

Fishing
by
Leighza Walker

FISHING

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FISHING

FISHING was originally produced by Cone Man Running Productions in Houston, TX at Obsidian Art Space, opening January 17, 2013. It was directed by Leighza Walker; the set and sound design were by Leighza Walker and lighting design by Josh Baker. The production stage manager was Clarity Leigh Welch.

The cast (in order of appearance) was as follows:

Grant – Michael Weems
Meg – Mischa Hutchings
Dana – Margaret Lewis
Amy – Gina Williamson
Mac – Eddie Rodriguez
Mac (understudy) – Rick Evans

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

Reading old plays you wrote at the beginning of your career is like looking at your high school Senior picture 20 years later. You're kind of embarrassed even as you trace your finger over that sweet, young face and think about how clueless you were, how much pain and joy is in store, how many hard lessons to be learned. And, while you're glad to not be that stupid anymore, you can't help but think about what you would have done differently if you could start over.

I spend a lot of time in supposition. "What if?" is a question I find myself asking often. My novel, "The Game" (which won an Honorable Mention from Houston Writer's Guild Novel Contest in 2010), was a what if, and so is "Fishing". I promise you, despite all the rumors, there's no truth to it. Yes, the character of Meg kinda reminds you of someone and sure, I have a cousin named Amy Jane, but that's where it ends. I made up all the other stuff. That's what writers do. We have conversations in our heads and we create new people out of an amalgamation of four or five or twelve existing people and two or three imaginary and idealized people. I've been known to create characters that are *completely unlike* anyone I know! It happens. I've written about twenty one acts and two full length plays and it would be impossible for all of that stuff to have happened to me. My life simply isn't that interesting.

"Fishing" is the first full length play I wrote; the first scene is actually the third one act play I ever wrote. I submitted it, along with the other two, to the local play festival, "Scriptwriters/Houston 10X10" in 2009 and all three of my entries were accepted as top ten finalists (only the second time this has occurred in the 19 year history of the contest). I've been writing my entire life, but I suddenly found myself a produced playwright. One of the notes from the panel choosing the final plays for the 10x10 said "This seems like the beginning of a play and I want to know what happens next". I agreed and that's how the story you're about to read was born. Pulling it out of a drawer and dusting it off and laying it out on the table for all of you guys was scary. It's full of "new playwright" mistakes, like telling you everything instead of showing you everything and there's a little too much of me in Meg and the set changes are hard and making one actor leap from one scene to the next is sorta mean and oh, my GAWD, the repetitious dialogue! I have groaned in embarrassment a few times during rehearsals, and have made so many dialogue cuts despite my love of my own turn of phrase. Between you and me, I think I could have been more ruthless.

My point, I guess, is to ask you to forgive me. The story is newby-ish but sweet and dark and, though perhaps over-romanticized, I think you might see a spark of the playwright I'm becoming.

Sincerely,
Leighza

FISHING

*For Elizabeth Keel, who served the Universe as my ignition switch.
For my Mother and Father, for where else does one learn to love?*

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Characters

(Author's note - I don't think age matters so much here. Minor changes may be made to age references and the length of time couples have been together, etc. They are all roughly the same age. My own mental picture puts them all at early to mid 40's.)

GRANT – ruggedly handsome, easy going, very sharp and educated. He does not like drama and is not a big fan of change. Poetic and funny.

MEG – beautiful but not a traffic stopper, laid back, intensely sexual, thinks way too much. *(Directors – she's not whiny. Most of what can be interpreted as whining is either playful or genuinely searching for answers.)*

DANA – the polar opposite of Meg in every way but looks. Beautiful but lacks the charged energy, instead she exudes calm and has a direct, almost businesslike manner.

AMY – country attitude but might be the smartest character on stage, mild East Texas accent.

MAC – Linebacker big, he's a cowboy without a hat. He has a huge presence and the same natural sexual energy that Meg has. Everything rolls right off of him. Mild East Texas accent.

Location:
Houston, Texas

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ACT I Scene 1

Interior – living room. It’s a large room, with a feeling of luxurious comfort. There is a front door up center and a door to the left that leads to the kitchen and a door to the right that leads to the rest of the house. GRANT and MEG enter through the front door, laughing and teasing extemporaneously. Meg is holding a fast food bag; she exits to the kitchen. Grant sits on the couch and opens a book. Meg enters and crosses to the couch, grabs her own book and sits down.

MEG. *(Raising her feet one at a time for Grant to remove. He obliges and tosses them across the room as they laugh. Meg puts her book down and looks over at Grant speculatively. Smiles.)* Why do you hang out with me?

GRANT. *(still reading)* Because I like you.

MEG. You like a lot of people and you don’t hang out with them this much.

GRANT. *(puts down his book and looks at Meg.)* You fishing?

MEG. A little.

GRANT. I like you a lot. You’re fun.

MEG. *(smiles)* Ok. *(Silent moment. Grant goes back to reading. Meg playfully pouts.)* That was a pretty small fish.

GRANT. *(looks over at her, she grins. He sighs, carefully marks his place in his book and puts it down)* Sorry. Help me out.

MEG. *(getting into her game)* Umm...why do you like me?

GRANT. *(distractedly)* Because you’re funny and smart and pretty.

MEG. I think I need more details.

GRANT. *(sighs)* Which part needs elaboration? Funny, smart or beautiful?

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MEG. You said pretty before.

GRANT. Oh, sorry, I definitely should have said beautiful. *(she smiles again)* You good now?

MEG. I think so. *(Silent moment.)* Unless... *(he sighs, she laughs)* You weren't finished?

GRANT. I'm just not sure what you want here.

MEG. Ummmmmm...pretend you're my boyfriend. I think I need some romance. Try that...

GRANT. Romance?

MEG. Something poetic? Please?? I really need to hear something sweet right now.

GRANT. Ok. Ok. Let's see. Do you need to hear that your eyes are like the stormy sea? Or that your hair is soft and wild? Or is it your intellect that needs an ego boost?

MEG. *(melting - scoots a little closer)* Mmm, I like fish. That was like poetry. You're so good to me. I'm glad you're my friend. *(Beat.)* Go on. *(He hesitates. She lays her head back on the couch and pouts again.)* Play with me. Please?

GRANT. Uhhh...ok...Sometime... *(warming up)* when we're talking...you get this sparkle in your eyes and I see how...into me you seem... and then I get a whiff of that lavender oil you always wear and my brain just shorts out a little...I just want to throw you down and...*(breaks off, a little embarrassed.)*

MEG. Oh. Wow. That's fantastic. More.

GRANT. I am constantly amazed at how hilarious you are.

MEG. Go back to my eyes....

GRANT. Your eyes...oh, well, your eyes are mischievous and I get lost in them.

MEG. Oh, that's good. That's nice. I think I'm almost full up. *(scoots closer to him – touches his arm)* Unless there's more?

