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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

How To Get Into Buildings

by Trish Harnetiaux

SAMUEL FRENCH

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HOW TO GET INTO BUILDINGS was was first produced by New Georges (Susan Bernfield, Producing Artistic Director; Jaynie Saunders Tiller, Managing Director; Sarah Cameron Sunde, Deputy Artistic Director) at The Brick in Brooklyn, New York, on December 3, 2015. The performance was directed by Katherine Brook, with set design by Katherine Brook with Josh Smith, lighting design by Josh Smith, sound design by Chris Giarmo, costume design by Normandy Sherwood, and choreography by David Neumann. The production manager was Rob Signom, the production stage manager was Jaimie Van Dyke, and the assistant director was Leigh Walter. The cast was as follows:

LUCY MASERATI. . . . . .Kristine Haruna Lee

ROGER SAUVIGNON . . . . . Jacob A. Ware

ETHAN CAMBABERT & THE WAITER & DOCTOR/ WAITER ONE . . . . . Jess Barbagallo

DAPHNE PIERRE-PONT & DOCTOR/WAITER TWO . . . .Stephanie Weeks

NICK NOVA-SCOTIA & DOCTOR/WAITER THREE . . . . . .Mike Iveson

MRS. REINHARDT & DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR . . . . . Tina Shepard

CHARACTERS

LUCY MASERATI – She's totally game/cautiously evolving

ROGER SAUVIGNON – He's a bit self-absorbed/yet earnest

ETHAN CAMBABERT
& THE WAITER
& DOCTOR/WAITER ONE – The storyteller/confident/dead serious

DAPHNE PIERRE-PONT
& DOCTOR/WAITER TWO – Easily annoyed/aware/dead serious

NICK NOVA-SCOTIA
& DOCTOR/WAITER THREE – Restless and easily offended/dead serious

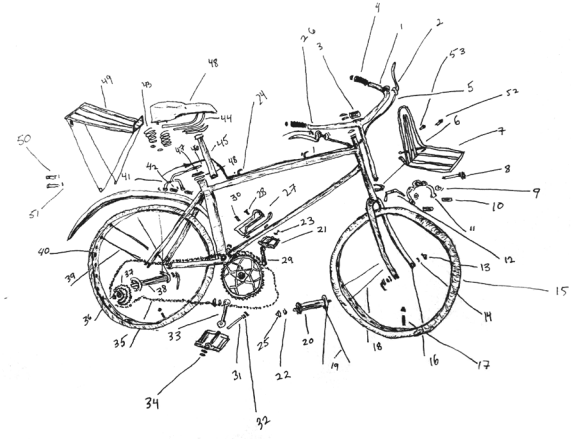
MRS. REINHARDT
& DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR – Wisely ambivalent/dead serious

AUTHOR'S NOTES

STRUCTURE
The structure is inspired by an Exploded View.

EXPLODED VIEW: an abstract view of an object which allows the viewer to see itemized parts individually, but still understand how they relate to each other as a complete whole.

For example: here's an example of an exploded view of a bicycle. But don't be confused, this play is not about a bicycle, this is just an example of something in exploded view form.



SOUND
This play should be full of sound, as indicated. It's important to include as part of the tissue connecting the Exploded View structure.

DOCTORS/WAITERS
Everyone except for the characters of Lucy and Roger are double cast as a Doctor/Waiter. Their short scenes should never be precious with overemphasis on the language. They should be dirty, messy passages that fuse confusion and confidence, through the manipulation of tone and pitch. Ethan is more a Waiter than a Doctor.

Diverse casting is more than encouraged.

***

For JW

(In the dark, there is the sound of a car accident.)

(Two figures are strangely clumped together. Oh, it's four figures, but looks like two.)

(A few moments of silence, then the crickets resume.)

ROGER & NICK. Don't take your finger off of my –

LUCY & DAPHNE. Your what?

ROGER & NICK. NO! Don't even think of removing your hand from my –

LUCY & DAPHNE. Leg?

ROGER & NICK. No –

LUCY & DAPHNE. Thigh?

ROGER & NICK. Whatever you do, I'd appreciate it if you –

LUCY & DAPHNE. Didn't remove my hand –

ROGER & NICK. I'll bleed –

LUCY & DAPHNE. Red. You'll bleed red –

ROGER & NICK. I'll bleed out.

