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*This play is dedicated with thanks to Eliza Anderson,
Betsy Carpenter, Kent Nicholson and Patrick Dooley.*

Cast of Characters

BARB, late forties. A nurse.

CARLA CARLA, early forties. A nurse. Best friends with Barb.

DONNA, mid thirties. Carla Carla's girlfriend. Works at the Twig RI Aquarium.

NICK, mid thirties. Spotty employment history.

THE SHARK, a mako shark in the Twig RI Aquarium.

BOB, Barb's husband.

Time and Place

The present. Twig Rhode Island.

Staging Notes

I would like to see *Swimming* performed on a long narrow horizontal stage. Perhaps five or seven feet deep. With two long benches. A runway along the back for the SHARK. A slide screen above it. Painted blue. The shark tank. Project the How To titles here. An alternative is to have the actors announce the titles. Either works for me. I'd avoid an elaborate set.

I like it when the Shark has a fin.

The action should be pressed flat. Like a screen. The actors' physical work should be vertical and horizontal rather than three-dimensionally horizontal. I like physical experimentation.

No blackouts except where noted.

Acknowledgments

The World Premiere of *Swimming in the Shallows* was produced by Coyote Theater/Theatrics! in May 1999 in Boston, and directed by Betsy Carpenter. The cast was as follows:

BARB..... Sophie Parker
BOB Gary Bisantz
DONNA..... Leslie Arnott
CARLA CARLA Lizza Reilly
NICK Daniel J. Kells
THE SHARK Nick Park

The West Coast Premiere was produced by Shotgun Players in San Francisco/Berkeley in September 1999, and directed by Kent Nicholson. The cast was as follows:

BARB..... Mary Eaton Fairfield
BOB Gene Thompson
DONNA.....Katie Bales
CARLA CARLA Dawn-Elin Fraser
NICK Liam Vincent
THE SHARK John Flanagan

The New York City Premiere was produced by Second Stage Theatre in June and July of 2005, and directed by Trip Cullman. The cast was as follows:

BARB..... Mary Shultz
BOB Murphy Guyer
DONNA.....Rosemarie DeWitt
CARLA CARLA Susan Pourfar
NICK Michael Arden
THE SHARK Logan Marshall-Green

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

New York City premiere by The Second Stage Theatre, New York, June 28, 2005. Carole Rothman, Artistic Director.

SWIMMING IN THE SHALLOWS

by Adam Bock

(BARB and CARLA CARLA are in nurses' uniforms. They are soaking their feet. They are on a break.)

BARB. Did you know there're Buddhist monks who only own eight things.

CARLA CARLA. Really?

BARB. From Thailand.

CARLA CARLA. Not including clothes.

BARB. No. Including clothes.

CARLA CARLA. What do they wear? A robe?

BARB. And sandals.

CARLA CARLA. The sandals count as one pair or two things?

BARB. I don't know two I guess I don't know.

CARLA CARLA. If I was the Buddhist monk and I only got to have eight things—I'd count'm as one pair.

BARB. And then they maybe have eyeglasses. Or a belt. Or an umbrella. Maybe a bag.

CARLA CARLA. Why would they have a bag?

BARB. So they can carry things.

CARLA CARLA. What? Your one other Buddhist monk thing?

BARB. So I thought I bet I've got eight pens right here in my purse. I looked. I had nine! Nine pens. What do I need nine pens for?

CARLA CARLA. I bet they borrow everything.

BARB. Who?

CARLA CARLA. Those monks.

BARB. I bet I have eight hundred probably eight thousand things just in my kitchen.

CARLA CARLA. I bet Thailand people say Oh hide the stuff here comes that Buddhist monk again. He's going to want to borrow something.

BARB. Forks knives spoons and glasses wine glasses milk glasses water glasses cocktail glasses and plates coffee cups I have coffee cups Carla Carla

CARLA CARLA. I know.

BARB. I don't even know how many coffee cups I have.

CARLA CARLA. I do. Alot.

BARB. I have. Alot.

CARLA CARLA. A Buddhist monk could borrow a coffee cup from you.

BARB. mixing bowls pots pans pie plates

CARLA CARLA. Yeah but sure everybody has all that stuff

BARB. cake pans can-opener bottle-opener garlic roaster toaster toaster-oven microwave-oven oven-oven dishwasher fridge my blender my waffle iron my mixer Bob's electric carving knife the cutting boards all my tupperware I've got tons of tupperware

CARLA CARLA. Everybody has tupperware Barb.

BARB. At Peggy's tupperware party I got forty-eight new pieces alone the other night forty-eight that's enough for six monks that's six Buddhist monks worth of tupperware at one shot in one night Carla Carla

CARLA CARLA. That's alot.

BARB. I read this and I got a very upset very unnerved feeling.

So I told Bob about it.

CARLA CARLA. What'd he say?

BARB. He said Lucky we don't live in Thailand. Lucky we live in Twig Rhode Island USA. I was gonna say No Bob that's all they want. But he was going (blah blah blah).

Same time I was looking around the room counting things. I passed two hundred I stopped. And we were only in the den. And I thought to myself Maybe I only want eight things.

I think maybe that was a very important moment. For me.

CARLA CARLA. Hmm.

(Pause. Gives BARB a gift.)

So anyway Happy Birthday.

BARB. Oh Carla Carla you shouldn't have.

CARLA CARLA. Yeah well.

BARB. Isn't this

CARLA CARLA. Oh just open it.

BARB. Thank you so much. Oh what is

CARLA CARLA. It's a cat bowl a bowl for your cat Barb.

BARB. Oh I love it it's cute she'll love it

CARLA CARLA. I know you already have one but I saw this one and I liked it and I wanted you to have it. Do you like it?

BARB. I do I like it.

CARLA CARLA. Cause I have the receipt. And I wouldn't mind.

BARB. Well

CARLA CARLA. You don't like it?

BARB. No I do.

CARLA CARLA. You want something else.

BARB. No I don't

CARLA CARLA. Here's the receipt. Since you don't like it.

BARB. No I have so much stuff I feel heavy. I love this bowl. I have so much stuff.

(Pause.)

CARLA CARLA. Nick has a new boyfriend.

BARB. Another one?

CARLA CARLA. Yup.

BARB. He keeping the old one too?

CARLA CARLA. I don't think so.

BARB. Oh I liked him. What was his name?

CARLA CARLA. Rick.

BARB. Rick? Was it Rick?

CARLA CARLA. Yeah Rick. Right?

BARB. It was Rick? Rick.

CARLA CARLA. Rick.

BARB. Jack.

CARLA CARLA. Right Jack. No it was Rick.

BARB. No it was Jim.

CARLA CARLA. Rick was before Jack?

BARB. Yeah it was Rick then Jack

CARLA CARLA. Then Jim.

BARB. Yeah.

CARLA CARLA. Rick Jack Jim.

BARB. Where does he find them?

CARLA CARLA. Outside. He walks outside he finds a new boyfriend. This one sells ballpark hotdogs. Nick went to a Pawsox game. Now he's in love. This new guy's name is Lance. You keeping the cat bowl? Cause if you don't want it I'll give it to Donna.

BARB. This Lance like him back?

CARLA CARLA. Look do you want it or not? I won't be upset.

BARB. You think Donna'd want it?

CARLA CARLA. Give it here. I swear I don't get you sometimes Barb.

BARB. Are you mad?

CARLA CARLA. No.

BARB. You seem mad.

CARLA CARLA. It's a birthday present.

BARB. Give it back.

CARLA CARLA. *(She doesn't.)*

This the beginning of another craze?

BARB. No.

CARLA CARLA. Because if it is I want fair warning.

BARB. Bob said the same thing.

CARLA CARLA. Because if this is the same as the needlework and the acupuncture and the running through the woods with the compass with the needle spinning and all of it being connected cause of the needles and how everywhere you look there are needles filled with meaning in barometers and porcupine needle art and the Seattle Space Needle I don't know if I can take it again or even if I want to.

BARB. If you're mad just be mad. Don't be nasty. Don't make fun of me.

CARLA CARLA. So I might be a little mad.

BARB. I feel heavy. Do you want our dishwasher?

CARLA CARLA. No.

