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SF PERUSALS

# Lascivious Something

by Sheila Callaghan

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH

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**Originally developed by Cherry Lane Theatre,**
**Angelina Fiordellisi, Artistic Director**

**Los Angeles debut produced by Circle X Theater Co. and the**
**Los Angeles County Arts Commission at [Inside] The Ford,**
**Hollywood, California**

**Originally produced in New York City in 2010 by Women's Project, Julie Crosby,**
**Producing Artistic Director, and Cherry Lane Theatre,**
**Angelina Fiordellisi, Artistic Director**

***LASCIVIOUS SOMETHING*** received its debut production in Los Angeles in March 2010 with Circle X Theatre Co. at [Inside] the Ford. It was produced by Tim Wright and Jennifer A. Skinner. The production was directed by Paul Willis with set design by Sibyl Wickersheimer, lighting design by Thomas Ontiveros, costume design by Dianne K. Graebner, and sound design by John Zalewski. The cast was as follows:

**AUGUST** . . . . . Silas Weir Mitchell
**LIZA**. . . . . Alana Dietze
**BOY**. . . . . Alina Phelan
**DAPHNE** . . . . . Olivia Henry

***LASCIVIOUS SOMETHING*** received its world premiere in New York City in a May 2010 co-production between Women's Project (Julie Crosby, Producing Artistic Director) and Cherry Lane Theatre (Angelina Fiordellisi, Artistic Director). It was originally developed as part of Cherry Lane's 2006 Mentor Project. The co-production was directed by Daniella Topol, with set design by Marsha Ginsberg, costume design by Theresa Squire, lighting by Christopher Akerlind, sound design and original music by Broken Chord Collective. The cast was as follows:

**AUGUST** . . . . . Rob Campbell
**LIZA**. . . . . Dana Eskelson
**BOY**. . . . . Ronete Levenson
**DAPHNE** . . . . . Elisabeth Waterston

## CHARACTERS

**AUGUST**

**DAPHNE**

**LIZA**

**BOY**

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue. When the stroke is not immediately followed by text, the next line should occur on the last syllable of the word before the slash – not an overlap but a concise interruption.

The playwright would like to thank the following people, without whose support, guidance, advice, and talents over the years this play would not have been possible:

Amy Mueller, Michael Weller, Mark Christian Subias, Linsay Firman, Eisa Davis, Jason Grote, Rob Handel, Anne Marie Healy, Laramie Dennis, Soho Rep, Daniel Aukin, Kent Nicholson, South Coast Repertory, Jerry Patch, Jennifer Kiger, Jess Bauman, Jay Jennings, Rob Kaplowitz, Jen Carter, Megan Carter, Julie Crosby, Angelina Fiordellisi, Marya Mazor, Jackie Wright, Sophocles Papavasilopoulos, Lia Aprille, Heidi Schreck, Flora Diaz, Mark Subias, Seth Glewen, Suzanne Agins, Charles Borland, Danielle Skraastad, Christina Bennett Lind, Jesse Camp, James King, Sherry Kramer, Darren Pettie, Amy Ryan, Shana Dowdeswell, Chris Kipiniak, Jen Kays, Maria Striar, Kip Fagan, and Deron Bos.

# ACT ONE

*(***AUGUST** *is a weathered, emaciated, older-than-his age. He's covered in dirt and his fingers are stained red and covered in small cuts.)*

*(He is out in the field, tending his vines.)*

*(It is 1980.)*

**AUGUST.** My one hand. This hand, with its million minor cuts. Watched it move through the air. Watched it stretch its fingers toward the neck. The middle one trembling like a thin live wire. Curling as they reached the neck, curling around the back, finger finger finger finger thumb, then TOUCH, cool, like everything good in life, you know that kind of cool, and the red inside…the word I want to use is LUSH, red lush like the million minor cuts on my hands…but cooler than blood…

I knew then my life was about to change.

I held it by its neck, I felt its cool. I wondered if my blood would cool with it. I wondered if it could sense my touch somehow, if the atoms spun differently beneath my palm. I stood a respectful distance from it. Gripping. Not gripping, something more respectful than gripping. Because *I* was the one being gripped, you see. So. *Holding,* and I let the air between us fill and fill, with. With. That emotion you reserve only for the most holy of objects.

Brought it upstairs, placing both feet on each step, and allowed it to be taken from my hands just long enough to be placed into my carrier. How much, I heard myself asking. My heart did not race as I thought it would, but I *did* bite my tongue.

**AUGUST.** *(cont.)* I barely saw the money leaving my fist, damp cash, barely saw the roiling concern in their eyes – they saw my cuts, I suppose, or maybe the worn soles of my sandals – and when the carrier was handed back to me its weight was sweeter than any weight that had *ever* loaded my pockets.

At home…You did WHAT, she said…but I hardly heard her. She was a little naked brown bean on the white sheets while I was plaster and roof and sky and clouds and black space. You did WHAT she said again, but with less conviction…and I realized she was making herself okay with it…The money. Everything.