(Beat.)

(Then, overlapping –)

Are you –

LUCY & DAPHNE. I think so.

ROGER & NICK. Alright. Is it bad –

LUCY & DAPHNE. I can't see it –

ROGER & NICK. – can you see it?

LUCY & DAPHNE. No. It's too dark.

***

(Shift.)

(The **DOCTOR/WAITERS** *enter. They are called* **DOCTOR/WAITERS** *because it is often unclear whether they are* **DOCTORS** *or* **WAITERS**.*)*

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. What part is it missing?

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. No heart –

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. Very upset –

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. There was a curve –

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. There is a mark on her face, she is missing an arm, she woke up and it was gone.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. No left knee.

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. Something about a car –

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. A bashed in cheekbone.

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. Something about a bar –

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Steel rod through the right shoulder blade –

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. The truck carried fish.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. Small patch of scalp missing at base of neck.

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Snapper we believe –

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. A curve in the road.

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Red snapper.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. Yes, a curve –

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. The curve was un/avoidable.

ALL. Unavoidable.

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Neck? Fried.

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. Wrist?

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. With a hollandaise.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. Heart?

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Heart?

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. There are two hearts.

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Two hearts.

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Artichoke heart.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. One and then the other.

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. That's the two –

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Oh, yes.

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. Oh, yep.

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Broken artichoke heart bone.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. One is outside the –

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. Yes.

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Does it bother her when –

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. YES.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. That's a shame.

DOCTOR/WAITER ONE. A shame.

DOCTOR/WAITER TWO. Shame.

DOCTOR/WAITER THREE. It's shameful.

DOCTOR/WAITER FOUR. Absolutely –

(They exit or something.)

***

(Shift.)

(A bright wash. The lobby of a convention center. There is wall-to-wall carpeting, a few large plants, and a bench. Some convention center lobby music.)

(A normal-seeming woman, **LUCY***, is sitting quietly eating her lunch with chopsticks – it's a delicious looking Bento Box.* **ROGER** *approaches and sits nearby. Something about him indicates his hero-worship of Marvel Comic's Silver Surfer, perhaps it's his backpack and the small silver surfboard peeking out the top. He opens the backpack and pulls out a huge – too huge, really – bag of chips.)*

ROGER. Huh – chopsticks, nice.

LUCY. Excuse me?

ROGER. Chopsticks. Nice.

LUCY. Would you, would you like one, or, some? I have extra.

ROGER. Sure, thanks.

*(***LUCY** *hands him some chopsticks.* **ROGER** *gratefully accepts and opens the bag of chips. He breaks the chopsticks apart and tries to lift chips one by one to his mouth. He is unsuccessful.)*

(He drops a chopstick. She smiles.)

***

(A muffled phone rings from **LUCY***'s bag.)*

(She removes her cell phone and listens.)

*(***MRS. REINHARDT***'s voice.)*

MRS. REINHARDT. Are you a first time caller?

(She turns slightly away from **ROGER***.)*

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. Well, we're thrilled you called in.

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. Are you a long time listener?

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. It's people like you that keep us alive.

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. People like you.

That have always been meaning to call, have never quite gotten around to it, but now find themselves in a position to *help.*

LUCY. I suppose.

MRS. REINHARDT. You sound like you're in love.

(Beat. **LUCY** *glances at* **ROGER***, but briefly.)*

You sound just like a person that's made a recent big decision to let someone into your life and stop being so selfish and I bet, now, you've been drinking a little less – am I right?

(Beat.)

I can tell by your complexion. One day, you'll look over and he'll be sitting there.

*(***LUCY** *glances briefly at* **ROGER** *again, but differently.)*

You'll be sitting *here*,

and he'll be sitting *there*.

LUCY. I'll be sitting *here*.

MRS. REINHARDT. He'll have come from a distant galaxy. He doesn't know it's you. All this not a minute too soon is what I say…everyone knows you were about to disappear, without a trace, never to be seen –

(Click. **LUCY** *closes the phone and turns back toward* **ROGER**.*)*

***

*(***LUCY** *watches* **ROGER** *eat his chips with the chopsticks and study a set of note cards balanced on one knee.)*

(She…reflects on her awful luck with love as…)

*(***ETHAN** *enters. His iPod is still on, but his headphones are around his neck, so we can still faintly hear the awfulness of a U2 song coming from it.*)*

ETHAN. Guess how many cats I have?