BARB. I'm going to wash our dishes by hand.

CARLA CARLA. We don't want your dishwasher.

BARB. How about the microwave?

CARLA CARLA. The dishwasher and the microwave?

BARB. Either. Or. Both.

CARLA CARLA. Did you talk to Bob about this?

BARB. I have too much stuff. I feel heavy. I don't like it.

CARLA CARLA. So I went home and I said to Donna
Donna Barb is thinking of giving away all her stuff.

DONNA. What'd she give us?

CARLA CARLA. She wants to give us her dishwasher. And the microwave.

DONNA. Hey lucky us!

CARLA CARLA. I didn't say we'd take them.

DONNA. Take the dishwasher. But not the microwave. Leave it I don't trust them.

CARLA CARLA. Don't you think it's weird that she wants to give away all her stuff?

DONNA. Did you tell her?

CARLA CARLA. Tell her what?

DONNA. What we talked about last night?

CARLA CARLA. No.

DONNA. So did you think about it?

CARLA CARLA. Yeah.

DONNA. So what do you think?

CARLA CARLA. I don't know yet.

DONNA. Why didn't you talk to Barb about it?

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

DONNA. Are you going to talk to her about it?

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

DONNA. When are you going to know?

CARLA CARLA. She didn't want the catbowl.

DONNA. She didn't want the catbowl?

CARLA CARLA. She only wants eight things. In her whole life. You want it?

DONNA. No. Thanks.

CARLA CARLA. You want this?

NICK. What is it.

CARLA CARLA. It's a cat bowl a bowl for your cat. I got it for Barb. For her birthday.

NICK. So why you giving it to me?

CARLA CARLA. She didn't want it.

NICK. Oh cause of the Buddhists.

CARLA CARLA. She wants to give us their dishwasher.

NICK. She's giving you the dishwasher?

CARLA CARLA. I don't want their dishwasher.

NICK. I'll take it.

CARLA CARLA. She offered it to me.

NICK. Maybe since you don't want it I can have it.

CARLA CARLA. To me and Donna.

NICK. It's not fair. You guys get everything.

CARLA CARLA. Nobody seems to think it's weird she wants to give it away.

NICK. She feels heavy.

CARLA CARLA. So you don't want this either.

NICK. Hey guess what I met someone new yesterday.

CARLA CARLA. What about Lance?

NICK. Lance? Lance. Oh.

CARLA CARLA. Here you can sell this too.

BARB. (*BARB is carrying yard sale stuff from offstage left to offstage right.*)

Donna didn't want it?

CARLA CARLA. I don't want to talk about it.

Donna wants me to tell you yes to the dishwasher and she wants us to get married. Nick says yes definitely take the dishwasher and says maybe could he have the microwave if you want to give it away but only if you really want to give it away because he has a really nice friend who wants one but doesn't have any money and that he doesn't love Lance anymore but he met a really really cute guy at the Home Depot when he was recaulking his bathroom.

BARB. Bob doesn't want me to give away the dishwasher.

CARLA CARLA. Oh.

BARB. Bob suggested I should have this yard sale instead. See if maybe if I get rid of some stuff I'll feel better.

CARLA CARLA. This's a good idea.

BARB. I said Bob I don't think that's going to work but I figure What the heck can't hurt.

NICK. Barb. You've got some great stuff here.

BARB. Nick you take whatever you want.

NICK. How about the dishwasher?

CARLA CARLA. Bob has a problem with her giving away appliances. You're selling your Hummels?

BARB. If I only want eight things I'm not keeping my Hummels.

NICK. What're Hummels?

CARLA CARLA. These're Hummels. They're collectibles very difficult to find collectibles.

NICK. Is this Hummel Heidi?

CARLA CARLA. You're selling Heidi?

NICK. Look she's yodeling. On her little tiny Alp.

CARLA CARLA. It took so long to find her.

NICK. You don't want your yodeling Heidi?

BARB. No.

CARLA CARLA. Yodeling Heidi is one of the hardest Hummels to find.

NICK. You sure you want to sell this?

BARB. Look you keep her.

CARLA CARLA. Stop giving me things.

BARB. Nick you take yodeling Heidi.

NICK. I don't want her.

BARB. See? Nobody wants this stuff.

NICK. I know how collecting works. I start with little yodeling Heidi I end up with a whole bunch of you know special edition plates of the Pope the Pope in India the Pope in Brazil the Pope in Denver I'll take the dishwasher.

CARLA CARLA. Bob doesn't want her giving away the dishwasher.

BARB. *(Goes offstage.)*

Can I help you?

NICK. HEY THAT'S NOT FOR SALE! That's my bike!

CARLA CARLA. That your knapsack?

NICK. THAT'S NOT FOR SALE EITHER! NONE OF THAT'S FOR SALE! NONE OF THAT WHOLE PILE!

BARB. *(Enters.)*

People are weird.

CARLA CARLA. These are yardsale people Barb.

BARB. It says fifty cents on it so they come and ask me if they can have it for twenty-five. I say Sure! Then they look disappointed cause I say Sure! —maybe I'm too happy? They're thinking Oh I should've offered a dime!

NICK. My bike's worth more than fifteen bucks Barb.

BARB. Look at it. Donna wants to get married?

NICK. Donna wants you two to get married?

CARLA CARLA. Yeah.

NICK. You knew. How come she knew and I didn't know?

CARLA CARLA. I just told her.

NICK. When?

BARB. I'm throwing you a bridal shower.

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

BARB. You are going to get some beautiful things.

CARLA CARLA. Don't give me stuff from your house.

NICK. Like a real marriage? In a church?

CARLA CARLA. We didn't talk about that.

NICK. So?

CARLA CARLA. What?

NICK. So

CARLA CARLA. So what.

NICK. So I'm your best man? Right?

BARB. I don't think so. She's having a matron of honor.

NICK. Oh no she is not.

BARB. If I throw the bridal shower

NICK. Bridal showers are for sissies.

BARB. and since I have dibs on the bridal shower I get to be the matron

NICK. She's having a stag party.

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

NICK. Come on it'll be a blast. Girls popping out of cakes.

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

NICK. Girls popping out of lots of cakes.

CARLA CARLA. Girls huh.

NICK. And cake. You love cake.

CARLA CARLA. I don't know if I want to marry her.

BARB. Oh.

(Pause.)

NICK. Why not.

BARB. Nick.

NICK. Well why not?

CARLA CARLA. I don't know.

NICK. What do you mean I don't know. I mean you love her don't you Don't you love her

CARLA CARLA. I LOVE HER I JUST DON'T KNOW AND EVERY TIME I SAY I DON'T KNOW SOMEONE GIVES ME A FRIGGING HARD TIME AND ALL I KNOW IS I DON'T FRIGGING KNOW I DON'T KNOW I DON'T KNOW

NICK. OK OK OK OK!

BARB. Ok Carla Carla

NICK. Ok.

CARLA CARLA. *(To audience.)*

(Pause.)

I'm ambivalent about marriage.

(Pause.)

So. How'd the yardsale go?

BARB. We made a lot of money.

CARLA CARLA. That's good.

BARB. But everyone brought me stuff to sell.

CARLA CARLA. Yeah?

BARB. So they left anything that didn't sell So I counted and now I've got more than when I started. I'm taking it to the dump.

CARLA CARLA. Hey have another sale.

BARB. That's what Bob said too. I like the dump. You just dump it.

Bob. He's full of suggestions. Have a yardsale he says. Have another yardsale he says. For every new thing we get we get rid of two old things he says. So he took the yardsale money and bought a new Lazyboy and now I have to figure out what to get rid of.

CARLA CARLA. Is something wrong?

BARB. No I mean I think it's fine. I'm just not sure he gets it.

Here.

CARLA CARLA. What's this.

BARB. Catbowl. Didn't sell.

BARB. The dump.

(Music.)

(To audience.)

BARB. I packed the back of the Buick. Bob helped at first. But then he was taking things in as fast as I was bringing them out so I sent him over to the neighbor's kiddie pool to cool down and I got into the Buick and drove right to the dump halfway between Twig and Bristol.