And then she said. In her smallest, warmest voice. I hope you know what you're doing.

*(He regards the bottle and smiles widely.)*

A fundamental impossibility. Fuck yeah.

*(***DAPHNE** *is seated at a worktable on a porch. She is 24 and poised, striking; a dark flower with a long willowy stem. She wears a work-shirt and jeans.)*

*(A modest, aging home sits behind her. She is surrounded by a trellis with grape leaves and bunches of fruit hanging down. She wears a sweater – it is slightly chilly. November in the Mediterranean.)*

*(She is scraping into a clay block. Every now and then she will consult a photo of the property.)*

*(***LIZA** *appears. She is also weathered beyond her years, out of breath. She carries a small book and a small bag and wears a large-brimmed hat.)*

**LIZA.** H-hello, I.

*(***DAPHNE** *looks up and smiles.* **LIZA** *flips through her phrase book.)*

Sorry, *Ya-mas, Keery Moo. / Eethen*

**DAPHNE.** *(Greek accent – much like Spanish)* I speak your language.

**LIZA.** *(out of breath)* Oh, Super. There's a. Sign actually. TWO signs, but. A man with a donkey. Could I sit?

**DAPHNE.** Please.

**LIZA.** Thanks. I'm so winded! Kept thinking I was at the. Summit but then there'd be ANOTHER…so and gosh the donkey had like a beard?

**DAPHNE.** Ah.

**LIZA.** So I started up the. Thing again, but the path is all overgrown.

**DAPHNE.** My husband has been very busy. He means to cut down the wild grasses but it is harvest and we have only one boy full-time.

**LIZA.** Do you know the donkey I'm talking about?

**DAPHNE.** You are American?

**LIZA.** I am. It had a beard. And eyebrows.

**DAPHNE.** My husband is American. He does not see Americans often. We get British, Germans. Mostly the summer.

**LIZA.** And the fella was SUCH an excuse me asshole. I think he hates your. I don't know what he hates exactly.

**DAPHNE.** You say that why?

**LIZA.** He kept spitting. *Ftou, ftou!* Greek-greek-greek, *ftou!*

**DAPHNE.** He is short and like a prune.

**LIZA.** Prune-like, yes, and. Wheew. Angry?

**DAPHNE.** My husband will come up for his omelet shortly. Will you have some omelet with him?

**LIZA.** Um. Sure.

**DAPHNE.** You have arrived on a special day. It is the last day of harvest for the season.

**LIZA.** Hey! Great!

**DAPHNE.** How long do you anticipate staying with us?

**LIZA.** Hadn't figured / actually

**DAPHNE.** We charge ten American dollars per night, or we have a weekly rate of sixty American dollars.

**LIZA.** Okay.

*(***DAPHNE** *stands and retrieves a decanter filled with wine from the corner. She hands* **LIZA** *a glass and fills it.)*

**DAPHNE.** Welcome to our Island.

**LIZA.** Oh, it's…kind of early but what the heck! I'm on VACATION. Salut.

*(***LIZA** *raises her glass.)*

You aren't having any?

**DAPHNE.** No.

**LIZA.** Okay….

*(***LIZA** *drinks deeply from the glass.* **DAPHNE** *returns to her sketching.)*

SWEET.

**DAPHNE.** It is not good. It is the run-off, so it is fortunate you do not pay so much attention in the sipping.

**LIZA.** Oh. I never really do. Just sorta knock it back and wait to get. Heh dizzy.

*(***DAPHNE** *smiles politely.)*

Boy, you're. Beautiful, I wasn't quite uh prepared…

**DAPHNE.** Where did you say you heard of us?

**LIZA.** This hostel in Italy, in Rome actually, and the – I've been traveling, so…and you know there's, they have the the. Corkboards. For backpackers.

**DAPHNE.** You do not have a backpack.

**LIZA.** No. Are you from nearby, or.

**DAPHNE.** My family is a small village a few kilometers away. *From,* is *from.* There are legends here…perhaps you shall hear some.

*(***LIZA** *glances around the space and notices a black and white photograph.)*

**LIZA.** Is this your….

**DAPHNE.** My husband, yes. Seven years ago.

**LIZA.** Nice. You took this?

**DAPHNE.** It was my semester abroad. I studied art. My thesis was a photo essay on the vineyards of the Napa Valley. Months later I brought him here.

**LIZA.** Why?

*(beat)*

**DAPHNE.** It's my family's land.

*(***LIZA** *examines the photo.)*

**LIZA.** What's wrong with his eyes?

*(***DAPHNE** *takes the photo from* **LIZA**.*)*

**DAPHNE.** It was harvest and he was an apprentice. Picking and pressing and tasting and not sleeping, he was drunk all the time…a piece of twine being frayed very slowly.

*(beat)*

He believes he is about to revolutionize the entire industry of wine-making. He does nothing small.