GRANT. *(blurts out)* Your bottom lip drives me mad.

MEG. Mad? Seriously? My lip?

GRANT. *(deep sigh)* Yes. It really makes me a little crazy.

MEG. Do you think about that...very often?

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GRANT. (*hesitant*) I was actually thinking about it right before you started fishing.

MEG. I should fish more often. (*Scoots closer- puts her hand on his thigh*)

GRANT. (*looks down at Meg's hand*) I should say nice things more often, so you don't have to fish.

MEG. Fishing is ok. You can't read my mind.

GRANT. See, that's another reason why I like to hang out with you. You don't expect me to be a mindreader like other women.

MEG. Men are terrible at taking subtle hints. You have to be direct with them. (*strokes his thigh*)

GRANT. Are you being direct with me now?

MEG. No. I think I'm being too subtle. Direct was when I had three shots of Jagermeister and asked you if you wanted me to give you a blow job and you ran screaming like a little girl.

GRANT. I did not!

MEG. You did, too. (*laughs*) Ok, maybe not like a girl. And maybe you weren't screaming...but you did practically push my drunk ass out of your car and your *tires* squealed like a little girl. And then you didn't call me for a week.

GRANT. We hadn't even kissed and we had had way too much to drink. It freaked me out a little, that's all.

MEG. Grant? Why haven't you ever kissed me?

GRANT. Why haven't you kissed me?

MEG. I don't want to scare you away again. But I don't think that's why you haven't kissed me.

GRANT. You know why. (*Beat.*) But, I want to. I just... shouldn't. I do think about it.

MEG. I know. You didn't just make up that stuff about my bottom lip on the spur of the moment.

GRANT. (*Reaching out to stroke her bottom lip with his thumb.*) I think about it...a lot.

MEG. Me, too. (*Beat. Their eyes are locked.*) We should stop now.

GRANT. Yes, we should. (*Beat.*) Right now. (*Beat.*) I'm stopping.

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(They move into an embrace. Just before their lips touch, a noise is heard offstage. They leap apart just as DANA enters with grocery bags.)

GRANT. *(jumps off couch, reaches for bags. Kisses her on cheek)* Hey, hi, honey! How was work?

DANA. Good. What are you guys doing?

GRANT. Nothing! Hanging out. Reading. *(He exits hastily left to kitchen with groceries.)*

DANA. What are you reading, Meggy?

MEG. The new King. It's pretty great. Classic King.

DANA. You'll have to let me borrow it when you're done.

MEG. No problem. I'll bring it by. I should go, let you guys get on with your evening.

DANA. It's ok, Meggy. You want to stay? We could watch a movie or something. I bought steaks.

MEG. No, no, that's ok. I should go. It's late.

DANA. It was nice to see you.

MEG. Thanks *(Grant enters)* Hey, I'll..umm... see you later. I'm headed home. *(hugs Dana.)*

GRANT. Ok. See ya.

MEG. Movie tomorrow?

GRANT. Yeah, sounds good. I'll text you times.

MEG. Cool. Bye. *(Exits. Dana exits to kitchen. Grant paces floor, distressed. Dana enters.)*

DANA. What's wrong?

GRANT. Nothing! Um, nothing. Just nervous energy, I suppose. I might get on the treadmill.

DANA. Hm.

GRANT. What? What's that hm?

DANA. *(Softly sarcastic)* Nothing. Nervous energy, I suppose. *(They stare at each other. His eyes drop to floor.)* Any ideas for dinner? I just bought some steaks but I don't think I want anything that heavy now.

GRANT. Do we have any shrimp? I could fire up the grill and do a steak for me and some shrimp for you.

DANA. Perfect. Oh, my stomach just rumbled. Go get the grill started, I'll skewer the shrimp.

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GRANT. Awesome. Come kiss me first, though. I haven't seen you all day. *(Dana crosses and they embrace and kiss briefly. Grant leans in to make the kiss last longer but Dana pulls away.)*

DANA. What's that smell?

GRANT. What? I don't smell it.

DANA. Smells like lavender. *(She sniffs around and traces it back to his shirt.)* It's all over you.

GRANT. Hm. Weird. I don't even smell it.

DANA. You wouldn't. *(Dana exits to kitchen. Grant lifts his shirt to his nose and breathes deeply. He exhales explosively and rubs his hands through his hair and over his face, picks up the phone and enters a text message. Dana enters with a small basket.)*

DANA. I thought I'd pick some lettuce for a salad. *(She sees Grant with his phone.)* What are you doing?

GRANT. I was just asking Meg if she wants to go get some dessert later.

DANA. Later?

GRANT. I figured you'd go right to bed after dinner. It's already late.

DANA. I can stay up to hang out with you.

GRANT. You want to hang out with me?

DANA. Of course I do, Grant

GRANT. That surprises me.

DANA. I'm always here.

GRANT. We almost never just...sit together.

DANA. Like you and Meggy do?

GRANT. *(sheepishly)* Well, yeah. We just...talk. It's nice.

DANA. Is that all you ever do? Talk?

GRANT. What? Oh! Yes! We just...talk, honey.

DANA. I'm sorry. *(Beat.)* Maybe I haven't been here for you, maybe if I was, you wouldn't need a Meggy.

GRANT. I'm not sure what to say to that.

DANA. Don't say anything. Let's just...do better.

GRANT. I'd like that. *(Beat.)* I don't *need* a Meg. I just like talking with her. *(laughs)* She hasn't heard all of my stories yet, so I'm still interesting to her.

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DANA. Has she heard the one about how you saw U2 at that dive bar before they were famous?

GRANT. Only twice! I can tell it at least 3 more times before her eyes glaze over. *(They laugh.)*

DANA. I'm not mad.

GRANT. About what?

DANA. You and Meggy. I understand.

GRANT. She hates it when you call her Meggy, by the way.

DANA. I know. *(chuckles.)*

GRANT. Why would you be mad? There's nothing going on.

DANA. Really? I walk in and you two jump up like the house is on fire? And I'm pretty sure you had a hard on.

GRANT. I did not!

DANA. You did, too. Maybe just a partial but it was there.

GRANT. We are just friends. Nothing is happening.

DANA. Ok, I believe you. *(Beat.)* But, even if nothing is happening now, it could. You know, humans aren't naturally monogamous; we've talked about that before. And we've been together a long time. It's really almost inevitable, isn't it?

GRANT. No. It's not. Why do *you* think it is? Have you....?

DANA. No, but it's crossed my mind.

GRANT. When? With who?

DANA. No one in particular, I swear. If it had been someone in particular, something might have happened. That's what I'm saying. You two like each other, she's sexy. It's like a part of her; even I notice it.

GRANT. She is. It's quite...distracting.

DANA. See? *(Laughs.)* You can't even pretend you haven't noticed. It's impossible not to notice. Look, honey, if I was in the same situation, I can't promise nothing would happen. It wouldn't be about you and me. It would be about...the moment. Sometimes you can't stop the moment from happening. That's what moments are.