I had a picture of the dump in my head. It was going to be a beautiful dump. With old dumped cars and old dumped stuff and old dumped fridges with no doors so the little drug kids can't get stuck

inside them and suffocate. Sort of orderly but chaotic. Like a big Sears jumble sale but bigger.

And as I drove I thought Maybe seagulls! Maybe rats. Probably trees probably a little river certainly mud broken glass cans. Maybe wild-flowers!

I got there.

It was a dump. It was a real dump.

I dumped my junk and left.

And as I drove away I thought

I thought this dumping was going to make me feel better and I'm not I'm feeling a sense of kind of despair. But now I think Maybe this is like water aerobics and it's going to hurt at first until I get used to it.

(Pause.)

I went to the dump.

CARLA CARLA. And?

BARB. I've got to stop for a while.

CARLA CARLA. Why?

BARB. Bob's angry. I dumped the National Geographics. He kind of hit the roof.

The Shark

(It is dark blue. In the aquarium.)

(The SHARK is swimming.)

THE SHARK. swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim

How to Quit Smoking

DONNA. Is it because I smoke?

NICK. I don't know.

DONNA. Did she mention smoking?

NICK. I don't think so.

DONNA. It's so stupid. She won't marry me because I smoke.

NICK. Maybe it's not the smoking.

DONNA. It's not like I smoke alot.

NICK. Oh yeah Donna.

DONNA. I don't.

NICK. You do.

DONNA. I don't.

NICK. So quit then.

DONNA. Yeah right I don't want to.

NICK. Since you don't smoke alot.

DONNA. I like smoking.

NICK. Want to get married? Stop.

DONNA. You stop.

NICK. Stop what?

DONNA. Picking up guys.

NICK. Why would I do that?

DONNA. You want to get married too right.

NICK. I don't know. Marriage. It's kind of a commitment.

DONNA. You want a relationship.

NICK. Yeah.

DONNA. Longer than three weeks.

NICK. Yeah.

DONNA. You want to see his apartment.

NICK. I've seen their apartments.

DONNA. During the day. Maybe find out his last name.

NICK. Aw Donna come on. I don't do that

DONNA. All you guys do it.

NICK. Not always.

DONNA. You Frankie George Peter Alex you all come to me saying
Oh I'm in love

NICK. I never say that.

DONNA. You always say that. I'm in love with fill in the name
He's really supercute He's supernice

NICK. I would never say supernice.

DONNA. I just met him last night

NICK. I would never use that word. Supernice. It's queer.

DONNA. We talked

NICK. Yeah yeah.

DONNA. and talked and talked

NICK. Yeah yeah yeah.

DONNA. We had fun We had sex He didn't call.

NICK. Frankie George Peter and Alex maybe do that.

DONNA. But not you.

NICK. My boys call me back.

DONNA. So what happened to Lance?

NICK. Which Lance?

DONNA. Uh huh.

NICK. Last week Lance? I saw Lance's apartment. During the day.

DONNA. Lance have a last name?

NICK. He wasn't a boyfriend he was a fling.

DONNA. A fling.

NICK. What's wrong with flings? You flung every woman in Rhode Island. Cecily Sunshine Nancy Rose Marcy Venus Shosanna Solstice

DONNA. Nick.

NICK. Tonya Sonya Linda Lyn Lynny Jolynn

DONNA. I just think it'd be nice if me and Carla Carla were married and you and whoever with a last name were married and we could go camping. All four of us.

NICK. I'm not going camping.

DONNA. And in order for that to happen clearly I have to quit smoking and you have to go out with someone for more than three weeks.

NICK. If I have a relationship I have to go camping?

DONNA. You get to go camping.

NICK. I don't like camping.

DONNA. Camping's great.

NICK. I hate camping.

DONNA. I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to quit smoking. And I'm finding you a boyfriend.

NICK. I can find my own boyfriends.

DONNA. Carla Carla will marry me. I'm going to be so irritable.

NICK. Later that week.

DONNA. Ok. I asked everyone I know How to quit smoking and here's the list. Hypnosis. Smokenders. The patch the gum. Tried'm tried'm. Willpower ha. Eat carrots because if you don't you'll blow

up like a whale. That's from Sandy who's kinda (*"Chubby" gesture:*) but at least she doesn't smoke. Read up about lung cancer. Thank you. Pray to Jesus. Exercise. Put Carla Carla's picture on the cigarette pack with a rubber band. Just keep saying I'm going to quit smoking!

So.

Today I'm going to a hypnotherapist.

Here's David's number. He's cute single meeting you tonight seven PM at Twig Beach watch the sunset Ok?

I'm going to quit smoking!

NICK. Tuesday.

DONNA. The hypnotherapist. What a creep. Doctor William White.

NICK. Oh.

DONNA. Call me Bill.

NICK. Oh.

DONNA. You're getting sleepy.

NICK. Ew.

DONNA. He put his hand on my arm. Alot. I don't think so. I got home. Smoked my brains out.

How'd it go with David?

NICK. Good.

DONNA. You slept with him. You weren't supposed to sleep with him. It was a date.

NICK. I'm not dating him. He kissed me and then he went

(Makes gun hand/wink/clicking gesture. Makes gesture again.)

DONNA. Oh.

Ok so tonight I go to my Stop Smoking Breathfree class. Here's Jason's address. You pick him up at eight. Coffee Exchange.

I'm going to quit smoking!

NICK. Wednesday.

DONNA. My class. Excellent. Ok so we were all smokers mostly still smoking and some of us were a little irritable even though we're still smoking but our instructor Janice says That is very normal and me and this guy Marty I met sat in the back of the room and laughed and then had a quick cig together in the bathroom. Class number two tonight.

Jason?

NICK. Artist. Cute artist.

DONNA. You didn't.

NICK. Cute cute artist.

DONNA. We had a deal.

NICK. I had to. He's working on not blocking his impulses.

DONNA. Nick!

NICK. He's calling me.

DONNA. He is?

NICK. I had such a great time. We talked for like three hours about his family and my family and all that stuff and how we came out and how it hurt and he got so quiet and what he wants to do as an artist and art and then more about art and just on and on about. Everything. This was different. This was something it felt. New for me. We're going out again. Tonight.

DONNA. Pretty successful night last night for us!

NICK. I really like him. I really.

DONNA. I'm going to quit smoking!

NICK. Thursday.

DONNA. Stop Smoking Breathfree class was FUN last night. Sondra she's French from France well She Cracked and She Smoked. In class. Janice had to ask her to leave. Me and Marty met her in the women's room and she was crying and we were going oh oh oh and then we each had one of her French cigarettes from

France and just sat together quietly smoking. It was very spiritual which is something Janice is talking about all the time so all in all I think it was a very good night. How'd it go with Jason.

NICK. We didn't get to go out.

DONNA. You going out tonight instead?

NICK. Maybe.

DONNA. He call?

NICK. No.

DONNA. Probably busy. Ok. Stop Smoking Breathfree for me tonight Call from Jason for you. I'm going to quit smoking!

NICK. Friday.

DONNA. Janice split me and Marty up and she won't let us go to the bathroom together anymore. I hate her.

Jason call?

NICK. No.

Saturday.

DONNA. That guy call?

NICK. No.

DONNA. Ok so Marty's not smoking anymore. Janice told him smoking screws up the capillaries in your dick. You can't get enough blood in the right place. It's a leading cause of impotence. Marty gets very quiet and suddenly he doesn't need to go to the bathroom. I asked Janice if the same thing was happening to my clitoris but she changed the subject. I smoke alone in the bathroom now which is no fun.

I brought you Marty's number.

NICK. No thanks.

DONNA. He's a chiropractor.

NICK. I want to see Jason again.

DONNA. Don't you get it?

NICK. What?

DONNA. Jason's not calling you.

NICK. Yeah he is.

DONNA. He said he'd call Wednesday.

NICK. So.

DONNA. It's Saturday.

NICK. Yeah well you're still smoking!

DONNA. Yeah so?

NICK. Yeah so maybe you don't know everything!

DONNA. Right this is the one who's going to call.

NICK. Maybe!

DONNA. Like any of the others did.

NICK. Maybe.

DONNA. He's not calling and the next one you sleep with too fast with isn't going to call and neither will the one after that and you won't ever get married.