*(***LIZA** *looks up at the grape vines woven overhead.)*

**LIZA.** Well I am delighted to be here. To be here in this place, this. Donkeys that need a shave, ha! And such a, an astonishing…It's. You know? HUMBLING. And these, these handsome…

**DAPHNE.** Help yourself.

**LIZA.** Don't you need them?

**DAPHNE.** We do not harvest those. They are for decoration. Please.

**LIZA.** Oh no no no no no…

*(***DAPHNE** *stands and picks a stem of grapes. She feeds one to* **LIZA**, *slowly.)*

**DAPHNE.** You will find we are very generous people. Do not hesitate to ask for anything.

**LIZA.** …what's your name.

**DAPHNE.** *(voiced TH, "Thahf'-nee")* Daphne.

**LIZA.** Th. Oh, DAF-nee. Like in Scooby-Doo.

*(***DAPHNE** *smiles.)*

**DAPHNE.** No. And how do they call you?

*(a small beat)*

**LIZA.** Liza.

*(***DAPHNE** *maybe registers this.* **LIZA** *shoves the remainder of the grapes into her mouth.)*

*(a beat)*

As in "Minnelli."

*(a beat)*

Is there somewhere I could go get cleaned / up

**DAPHNE.** Of course. The guest house is down those steps and around the back. You are the first door, the suite. The key is in the handle and the sheets are starched and folded for the bed.

**LIZA.** Super. Thanks.

*(***LIZA** *exits.)*

*(A beat.* **DAPHNE** *realizes she is still holding the photo of* **AUGUST***. She places it back on the table.)*

*(***AUGUST** *sweeps into sight, singing loudly in Greek. He's a little tipsy.)*

**AUGUST.** *Na ena karidi*
*Na ena zoozooni*
*Fa'eh toh zoozooni prota*
*Ella hondreh'*
*(Translation:*
"Here's a walnut
Here's a bug
Eat the bug first
Hey fatty"*)*

*(He suddenly roars loudly.)*

*Aftos ine o thorivos pou kratousa mesa mou gia dio meres. (Translation:* "That is the sound I have been holding in for two days."*)*

**DAPHNE.** *Sigharitiria, agapi mou (Translation:* "Congratulations, agapi-mou."*)*

**AUGUST.** Thank you*, kota. Ine i sampania kria. (Translation:* "Is the Champagne chilled?"*)*

**DAPHNE.** *Ke pote den ine. (Translation:* "When is it not."*)*

*(***AUGUST** *retrieves a bottle from the cooler and pours himself a glass. She watches him carefully.)*

**DAPHNE.** *Ehis homa sta hili sou. Pali tros homa… (Translation:* "You have earth on your lip. Eating your dirt again…"*)*

**AUGUST.** *Matheno pos i gevsi pezi mesa sta stafilia. Kita gia ton eafto sou. (Translation:* "I can taste how it plays into the grapes. See for yourself."*)*

*(He kisses her.)*

**DAPHNE.** Ick.

**AUGUST.** *De tha fas homa.* Woman. *Epidi ise homa.* Filthy filthy chicken… *(Translation:* "You won't eat dirt. Woman. Because you ARE dirt."*)*

*(He begins to kiss her. She notices his hands covered in cuts.)*

**DAPHNE.** *Vlepis! Ti krima! (Translation:* "Look! What a pity!"*)*

**AUGUST.** Ah, scissors broke again. Some reason the stems were so tough this year…

*(***DAPHNE** *retrieves a damp rag.)*

**DAPHNE.** Did Boy throw up?

**AUGUST.** You should see him down there with the crushers, pressing his little heart out…

**DAPHNE.** *Afto simeni ne? (Translation:* "That is yes?"*)*

**AUGUST.** Yes. He threw up. At around five-thirty.

**DAPHNE.** *Pini para poli sti sigomidi. (Translation:* "He drinks too much during harvest."*)*

**AUGUST.** Let him drink as much as he wants, long as it doesn't affect his work…

**DAPHNE.** *Ase to katharizma gia avrio. Ine methismenos / simera. (Translation:* "Save clean-up for tomorrow. He will be too hung over / today"*)*

**AUGUST.** He'll do as he's done every other year.

*(He touches her tummy.)*

*Pos estanese? (Translation:* "How are you feeling?"*)*

**DAPHNE.** *Kourasmeni. I naftia me ksipnise. (Translation:* "Tired. The queasy woke me."*)*

*(He kisses her, then grabs a rag and begins wiping his hands.)*

**AUGUST.** You know what I was thinking today? How this all suddenly has a purpose. I mean it did before, but. I dunno. This little blastocyst…he's like a, like a root. Connecting us. I get all choked up thinking about it.

**DAPHNE.** *Avgusto –*

**AUGUST.** Ow. Weird. My knuckle. When I move my hand like this, my knuckle hurts. See like this, it hurts. Like this, it doesn't. This, ow. This, no. Ow, no. Ow, no.

**DAPHNE.** *Kapios ine 'tho. (Translation: "*Someone is here."*)*

**AUGUST.** Here? From the village?

**DAPHNE.** *Mia Americaneetha. (Translation: "*An American."*)*

**AUGUST.** That's odd…a tourist?

**DAPHNE.** Someone from your past.

*(a beat)*

A woman.