GRANT. That's a pretty philosophical conclusion, there. How do you feel, though, thinking about me with someone else?

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DANA. How do you think I feel? (*A rush of confession.*) A part of me hates her. Part of it is her casual sensuality, grr, it's like she's not even trying. And I want to punch her when she's nice to me. Have you noticed how she tries to manipulate me? How she hugs me good bye and not you, like that's going to fool me into thinking I can trust her.

GRANT. She likes you.

DANA. Come on! She wants to sleep with you. How can she like me when I'm the reason you won't?

GRANT. All I know is she's told me lots of times that she likes you.

DANA. Oh, my god! Are you joking?

GRANT. No. She wouldn't want you to hate her.

DANA. I like her, too, oddly enough. But I hate her.

GRANT. She's not in love with me or anything. I don't think. I actually think it's just a challenge to her, to see if I'll do anything.

DANA. Do you think you will?

GRANT. (*Silence- he's considering.*) I don't know. I really don't. I should stop hanging out with her. Stop it before you get hurt any more.

DANA. I'm not that hurt. (*Quietly*) Maybe... you should play it out.

GRANT. Yeah, sure, I'll get right on that. (*Beat.*) What? You're kidding, right?

DANA. I'm not. Get it out of your system. I'll still be here when you get back.

GRANT. Why would you even say that?

DANA. That's just the only logical conclusion I could come up with.

GRANT. That is the only conclusion? Not telling me I can't be friends with her anymore wasn't logical? Kicking my ass for even thinking about it wasn't a conclusion?

DANA. You'd hate me for that.

GRANT. This is too much. I can't even think about this right now.

DANA. Was it easier to think it about it behind my back?

GRANT. Yes, it was. It was just speculation, just a stupid fantasy thing. You're trying to make it real.

DANA. It is real.

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GRANT. It isn't real. And for fuck's sake, I wasn't even really thinking about you and how you'd feel. I was thinking with my dick. And now I feel terrible.

DANA. Don't feel terrible. I told you, I get it. I do. I'm not testing you, this is not a set up, I promise. *(Laughs.)*

GRANT. It's just so weird to be talking to you about it. I'm embarrassed.

DANA. You can talk to me about anything. Anything. *(Amazed.)* I think I actually saw this before you did.

GRANT. Maybe. I didn't really think about it being real or anything.

DANA. *Nothing* has happened?

GRANT. No!

DANA. Really?

GRANT. No!! No. We haven't. And we won't.

DANA. Then what's nothing serious? Have you kissed?

GRANT. No. Well...no. We tease, we flirt, yeah, but nothing... has really happened. Nothing is going to happen.

DANA. If you say it enough times, maybe you'll convince yourself.

GRANT. I'm sorry.

DANA. Don't be. I don't have to like it but I get it. I just thought, you know, that maybe just once you'd gotten drunk and slipped up.

GRANT. Honey! No! That really hurts. That you think I'm the kind of man that would do that.

DANA. I know...I *know* you're a good man, Grant, but...sometimes stuff just happens. It wouldn't make you a bad person.

GRANT. I'm freaking out. You thought I was having an affair this whole time and you were ok with it? I'm not sure how to feel about that.

DANA. I wasn't entirely ok with it. I tried to think of it as a phase. And I wondered, honestly, what would make you trust me enough to tell me.

GRANT. I do trust you. And there really wasn't anything to tell.

DANA. Yet. *(Beat.)* Ah, baby. I kind of feel sorry for you. You really hate complicated.

GRANT. I don't deserve you. *(reaches out and pulls her into an embrace)* How could I ever...?

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Knock on door. They exchange a look; he goes to answer the door. Meg enters.

MEG. I forgot my book.

GRANT. Oh. Uhhh.

DANA. Here, Meggy. *(picks up book on couch and hands it to Meg.)*

You know, what? I think I'm going to bed. I'm not really hungry and I have to get up super early. You kids have fun. Night, Meggy. Night, honey. *(kisses his cheek, pats his butt, smirks at him, exits)*

MEG. So, um....did you still want to go grab some dessert or something?

GRANT. It's pretty late.

MEG. So? *(reaches out and touches his arm, moves closer)* I want something sweet.

GRANT. I am very, very tempted.

MEG. Come on, she's going to bed. She said have fun. She won't care.

GRANT. She'll care.

MEG. Is something wrong?

GRANT. I don't know. *(looks toward hallway)* I think I'm going to stay in.

MEG. Ok. *(sighs)* I'll see you tomorrow then.

GRANT. We'll see.

MEG. What happened? Everything, this *(waves her hand between them)* changed. I thought...I mean...I thought we were...

GRANT. I did, too. I... I don't know what to say. You're right. It's changed.

MEG. I don't want it to change. I like it.

GRANT. Me, too.

MEG. Kiss me. Once. *(He puts his hands on her upper arms and pulls her to him, slowly leans forward and presses a gentle kiss to her forehead.)*

MEG. *(softly)* Dammit.

GRANT. Good night.

MEG. Dammit. Good night.

She exits. He locks door, leans against it, turns out the light and exits to Dana.

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Scene 2

Coffee shop. Meg and AMY sit at a table with coffee and muffins.

MEG. *(taking a large bite of muffin)* I just don't know what to do!

AMY. How about you chew that and swallow it like your mama taught you and then tell me what the hell you're talking about?

MEG. *(Chews, swallows, sips coffee and clears her throat)* Grant.

AMY. Oh, god.

MEG. I know. You're tired of the drama.

AMY. I'm a little tired of the drama. You call me up and tell me I have to drive an hour into town because you really need someone to talk to, but not on the phone. This had better be big.

MEG. This is big. It's my life.

AMY. Yeah, whatever. What is it this time? Did he touch your arm when you were talking again? Did he tell you you smell good? Oh, I know, you gave each other backrubs again? I mean, come on, Meg.

MEG. No! He said my eyes were like the stormy sea and that my bottom lip drives him mad.

AMY. Ok. That's...some...progress. So, next year sometime, he might actually lay a hand on you again. Come on, Mega, this has dragged on and on.

MEG. I know. It's stupid. The whole thing is...just juvenile.

AMY. You like him. You can't help that, but, sweetie...it's not gonna happen.

MEG. Yeah.

AMY. I know you want it to, but you have to know when to quit.

MEG. I don't like hurting myself. *(Beat.)* Why can't I be content just being friends with him?

AMY. Chemistry is chemistry. You two are playing with fire and you both like it.

MEG. Sometimes I like it. You're right. I need to stop.

AMY. We need to find you a man.

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MEG. Maybe I just need to be alone for a while. I've been doing this thing with Grant for almost two years.

AMY. You haven't been doing *anything* with Grant for two years. You need to get laid.

MEG. I get laid.

AMY. When?

MEG. Every time Mac is in town.