NICK. Yeah well you can cover your whole body with one big nicotine patch and you'll still smoke and you'll never get married either! And besides you don't have to get married to go camping! You just have to get a stinky old tent and a couple of stinky old sleeping bags that who knows who slept in last wearing who knows what and a crappy old bunsen burner and tin plate thing and that crappy food and some toilet paper and dump the whole crappy kit and caboodle near some stinky old swamp and suffer!

DONNA. Well you don't have to go camping!

NICK. Well I'm not going to go camping!

(Pause.)

DONNA. I'm going to have a cigarette out on the porch. Want to come?

NICK. Sure.

Sunday.

You're going to church?

DONNA. It's nondenominational. Unitarians. They barely believe in God.

NICK. Going to pray huh.

DONNA. No. I'm checking out the hall. For the commitment ceremony.

NICK. I'm not dating anymore.

DONNA. Didn't call huh.

NICK. Alex saw him with another guy last night.

DONNA. Lots of cute boys go to church.

NICK. Yeah?

DONNA. A whole section of them sit upstairs and look at each other the whole time. Coming?

NICK. Let me get my coat.

DONNA. I'm going to quit smoking!

CARLA CARLA. She's cheating.

BARB. She is?

CARLA CARLA. She's sneaking. She's cheating she's sneaking she's lying and she's smoking.

BARB. Oh!

CARLA CARLA. Why would I want to marry a liar a cheat a sneak?

BARB. What makes you think she's cheating?

CARLA CARLA. Oh I know. I know. Officially she has only one pack of cigarettes Marlboro Lights with a photo of me and a cut out gown from Bride magazine glued on top of me this whole little bridal dream-collage rubber-banded to her pack of cigarettes. I'm not sure how I feel about that but she's quitting her disgusting filthy habit so ok fine I ignore it.

BARB. That's a very cute that's a cute idea.

CARLA CARLA. Every night she comes home and she says Oh Carla look I only smoked two today Oh Carla look I only smoked one today and she shows me and I say Honey! and I kiss her congratulations.

BARB. She's down to two a day?

CARLA CARLA. But

BARB. But that's good that's very good!

CARLA CARLA. BUT yesterday she's in the shower and I look on her dresser and she has three packs of matches going. Two of them are almost empty.

BARB. So?

CARLA CARLA. They were full two days ago!

BARB. Oh!

CARLA CARLA. AND we today we went to lunch at Downcity Diner and the host Tom looked at her and said Smoking section again today for you?

BARB. Oh!

CARLA CARLA. AND today she comes home what do I smell?

BARB. What?

CARLA CARLA. Menthol!

BARB. No!

CARLA CARLA. Yes! Menthol!

BARB. Oh!

CARLA CARLA. BUT I don't know where she's getting them. The house is clean I checked all her hiding spots. I checked her purse. I checked her car. I checked her locker at work.

BARB. Carla Carla!

CARLA CARLA. I'm not marrying a sneaky lying cheater.

BARB. Still.

CARLA CARLA. Someone is sneaking her cigarettes.

BARB. Oh!

CARLA CARLA. She has a sneaky partner.

BARB. Who?

CARLA CARLA. And I am going to catch them.

The Shark 2.

(DONNA is leading an aquarium tour.)

DONNA. We're real proud of this fella here at the Twig Rhode Island Aquarium. This is *Isurus oxyrinchus Rafinesque 1810*. The mako shark. This fella's known to jump fifteen twenty feet in the air when he's hooked. In order to jump that high he'd have to be swimming 22 mph through the water. That's fast. You're looking at what is probably the most graceful most beautifully proportioned fastest meanest-looking animal on earth. The word mako is Maori

NICK! Over here.

(NICK enters.)

DONNA. HI Will you all excuse me for one moment You got them?

(NICK gives her the cigarettes.)

DONNA. They need me in the office Huh! You'll all have to excuse me for just another short moment Talk'm through this part of the tour ok Nick The word mako is Maori etc etc etc I'll be right back

(DONNA exits.)

NICK. Um Donna? Um

(Pause.)

Well Um Huh

This is a shark. Um. A mako. Um. The word mako is Maori from New Zealand although we don't know what it means. These big guys are Um big and Oh Um scary and really Um Something huh?

THE SHARK. swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim swim

DONNA. Well. Well well well Ok let's move on Thanks Nick. To the jellyfish exhibit on your left.

NICK. Donna!

DONNA. Yeah?

NICK. Carla Carla knows.

DONNA. How?

NICK. The matches.

DONNA. Rats!

NICK. And Barb said Carla Carla said she smelled menthol.

DONNA. Rats!

NICK. I'm not bringing you any more.

DONNA. Nick! Come on.

NICK. She'll catch us and then I'm going to get it.

DONNA. I'll use a lighter!

NICK. Nope.

DONNA. I won't touch another menthol anything.

NICK. I can't.

DONNA. I promise!

NICK. NO.

DONNA. Great friend you are.

NICK. Oh yeah great friend you are too. She'll go ballistic on me. Not you.

DONNA. She's not going to catch us.

NICK. Barb isn't bringing you any more either.

DONNA. Oh great.

NICK. She thinks we're helping you not stop.

DONNA. You're both abandoning me?

NICK. We want you to get married.

DONNA. I have abandonment issues. You both know that!

NICK. You have smoking issues.

DONNA. *(To tour.)*

I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MINUTE!

NICK. Don't be mad. Huh?

DONNA. Thanks.

NICK. That's a cool shark huh.

DONNA. Thanks a lot. Great.

How to Cook a Rabbit.

(BARB is showing CARLA CARLA her empty room.)

BARB. What do you think?

CARLA CARLA. Where is everything?

BARB. Isn't it beautiful?

CARLA CARLA. It's an empty room Barb.

BARB. Exactly!

CARLA CARLA. Where's your sewing machine?

BARB. Salvation Army.

CARLA CARLA. You gave it to the Salvation Army?

BARB. Yeah.

See the cushion that's where I sit and I put a candle here or a flower.

CARLA CARLA. Did you give them all your sewing stuff?

BARB. They know me down there now. They say Hey here comes Barb! Then I hear Hey Barb! Hey Barb! Hey Barb! and I say Hey Joe Hey Pablo Hey Randy except when one of them's gotten drunk the night before and then I say Where's Randy or Joe or whoever? and they go He got drunk This is the new guy Larry Hey Larry this is Barb.

CARLA CARLA. You give them your rocking chair?

BARB. Bob Jr. wanted it so I gave it to him. You know how to cook a rabbit?

CARLA CARLA. A rabbit.

BARB. Hm?

CARLA CARLA. Where'd you get a rabbit?

BARB. Bob got it.

CARLA CARLA. Where'd Bob get rabbit?

BARB. He went hunting.

CARLA CARLA. Bob shot it?

BARB. He hit it with the car. On the highway. On his way home from hunting.

CARLA CARLA. He hit it?

BARB. He says he swerved to hit it so it counts. It's his trophy rabbit. He wants me to cook it. I'm not cooking it.

CARLA CARLA. What a jerk. I can't believe he hit a rabbit.

BARB. He just brought it home and said Barb will you get a load of this!

And I look and he's standing there Bob with his new hunting hat and pants and hunting boots and bag and gun.

He bought the whole outfit for this one hunting trip Carla Carla.

CARLA CARLA. He has the rabbit just

BARB. He's got a whole another outfit for when we ride our bikes!

CARLA CARLA. So?

BARB. And one for jogging!

CARLA CARLA. I think you're being kind of hard on him.

BARB. I don't want to cook the rabbit. I'd have to skin it.

CARLA CARLA. Loads of people have lots of clothes.

You have a new way of seeing things now right. But Bob doesn't get it. You want him to get it. But he doesn't.

BARB. We have three TVs.

CARLA CARLA. So?

BARB. Since Bob Junior moved to Boston there are only the two of us at home and we have three TVs. I told Bob that.

CARLA CARLA. He doesn't get it.

BARB. What could be more simple. Three TVs two people.