**AUGUST.** Who?

*(***DAPHNE** *does not answer.)*

Daphne…

**DAPHNE.** The one who bites.

*(***LIZA** *enters.)*

**LIZA.** I had trouble finding the….

*(She notices* **AUGUST***.)*

…bathroom.

**AUGUST.** Holy shit.

**LIZA.** Hello, August.

**AUGUST.** Holy shit. It's you. Is it you?

**LIZA.** It's me.

**AUGUST.** Ho. Lee. SHIT. What the hell are you doing here?

**LIZA.** I was just telling your your / wife

**DAPHNE.** I will go make the omelet. Excuse me.

*(***DAPHNE** *exits.)*

**LIZA.** I was telling…she is STUNNING, by the way.

**AUGUST.** Thank you.

**LIZA.** And so YOUNG.

**AUGUST.** Thank you…Liza! Wha…

**LIZA.** I was in Rome, and Romania, and Prague, and Budapesht/

*(***AUGUST** *and* **LIZA** *begin kissing almost accidentally. Then they stop, embarrassed, surprised. Awkward.)*

*(***DAPHNE** *enters.)*

**DAPHNE.** You might like to know, they said on the radio. Your president has been elected. He is named Ronald Reagan.

*(***LIZA** *exits.* **AUGUST** *and* **DAPHNE** *move into similar positions they were before* **LIZA** *entered.)*

**AUGUST.** Who?

*(***DAPHNE** *does not answer.)*

Daphne…

**DAPHNE.** The one who bites.

*(***LIZA** *enters.)*

**LIZA.** I had trouble finding the….

*(She notices* **AUGUST***.)*

*…bathroom.*

**AUGUST.** Holy shit.

**LIZA.** Hello, August.

**AUGUST.** Holy shit . It's you. Is it you?

**LIZA.** It's me.

**AUGUST.** Ho. Lee. SHIT. What the hell are you doing here?

**LIZA.** I was just telling your your / wife

**DAPHNE.** I will go make the omelet. Excuse me.

*(***DAPHNE** *exits.)*

**LIZA.** I was telling…she is STUNNING, by the way.

**AUGUST.** Thank you.

**LIZA.** And so YOUNG.

**AUGUST.** Thank you…Liza! Wha…

**LIZA.** I was in Rome, and Romania, and Prague, and Buda-pesht –

*(beat)*

Did you know that's how they pronounce it? With a 'sht'?

**AUGUST.** I'm, I'm literally

**LIZA.** PESSHHHT. I was doing some traveling, so…did you know Hungary has the highest, the highest um suicide rate of any other country? In the world?

**AUGUST.** You're a woman.

**LIZA.** Ha! I suppose I am.

**AUGUST.** You dropped all the baby fat.

**LIZA.** Ha! Well it was more like standard grade D American Chub…big Mac and a vanilla McShake every Mcfrickin' meal…

**AUGUST.** Are you hungry? Can I get you anything? Champagne? *(He dashes over to the champagne bucket.)*

**LIZA.** Strange we didn't see the irony of keeping our enemies in business…thanks…How is it that you look exactly the same?

**AUGUST.** I don't.

**LIZA.** You're swarthier, actually…

**AUGUST.** Swarthier? No.

**LIZA.** Not a little swarthier? Not even a little?

**AUGUST.** Knobbier, maybe. Less hair.

*(He hands her a glass of champagne, then realizes she still has her wine.)*

Oh, sorry, I didn't / even realize

**LIZA.** No, it's, hang on…

*(***LIZA** *downs her glass quickly.* **AUGUST** *is amused.)*

**AUGUST.** You aren't a wine drinker.

**LIZA.** I'm no I don't suppose I mean a glass with dinner sometimes but.

**AUGUST.** *(mischievous)* Perfect. Are you as CLEVER as you ever were, Miss Liza?

**LIZA.** Clever-er, actually.

**AUGUST.** Then you shall learn. About such things. At this place. Are you as self-absorbed?

**LIZA.** You can't tell?

**AUGUST.** Then you will learn a lot, for fear of being made a fool.

**LIZA.** Ah. Well good.

**AUGUST.** Last question.

**LIZA.** Games, little August and his little / games

**AUGUST.** Are you still a raging lunatic?

**LIZA.** Well of course. It's in my nature.

*(***AUGUST** *hands her a glass of champagne.)*

**AUGUST.** Then. Cheers.

*(***DAPHNE** *enters with a large plate of eggs and three forks.* **AUGUST** *immediately begins wolfing it down.)*

**DAPHNE.** I make it like the French. With heavy cream. An old French lesbian showed me how. She said Americans don't eat eggs. She said Americans therefore are the dangerous people. She had chickens in her back.

**AUGUST.** Back*yard.* She didn't have chickens in her. Heh.

**DAPHNE.** Her eggs came to the kitchen still warm from the chickens' bodies. Once we found a beak in the egg. A little baby beak.