LUCY. Oh, I couldn't –

ETHAN. Just guess, really, there are no stupid guesses.

(They share a smile.)

LUCY. I don't know…a hundred.

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ETHAN. That's a stupid guess. Did you even really think about it before you blurted that shit out? Think about what you already know about me. You know I live in an apartment, right?

LUCY. (*Quietly.*) I was jok–

ETHAN. You know I was laid off last year and no matter how hard I try, no matter how many mornings I get up before dawn and go looking for a job, etc, etc, ETC – you know I wasn't able to find one until last month.

(Beat.)

Correct? Am I correct?

LUCY. I'm sorry.

(Rises.)

I should go –

ETHAN. Just sit your stupid idiot self down. I'm only teasing. *Stupid.* I have seventeen cats. Want to hear their names? Toshi, Boshi, Noshi, Floshi, Baby, Nabi, Wabi, Labi, Sabertooth, Clementine, Botchi, Potchi, Lotchi, Zotchi, Melonball, Zucchini Face, and Labia.

(He smiles and walks on.)

***

*(***NICK** *and* **DAPHNE** *are at the diner looking at very large menus.)*

(Terrible Muzak plays.)

*(***DAPHNE** *wears a purple scarf.)*

*(***ETHAN** *enters as* **THE WAITER**.*)*

THE WAITER. I'm afraid to say. We are…out of the fish. It was…Snapper. In case you…were wondering. Red Snapper.

NICK.
That's okay.

(Beat.)

DAPHNE.
Whatever.

THE WAITER. Well, okay…Correction. I *was* afraid to say "We are out of the fish." But –

(Quick smile.)

– it seems you're taking it well, so I'm a little less, a little less afraid. I'll be slightly less intimidated, and less afraid, telling my next table. Thank you. I thank you for that. A learning curve, that's what I just went through, or around, it is a curve and all, or…I know – let me take *this* little moment to say that is a very, very nice scarf. The purples and rose hues and such. I believe my mother had a scarf like that…

(Brief smile.)

Oh god. Wait…

(Horror.)

I'm sorry…I'm having this terrible memory of that scarf now…

*(***THE WAITER** *backs away, terrified.)*

*(***DAPHNE** *looks confused, but then, like, normal.)*

*(***NICK** *looks at the menu.)*

(Awful Muzak continues.)

NICK. So…what are you going to get?

DAPHNE. Hmmmm.

NICK. This menu is, ah, large.

DAPHNE. Yes. So many, so many…omelets.

NICK. And waffles. I'm mostly interested in waffles.

DAPHNE. Wow.

(Snorts.)

That's surprising.

(Beat.)

I just remember how much you liked the omelets last time…

NICK. I know.

DAPHNE. You made a point to get an *omelet* last time.

(The Muzak starts to get louder.)

NICK. I did.

*(***NICK** *searches for the origin of the awful Muzak –)*

DAPHNE. Did that whole thing with your *hat* and the menu and –

NICK. *(To no one, but to everyone.) JESUS! Can you turn this SHIT down??*

(The Muzak stops.)

DAPHNE. *Nick.*

(Beat.)

NICK. It's just that the waffles seem more, I don't know, appropriate today. Now. Today. *Waffle day.*

DAPHNE. Appropriate?

NICK. I…guess.

(Beat.)

Are you going to have juice?

DAPHNE. *JUICE??*

NICK. Yeah.

DAPHNE. *NO.*

NICK. *Daphne.*

DAPHNE. I had some at home.

NICK. *YOU DID??*

DAPHNE. You *watched me* –

NICK. I never saw –

DAPHNE. – drink it straight from the fridge.

(Under breath.)

Jesus.

NICK. *("Acting" confused.)* You knew we were coming here? Why would you –

DAPHNE. Don't act so *confused.*

NICK. You could have waited.

DAPHNE. I like a belt of it. A belt of juice in the morning.

NICK. A what?

DAPHNE. A belt of JUICE.

NICK. That doesn't even make sense, a belt…

(Beat.)

(Sigh.)