He thinks I miss Bob Junior. Which I do. That's not the point. I got this room cleared. He wanted to fill it. He drags me to the Big Boys store. Let's buy in bulk and stuff that we don't need now But Barb we might need it it's on sale and

I was crying

In the aisle I was

I couldn't stand it. He didn't even notice.

CARLA CARLA. That's well That's just Bob.

Bob's always been like that.

And you two always used to shop at Big Boys.

BARB. I don't want to anymore.

CARLA CARLA. You sure you're making the
I mean You're changing alot.

BARB. I don't know how to explain it I just
I feel lighter.

CARLA CARLA. Cause sometimes I get worried too. But if it's
working Maybe I shouldn't worry.

BARB. I'm feeling much much better.

CARLA CARLA. You look better. It's just scary to see someone
change so

BARB. I like how I feel.

CARLA CARLA. As long as you feel ok.

BARB. I do.

CARLA CARLA. You do.

BARB. I do.

CARLA CARLA. Ok.

BARB. I'm in here. Cushion candle shoes dress sweater underwear
bra eight things. In this room I only own eight things Carla Carla.
And suddenly a lot of things seem possible.

How to Fall in Love

NICK. I'm in love.

BARB. Yeah yeah.

NICK. No I am.

BARB. How long's it been?

NICK. Three days.

BARB. You're not in love. You're infatuated. It goes You're infatu-
ated You are getting to know someone You're spending a lot of

time together You have someone special then after six months to a year or so you might feel the first stirrings of love.

NICK. I'm in love.

BARB. Where'd you meet him?

NICK. The aquarium.

BARB. He works with Donna?

NICK. Not exactly.

BARB. What's his name?

NICK. I don't know.

BARB. Oh you're definitely not in love then You haven't met him. That's a crush. That's even before infatuation.

NICK. I'm in love.

DONNA. Great.

NICK. Yeah.

DONNA. I'm in love too.

NICK. Great huh?

DONNA. Yeah.

NICK. I'm in love.

CARLA CARLA. She's cheating isn't she.

NICK. What?

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

NICK. Why?

CARLA CARLA. Don't play stupid.

NICK. I don't think she's been

CARLA CARLA. She's been sneaking.

NICK. I don't think she's

CARLA CARLA. She's been smoking.

NICK. I

CARLA CARLA. Alot.

NICK. I don't

CARLA CARLA. You've been helping her.

NICK. Oh.

CARLA CARLA. Are you all right?

NICK. Oh.

CARLA CARLA. You look sick.

NICK. I feel a little sick.

CARLA CARLA. Have you been eating?

NICK. I haven't been eating. I'm in love.

CARLA CARLA. HOW COULD YOU HELP HER SMOKE!

NICK. She asked me.

CARLA CARLA. SHE ASKED ME. SHE ASKED ME.

NICK. Don't go off on me. DON'T you go off on me.

CARLA CARLA. Why shouldn't I?

NICK. Because I'm not your girlfriend.

(Pause.)

CARLA CARLA. I'm going to go off on both of you.

(Pause.)

She's lying.

(Pause.)

NICK. She's scared you won't marry her.

CARLA CARLA. She should be. Lying.

NICK. She's scared.

(Pause.)

Kind of hard. Ask someone to marry you. They say Maybe Except you do this one thing I don't like.

(Pause.)

CARLA CARLA. You saying I should?

NICK. Marry her? You want to?

CARLA CARLA. I do I don't. What if the smoking's telling me more about her than just smoking?

NICK. Like what?

CARLA CARLA. Maybe she doesn't like herself so much.

NICK. Maybe.

CARLA CARLA. Well there you are.

NICK. Maybe that's not so important.

CARLA CARLA. It is.

NICK. Maybe it's taking her time to learn how to.

CARLA CARLA. Maybe.

NICK. She's trying to stop.

CARLA CARLA. But she hasn't has she.

NICK. Look at Barb though. Right? She's trying to do something new and she's asking Bob for help and he buys a Lazyboy.

CARLA CARLA. Yeah but.

NICK. At least Donna's listening to you.

CARLA CARLA. Yeah but.

NICK. I remember when you and Donna first started following each other around.

You were God you were Nick Donna said this

CARLA CARLA. Ok

NICK. and Nick Donna does

CARLA CARLA. Ok

NICK. that and Oh Donna Donna Nick Donna Donna and

CARLA CARLA. Ok ok

NICK. laughing and Nick how wild it is to be in love and I've been waiting I've been waiting so long

CARLA CARLA. Yeah yeah yeah.

NICK. And I'm so lucky I'm so lucky and

CARLA CARLA. Ok.

NICK. Yeah and I think maybe you're forgetting it's hard to find love.

CARLA CARLA. I'm not forgetting that.

NICK. It's not so easy.

CARLA CARLA. You're always in love.

NICK. How many times they been in love with me?

CARLA CARLA. Huh.

NICK. Yeah huh. They ever stay in love with me?

CARLA CARLA. So I went home and I said to Donna
Donna I'm thinking I might say yes to you.

DONNA. What

CARLA CARLA. I think we should.

DONNA. OH!

I'm still smoking.

CARLA CARLA. I know.

DONNA. More than I've been telling you though.

CARLA CARLA. I know.

DONNA. I know you were spying on me.

(Pause.)

I want to quit.

CARLA CARLA. I know you will.

NICK. I'm in love.

CARLA CARLA. I said yes.

DONNA. We're getting married!

BARB. I'm moving out of our house.

ALL. Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh.

CARLA CARLA. Why?

BARB. Bob bought me a car.

DONNA & NICK & CARLA CARLA. Huh.

(Pause.)

NICK. So?

BARB. He won't stop buying me things.

(Pause.)

So I'm leaving him.

CARLA CARLA. You sure?

BARB. Hm.

CARLA CARLA. You thought it over?

BARB. Hm.

CARLA CARLA. What'd Bob say?

NICK. Bob.

DONNA. Bob.

Bob

(Overhead is projected "Bob". Or BOB carries a sign saying Bob.)

(BOB enters. BOB stands.)

(BOB exits.)

BARB. Bob

Well Bob's not too happy.

BOB. *(BOB is offstage.)*

THAT'S RIGHT I'M NOT TOO HAPPY.

BARB. He thinks I'm ungrateful.

BOB. THAT'S RIGHT BARB!

BARB. and selfish

BOB. UH HUH!

BARB. and stubborn

BOB. UH HUH!

BARB. and maybe crazy.

BOB. BRAND NEW BUICK PARK AVENUE. DUAL AIRBAGS. ANTI-LOCK BRAKES. 3.8 LITER V-6 SFI ENGINE. AIR CONDITIONING-ELECTRONIC CLIMATE CONTROL. POWER ANTENNA. KEYS IN THE IGNITION BARB!

BARB. I DON'T WANT A NEW CAR BOB!

(BOB enters.)

BOB. It's a Buick Barb!

BARB. I didn't ask for it. You didn't ask me. I don't want it.

BOB. Well I bought it Barb.

BARB. Well bring it back Bob.

BOB. What's bought is bought Barb.

BARB. Where's my Buick Bob?

BOB. This is a Buick Barb a brand new Buick.

BARB. Where's my old Buick Bob.

BOB. I traded it in.

BARB. You traded it in for that? BOB!

BOB. Come on honey.

BARB. Don't come on honey me Bob.

BOB. I can't believe you're getting all bent out of shape over a new car Barb.

(BOB exits.)

DONNA. Sounds like a nice car.

NICK. Yeah.

BARB. Aren't you even listening to me? At all? Isn't anyone?

CARLA CARLA. Seems like you're over-reacting. A little.

BARB. I don't want a new car. I didn't want my old one.

CARLA CARLA. How'd you get to work?

BARB. Bus bike walk get a ride carpool. I have a car. I have to put gas in it. I have to clean it. I have to wash it. I have to get the oil changed. I have to get it tuned up. I have to get new tires. I have to get it fixed. I have to register it. I have to insure it. I have to have a license. I have to pay for tolls. I have to pay for parking. I have to pay for meters. I have to pay for tickets. I have a job partly to pay for the car. So I can save time driving to work. But have you ever thought Maybe the time I save with the car is less than the time I have to work to pay for the car? This is what is spinning around all day every day in my head. I have more and more stuff every day and every day more and more stuff has me. And all I want to do is stop and be quiet and see whether I want it.