**AUGUST.** Daphne's family spent their summers at various chateaux in Normandy. LOADED…

*(***DAPHNE** *offers a fork to* **LIZA**.*)*

**LIZA.** Thank you.

*(***LIZA** *eats a forkful.)*

**DAPHNE.** My lesbian also told me it is customary to spit into the eggs of our enemies.

*(***LIZA** *stops chewing.)*

Fortunately, I do not spit. Spitting is a dirt habit. For people who eat dirt. You agree?

**AUGUST.** Talking about spitting while one is eating is also a dirt habit, *mikri-kota-mou.*

**DAPHNE.** Only from those with the dirt-mouth. You are not eating, Liza.

**LIZA.** I'd like to be drunk first, thanks. Great eggs.

**DAPHNE.** Thank you. You might like to know, they said on the radio. Your president has been elected. He is named Ronald Reagan.

*(Slight beat, slight smile.)*

The actor.

*(***LIZA** *and* **AUGUST** *look at each other.* **AUGUST** *drinks.)*

**LIZA.** I didn't realize you folks got American news over here.

**DAPHNE.** We receive the large news, the head – headlines, of course. We once received American newspapers to the house. But then I stopped allowing them. You know that vine in his neck, the big vine? When he would read the American news his vine would pop.

**LIZA.** Vein, I think. Right?

**DAPHNE.** He has a grape vine in his neck. Tell her, *Avgusto.*

**AUGUST.** I have a grape vine in my neck, Liza. It used to be a vein. But now when I bleed. My blood is wine. Delicious eggs, my filthy chicken. You know, tonight? We should have a feast. For Liza.

**DAPHNE.** Of course we should.

**LIZA.** Oh, no…

**AUGUST.** What do you eat?

**LIZA.** Don't go to any. I wasn't even planning on / staying

**AUGUST.** There are no other guest houses for miles.

**LIZA.** I eat everything.

**AUGUST.** A feast then. For the last day of harvest AND for a long lost friend. More champagne?

**LIZA.** No thank you. All right.

*(He pours.)*

**DAPHNE.** Liza! You are the first old friend of my husband's which whom I have met. I would very much like to hear a story from his youth.

**LIZA.** A story? Like what kind of…

**DAPHNE.** A badly behaved story. I'm sure he has many.

**LIZA.** Um…I met him senior year of high school, so…he was a, oh god a WRETCHED student. I mean he was a genius, but. But he liked to do, heh. Bad things. To teachers. Like have AFFAIRS with them.

**AUGUST.** Ha! I forgot about that!

**LIZA.** Oh please, how could you / have POSSIBLY

**DAPHNE.** Affairs. Love affairs.

**AUGUST.** Man oh / man…

**DAPHNE.** I am not shocked.

**AUGUST.** Just the one, Liza is hyperbolizing/

**LIZA.** One was / PLENNY

**DAPHNE.** I don't know that word, / Hyper…

**LIZA.** She was so OLD!

**AUGUST.** No she was / not.

**LIZA.** She was what, fifty, / fifty-five?

**AUGUST.** THIRTY-five. Ish.

**DAPHNE.** You were how / old?

**AUGUST.** I don't / recall

**LIZA.** Seventeen. He got EXPELLED. For BONING his chemistry teacher! She was, is, is this an appropriate / story

**AUGUST.** It's fine.

**DAPHNE.** Go on.

**LIZA.** Well he was planning on dropping out anyway. Was on this angsty kick against formal education.

**AUGUST.** Heh/

**LIZA.** Wanted to eat garbage and write leftist propaganda. They called him "Mega-Marx!"

**AUGUST.** You're leaving out the best part of the story!

**LIZA.** Oh! So this teacher wasn't just ANY teacher…she was BLACK. A BLACK teacher in a white public school system. In suburban New Jersey. In 1963. You can just imagine the uproar from the – do, do you know anything about the American Civil Rights movement?

**DAPHNE.** Yes.

**LIZA.** Well anyway. She got very fired AND very publicly ostracized…And a week later, he showed up to the board of ed meeting with about twenty angry teenagers.

All in blackface.

*(***AUGUST** *and* **LIZA** *laugh.)*

**DAPHNE.** Ha. That is an amusing. I also know a story. It is one involving you.

**LIZA.** Really? What?

**DAPHNE.** I'm sure if you thought hard you would think it up.

**LIZA.** I am thinking hard…

**AUGUST.** Miss Liza, what is the one story my wife would have to know?

**LIZA.** I really can't imagine…

*(***AUGUST** *stands and turns his body to the side, and pulls down his pants. A puffy, bite-shaped scar is dug into his hip.)*

**DAPHNE.** You and he were living out of your small car at the San Francisco Bay. You had no more food. You had not washed yourselves in two weeks besides your feet in the water. You had sex four times a day and were on pot much of the time. You were lying with your stringy head in his lap with your eyes closed. You were talking

about molecules moving in your fingers and your feet. You were talking about how your skin was not solid, how the vinyl seat was not solid. You said everything was vibrating in nature at all times, and you said it scared you so much, and you said the only time you felt still was when his voice was in your ears, low and serious. And then you felt a wet drop on your closed lids, and you opened them and he was crying into your eyes. And he said you are so beautiful Liza, you are so beautiful you could crack the sky open. And you said August you are like the universe, you are so big you fill me you fill my ears and you fill me. He brought his head down to yours and unrolled his tongue into your mouth. And his fingers wound around your hair. And you grabbed his hip with your hand and you said the word NEED, and you wrapped your thick leg around his skinny leg and said the word NEED, and then you sank your teeth into his hip and bit so hard you came back with part of him in your mouth. And then you made love. And you fell asleep. And when you woke up you had a red smear on your face where you fell asleep in his blood. But he was gone.