AMY. Another winner. Didn't his wife just have a baby?

MEG. Eight months ago.

AMY. God. You're such a masochist.

MEG. I need sex.

AMY. We all do but there are more mainstream ways to go about it.

MEG. I don't want him to leave his wife or anything.

AMY. Which one are we talking about?

MEG. Mac. And don't tell Grant. I told him I broke up with Mac a year ago.

AMY. So, now it's kinda like you're cheating on him?

MEG. I did break up with him. For two whole months! I'm not cheating. That's ridiculous.

AMY. Ok, maybe not in the mainstream where I tend to swim but in your twisted Megaland, you are. You lied to him. He's your best friend and you kept it from him.

MEG. I was embarrassed, ok? After Mac told me about the baby, I cried all over Grant and told him I hated Mac and that I'd never see him again. I stopped mentioning Mac when I started sleeping with him again and Grant just assumed I was over him.

AMY. What's your deal with married men, Megatron?

MEG. I do not know. *(Beat)* Let's get drunk.

AMY. *(Dry.)* It's 10 o'clock in the morning.

MEG. I just don't want to think about this anymore.

AMY. Yes, you do. You love it. The chaos, the drama, dissecting every move he makes, every syllable he utters.

MEG. Which one are we talking about now?

AMY. Does it matter?

MEG. Are you making fun of me?

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AMY. No. I just *know* you. Next month, Mac will do something really sweet and supportive and it'll be him you're gushing over.

MEG. But I hate it.

AMY. You like it.

MEG. Ah, man. I want to be...serene.

AMY. I hate to tell you this, sweetie pie, but you'll never be serene.

MEG. I have some serenity in me! Somewhere.

AMY. Meg, I've know you since I was born. You have never been serene. I might just be your dumb hick cousin from the sticks, but I know you.

MEG. You're not dumb.

AMY. But I am a hick and I am from the sticks and I say, if you want Grant, you just have to get him all liquored up, take him out to the woods and jump him. You should know that, being from the sticks yourself.

MEG. Well, here in the big city, we don't quite have that option. Besides, I've gotten him drunk dozens of times. Dammit, I just don't know what I want.

AMY. Yeah, you do. You just don't want to admit it.

MEG. Ok, hick. What do I want?

AMY. Once again, Amy Jane draws Meg a picture. You. Want. Him. To. Choose. You. (*Meg snorts.*) You want him to fall down on his knees and admit that he's hopelessly in love with you and wants to be with you and *only* you forever.

MEG. I do not! I just want to fuck him.

AMY. My ass. You're too intimate. You're too emotionally connected. Fucking coulda happened a year ago, maybe, but not now. You can't just fuck someone you want to be with forever.

MEG. That's what you think. I know you think this is just me being obsessive but he's said he wants to be with me forever.

AMY. Oh, yeah...wait....what was that? Tiny detailed analysis number thirty seven...he said he wants to be *friends* with you forever. Friends.

MEG. I should buck and run, shouldn't I?

AMY. At last, a moment of lucidity! You're never going to find anyone if you're always out with him. Everyone thinks you're a couple.

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MEG. Nothing has happened since...damn...four months ago when we were at his house and the backrub thing kinda got out of hand. We really are trying but...

AMY. He's trying. You're just along for the ride.

MEG. Shut up. I have stopped it just as often as he has. But, the other night, he almost kissed me.

AMY. Really?

MEG. Yeah, I swear to God our lips were an inch away from each other and then Dana walked in and...

AMY. Where were you?

MEG. At his house.

AMY. You can't do anything at his house. That's just...wrong.

MEG. There's no such thing as wrong. Don't be so black and white.

AMY. Adultery is not a gray area, cuz.

MEG. We're trying....

AMY. Y'all are "trying" to not let anything happen but you still let yourselves be alone at his house?

MEG. Dana could come home at any time, it makes us behave.

AMY. She was out of town four months ago but that didn't stop you from suggesting backrubs at two in the morning after you'd been out drinking. She was, where, at work the other day? If you were really "trying", you'd never be alone. Ever.

MEG. That's why I think he wants something to happen. I say let's go to a movie or a bar, he says let's watch tv at my house. Let's play Uno. I'll teach you how to play Chess.

AMY. He's never going to do anything. He's waiting for you. He needs it to be your fault.

MEG. So, see? Nothing will happen because I'll never do anything because I don't want to lose my friend. If something happens, for real happens, he'll tell her, and it'll all be over.

AMY. Don't you think she suspects?

MEG. No. How could she? If she did, she'd never let him hang out with me.

AMY. She's got to. Women have a sense about this stuff. Maybe she doesn't care? Maybe she's hoping to unload him.

FISHING

MEG. I've wondered. They don't spend very much time together.

AMY. Because he's always with you.

MEG. And she's just going to freak out soon and tell him we can't hang out together anymore so why should I invest any more in it? It's happened with every male friend I've ever had. The wife *always* freaks out. But why hasn't she freaked out yet? Almost two years? I don't get it.

AMY. Me, either. I'd never let my husband date another woman.

MEG. We're not dating. (*Laughs.*)

AMY. Uh, yeah, you are. You go out three or four times a week, he always pays?

MEG. He can afford it.

AMY. So can you! You've got plenty of money.

MEG. No, I don't. If I'm careful, the money Mom left me might last me, but I have to be careful.

AMY. She left you a fortune. You're ridiculous.

MEG. I'm being cautious. I might live to be 90 and I don't want to eat cat food.

AMY. It cracks me up what you think to be cautious about.

MEG. I think I said to shut up....Maybe I should get a job. Then I wouldn't be available so much to hang out with him.

AMY. You've been fired from every job you've ever had. You're a terrible employee. You're too flighty.

MEG. Stop bashing everything I say!

AMY. Look, you don't want to do the hard thing, the only really smart thing. You like weird, you like the excitement. It runs in our family, and even if it did skip me, I recognize it. You're going to take those scissors and you are going to run and run and run until you get hurt.

MEG. What if it could...work out somehow?

AMY. Oh, honey.

MEG. It doesn't matter. I haven't heard from him in days and, who knows, maybe it's over.

AMY. It won't be over until you admit that you're having an affair at all.

MEG. We're just friends.

FISHING

AMY. Meg. Once you've had a man's dick in your hands, even if it was just for a minute...let's just say you are not *just friends*. You can try to convince yourself but I'm not buying it.

MEG. I have to buy it. If I let myself really feel what I'm feeling, I'll break.

AMY. Either be in love with him or just be his friend. You can't have both. You have to tell him how you feel, see if he feels the same way, and then move on from there.

MEG. I'm terrified to do that.

AMY. You both are. You're obviously important to him or he would have walked away a long time ago. And you have to think about Dana, ok?

MEG. I do think about her! She's the only reason...

AMY. She's not the only reason. Stop dancing long enough to hear the music. (*Sighs.*) We know Mac isn't the one. If Grant isn't the one, you've got to stop wasting your time with it.

MEG. Dammit.

AMY. God, your exciting city life makes me long to be back in my house ten miles away from the nearest neighbor, tucked up all righteously in my bed with my husband who has no women friends.

MEG. Sounds nice.

AMY. It is nice. Maybe you'll try it sometime.

MEG. What do I do? Just tell me what to do.

AMY. Ok. I will. First, you have to break up with Mac. Permanently.

MEG. But...

AMY. It won't be hard for you to find just sex if that's what you want. But, that's not what you want anymore, is it?

MEG. No.

AMY. Second, stop being so afraid and tell Grant how you feel, if you can figure out exactly how that is. And then, see what happens. Lower the drawbridge, cuz.

MEG. Then what?

AMY. Then you won't have to wonder any more. Sometimes I think you like the wondering more than you like the actual living.

MEG. Shut up.

FISHING

AMY. Ok, that's my cue. We're going to circle around again and I'll be making the same points. I have a long drive ahead of me and you have some thinking to do. Call me soon, ok?

MEG. K. Drive safe. Thanks for coming.

AMY. Thanks for helping me appreciate my simple little life. *(They hug and Amy exits.)*

MEG. *(Picks up her muffin, tears a few pieces off and throws them on her plate. She takes out her cell phone and dials.)* Hi, Grant. I saw a trailer for that new horror movie and I thought we could go see it later this week. Give me a call...I hope everything is ok. Talk to you later. *(She closes the phone, waits a beat, then opens it up and dials.)* Hey, Mac. I need to talk to you about next week. Call me, ok?

Scene 3

Meg's apartment – an efficiency - a loft bed on one wall with desk underneath - a small kitchenette and a soft comfortable chair. There is abstract art, probably painted by Meg. Scarves adorn the windows, making diffuse light. A Goddess statue and candles are on a shelf with lots of books. Books and clothes are scattered over every surface. One wall by the front door is covered with photographs, pinned up with thumb tacks, no order to them, but a lot of them are of her and Grant. Meg is watering the myriad of plants. She is dressed in a tshirt and panties. Music blares. There's a knock on the door. Meg looks through the peephole and steps back, startled.

MEG. Hold on. Just a sec. *(Meg turns off music and grabs a pair of shorts, dragging them on as she goes to the door. Takes a deep breath and opens it. It is Dana.)* Hi!

DANA. Hi.

MEG. Is everything ok? Did something happen to Grant?

DANA. No! No, I just thought I'd....drop by.

MEG. Oh. *(Breathes deeply.)* Ok, cool.

DANA. Can I come in?

FISHING

MEG. Oh, gosh. Yeah, yeah, come on in. Sorry. (*Meg clears clothes off of the chair.*) Sit down?

DANA. No. Um. No, that's ok. Thanks, though. (*Both women stand uncomfortably. Dana sees photographs.*) Cute pictures.

MEG. Thanks.

DANA. Where was this one taken?

MEG. Art Car Ball, last year.

DANA. Oh, yeah. I remember, I heard all about it. (*They both stand looking at the pictures; uncomfortable silence.*) Who's this one of?

MEG. That's Mac.

DANA. Nice.

MEG. Uh...thanks.

DANA. Is he your boyfriend?

MEG. No. Not anymore. He was, sort of, but...not anymore.

DANA. Where was it taken?

MEG. New Orleans.

DANA. When you went last month?

MEG. Maybe.

DANA. I just didn't know you had a boyfriend, that's all.

MEG. I don't. We broke up.

DANA. Right, you said that. I'm sorry. I'm kind of...frazzled.

MEG. Dana...are you sure...everything is...ok?

DANA. I think so. I'm not sure. (*Sighs*) I hoped we could talk. I mean...crap, this is so much harder than it was in my head.

MEG. Is this going to be bad?

DANA. I don't think so. I hope not.

MEG. Dana, just spit it out. I'm really bad at small talk. I've been expecting this anyway. I think I know what it's about.

DANA. Do you? (*Laughs.*)

MEG. You want me to stay away from your husband, right? I haven't seen or heard from him in a week and... (*Dana laughs again.*) What is so funny? You're kinda scaring me, Dana.

DANA. Relax, I'm not losing my mind, I don't think. Look, Meggy...uh, Meg...I want to talk about you and Grant, yes, but...God, just say it, Dana just say it.

FISHING

MEG. I'm really hard to offend. I promise, you can say anything to me.

DANA. Maybe I will sit down.

MEG. Iced tea?

DANA. *(Looking at messy room.)* Um, no. *(Dana sits and stares at her hands for a moment. Meg stands across the room, fidgeting.)* I know that you and Grant really like each other. I mean, *really* like each other.

MEG. He's my best friend; of course I like him.

DANA. Meg. You know what I mean.

MEG. I want to know what you mean but you're just dancing around here. You're really gonna just have to say it. I'm bad at guessing games. I hate them.

DANA. Ok, I had a prepared speech but I can't remember a word of it.

MEG. Oh...my...God!! Dana! You're driving me nuts!

DANA. I know. I'm sorry. You know how when you have a conversation with someone in your head and they say all of the right things and you say all of the right things and there aren't any misunderstandings?

MEG. Yeah. I do that all day every day.

DANA. And you can go back a few lines if you need to and say something else?

MEG. Nice, isn't it?

DANA. It is. Well, I've had this conversation with you about ten times today.

MEG. Ok, then. How did it start each time?

DANA. *(Blurts)* I want you to sleep with my husband. *(Meg stares.)* I mean it. I do.

MEG. This isn't funny. Maybe you should go.

DANA. No, Meg, really. *(Takes deep breath and blows it out.)*

MEG. That's nuts.

DANA. A little, yeah, but not totally unheard of in the world.

MEG. You're serious, aren't you?

DANA. Yes. I talked to Grant about it but I think he thinks I'm either crazy or that I'm setting him up.

MEG. Are you?

FISHING

DANA. No. I'm not either one. Look, I know this is odd but will you hear me out?

MEG. Ok...

DANA. I've been with Grant for 15 years. I love him. Sometimes I feel...separated from him but I think that's because we're just so accustomed to each other.

MEG. That happens after that many years together. I've heard that, anyway.

DANA. Sometimes, it feels like I'm living with my brother, more than my husband.

MEG. You don't sleep together? Have sex, I mean?

DANA. Sometimes, but...not that often. I'm not really all that interested. It's not that I don't find him attractive, it's more like I don't find anyone attractive. I think my libido has gone deep underground.

MEG. Yikes. I'm sorry about that.

DANA. Don't be. It's not bad or anything, I actually don't miss it. But Grant does.

MEG. I see.

DANA. Do you?

MEG. I'm beginning to.

DANA. His sex drive is a lot higher than mine and he really needs to have an outlet.

MEG. And I'd be that outlet.

DANA. You're offended.

MEG. Only mildly. I told you...it's hard to offend me.

DANA. Would you sit down? You looming over me isn't making this easier.

MEG. *(Meg very deliberately pulls desk chair over, turns it backward and sits straddling it. Her hands are on the back. She slowly rests her chin on her hands.)* Better?

DANA. Yes. Thank you.

MEG. Ok, go on.

DANA. Ok, where was I? I love Grant. I'm not....not trying to *pawn him off* on you or anything.

MEG. Ok...

FISHING

DANA. But, I see that he likes you. I'm afraid that he'll resent me, resent our bond, if he has to pass you up.

MEG. Dana, that's nonsense....

DANA. Let me finish, ok? I told him it would be all right with me...I told him I thought you two had already...anyway, he didn't buy it.

MEG. He wouldn't.

DANA. He's very... reasonable.

MEG. He's a chicken.

DANA. No, he's not. He just...takes himself...very seriously.

MEG. This happened the other night, right?

DANA. Yes.

MEG. That explains a lot. I haven't heard from him since then.

DANA. I know. That's why I'm here. He's hiding. When I try to talk to him, he says Not now.

MEG. I hate it when he gets like that.

DANA. Me, too.

MEG/DANA. Big baby.

MEG. (*Laughs*) You owe me a coke.

DANA. A fountain coke, right? It's funny, I know all these odd little things about you from Grant.

MEG. He knows me pretty well.

DANA. You want him, right?

MEG. I don't know how to answer. You're right, this is hard.

DANA. Spit it out. I did.

MEG. (*Meg laughs softly.*) I do want him and...this is going to sound weird but...I haven't pushed it too much because my motivation is questionable. I love him but I'm not IN love with him.

DANA. I didn't think you were and that's why this is kind of perfect.

MEG. You're kinda blowing my mind. You're amazing.

DANA. No, I'm not. I just see him struggling. It would kill him to be less of the man that he thinks he is. But, if I say it's ok...

MEG. Are you sure about this? I mean, Dana, have you really thought this through all the way?

DANA. Yes, I'm sure. If you guys continue being friends, you're going to have sex. I mean, shit happens, right?

FISHING

MEG. (*Reluctantly.*) Right. Shit does happen.

DANA. The alternative to you guys not having sex is really for you not to be friends anymore, not to hang out anymore. Neither of you want that option.

MEG. No, but if it's the only way...we'll have to.

DANA. Stop it. It's not the only way. But, if it's behind my back, Grant starts to feel guilty. He starts to see me as the enemy. It'll taint everything. If my marriage ends, it ends, but I don't want it to happen because I couldn't step outside of my fear and see it for insecurity.

MEG. Wow, you really have thought about this.

DANA. I have. A lot. You've seen a lot of movies in the last year or so, Meg. Every time you saw a movie, I was alone for 3 hours, wondering.

MEG. I'm sorry. I didn't consider you.

DANA.

Why would you? I'm just the wife...

MEG. I didn't know you.

DANA. Did you want to?*(Silence.)* I like you, Meggy, mostly. I'm not angry. Love finds us in weird places. As screwy as it is, it makes me like you more that you love him.

MEG. Ok, you're not asking me to move in or anything, are you? Like some kind of Mormon compound kinda thing?

DANA. (*Laughing.*) NO! No, no, no. I mean, I don't want to hear you guys going at it or anything.

MEG. Ok, good, that answers my next question...

DANA. Which is?

MEG. Threesome. I'm not into that at all. (*Laughs.*) Been there, done that, got the t-shirt.

DANA. (*Laughing harder.*) Oh, Meggy, I see why he likes you.

MEG. There's one more thing you need to think about. Maybe you already have... what if he falls in love with me?

DANA. Do you think he will?

MEG. Sex does weird things to people and love...well, love is a chemical thing. I think he will...for a little while. It'll wear off, but it could take some time. I'm talking, maybe, months. Are you cool with that?

FISHING

DANA. If it means that I might have my husband 5 years from now, ten years from now, then yes.

MEG. I think he'll love you even more for it.

DANA. I'm counting on that. All my eggs are in that basket.

MEG. He's going to be weird about it at first. He's just not going to buy it.

DANA. Will you come to dinner tonight?

MEG. *(Silent moment.)* Yes. Ok.

DANA. You and I are going to make dinner together. We are going to be at ease with each other. We are going to have a nice relaxed evening, some wine, some music, and then I'm going to give you two a hotel room key and you guys can go...

MEG. Fuck.

DANA. Exactly.

MEG. No! Dana...

DANA. What?

MEG. That's so...

DANA. What??

MEG. It's like a scene in some cheesy bowchickawowow movie.

DANA. You don't think I should do it.

MEG. I don't know. It's just too bizarre. I'm still processing it.

DANA. I'm sorry. I barged in on you and laid this on you and I guess I thought you'd fall right in with it.

MEG. Ok, look. Give me some time. I need to make sure I'm totally on board. This is a risk for me.

DANA. How so?

MEG. Oh, god, Dana, you've only thought this through on Grant's side. What if *I* fall in love with *him*? *(Silent moment.)*

DANA. But you haven't...you're not...you said...

MEG. I know what I said. I'm not in love with him. But, like I said, sex does weird things. The chemicals, the hormones; this could backfire all over me. Grant loves you more and y'all's relationship is all set in concrete and shit and I'm alone. I come home to my bed, to this apartment and I'm by myself.

DANA. Oh.

FISHING

MEG. Yeah. Oh. Meggy has a soul, too.

DANA. I didn't mean...

MEG. I know you didn't. You forgot to make me real the same way I forgot you.

DANA. I did. I'm sorry.

MEG. Don't apologize. You're the least selfish person I've ever met. I just need some time.

DANA. *(Subdued)* Ok. I'll...go ahead and get out of here.

MEG. One more thing...

DANA. What?

MEG. You need to be sure...you need to be really fucking sure of two things. One, that you are seriously cool with it...

DANA. I'm seriously cool with it.

MEG. Right now you are...and two, that you aren't trying to subconsciously unload him.

DANA. I'm not.....

MEG. Don't answer yet. Just think about it.

DANA. I will.

MEG. *(Phone text message alert sounds. Meg picks up phone, reads message.)* Grant's texting me. He just asked me to a movie tonight.

DANA. Well, maybe he's not as opposed to it as I thought.

MEG. How do you feel right this second?

DANA. A little scared, honestly.

MEG. Me, too.

DANA. Are you going to go?

MEG. I want to.

DANA. Tell him yes.

MEG. Are you *absolutely sure*? Do not rope me into this and then change your mind.

DANA. Are you kidding me? You were perfectly content with the idea of doing it behind my back! Look, do what you want. Maybe you needed the subterfuge, the manipulation; maybe it needed to be an affair for it to work for you. My permission seems to have deflated your purpose.

FISHING

MEG. Dana, I never needed your permission. I needed his. That hasn't changed. I could have had him on his back a dozen times over the last two years if I'd just been aggressive about it.

DANA. Why didn't you?

MEG. I don't know. I don't...know. I don't want to break him.

DANA. Look, it's just a movie.

MEG. It's not and you know it. Arghh... dammit. This is just bizarre, ok??? It's cuckoo crazy.

DANA. Grant says that. Cuckoo crazy. *(Beat)* Text him back. You always answer right away. He thinks it's cute.

MEG. I'm embarrassed, you know that? It embarrasses me for you to point out my crush on your husband.

DANA. It's not a crush if he likes you back.

MEG. I can never tell if he likes me back.

DANA. Please. He just asked you out.

MEG. Yeah. I'm his buddy. He calls me Dude.

DANA. He calls you period. He talks to you. You probably know sides of him I don't. *(Silent moment.)* He talks about you all the time. Meg said this or Meg did that or Meg has one of those. He frikkin likes you, ok?

MEG. I don't want to get my heart broken.

DANA. Ok, look. I've said what I had to say. I'm not here to counsel you on whether you should do it or not. I'm just here to tell you that, if you do, I won't track you down and kill you. I won't divorce him over it.

MEG. Ok.

DANA. Ok. So, ball's in your court?

MEG. Yeah.

DANA. Text him back. *(She exits. Meg stares at the door, then down at her phone. It rings. She covers her eyes with her hand, sighs. Sets the phone down, lets it ring, and exits to bathroom. Water runs and she enters with a washcloth and wipes her face and neck. She looks at the photographs for a moment, then turns and picks up the phone, dials.)*

MEG. Hey, sorry I missed your call.

It's good. I've had an interesting afternoon.

I'll tell you about it later. I'm ... kinda distracted.

FISHING

Yeah, sure, sounds good. Dinner first or after?

Ok, I'll see you in an hour?

K. Bye. *(She hangs up phone and stares at it, smiling. Closes her eyes.)*

God. What kind of weird ass mess have you gotten yourself into now, Margaret Elizabeth? *(Lights out.)*

Scene 4

Grant and Dana's living room. Grant enters from hallway, keys in hand, reaches for the front door as it opens. Dana enters. She is laden with shopping bags.

GRANT. Wow. Here, gimme some. *(Grant takes some of the bags and sets them on the couch. Dana drops hers by the front door.)* Did you leave anything in the store? *(Laughs.)*

DANA. It was therapeutic. You headed out?

GRANT. Yeah, gonna go see that new scary movie. And, of course, I'm late, so I gotta book. Love you. *(He kisses Dana on the cheek and heads for the door. Stops.)* You all right?

DANA. *(Waves her hand.)* Yeah, yeah, go on, have fun.

GRANT. Are you sure?

DANA. I'm fine. Really. Go. She's probably waiting impatiently.

GRANT. I'll never hear the end of it if we miss the previews. Hey, I'm sorry, did you want me to stay in with you?

DANA. No. You need to do this.

GRANT. Do what? Ah, crap. Are we back to that? Look, nothing's going to happen, you know. I won't let it.

DANA. Grant. *(She sighs and sits on the edge of the couch.)*

GRANT. What? I know you think you're ok with the idea of something happening with me and Meg but I'm just not buying it. And Meg and I are fine just being friends. We're grown ups, we're not going to go at it just because *Mom* said it's ok.

DANA. Mom??

GRANT. You know what I mean.

DANA. No, I'm not sure I do. I'm not your Mom, I'm your wife. Your partner. You don't need my permission.

FISHING

GRANT. Then why did you give it to me? (*Silence. Grant crosses to Dana, squats in front of her and takes her hand.*) Dana, I love you. I want to sit on our front porch in rocking chairs with you in 30 years and curse our bad hips and how bad our dentures fit and whine about how our kids never come visit. This is our life. Together. Why would I jeopardize that?

DANA. Because you LIKE her! You want her and humans can't help their emotions. (*Grant stands up, makes a disgusted sound.*) Look, we're intellectual people. We're accustomed to thinking of ourselves as enlightened.

GRANT. What could this possibly have to do with enlightenment?

DANA. Please, honey. You know. You're just having a hard time climbing out of your box.

GRANT. Oh, great, now I'm stuck in a box and you're the only one of us that's really enlightened?

DANA. No! Stop. Don't get your feelings all hurt, just come with me. (*She reaches out and takes his hand*) We're both enlightened enough to recognize that the status quo is bullshit. That just because something is "normal", doesn't mean it's actually true. It just means... it's easy.

GRANT. I'm good with easy. I like easy. Easy is not scary and easy does not make me worry that I'll come home one night and find you hating me.

DANA. "Life is difficult." M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*. Remember? The most succinct and true first line of any book ever written.

GRANT. Yeah.

DANA. And love and relationships are probably the hardest part.

GRANT. Yeah. (*Sighs.*)

DANA. We have discussed this intellectually before. But now that reality is creeping in, you're getting cold feet.

GRANT. We've discussed the *idea* that it's possible for some random someone to love two people at once, we have never discussed the reality of you sharing me with another woman.

DANA. Well, now we are.

FISHING

GRANT. Oh, God. Man, oh, man. You're really serious, aren't you? You're really ok with this.

DANA. I'm really ok. I can't give you everything you need and maybe, between the two of us...

GRANT. Jesus. *(He sits suddenly, his hand in his hands.)*

DANA. What? Are you ok?

GRANT. I'm freaked.

DANA. Oh, baby. *(She wraps her arms around him and he sags into her)* I'm sorry.

GRANT. I don't understand. I was just rolling along, trying to be a good guy and occasionally letting the idea cross my mind that maybe I'd sleep with her on accident.

DANA. On accident? *(Laughs)*

GRANT. You know, like we'd be drunk or something and one thing would lead to another like the backrub thing and...

DANA. The backrub thing?

GRANT. Nothing...nothing...but now...

DANA. Yeah, I know. But now...

GRANT. But now, it's more like on purpose and I don't know why that seems harder and more bizarre. It's fucked up that I could somewhere in the back of my head deal with the concept of adultery better than I'm dealing with this.

DANA. Pretty fucked up, yeah.

GRANT. Oh, God. It's like... I'm *dating* her.

DANA. You've been dating her for over a year.

GRANT. No! We're just friends. Jesus. Ok. Yeah, but I never thought of it like that. I tried not to think about it.

DANA. Aren't you late?

GRANT. Ah, crap. Yes. *(Walks toward the front door. Stops.)* I can't.

DANA. Yes, you can. Go.

GRANT. Fuck.

DANA. Look, just because I said its ok doesn't mean you actually have to do anything. It's not like you *have* to. Just that you *can*.

GRANT.

I think that's what scares me the most. Now that I can, do I want to?

FISHING

DANA. I guess you'll find out, won't you?

GRANT. That sounded bitter.

DANA. It wasn't. I'm kind of fascinated to see what happens.

GRANT. You're not experimenting on me, are you?

DANA. What?

GRANT. I don't wanna be your subject for some theory you have. Are you just trying to see if it pans out?

DANA. (*Laughs.*) Now you're just looking for excuses and you're getting paranoid.

GRANT. Ok. I'll go. But just remember, you're making me go.

DANA. No! Stop. Stop right there. There will be no blaming. None. Do you understand me?

GRANT. I was joking...

DANA. No. I don't care. If this is going to backfire into blame, I take it back.

GRANT. What?

DANA. If something happens between you and Meg, you have to accept responsibility, just like you would have if it had been behind my back. I'm not playing the "you made me do it" game. You can't blame me and you can't blame Meg. It's all on you.

GRANT. Ok. Ok, I'm sorry. I'll try to be... the...the master of my own destiny.

DANA. Ok.

GRANT. God. (*He exits. Lights out*)

Scene 5

Meg's apartment – Meg enters from bathroom, hair in a ponytail, putting in an earring. She walks to the bedside table and sprays on perfume. She is dressed provocatively but not overtly so. A horn honks outside, Meg looks up, goes to the window and looks out. She picks up her phone and dials.

MEG. Are you seriously out there honking at me to come out?

FISHING

(Laughs.) Well, you can forget it. My mother always told me never to go anywhere with a boy who honks for you. It means he doesn't respect you. ...Actually, I'm serious. ...I won't....I know you usually text me when you're here, but that's not honking....I don't care if we're late... No, I'm not. ...Fine. Go....Bye. *(She mutters angrily, we hear various curse words as she angrily takes off her earrings and tosses them onto the kitchen counter then kicks her shoes off across the room. She turns on music and turns the volume all the way up. She is still muttering. She strips off her shirt and throws it at the bed, her skirt follows. She pulls her hair out of the ponytail and shakes it out. She is standing there in matching bra and panties when there is a knock at the door.)*

MEG. Fuck. *(She grabs a short kimono and pulls it on, goes to the door and throws it open. It is Grant, holding flowers. They have obviously been hastily picked outside.)*

GRANT. I'm sorry.

MEG. What? *(She walks over to stereo and turns it down just as Grant yells...)*

GRANT. I'm sorry!!

MEG. Dammit. Damn you.

GRANT. I'm really sorry.

MEG. How do you make me so angry over nothing?

GRANT. I don't know but apparently I'm good at it. *(He holds out the flowers.)*

MEG. That won't make it better. *(She takes the flowers; they obviously do make it better. She crosses to kitchen, gets out a vase and arranges the flowers in it. It's a sad but sweet bouquet.)*

GRANT. Is that why you were mad? Because you're not ready? *(He points to her state of undress.)*

MEG. Oh. My. God. No. I was ready. I looked fanfuckingtastic. I pitched a fit and took it all off just now.

GRANT. You actually look pretty fanfuckingtastic right now. Let's go.

MEG. Please. You're insane. Hold on and I'll get dressed. *(She drops the kimono where she stands and walks over to the bed, bends over to pick up her skirt.)*

GRANT. Jesus Christ. I'm...uh...God...I'll wait outside.

FISHING

MEG. It'll just take a second. Hold on. (*She looks down at her bra and panties, smiles, looks up at Grant and drops the skirt she's holding.*) Unless...(*she walks toward him slowly*)...you're not in the mood for a movie anymore.

GRANT. (*Averting his gaze.*) No. I mean, yes. Um, hurry up, we're running late as it is.

MEG. We could go to a later movie. (*She puts her hand on his chest and slides it up to his shoulder and then does the same thing with her other hand.*) I've heard it's not that great a movie anyway.

GRANT. (*Seriously unnerved, his voice raises an octave.*) Really? (*He clears his throat and pitches his voice down.*) I heard it was great. Oscar material. (*He takes a step back.*)

MEG. A horror movie winning an Oscar? Never happen.

GRANT. Could happen. Come on, quit screwing around and let's go.

MEG. (*Mildly disgusted.*) Ok. Fine. Let's go see it. (*She turns again and picks up her skirt and starts to pull it on. She turns to Grant, he is watching avidly. She pulls up the skirt slowly, their eyes are locked. She takes a step toward him and he steps back hurriedly. Tenderly -*) What are you so afraid of?

GRANT. I don't know. I really want you but...

MEG. But what?

GRANT. I haven't figured that out yet.

MEG. I'm sorry. I'll back off. You lead.

GRANT. (*Groans*) I'm afraid if you do that, we'll never.... (*Beat*) I don't know. I love her, Meg.

MEG. I know you do. I just want...my bit. My little piece of Grant.

GRANT. I can't find that place in my head that makes it right.

MEG. There's no such thing as right. You struggle with black and white all the time but all I see is gray.

GRANT. I see in vivid color. You are very, very vivid to me and I don't want to lose what we have just for...

MEG. Ten or twelve hours of the best sex you've ever had?

GRANT. Exactly. (*Laughs.*) See? I knew you could see it my way.

MEG. What do we have, Grant? What would we lose?

FISHING

GRANT. Each other. We...get each other...mostly. That doesn't happen very often.

MEG. Do you love me, Grant?

GRANT. Of course I do. You're my best friend.

MEG. No. You know what I mean. Do you love me? *(Silence. Grant looks at the floor.)*

MEG. You want to know what I think? I think...you were just afraid.

GRANT. I am afraid. *(Meg makes a disgusted sound and turns her back on him, goes over to pick up her clothes.)* I already talk about you too much to her. I don't want her to see... *(Meg stops as she's bending to pick up her blouse.)* I'm afraid of losing myself in you and not being able to find my way back to Dana. She's my home base, she's my anchor. You...you're the open sea and the wild prairie and... I'm afraid of getting lost.

MEG. *(Turns and stares at him for a moment.)* You should write that down. That's beautiful. *(Silent moment as they look at each other.)*

GRANT. I will. But first...

MEG. What, baby?

GRANT. Could you please....put your shirt on?

MEG. *(Laughs.)* Fuck. I forgot. Sorry. *She drags her shirt over her head.* May I hug you now?

GRANT. Yeah. That would be nice. *(Meg walks over and puts her arms around his neck, pulls his face towards hers and kisses him on the forehead.)*

MEG. We'll just be friends. I will try to not be so incredibly sexy and you will not say anything else poetic and we will be good, good friends for a long, long time. *(She buries her faces in his neck and breathes audibly.)* Oh, god, and you will try not to smell this good. *(Grant's arms come up around her waist and he pulls her to him tightly then pushes her away firmly.)*

GRANT. We should go now. We're missing the movie.

MEG. *(Smiles.)* Chicken.

GRANT. Yes. So?

MEG. You have a hard on.

GRANT. Ignore it. It's no big deal.

FISHING

MEG. Seems like a big deal to me.

GRANT. Stop. Get your shoes on.

MEG. