Best-Of's.

ULA

Which one?

LEN

Volume 2: “Oldies. Goodies”. Where he has that beard on the cover.

ULA

Oh I like that one.

LEN

And that guitar, that guitar which used to be around here is it still here?

NINA

No. Len when was the last time you cleaned out your glove compartment?

LEN

No no, I listen to it sometimes, it’s part of my collection. I’ve been blasting it.

ULA

Is that an actual cassette? Give that here. It’s been a long time since I handled a cassette you still play these?

LEN

I didn’t want to buy all new cds when I already owned the cassette why should I.

ULA

Sound quality.

LEN

I don’t care about sound quality I’m not one of those people, I just listen to the song. Should I put it on?

NINA

No.

*On the overhead speaker:*

*Two small children – a girl, 7, and a boy, 5, sing simultaneously, and with increasing volume;*

*Occasionally, they try to drown each other out:*

CASEY

Michael row, your boat

ashore

Hallelujah

Michael row

Your boat ashore

Hallelujah

The River Jordan

IS DEEP AND COLD

HALLELUJAH

Chills the body

But not the soul

HALLELUJAH

Michael row

Row row your boat!

HALLELUJAH

Michael row your boat!

Row row

Your boat ashore!

HALLELUJAH

RIVER JORDAN!

DEEP AND WIDE!

MILK AND HONEY!

WALLY

Row row row

Your boat

Gently down

The stream

merrily

merrily

Merrily merrily

ROW ROW

ROW!

ROW ROW

ROW!

Merrily

merrily

Merrily

MERRILY

MERRILY

MERRILY

ROW

ROW

ROW

ROW

ROW

THE OTHER SIDE!

MICHAEL ROW

YOUR BOAT

ASHORE

HALLELUJAH

MICHAEL ROW

YOUR BOAT

ASHORE

HALLELUJAH

HALLELUJAH

ROW!

ROW!

YOUR BOAT

GENTLY

HALLELUJAH

MERRILY

MERRILY

MERRILY

HALLELUJAH

HALLELUJAH

LIFE IS BUT A DREAM!

*Night. Crickets & frogs outside.*

*Screen door opens, bangs slightly shut.*

Adrian!

ULA

Hello...everybody.

ADRIAN

I didn't hear your car. Did anyone hear the car?

ULA

I walked.

ADRIAN

Not from San Antonio.

NINA

ADRIAN

No. I was starved. Stopped off at Rudys for some BBQ. Actually ran into a guy I know from Albuquerque I had some business with. I called, but nobody answered.

NINA

We were swimming, probably.

ULA

Still no answering machine.

NINA

Dad was adamant and, I don't know.

LIZ

Dad wouldn't have cared. That was his own thing and he knew it.

NINA

*(Nerves, although you can't really tell. Talking.)*

Let's hang on to every tradition. We don't have enough here; we are not rooted to this glorious land. Let's make whims into traditions, bad habits into traditions. Where are you walking from?

ADRIAN

From the turn off. From that gravel section, where I always thought I'd spin out.

NINA

You spun out?

ADRIAN

No I just broke down. No reason. I tried to call again but no cell service.

LEN

Still the middle of nowhere. Good to know, right. Where that is. It's right. Here.

ULA

So you've been walking for

ADRIAN

About an hour.

NINA

The guys at the garage aren't there until the morning.

ADRIAN

I'll call them in the morning.

*There's a little pause which he seems comfortable with.*

Wine? LEN

Yes, thanks. ADRIAN

There's Guac and fried chicken and coleslaw left. ULA

I'm good. ADRIAN

It's actually Sangria. LEN

Sounds fine. ADRIAN

Which I now suddenly remember you hate. LEN

I like the taste. I used to think it was emasculating. ADRIAN

No more. LEN

Now I think lots of other things are emasculating. Sangria is just wine with fruit in it. ADRIAN

Oh and we're out of ice cubes. NINA

So it's lukewarm Sangria. LEN

I was parched. ADRIAN

I'll get you another glass. LEN

*There's another little pause.*

ULA

So where are you living these days, are you down by the gulf?

ADRIAN

No, I'm actually in Arizona.

LEN

Oh, Phoenix?

ADRIAN

No. His mom coming to this?

NINA

She died a few years ago.