(Pause.)

NICK. I'm in love with a shark.

(The SHARK crosses the stage.)

CARLA CARLA. You are?

BARB. You are?

DONNA. Naw.

CARLA CARLA. You're in love with a shark.

NICK. Um hum.

CARLA CARLA. A shark.

DONNA. Naw.

BARB. A shark?

CARLA CARLA. Any particular shark or just any shark?

NICK. Not just any shark. The mako shark You know Donna the shark at the aquarium.

DONNA. My shark.

NICK. You know.

DONNA. He's in love with my shark.

CARLA CARLA. You know the shark?

DONNA. Well not well.

CARLA CARLA. Is it cute?

DONNA. Well

NICK. Well what?

DONNA. I don't know.

BARB. Is it?

DONNA. It's a shark.

NICK. It's the shark I'm in love with.

BARB. You're not in love with that shark.

NICK. I am too.

BARB. You have a crush on it.

CARLA CARLA. This shark you love have a name?

BARB. He hasn't met it yet. He hasn't met it yet it's just a crush. It goes crush THEN infatuation THEN like. Love takes time.

CARLA CARLA. Why haven't you met?

NICK. I'm shy.

BARB. You're shy?

CARLA CARLA. Since when are you shy?

NICK. Since now I guess.

CARLA CARLA. Get Donna to introduce you.

DONNA. I can't.

CARLA CARLA. Why not?

DONNA. I barely know him.

NICK. Barely is better than nothing.

BARB. The shark doesn't know you're alive?

NICK. No.

BARB. Then it's a onesided crush.

DONNA. This isn't good.

NICK. What's not good.

DONNA. You make me introduce you and you go out fall in love then break up and then you don't want to ever come by and see me at work any more because you're afraid you'll bump into the shark.

BARB. They're divorced. She's divorcing them already. He hasn't met the shark yet. They're still in the CRUSH stage. Divorce comes way after LOVE.

DONNA. I don't want him to get hurt.

CARLA CARLA. Him him or the shark him?

BARB. Nick's boyfriends do end up hurt.

NICK. Hey!

BARB. Well they do don't they?

CARLA CARLA. You've said it yourself.

NICK. Hey!

BARB. Is the shark sensitive?

DONNA. I don't know.

BARB. Cause if it is maybe you should warn him about Nick.

NICK. Hey!

CARLA CARLA. Maybe the shark's a shark.

NICK. Can't anyone be happy for me?

(Pause.)

DONNA. It's a nice looking shark.

CARLA CARLA. Nice looking cute or nice looking nice?

DONNA. Both.

CARLA CARLA. There you go.

BARB. I'm sure you'll be really happy.

CARLA CARLA. Course he's going to be happy.

BARB. Once you meet it.

CARLA CARLA. You are planning on meeting the shark I guess huh?

BARB. Or maybe it'll be love from afar?

CARLA CARLA. Love from afar with a shark might be good.

BARB. Love from afar is romantic.

DONNA. This isn't good.

NICK. Why not?

DONNA. You're never going to meet It's going to be love from afar and you are going to slowly pine away saying If only I'd met the shark If only I'd met the shark.

NICK. I'm going to meet the shark. You're going to introduce us.

DONNA. I am?

NICK. You'd do that for me.

DONNA. I barely know him. Oh ok I will I will.

NICK. Good.

The next week was a whoosh of preparation.

Carla Carla and Donna planning their commitment ceremony

DONNA. Purple.

CARLA CARLA. Purple?

DONNA. Definitely purple.

CARLA CARLA. Ok fine. Purple.

(Pause.)

I don't like purple. How about green?

DONNA. No.

CARLA CARLA. I like green.

NICK. Barb wanting to tell Bob she's moving out.

BARB. Bob

(Long pause.)

NICK. Me thinking about the shark shark shark shark shark shark
shark shark shark shark shark

It was exhausting.

ALL. I'm going to take a nap.

(CARLA CARLA DONNA and NICK exit.)

3 Dream Sequences

(Dream # 1)

BARB. My dream sequence.

I dream:

I'm in the cereal aisle at the Twig Super Stop N Buy looking for Quaker Oats. Bob laughs at me because I'm intimidated by the cereal aisle. Barb it's cereal he says. People aren't scared of cereal Barb he says. People love cereal. It's part of a balanced breakfast. Here I am in my dream I'm surrounded by cereal. I don't know where Bob is. Normally I go to the dairy section cheese butter milk and Bob buys the cereal. But here I am boxes and boxes of cereal. Cereal and cereal and cereal. A whole long long aisle of cereal. Bran Flakes. Bran Flakes and Raisin Bran. And Bran Raisin Flake Nuts and Honey Nuts and Bran. And Honey Nut Raisin Fruit Bran. With Nuts. Without Nuts. With Nuts and Fruit. And Nuts. Fruit Nut Raisin Flake Nut Flake Raisin Raisin Flake Nut Honey Nut Stuff with BRAN BRAN

and I think Barb.

Leave the shopping cart!

Walk. Out.

Just get to the car! Drive away!

I think Tomorrow I'll eat toast.

Now in my dream I'm in the car and I'm driving.

And now I'm in a parking lot.

And now I'm in an alleyway. There's a door and I open it. And I walk down steps and through a door and into a room. With a brown red floor and a circle of chairs. And people in the chairs. They're sitting. One person is talking quietly and no one. Is buying. Anything.

I sit down.

I don't see Bob anywhere.

(Dream #2)

(CARLA CARLA and DONNA cross the stage. The Wedding March. Slightly sped up. They are wearing white t-shirts. Blue jeans. Big black belts. Construction boots. And wedding veils, that are starched to look windblown back. They are running in slow motion. CARLA CARLA is hopping. Trying to put on one of her boots. They are late.)

(Dream #3)

(Music. Something with a upbeat. Club music.)

(The SHARK is dancing.)

(NICK enters. He is wearing a bathing suit. A life jacket and goggles. Or waterwings.)

(The SHARK and NICK swim/dance. Underwater courtship dance. Flirt. Make love. Should be a subtle and slow shift from funny to sexy. Wet. The lifejacket the goggles come off. Perhaps projections of National Geographic shark closeups. Blood in water. Shark attack. Not dancey. More muscular. Water eddying. Swirls. Music slows.)

(Lights fade.)

(To black.)

BOB. BARB!

(Lights up.)

BARB. Hm Bob?

BOB. Where are the keys to the lawnmower?

BARB. Bob?

BOB. You seen them?

BARB. I'm thinking of getting an apartment.

BOB. What?

BARB. An apartment.

BOB. Why?

BARB. To live in.

BOB. Why would you want to do that?

BARB. I want to live alone for a while.

BOB. Hm.

BARB. For a while. To

I'm not so happy.

(Pause.)

I don't like having

(Pause.)

I'm not so happy.

BOB. You seen the keys?

BARB. No I haven't I

I think I've found one.

(Pause.)

An apartment. Downtown.

BOB. You've already found one.

BARB. It's small.

BOB. What do you want an apartment for? We've got everything here Barb.

BARB. Well that's exactly

I don't want all this

BOB. Don't start with all that Reader's Digest stuff.

BARB. What

BOB. Is that what all this is about I'm not even listening cause I am sick of that stuff.

BARB. I'll pay for it myself.

BOB. *(Smiles.)*

BARB. I figured it out My job'll be enough for the rent and

BOB. You signed a lease?

BARB. I like it. It's small.

BOB. You didn't ask me You just signed it?

BARB. I didn't know I'd have to ask you.

BOB. Is this about the car?

BARB. It's more

BOB. Cause the car's just a car Barb.

BARB. This isn't just

It didn't just happen. Partly the car. Other things.

I wanted to talk to you about it.

BOB. Why didn't you?

BARB. I am. Right now.

BOB. This isn't talking.

BARB. I've been trying all along to

BOB. Talking is Bob I'm unhappy. Oh no Barb what's the matter? What can I do? Not Bob I'm thinking of leaving you. And if it is then I say if we're talking No Barb really Don't. And you say Why not? Cause we're married I don't want you to. And then you don't. Or on and on from there. That's talking. I get to say something.