That was the last time you saw him.

**LIZA.** Huh. I don't remember that.

**AUGUST.** You do, Liza.

**LIZA.** I don't, really. Biting. I'd remember a thing like that. But I do have the urge quite often. To bite people. I just don't think I'd follow it through.

**AUGUST.** Of course you would. You want to bite my wife right now. Admit it.

**LIZA.** Ha! Sure! I'll bite her face off!

**AUGUST.** I think you just might.

**LIZA.** What? Shut up.

**DAPHNE.** She will. She is about to.

**LIZA.** Bite your face? No, honey. I will not bite your face.

**AUGUST.** Do it. Go on. Bite her.

**DAPHNE.** August –

*(Long beat.* **LIZA** *looks as though she might bite* **DAPHNE***'s face. She does. Chaos. Then…)*

**DAPHNE.** Ha. That is an amusing. I also know a story. It is one involving you.

**LIZA.** Really? What?

**DAPHNE.** I'm sure if you thought hard you would think it up.

**LIZA.** I am thinking hard…

**AUGUST.** Miss Liza, what is the one story my wife would have to know?

**LIZA.** I really can't imagine…

*(***AUGUST** *stands and digs into his pocket, and takes out a package of Wint-O-green Lifesavers.)*

Oh NO!!

*(He pops three in his mouth and begins to chew, smiling hugely.* **LIZA** *begins cracking up.)*

**DAPHNE.** He is obsessed. Impossible to get over here, I have / them shipped.

**LIZA.** You told her!

**AUGUST.** No choice, I'm /afraid

**DAPHNE.** He tells me everything

**LIZA.** Roll after roll, / the whole trip…

**AUGUST.** Ha ha!

**LIZA.** Getting high in our car every night, reading passages from Reagan's autobiography –

**AUGUST.** It had a great title, didn't it, a line in a movie where he played an amputee…um…"Where's the Rest of Me. The Ronald Reagan Story."

**DAPHNE.** What/ ah…

**LIZA.** That's it! And THEN, we'd turn off our flashlights and you'd haul out the Wint-o-greens…

**AUGUST.** Fireworks!! Every time!! God that was…it was epic. Wasn't it?

**LIZA.** It was. And you had like a theory, a real scientific THING / for the whole

**AUGUST.** Not theory. Fact. All hard sugar-based candies emit some degree of light when you bite them. It's called um triboluminescence.

**DAPHNE.** I don't know that / word

**AUGUST.** The emission of light resulting from something being smashed or, or / torn.

**LIZA.** You ass. It's MAGIC. A little electrical storm in your mouth.

**AUGUST.** But well YES. That's exactly what it is.

**DAPHNE.** Don't think me rude for saying this but I feel as though you should not be calling my husband a donkey. Thank you. Pardon me…

*(***DAPHNE** *begins cleaning up the dishes.)*

"Boning." This means to make love.

**AUGUST.** …yes.

**DAPHNE.** I was not certain.

*(***DAPHNE** *exits. A beat.)*

**AUGUST.** Well.

**LIZA.** Well.

*(small beat)*

**AUGUST.** Fucking Reagan –

**LIZA.** I KNOW! I mean he was way ahead in the polls this week, but I thought maybe, just maybe…. I mean not really but.

**AUGUST.** Were you in on any of that?

**LIZA.** I tried, man. We were going door to door right up until I got on the plane.

**AUGUST.** Not for Carter?

**LIZA.** God no. Voter registration. I work for the ACLU. We focus on former convicts, the disenfranchised, et cetera.

**AUGUST.** *(impressed)* Pounding the pavement for / the people's rights…

**LIZA.** Well mostly I'm behind a desk in a tiny grey office drinking bad coffee and working for pennies. But yeah.

**AUGUST.** Where?

**LIZA.** Berkeley.

**AUGUST.** Still?

**LIZA.** Jealous?

**AUGUST.** I am. We had quite a little thing going, didn't we. Sweating into our Keds outside / the Safeway…

**LIZA.** The Safeway, yeah

**AUGUST.** …looting AV equipment from the student union…

**LIZA.** We kept at it after you left. Got pretty close. We were only about two hundred thousand signatures away from qualifying for the ballot to kick Reagan out of the governor's office…

**AUGUST.** Wow. That's –

**LIZA.** Fat lotta good it did.

**AUGUST.** Still. You tried.

*(small beat)*

**LIZA.** We fell apart two weeks later. We needed you man. Everyone wanted to know where you had gone. I told them Canada. Said you'd be back when the draft was over. I went looking, once…Mendecino, Humbolt, Crescent City even…

Not even a postcard.

*(beat)*

You gonna tell me what happened?

**AUGUST.** *(with difficulty)* Yeah, okay.

I was making this speech one day – it was a Thursday, that's when I had the morning shift at the Copymat – so I had this stack of stolen flyers, and I was screaming about how everyone should hurl their bodies onto

the gears of the machine, right…but for some reason I started getting panicky…then I was floating above myself, looking down at the throngs of kids…and suddenly it was like *I was* the machine…So I just, I fucking lost it. Grabbed the stack of flyers and chucked them at the crowd. Left town the next day.

*(beat)*

**LIZA.** I'm sorry.

**AUGUST.** You couldn't have done anything. Some people were meant for greatness. I'm not one of them.

*(A long beat.* **AUGUST** *drinks.)*

**LIZA.** *(trying)* But…you're doing something here, right? Something big? With your vineyard? Your wife said –

**AUGUST.** I'm trying…

**LIZA.** She said you're revolutionizing the wine industry.

**AUGUST.** I'm *trying*. I planted a rare varietal.

**LIZA.** What's that?

**AUGUST.** A derivation of a common regional grape called *mavrodaphne*. Traditionally it is a sweet communion wine, but I vinified a DRY *mavrodaphne*. This country has no wine trade, so if it takes off…well the economy here could use it…and we'd have a cheap decent bottle for the locals, so…

That's something. Right?

**LIZA.** Hell yeah. That's fucking amazing!

**AUGUST.** You think?

**LIZA.** Yeah! It's great, August. You – you have this – eating the world with your eyes kind of thing…

*(***DAPHNE** *emerges. She is dressed differently, more elegantly, but still appropriate, possibly in a flowered dress. She is now wearing make-up. She carries freshly cut flowers. They are odd and wild and beautiful.)*

**DAPHNE.** I feel better now. It is a superb weather today. This year's harvest will be extraordinary, with this orange sun and thickly spiced air…

**AUGUST.** Did Daphne show you the label? Show her, Kota…

*(***DAPHNE** *retrieves a print from her work area. She shows* **LIZA**.*)*

**DAPHNE.** It is not done…you see I need to fill in the details on the leaves. Also the wood grain on the barrels.

*(***LIZA** *examines the print.)*

**LIZA.** I like it.

**DAPHNE.** *Avgusto* does not.

**AUGUST.** I love it. It's just, it's a little. Stately, but.

**DAPHNE.** He wants it to have more whimsy and wickedness.

**AUGUST.** It's beautiful.

**LIZA.** Where's the, the thingie. The title.

**DAPHNE.** The name is secret. He will not tell even me. I think he does not have one.

**AUGUST.** Oh I have a name. It is top secret. I want to taste it first before I make it official.

**LIZA.** You haven't tasted it?

**AUGUST.** I'm superstitious. Two more days, Liza. I feel like a little kid. Will you still be here?

**LIZA.** Do you want me to be?

**AUGUST.** Of course, yes, I would very much like you to stay for it.

**LIZA.** Would you.

**AUGUST.** I…ha.

**LIZA.** Could you tell me where the bathroom is?

**AUGUST.** Through the kitchen and down the uh, the stairs.

**LIZA.** Thank you. Whoo. I'm a little. Tipsy, actually I might like to nap. I didn't sleep much on the. Boat, a baby kept crying…

**DAPHNE.** Of course. I will come down with a glass of water for you shortly.

**LIZA.** No need…

**DAPHNE.** Very well. Shall you have a legend when you come back?

**LIZA.** That's /okay

**DAPHNE.** Has she earned a legend, *Avgusto*?

**AUGUST.** *(playful)* Indeed. She's earned *two.*

**LIZA.** Swell. See you in a while.

**AUGUST.** Sleep well…

*(She exits.* **AUGUST** *and* **DAPHNE** *are tense around each other a moment.)*

**DAPHNE.** *Thelo na sou 'po, then nomizo oti prepi na ine 'tho / avrio yia toh –* *(Translation: "*I have to say, I don't think she should be here tomorrow for the –"*)*

**AUGUST.** English, Kota, I'm too tired to translate…

**DAPHNE.** Uurrg. I am weary of English. It is such a pointy language. Many corners and very little curves. I feel when I speak it I am walking around a small room with large pieces of sharp furniture.

**AUGUST.** It's good practice. You're out of practice.

**DAPHNE.** I also feel this way around your friend…

*(a beat)*

You told me she was dead.