ADRIAN

Oh I'm sorry to hear that. I always liked Mariela. What about his sisters?

NINA

Allison died 10 years ago from some kind of very strange blood disorder. Jenny's in Alaska and wasn't interested in coming. It's just us.

ADRIAN

Us.

This all that's left?

NINA

Suzie is coming. Scott and Peg and Bama.

ADRIAN

Bama. Scott. Peg. Amazing.

Don said you have the body.

NINA

The ashes. Peg is picking them up today in New York – that's where he was living –

ULA

So *Don* told you about Sean.

ADRIAN

Yeah. I thought he heard from Suzie but Nina says no.

NINA

It wasn't a romance it was more, just, Don hovering around.

ADRIAN

That's too bad. I know he thought about her a lot.

ULA

Nina says Don is doing well. Real estate.

ADRIAN

Adulthood suits him. And success, I guess. He's slimmed down. He's a little hard.

But he's a lot easier to talk with. Much better conversationalist.

ULA

I have real estate questions, do you think he'd mind if I contacted him or is he too big for the old crowd?

ADRIAN

I don't think he'd bend over backward, but I bet you could get a tip or two off of him.

ULA

That would be great, will you pass me his number?

ADRIAN

It's on his site. Shore Estates.

ULA

Oh great. Thanks.

ADRIAN

Should I write it down, or?

ULA

I can remember. Thanks.

ADRIAN

So you all stayed in touch. With Sean.

*There's a kind of a pause.*

LIZ

No. Not really.

NINA

We'd definitely. From time to time. When he came to town.

LEN

For a while. Every now and then. A drunken phone call. Really *fun* drunken phone calls, we'd talk for hours. Then less fun drunken phone calls. Then he went into AA. Then we spoke less often.

ULA

He didn't have a will but he had a file. Called: When I Die. Which they found in his things. And in it he said he wanted to be buried here. The file was years and years and years old but no one else...claimed him, so.

NINA

He was seeing someone but it was very new, his ex wasn't on great terms with him and they didn't have any kids; he did have a lot of friends and they're having a big memorial for him in New York but they didn't expect the body so there wasn't a...jurisdictional dispute.

LEN

It didn't say anything about a tombstone did it? The file?

NINA

Gravestone.

LEN

If he's buried here? Isn't it a tombstone?

NINA

I think you have to earn a tombstone. I don't think a few years kicking around Austin counts.

Should he have one?

LEN

Shouldn't he?

NINA

Well not if you're scattered, right? You're sort of everywhere. You can't be pinned down. To one location or sentiment.

LEN

*(Just occurring to him.)*

Did he say where? He didn't say where did he. The Blue Hole?

NINA

He didn't say. I was thinking maybe near the Blue Hole, like just before sunset when there's that last bit of light, like kind of up a bit on the hill or

LEN

In the shrubbery

LIZ

Scrub.

LEN

Scrub. Right. Is that dignified enough? To be scattered in scrub?

ULA

There's still no way up on that mesa, is there.

NINA

Butte. No. They're stubborn, about that Butte.

LIZ

They have the butte, we have the Blue Hole, it's a kind of standoff of Western land desirables

LEN

But you win, right?

LIZ

Oh totally. I mean, a butte is great, a vista is amazing but, it's *hot*.

NINA

Dad was always trying to befriend the guy whose family owns the butte, so he could eventually challenge him to a winner take all drinking contest. He was like; I've got twenty years on that guy, he'll never suspect a thing.

LIZ

He never came close.

NINA

He never came close. He's a 7<sup>th</sup> day Adventist, right? Or a Jehovah's. One of those non drinking ones he didn't even want to talk with Dad, he was all: *I know who you are*, sir.

LIZ

Which thrilled dad.

NINA

He was thrilled. "Sixty Five years of age and somebody still thinks I'm a Bad Boy"

ULA

It's just too bad you couldn't work out some kind of pass-through situation right?

NINA

Yeah but no one wants anyone else hanging out on their butte or in their Blue Hole.

LIZ

That was so almost obscene.

LEN

Yeah if it were called:

NINA

No no!

Or, wait, God, I'm sorry – slipped into mom mode for a sec. Go right ahead.

ADRIAN

Kids?

NINA

Two. Boy/girl. 5/7. But they're fast asleep in their cabin. If it were called?