BARB. Um

BOB. Aw HELL Barb.

BARB. Bob

BOB. This is BAD Barb. This is BAD This is lousy It's BAD.

BARB. I wanted to talk to you.

BOB. Yeah right you did. The HELL you did So why didn't you

BARB. Not only you talk to me.

BOB. WHAT.

BARB. Um

BOB. Ok. Talk.

BARB. Um.

(Pause.)

It's the stuff.

BOB. Not that. Barb.

BARB. But Bob

BOB. Not that.

BARB. But that's it.

BOB. Barb. Not that.

BARB. It is. So if you want me to talk

BOB. Talking isn't you deciding everything either.

BARB. No I haven't

BOB. You already have an apartment.

BARB. Don't get upset.

BOB. Don't go then.

BARB. No I have to

I have

I have to

Hmm.

BOB. Wait a while. We keep the apartment. We talk. Barb. We can talk about giving back the new car getting your old car back.

BARB. Bob.

BOB. I don't want you to. We'll talk about this later.

BARB. No.

I guess I didn't want to talk to you. I just wanted to tell you.

How to Get a Man

(DONNA and NICK go to the aquarium.)

NICK. Act casual.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Like I just happened to drop by.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Coincidentally.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Like Oh Hey Look who's here!

DONNA. What a coincidence.

NICK. Right!

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Or Hey How've you been Nick!

DONNA. Nick.

NICK. Only don't call me Nick in front of him.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Ok? Call me Nicholas. Not Nick ok.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Cause Nick sounds unsophisticated.

DONNA. Ok.

NICK. Ok?

DONNA. Ok.

Um. This is my friend Nicholas.

THE SHARK. swim swim swim swim swim swim swim swim

NICK. Hi.

(Pause.)

THE SHARK. swim OH GLASS GLASS WATCH OUT FOR THE GLASS swim swim swim swim swim swim

(The SHARK exits.)

(Pause.)

NICK. Well that went well.

DONNA. I guess.

NICK. I think it went well What do you think I think he liked me.

DONNA. Uh huh?

NICK. I'm taking it slow.

DONNA. Oh you are.

NICK. After Jason? my therapist said maybe I sleep with people too fast sometimes.

DONNA. Oh really.

NICK. Uh huh. My therapist said that maybe maybe I sleep with people before I am totally emotionally prepared. Physically I'm ready fast and so I sleep with them fast but then I wake up and I'm freaked cause who the hell is this guy? see I'm slower emotionally. And so then I push them away and then get sad cause I'm all alone again.

DONNA. Huh.

NICK. Unless I just want to have sex which is ok my therapist says. But. If I want to develop something then I have to develop it. Which is slow. Weird huh.

DONNA. Your therapist said that?

NICK. Think he maybe might be right?

DONNA. I TOLD YOU THAT TWO YEARS AGO.

NICK. Well yeah.

DONNA. I'VE BEEN TELLING YOU THAT EVERY DAY SINCE.

NICK. Well yeah.

DONNA. AND YOU'RE GOING TO LISTEN TO HIM?

NICK. He's my therapist.

(Pause.)

Do you think he liked me?

DONNA. She wants to invite my mother.

NICK. To the commitment ceremony?

DONNA. My mom won't come.

NICK. Maybe she will.

DONNA. She didn't come to our house-blessing ceremony. She won't come to this.

NICK. Is Carla Carla's dad coming?

DONNA. And her stepmother. And her mom.

NICK. I thought you weren't having too many people.

DONNA. I just wanted you and Barb and our friends and a few other people like our massage therapist and the guy at the Super Stop and Buy who always saves us the good mangoes. Small.

NICK. Your backyard won't hold that many people.

DONNA. She wants it big.

CARLA CARLA. I do I want it big.

DONNA. How big?

CARLA CARLA. Real big. If I'm getting married I want it big. I want bells and rings and cake and dancing. I want lots and lots of dancing. Lots of dancing and the whole shibang. And lots of white everywhere.

DONNA. Well

CARLA CARLA. So we better get cracking.

How to Agree on a Minister.

DONNA. She's not really a minister. She's more a crystal worker who specializes in partner/partner blessing ceremonies drawing from all kinds of ethnic traditions Judaism Tantric Balinese rainbow light therapy Buddhism

CARLA CARLA. Barb'll be pleased.

DONNA. Yeah I thought

Anyhow she used to be a Wiccan priestess.

CARLA CARLA. How'd you find her?

DONNA. She's someone I used to know. Wanna meet her? Her name's Solstice.

CARLA CARLA. Sure.

DONNA. Great.

How to Pick a Ring.

(DONNA and CARLA CARLA look at rings.)

BOTH. That one.

(Pause.)

Really?

How to Choose a Caterer.

CARLA CARLA. You said you wanted Southwestern food.

DONNA. Not Texan food. Southwestern food.

CARLA CARLA. Texas is in the Southwest.

DONNA. It's practically Midwestern. My mom won't eat Texan food.

CARLA CARLA. You said you didn't want to ask your mom.

DONNA. If I ask her and if she says yes she won't eat Texan food.

CARLA CARLA. You said your mom won't come even if you ask her.

DONNA. I was thinking more New Mexican food.

CARLA CARLA. Your mom would eat New Mexican food?

DONNA. You know my mom's not coming!

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

DONNA. Why are you making this so difficult?

CARLA CARLA. What am I doing?

DONNA. If you don't want to get married just say it instead of all this making it difficult and bringing up my mom. She's not coming.

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

DONNA. Because it just makes me really. I don't even

(Pause.)

CARLA CARLA. When'd I say I don't want to get married?

DONNA. You might as well have.

CARLA CARLA. I want to get married.

DONNA. You want a big wedding. You don't want to get married. You just want a big splash wedding thing with this and this and this.

CARLA CARLA. You know I want to get married

DONNA. Maybe you think you have to now we told everyone. But you don't.

CARLA CARLA. I know I don't.

DONNA. Fine. We'll just call it off. It's off. Fine it's off.

(Pause.)

CARLA CARLA. It's not off.

(Pause.)

DONNA. It is. It's off.

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

DONNA. Call and cancel.

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

DONNA. You just keep making problems.

CARLA CARLA. I make problems?

DONNA. Yeah

CARLA CARLA. I make problems.

DONNA. Um hm.

CARLA CARLA. I don't make problems.

DONNA. You do.

CARLA CARLA. Hey. I didn't ask my ex-girlfriend the High Witch Priestess who is still in love with me to be our minister. "I want you to think long and hard about this Donna I'm looking I'm looking I don't see a very good future for you and Carla Carla."

DONNA. I said sorry about her.

CARLA CARLA. I'm not the one making problems.

You know I want your mom to come.

DONNA. Then why do you think we should have Texan food?

CARLA CARLA. We won't. We won't. We won't have it.

DONNA. No the wedding's off.

CARLA CARLA. Donna.

DONNA. It's off.

My mom said I'd never get married.

How to Arrange Flowers.

NICK. The wedding is on again. I will be doing the flowers.

(Pause.)

That was easy wasn't it.

How to Find a DJ.

BOB. *(Enters. Interrupting.)*

Um Carla Carla?

CARLA CARLA. Bob? Hi Bob.

DONNA. Hey Bob.

NICK. Hey Bob.

BOB. Donna. Hey. Nick. Um. You seen Barb?

CARLA CARLA. Today?

DONNA. No.

CARLA CARLA. No.

NICK. She's at that thing.

CARLA CARLA. What thing?

BOB. I drove by that

by her apartment and I didn't see the Buick

NICK. She's at that thing. That thing at the museum where those monks are making a picture out of sand. In Providence. You know the Buddhist thing.

BOB. Oh. So

(Pause.)

How you doing?

NICK. They're fighting over a DJ.

DONNA. We're not fighting.

CARLA CARLA. We're discussing.

NICK. You're fighting.

CARLA CARLA. We're not fighting.

DONNA. We're discussing. A lot.

BOB. For a party?

DONNA. We're planning our commitment ceremony.

BOB. Your what?

CARLA CARLA. Our ceremony.

NICK. Their wedding.