Are you going to get home fries?

DAPHNE. Yeah.

NICK. I think I'll get a belt of them.

(Beat.)

DAPHNE. What's wrong with you?

(Beat.)

NICK. I'm hungry.

Really, I want a belt of home fries.

DAPHNE. Jesus.

***

*(***LUCY** *and* **ROGER**, *as before.)*

*(***ROGER** *has a piece of chip between his chopsticks.)*

*(***LUCY** *pops a California roll in her mouth.)*

LUCY. I like your surfboard.

ROGER. Yeah?

LUCY. Yeah.

ROGER. Silver Surfer.

*(***LUCY** *has no idea what he is talking about.)*

LUCY. Oh yeah? Cool.

ROGER. Norrin Radd.

LUCY. Excuse me?

ROGER. You a Norrin Radd fan?

LUCY. Yeah…/yep.

ROGER. Cool. Comic Con?

LUCY. What?

ROGER. You here for Comic Con?

LUCY. No, I'm here with the other convention.

Huh.

ROGER. You are?

LUCY. Yep.

(Holding up her Bento Box.)

Lunch break.

(They smile.)

***

(The sound of rain.)

*(***ETHAN** *is reading a passage from his new book,* The Car Accident. *The cover is extremely violent.)*

ETHAN. "– and she was whispering in his ear that he was *either* a doctor *OR* a waiter. That it was *confusing*. That he had hollandaise on his *sleeve*, but blood on his *cuff*, so she couldn't tell. He smelled like Neosporin *and* garlic. She wasn't sure why at the time, but it was absolutely necessary for Daphne to find out."

(A loud clap of thunder. **ETHAN** *turns the page.)*

"Chapter Thirty-Nine. On a sunny afternoon, Daphne shot Nick after brunch. There had been an argument at a diner; she was surprised he wanted waffles when all he could talk about the last time they'd eaten there was how goddamn good the omelets had been. He *couldn't believe* she'd already had juice earlier that morning, she knew they were going for brunch, she could have given him the courtesy of waiting."

*(***LUCY** *cautiously enters. She carries a red purse and sits in an empty chair.)*

"For *weeks* she'd had to listen about that omelet. The perfect amount of butter it was cooked in, the freshness of the cheese, the perfection of the spinach inside – not

too slimy, just crunchy enough to let him know it was fresh and had been picked that morning, then driven to the city at what many would still call the middle of the night.

This made Daphne want to kill herself. And Nick."

*(***DAPHNE** *enters and sits.)*

"So, she bought a gun.

At least it was the shape of a gun, but smelled like chocolate. For hours she would stand in front of the mirror watching herself hold it. Staring at her reflection as she raised it up and put it in her mouth. She could practically taste the crushed up peanuts and thin layer of caramel as her lips closed around the barrel, biting into it.

See, Nick was a chef, and couldn't look at anything without immediately trying to find different ways to either eat it, or cook it. And now, Daphne couldn't either."

DAPHNE. *(Barely audible.) Jesus.*

(A phone starts ringing, only **LUCY** *appears to hear it.)*

*(***LUCY** *realizes it's in her bag and tries to muffle the noise. It's not making much of a difference and she tries to sit on it without drawing too much attention to herself as* **ETHAN** *continues reading.)*

ETHAN. "He would see a flower and wonder how he was going to fill the petals with cheese. His mind already making a light sauce from the stem, mixing diced Amish garlic and organic cow tears. He would spend hours contemplating which would be best, to serve this new dish on an antique plate bought at the flea market in San Telmo or a lopsided plate of his own creation that he had made as a child, that he had glazed in the art room with the other children, the summer he was sent to the camp in the mountains with the other boys

that had been bad. The question was, and this was always the question, which would his mother like best?"

(The ringing has not stopped.)

(The rain has not stopped.)

*(***LUCY** *brings her red purse back onto her lap.)*

***

*(***LUCY** *swivels slightly so she's facing away from* **ETHAN** *and gently pulls an old-school phone receiver – complete with curly cord – awkwardly from her bag. During the following,* **ETHAN** *continues to read [but with no sound] and* **DAPHNE** *continues to listen and occasionally shake her head in response.)*

*(***LUCY** *glances around and whispers –)*

LUCY. Hello…

MRS. REINHARDT. Are you a first time caller?