**AUGUST.** I said she was *probably* dead.

**DAPHNE.** Why do you imagine she's here?

**AUGUST.** She's traveling…

**DAPHNE.** It is not usual.

**AUGUST.** She saw a posting. We're in that book, they all have the same guidebook.

**DAPHNE.** Will she be paying?

**AUGUST.** She's our guest, Daphne.

**DAPHNE.** She was not invited. We need the money. I cannot bear to go to my father again. Not after last time.

**AUGUST.** I'll ask her to leave. Would you like that?

**DAPHNE.** I do not think she should be here for the tasting.

**AUGUST.** Why not?

**DAPHNE.** It is an intimate moment. You do not know what to expect. It could be a triumph but also it could be a disappointment –

*(***LIZA** *reappears.)*

**LIZA.** Sorry. There's a girl in the bed.

**DAPHNE.** That is Boy. He is passed out. Just move him gently to one side.

**LIZA.** Oh. Okay.

*(***LIZA** *disappears. A beat.)*

**AUGUST.** I'll tell her we need the rooms. Or that you aren't up to entertaining. I'll think of something.

*(***DAPHNE** *begins scraping into her block in agitation.)*

She was never good around other women. Didn't have many girlfriends. Hid in corners, that sort of. People thought she was mental. Got into fights a lot, this thing she'd do…I thought it was funny at the time. She'd bring a, a pair of scissors to class and snip the hair of whoever sat in front of her.

**DAPHNE.** Oh. I like that.

**AUGUST.** You would have been the girl whose hair was snipped.

**DAPHNE.** Do not be ridiculous. I commanded respect at that age. I had many friends, even the ugly girls. They threw a party of me at fifteen. It was a surprise. I remember I had stolen a dress that day. Did I tell you about this?

**AUGUST.** No.

**DAPHNE.** I stole a designer dress from the department store. I could have bought it myself. I had the money…It was a very pretty dress. It had sparkle, you know? Those bits that catch the light. Not diamonds, the other word. But I didn't want it badly enough to pay. And it was my birthday. I thought if I got caught I would tell the men it is my birthday, and they would let me take it anyway. But I did not get caught. In the room where you try things on, I put on the dress, then I put on my longer dress over it, and then I walked home. And my heart was so light. And I arrived home and my house was full of my friends, all smiling and eating little foods on plates. And there was a pile of *cadeaux* in the corner,

eh, gifts. And I took off my long dress and beneath I was sparkling, and everyone shouted "ahhh!" and applauded. As if I could have known I had a party waiting for me. It was luck! I've always been lucky like that.

**AUGUST.** I bet you were beautiful.

**DAPHNE.** I could sparkle for you now, if you like. I will become a holiday. I will decorate myself with twinkle lights and sing a song about a man who buries his heart in the dirt and later eats the dirt to remember how the heart tasted.

I will behave myself around your *amour perdu*…

**AUGUST.** You're fine.

*(***DAPHNE** *begins to Greek dance a little, her arms out.* **AUGUST** *watches her.)*

**DAPHNE.** Look. Can you see them? My twinkle lights…

*(***DAPHNE** *turns on the radio from before. She dances for him. He claps along half-heartedly. She pulls* **AUGUST** *from his seat.)*

**AUGUST.** Too tired, *kota*…

**DAPHNE.** This will enervise you…

*(***AUGUST** *begins dancing.* **AUGUST***'s steps are clumsy.)*

Your Greek dancing is appalling.

**AUGUST.** I'm not Greek.

**DAPHNE.** Can you not get your back any straighter?

**AUGUST.** It doesn't go any straighter.

**DAPHNE.** Of course it does.

*(***AUGUST** *begins dancing absurdly.)*

**AUGUST.** *Opa!!*

**DAPHNE.** Don't say that. You sound like an American.

**AUGUST.** *Opa!! Opa!! Ella! Yia-sou!*

*(***AUGUST** *stops dancing.)*

**DAPHNE.** An insult to my people…

**AUGUST.** I'll take lessons…

**DAPHNE.** You are beyond correction…

**AUGUST.** Find me a teacher.

*(small beat)*

**DAPHNE.** *(melancholy, distant)* There are no men in the village who would teach a husband of mine.

**AUGUST.** Don't think about that right now…

*(***AUGUST** *draws* **DAPHNE** *into her. They slow-dance.)*

**DAPHNE.** My father had a friend, and old man…at every wedding he would dance for hours. His jumps were so high. Balloon, they used to call him. You could not stop him. Not even to feed him. He is dead now…

**AUGUST.** Did he dance himself to death?

**DAPHNE.** Yes.

*(***AUGUST** *stops dancing.)*

**AUGUST.** Are you trying to kill me, *kota?*

**DAPHNE.** Yes.

**AUGUST.** But you aren't a dangerous woman. You are a brown bean.

**DAPHNE.** Would you like me to be dangerous? I could be.

**AUGUST.** No…

**DAPHNE.** I have a little danger in me. A very little.

**AUGUST.** I know where your danger is.

*(He touches her belly, then below.)*

**DAPHNE.** Yes…

**AUGUST.** Filthy…filthy…

**DAPHNE.** *Ne…*

*(They begin kissing passionately.)*

*(Lights down. They continue kissing as…)*

*(A radio broadcast is heard. Music, scratchy, news from America, spoken with an English accent.)*

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