BOB. You two. Hey! Congratulations!

DONNA. Thanks.

BOB. Married huh. Barb didn't tell me.

CARLA CARLA. It's going to be small.

BOB. That's great.

DONNA. A small ceremony. But with lots of dancing.

BOB. No that's great. Ok so.

(Pause.)

If you see Barb

CARLA CARLA. You ok Bob?

BOB. Me? Yeah.

(Pause.)

Well. It's been rough. But

(Pause.)

Ok.

(Pause.)

Ok.

(Pause.)

She doesn't have any furniture. At that at her apartment. She doesn't have a bed. She has a big cushion. A futon. It's called.

(Pause.)

Ok.

(Exits.)

(Pause.)

NICK. He looks crappy.

DONNA. Um.

NICK. He should of listened to Barb. He should have tried to change and do a little of what

(The SHARK enters.)

DONNA. Shut up. Look.

CARLA CARLA. That the shark?

DONNA. Um.

CARLA CARLA. We'll

DONNA. Yeah.

NICK. Yeah.

CARLA CARLA. Yeah.

NICK. Quick.

(They're gone.)

Excuse me I

You're the

THE SHARK. *(Pause. Smiles.)*

NICK. I met you the other day With Donna
She was just here.

THE SHARK. I remember.

(Pause.)

You're Nicholas.

NICK. You can call me Nick Some people call me Nicholas Some people Nick They used to call me Fatboy

THE SHARK. Really? Fatboy?

Why?

NICK. I used to be

I spent a couple of summers in front of a fryolator at Twig Beach. I ate a lot of French fries. I was kind of

So you're a real swimmer huh?

THE SHARK. Yup.

NICK. You like it?

THE SHARK. What?

NICK. Swimming?

THE SHARK. Oh yeah I do.

Which is lucky cause I do it all day long.

NICK. Yeah.

THE SHARK. Swim. You know. And swim.

(Pause.)

I love the beach.

NICK. Want to go?

THE SHARK. Where?

NICK. Want to go to the beach?

THE SHARK. With you?

NICK. Yeah?

THE SHARK. Now?

NICK. Yeah?

THE SHARK. Sure.

NICK. You do?

THE SHARK. Sure.

NICK. Great.

(NICK takes a handful of sand from his pocket and throws it on stage. They are at Twig Beach.)

THE SHARK. Umm.

Gosh. The water's so blue.

NICK. See over there? Just past where that house

THE SHARK. The grey one?

NICK. Yeah That's where Donna lives. They're having their commitment ceremony If they have it In their backyard so the procession goes up the beach and through the street and then into their backyard for the service. Beautiful huh?

THE SHARK. Yeah.

NICK. And over there? That was where my fryolator.

THE SHARK. Nice.

(Pause.)

The water is so blue.

NICK. Want to sit down?

THE SHARK. It's so blue. I forgot. At the aquarium it's either the glass or something they put in it but the water's green it's not blue.

NICK. You like the aquarium?

THE SHARK. It's ok It's a job. It's kind of boring. People stare alot.

NICK. Well

THE SHARK. Yeah I guess that's

Before that I used to sell Avon. Skin So Soft. Door to door up on Federal Hill.

NICK. Oh I love Skin So Soft.

THE SHARK. It's a good product.

NICK. Does it really repel blackflies?

THE SHARK. Yup.

NICK. Chemistry huh?

(Pause.)

I once sold paintings door to door.

THE SHARK. You did?

NICK. Horrible.

THE SHARK. Bad?

NICK. Unbearable.

THE SHARK. Grotesque?

NICK. The paintings. They were landscapes. And one completely ugly clown painting I still

You know Sad clown sad eyes big white mouth head tilted ugh

(Pause.)

Me and my friend Shao Mei we were totally broke so we answered an ad Do you want a Career in Art? And since she's a macrame artist and I'm well I'm artistic too

THE SHARK. You are?

NICK. I don't do art but I love art Van Gogh Picasso Michelangelo that guy that paints the sunflowers you know what's his name

THE SHARK. Van Gogh

NICK. Oh yeah Van Gogh so we thought We're perfect. So we go to the place this was outside of Boston and the guy running it piles me and Shao Mei and ten other people in a van and drives us for miles and then when we get there he gives us each a portfolio of ten

different paintings Oh they were so ugly The clown Moon over palm trees Moon over waterfall Moon over fir trees Moon over a circus So they're all signed Blunt so I have to pretend I'm Nicholas Blunt cause you know Nick Blunt? that sounds stupid so me and Shao Mei Blunt and ten other Blunts walk around this neighborhood pretending we're poor art school students listen to me I'm just talking and talking and talking

I'm nervous I'm nervous

THE SHARK. I was watching your mouth move.

NICK. Oh.

(Pause.)

I had to stop because the clown painting was so ugly it gave me a headache. Plus I walked into a house and they already had one of my paintings. Moon over the mountains right over the sofa.

Horrible.

What'd you do before Avon?

THE SHARK. Before that

Used to be I was. Out there.

NICK. Here?

THE SHARK. I used to come here.

NICK. To Twig Beach?

THE SHARK. I liked this beach.

NICK. I wonder if I ever saw you.

THE SHARK. I'd swim and I'd see the beach and the people on the beach pink people and brown people and white. And I'd stare at them.

Scoot in.

NICK. You'd swim in?

THE SHARK. I liked swimming in the shallows. I liked being near people in the water. I liked feeling the blood vibrating in their bodies. I liked the heat. I liked the thrash.

And I remember thinking

(Makes biting gesture.)

Course I didn't.

Would of ruined a good day at the beach for someone. Kind of.

That scare you?

NICK. No.

THE SHARK. Donna think you should be here with me?

NICK. Huh?

THE SHARK. Go out with a shark you going to get bitten. Or shark today gone tomorrow. Or I knew a guy who dated a shark he's got one leg and a big chunk missing out of him.

(Pause.)

That scare you?

NICK. No.

THE SHARK. I'm talking too much. I got a big mouth.

That scare you?

NICK. No.

THE SHARK. No?

NICK. I have a crush on you.

THE SHARK. You do?

NICK. That's what my friend Barb says.

THE SHARK. She does?

NICK. It comes before infatuation which she says is around the corner if we keep talking which I think I might be feeling.

THE SHARK. I like Barb.

(Kisses NICK.)

NICK. I like Barb too.

THE SHARK. I like Barb alot.

(Kisses NICK.)

NICK. Oh alot me too.

THE SHARK. Alot.

(Kisses NICK.)

NICK. Hm.

THE SHARK. Sometimes I'd swim way far out there.

Late at night Empty and I'd get lonely and that blue and blue forever and then a swimmer and

we'd circle each other looking at each other and he'd look back and I'd follow him and I'd feel that

(Pause.)

and after I'd swim again. Looking. And I'd be lonely again.

(Kisses NICK. Kisses NICK and touches his chest. Kisses NICK and touches his leg. Kisses NICK and moves his hand up NICK's leg.)

NICK. Can we

Um

wait on this?

THE SHARK. Huh?

NICK. Just for awhile?

THE SHARK. Sorry. Yeah. Forget it.

NICK. I'd rather just

THE SHARK. Yeah sorry ok.

NICK. Cause I like it but

Don't you like kissing?

THE SHARK. No I do.

NICK. Me too. I could kiss

See I'm not supposed to go too fast. I mean I want to But everyone's saying Not too fast Not too fast

I usually jump too fast.

THE SHARK. Me too.

I think I shouldn't.

But then I forget.

NICK. Me too. Let's forget it. I can forget it.

THE SHARK. Naw.

NICK. Yeah lets. My therapist says I'm fast. So what I sleep with people too fast. I want to. Let's sleep together now and next date let's wait.

THE SHARK. No.

NICK. I changed my mind. I want to.

THE SHARK. No.

NICK. I do I want to.

THE SHARK. No.

(Pause.)

NICK. We could Maybe Maybe we could go out to Would you want to maybe go to the wedding with me To Donna's commitment?

THE SHARK. *(Pause.)*

Can I call you?

NICK. Oh.

(Long pause.)

Sure. Yeah.

THE SHARK. Ok I'll call you.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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