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. Are you a long time listener?

LUCY. Yes.

MRS. REINHARDT. Well, we're thrilled you called in.

LUCY. I'd been meaning to call.

MRS. REINHARDT. People like you have always been meaning to call. But the problem is, you don't. You sound like you've got a good head on your shoulders. You sound like you can spot trouble a mile away and let me tell you that's no small skill young lady.

LUCY. I'm just calling to –

MRS. REINHARDT. You're just calling to hear me out, now listen closely.

You'll be walking along one day and it'll start raining.

You'll have forgotten your coat,

your hat,

your umbrella.

You'll see a diner and you'll duck in for cover.
Then you're in a booth with steaming coffee,
a wet newspaper near your elbow,
some spilled sugar.
Before you know it you're off balance,
off kilter,
a curve in the road,
a *learning* curve,
the curvature of the spine –

LUCY. There will be an accident –

MRS. REINHARDT. – which we're more than happy to simply deduct from your account each month. No need to remember, no need to pull out that checkbook or lick that envelope. No need to search the couch cushions for a stamp, slicing your palm with the steak knife you pull out instead. It will be automatic.

LUCY. Clockwork.

MRS. REINHARDT. Clockwork.

LUCY. A small donation will be fine. Each month. Ten dollars.

MRS. REINHARDT. Eleven dollars?

*(***LUCY** *really doesn't want to do eleven dollars, but she does.)*

LUCY. Eleven dollars…

*(***LUCY** *places the receiver back in her bag.)*

*(***ETHAN** *is in the last moments of his reading.)*

ETHAN. "– and she was screaming, 'HEY – DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM THE HOUSE OF PUDDING?'

But it was too late…she had already rounded the corner and disappeared. (*Gone.)*

She licked some drops of blood off her hand, then smiled, realizing it was chocolate."

***

*(***LUCY** *and* **ROGER** *eating lunch.)*

ROGER. So, you're here for the *other* convention?

LUCY. I come every year.

ROGER. I can't believe you're / here with the *other* –

LUCY. Well, I guess that's not true, I missed…last year.

ROGER. You don't seem the type?

LUCY. Type?

ROGER. You look…put together.

LUCY. Thanks, I guess?

(He gestures generally at her.)

ROGER. Whichever one it is, it's like I can't even tell.

LUCY. Excuse me?

ROGER. Like, BOTH of your legs look REAL.

LUCY. They *are*.

ROGER. Then, my god, NICE job on the arms!

LUCY. What?

ROGER. So cool, how they move at the elbow and everything –

LUCY. As opposed to?

ROGER. And your hands, did they take that skin from your *thigh*? It's so skin-like and –

*(***LUCY** *sets down her Bento Box.)*

LUCY. I'm sorry, what's your name?

ROGER. Roger.

LUCY. Roger –

ROGER. What's yours? Wait – let me guess! I'm really good at guessing names, I know that's, er, odd, but I really *like* to do it. Do you mind?

LUCY. Roger –

ROGER. Wait! Before I guess, you're not…a warrior princess right? This one time, wo-ah, *this*, she, was –

LUCY. What convention do you think I'm here for?

ROGER. Portia? No. Juliana? No…Like do you have a small-boys-name-girls-name-type-thing? Shane?

LUCY. No.

ROGER. Dalia?

LUCY. What convention do you think I'm here for?

ROGER. The Prosthetic…Limb Convention…? Probably / not.

LUCY. Probably not.

(She smiles.)

I think there are like four conventions here.

ROGER. Oh.

(Beat.)

LUCY. Lu/cy –

ROGER. LUCY!

*(***LUCY** *is unclear if* **ROGER** *wants credit for "guessing" her name…)*

(She holds her hand out to him.)

LUCY. Touch it.

*(***ROGER** *holds his hand up helplessly.)*

ROGER. *Mustard.*

LUCY. Lick it off.

ROGER. Excuse me?

LUCY. Wipe it off.

(She hands him a napkin.)

(He wipes the mustard off.)

(She holds her hand out again.)

(He takes it.)

Skin like?

(They hold their hands together for a moment.)

ROGER. Very, very skin like.

***

*(***NICK** *and* **DAPHNE**, *still at the diner.)*

NICK. I brought you something.

DAPHNE. Uh-huh.

*(***NICK** *sets a case between them on the table.)*

*(***DAPHNE** *snorts, then smiles.)*

Where did you find them –

NICK. I kept them.

DAPHNE. No you *didn't* –

NICK. Kept 'em.

(Smiles.)

Surprised aren't you?

DAPHNE. No –

NICK. You love it when I surprise y–

DAPHNE. I hate it.

*(***THE WAITER** *appears.)*

THE WAITER. Nice guns.

*(***NICK** *touches his own arm, caresses it.)*

NICK. Thanks. Don't worry –

THE WAITER. Sir –

NICK. – they're not loaded.

THE WAITER. I'm afraid we don't –

NICK. I didn't see any *signs* –

THE WAITER. We have a No Fire Arms Policy.

NICK. As you should, as you should.

*(***THE WAITER** *exits.)*

(That terrible Muzak sneaks back on, but softly. Neither notice, but if **NICK** *had noticed, he probably would have liked it this time.)*

*(***DAPHNE** *gets distracted by a sign past* **NICK***'s head.)*

DAPHNE. Oh god –

NICK. What?

DAPHNE. Oh my god.

NICK. WHAT?

DAPHNE. Of course

NICK. *Jesus.* WHAT?

DAPHNE. CASH ONLY.

NICK. No –

DAPHNE. It's cash only.

NICK. Since when? GOD.

DAPHNE. This place is *cash only*?

NICK. Why do you always take me to cash –

DAPHNE. *I didn't know.*

NICK. You should've checked –

DAPHNE. I can't do *EVERYTHING.*

NICK. It's okay –

DAPHNE. *Pisses me off.*

NICK. *IT'S FINE.*

DAPHNE. How many dishes did we even have?

NICK. Dishes?

DAPHNE. *Dishes.*

*(***NICK** *sighs.)*

NICK.
Minty Lamb Sliders.

DAPHNE.
Three sliders each, times two, you didn't eat one –

NICK. *MINTY LAMB SLIDERS.* One dish. ONE dish.

DAPHNE. *(Panicking.)* Well what are going to do, I don't have cash –

NICK. It's okay –

DAPHNE. We should have split an –

NICK. I got it.

DAPHNE. *You* have cash.

(Beat.)

NICK. I have cash.

DAPHNE. YOU have CASH.

NICK. I have cash.

DAPHNE. YOU have cash.

NICK. Yes.

DAPHNE. Well.

Alright.

*(**DAPHNE** pulls the case toward her as **NICK** reaches for his wallet.)*

***

*(**ETHAN**, as before, reading from his book* The Car Accident.*)*

(The rain.)

*(**DAPHNE** adjusts her seating to become a captive member of his audience.)*

*(**NICK** counts money from his wallet.)*

ETHAN. "*Chapter One Hundred Thirty Four – The Bento Box.*

Lucy would ONLY eat lunch out of a Bento Box.

It was no secret that the true allure of the Bento Box was in how each item, each separate *piece* of lunch, was in its own compartment – guaranteeing that everything retained its own unique flavor.

The chicken teriyaki.

The little bit of salad.

The dumplings.

The small California roll.

Delicious.

And separate.

One needn't worry about the purity of the bite for example, and Lucy appreciated this.

This was futile to Roger whose natural born state is slight paranoia. When this is directed at food, it materializes in his belief that everything contains bones. That flattening his food with anything nearby is the only solution – a fork, a glass, a shoe.

Flatten.

Cut.

Examine.

Eat.

He was fond of the story that once, when he was small, he found chicken bones inside his artichoke heart at a vegan restaurant. No one choked, but it was enough to provoke Roger to throw a fit – turning the tabletops upside down, throwing plates against the wall and ultimately breaking his pelvic bone, which put him on bed rest for the three months leading up to his ninth birthday.

Later, he'd trace this incident as one of the most shaping of his childhood. It was then that he lay, propped up with pillows, and opened issue one of *The Silver Surfer: Escape to Terror!* He was hooked from the first caption:

'Safely hidden atop the towering Himalayas, in a lonely, long-lost land, tortured by his own anguished thoughts, sits the Silver Surfer!'

They were the most real words he had ever read."

*(***ETHAN** *continues to read, but we don't hear him.)*

***

*(***ROGER** *and* **LUCY** *are still having lunch.)*

ROGER. It's such a hard question, right? What do I like to do…

*(***ROGER** *reaches over into her Bento Box.)*

LUCY. Are you reaching into my Bento Box?

(He pops a California roll in his mouth.)

ROGER. So. Hmm. I like… I like to bury things? Maybe that's the wrong answer. I like to take things and dig holes for them, then wrap them in some kind of casing or coating or plastic and then lay them really gently in the earth and cover it back up with dirt or rock or sand

– it, of course, *absolutely* depends where I am. I have *seriously* buried all sorts of things, like fish and –

(Laughs it off.)

It's ridiculous. Sorry, usually I don't tell this sort of thing to someone I just met.

I should –

I should change the…

So…

If you had a boat what would you name it?

LUCY. I'm not –

ROGER. Really, I'm polling people. Say you had a boat.

LUCY. A sailboat?

ROGER. A tugboat, a sailboat, whatever – now, name it.

LUCY. Sun/shine –

ROGER. SUNDAY!

(Beat.)

ROGER. I'd call my boat *Zenn-La*.

LUCY. Cool.

ROGER. Or *Shalla-Bal*. Which one sounds better?

LUCY. *Huh?*

ROGER. So, I guess *Shalla-Bal*, right?

LUCY. *Sunshine-Shalla-Bal*!

(Beat.)

(It feels strangely too soon for **LUCY** *to marry their boat names…)*

ROGER. Ok, forget the boat. Don't think I'm weird. Could you help –

LUCY. I'd love too.

(She answered that a little too quickly, but **ROGER** *doesn't mind.)*

(He grabs the note cards he's been studying.)

ROGER. I have this presentation…I could show –

LUCY. Absolutely.

(Ugh! She did it again.)

ROGER. I need to warn you that I'm really weird about feedback.

LUCY. Weird…about feedback?

ROGER. Criticism. Feedback. Like just *censor* yourself. I'm not one of those guys that "likes it straight," at least not right away. For now, just tell me it's astonishing or something, okay?

LUCY. Sure –

ROGER. And, I'm not saying that I'm going to get to know you better, it's just that I'm not sure I could take it if you, like, yelled at me –

LUCY. That's not going to happen.

ROGER. – don't get me started about why I quit the wrestling team –

LUCY. There's no way I'll yell at you.

ROGER. That's what *he* said.

(He's nervous.)

LUCY. I'm incredibly selfish.

ROGER. No –

LUCY. You're bad at criticism. I'm selfish, I'm terrible, it's something I'm working on. Actively. See?

ROGER. No way.

LUCY. I'm actively working on it. It's not…natural.

*(***ROGER** *smiles.)*

ROGER. Don't try to make me…more comfortable.

LUCY. I'm not! That would be *giving* of me, and as I just said, I'm not a very giving person. So.

(He smiles again. He stands.)

(He clears his throat and glances at his note cards.)

ROGER. Imagine there's these slides behind me with images and stuff, really creative images that enhance the words, and I'll play this song then –

LUCY. Just start –

ROGER. Okay.

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, Superheroes and Lords of the Underworld. Without further *adieu*, I shall begin:

(He holds the first note card. It's like he's about to start…then doesn't.)

…Or, maybe, I shouldn't, you know, *blow my wad.*

(Hmm.)

That's a disgusting phrase.

I want to acknowledge that I know.

That I'm aware.

That you are probably thinking –

LUCY.

You seem a bit wound up –

ROGER.

– that I have just used a disgusting phrase.

LUCY. You're making a classic mistake right now: thinking too much about other people.

I have a, ah, a friend that used to do that all the time…

She'd get all freaked out that no one could hear her when she spoke.

Started SHOUTING ALL THE TIME!

Like her ears hadn't popped from that stupid, *expensive,* return *flight* from fucking Bolivia.

Awful.

Have you ever traveled with friends and loved ones in South America?

Don't answer that.

Don't.

Don't try to have like your entire life experiences in every single moment.

Just…take a breath.

Tell me about what you're thinking…

ROGER. Like casually?

LUCY. You don't have to actually do it.

ROGER. Ahh, that's interesting.

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