LEN

It wasn't good enough to sustain the delay. Obscenity is a dish best served piping hot.

NINA

Oh Len

ULA

Len!

NINA

I'm sorry. Really?

LEN

Really.

NINA

Now we'll never know

LEN

Gonna take it to my grave. *Unless, I ask to be scattered here as well and have it as my epitaph.*

NINA

You're welcome to do both.

ULA

Just make sure it's in your When I Die file.

LEN

If I had an If I Die file that would be the first thing. The epitaph. I should make up an epitaph. I should make up an If I Die File shouldn't I.

ULA

You should. You're gonna die.

LEN

Right. I *am* going to die, aren't I.

NINA

And when it happens. You don't want someone else coming up with your epitaph.

LIZ

And it could happen at any moment. It could happen in the next second.

LEN

That's *right*.

LIZ

Everyone just, just: be quiet for, for just a second.

*They're all quiet, the second passes.*

And we're fine. But it could have happened that quickly, right then.

NINA

I mean...yes...

LIZ

Tornado, rattler in the cupboard, aneurism. Heart attack – (*This next is directly to the audience.*) and for you ladies you need to know its more common among women than you'd think. (*She returns her attention to the room.*) Ah –

LEN

Wolf.

LIZ

Wolf. Gunshot – someone could be standing right outside there, we’d never see them in the dark. Ah –

LEN

Nuclear conflagration.

LIZ

Yes.

NINA

*(Interrupting this.)*

But Len you do have a Will, right?

LEN

I do have a will I mean, yes. I have a financial document. But I don’t have anything in the way of further instructions. I am going...to die. Huh.

And you...are going to die. And you. Adrian, do you have a will? Do you have a file?

*Minor hitch.*

NINA

*(Suddenly remembering.)*

You have a tattoo. On your stomach. It says:

*(Remembering: )*

When I die: torch me where I fall. Let the wind take me.

*He laughs.*

LEN

Serious?

ULA

Show me.

*He laughs.*

NINA

It’s not a real tattoo it’s a

ADRIAN

It was a sort of topic, between us.

NINA

It was a projected tattoo.

ADRIAN

I wanted it to be large. And I couldn't decide on the script. So I waffled.

NINA

It was going to be painful. It was going to be very very painful, the abdomen the entire abdomen. Big thick letters.

ADRIAN

Which at the time, made it seem like an even better idea. But I was broke.

NINA

There was that one night.

ADRIAN

Oh.

NINA

You were really drunk.

ADRIAN

I was really drunk.

NINA

You were going to sell your motorcycle, to that guy at La Zona Rosa, at the corner table, and then march over to the tattoo shop.

ADRIAN

She knocked me unconscious with a whiskey bottle to prevent this.

NINA

I didn't do that but I did do something, what was it.

ADRIAN

I don't remember any of this.

NINA

Oh! Right. I got you more to drink. I got you more to drink. I said: great idea. Let's celebrate it. I got you two more shots and you passed out. It was brilliant. Usually I tried to reason with you. That never worked.

ADRIAN

No.

*Little pause.*

ULA

Your dad is here, right? Does he have an epitaph?

NINA

No. Unmarked grave. Unmarked!

LIZ

Really obnoxious.

NINA

Too cool for school.

LIZ

Mom has a gravestone.

NINA

With a bible verse. Selected by dad.

LEN

What was it?

LIZ

“Who is this that cometh out of the  
Wilderness like pillars of smoke  
Perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincense.”

LEN

That’s lovely.

NINA

It’s very lovely. I’m not convinced that it’s accurate.

ULA

I don’t know that they’re about summing you up. I think they’re more about getting people in the right mood to contemplate you.

NINA

Regardless. And she would not have liked the bible part at all.

LIZ

But she didn’t leave a file.



The baby in its jaw

I flickered and I turned to go  
 And as I exited waved slowly at all, goodbye to all, my eyes  
 the last to vanish, fixed,  
 on that flecked and foaming maw.

*They're released.*

LEN

What about the novel. Did they find that? In Sean's stuff?

NINA

No.

ULA

I asked.

LEN

All those short stories?

ULA

Nothing. He must have just chucked them all out. At some point.

LIZ

Really?

ULA

I don't have any copies. Of any of them. I must have, some move. Do you?

LEN

No, me neither. Huh.

Well.

I always thought...

ULA

I know. Me too.

*Bit of a Quiet.*

LEN

Well.

Got to get my dose of night sky.

ULA

Oh me too. Are there any blankets that aren't mothbally?

LIZ

I did not remember to demothballize the blankets.

NINA

Awww. Liz.

LEN

I don't think I think a night sky is the same without the scent of mothballs.

ULA

I don't like it at all. But I like it better than jackrabbit poop stuck to my back.

You want to?

NINA

I'm good. I gave them all a good hard stare last night.

ULA

Alright. Don't, uh, finish up all of the wine.

*They troop out.*

*Liz lingers for a moment in the doorway.*

LIZ

Hey Adrian, what do you think, Time an Illusion?

We were having a discussion about it, before you arrived.

*A micromoment.*

ADRIAN

No. Time is...crushingly heavy. And solid. And real.

LIZ

Huh. Alright.

*She goes.*

*Adrian and Nina.*

ADRIAN  
It was a mistake to come?

NINA  
No. Of course not.

ADRIAN  
It's been a long time.

NINA  
*It has* been a long time.

*There is a bit of a pause.*

You know it's weird I don't think. I don't know that I would have recognized you, if we'd passed on the street.

ADRIAN  
Haggard.

NINA  
No. Just. I don't know.

I see you better the longer you're in my vicinity, like, eyes adjusting to [the light]

ADRIAN  
The dark.

NINA  
Sure.

ADRIAN  
*(Immediately.)*  
Those kids immaculate?

NINA  
Huh? Oh, do you mean –

ADRIAN

-ly. Conceived.

NINA

*(A little nervous.)*

Yeah they're not tidy. Or in any way pristine, well he's still a little pristine, he still has that baby star fluff around him a little, sheer ignorance, it's adorable, she's mayhem, but no, I had them in congress with my husband, Adam.

ADRIAN

And who is Adam?

NINA

Not sure that I can just sum him up.

ADRIAN

Fair enough.

NINA

This is the point where you say he's a lucky man.

ADRIAN

I don't think I know enough about him.

*Mini beat.*

NINA

Fair enough.

What about you? Kids? Wife?

*On his silence.*

Ex-wife/*two-exwives?*

Three.

ADRIAN

Uh uh.

NINA

You must be seeing somebody.

ADRIAN

I'm not.

NINA

Just...catting around?

ADRIAN

Uh uh.

NINA

Uh uh?

ADRIAN

Nope.

NINA

Huh.

ADRIAN

You're having a moment where...you wonder if I've been thinking about you. You wonder if I've come to tell you that. And the answer is no.

NINA

Ummm....

ADRIAN

I haven't forgotten you. But you're a memory. Not something real.

Not part of my present.

NINA

Okay: yes. Ditto. But.

I actually am. At the moment. Part of your present.

I do not *mean, anything* by this, I'm just saying: factually.

ADRIAN

Right.

NINA

Part of your present.

ADRIAN

You and your, keen insistence on facts. Rational process. All coming back.

You know, when I heard about Sean, and this... gathering, my thought, my very first thought was, just, habit: Awww. I want my buddy. And my girl.

*He laughs.*

NINA

And you, a guest in my household.

ADRIAN

Let's join them. You can't really see the sky in LA can you.

NINA

No not with the glare.

It's kind of a crazy shame.

ADRIAN

Not at all. Just a city doing its job: protecting you from the obvious.

Let's go.

*Outdoors. It is pitch black. They stand in a semi circle, holding a slightly motley assortment of flashlights and a few candles. Nina is present though she does not speak.*

LEN

There was the night we all got so drunk and went outside to look at the stars and wanted to work out the constellations but we couldn't really and kept arguing over which one was Scorpius and Sean was sure it was (*Points.*) there and I was positive it was (*Points.*) there and there was an epic battle of star-knowledge posturing but we looked it up in the morning and it turned out neither one of us was right.

BAMA

There was the night the Turkey was oversmoked and fell apart I am not shitting you fell apart to the touch which is in theory a good thing but in this case was basically gruesome

LIZ

The night we were certain we had seen a UFO.

LEN

*A pair of UFOs, operating in tandem.*

ULA

There was that woman in town it was so random we were having a perfectly normal conversation until with no indication at all that the topic was veering she begins

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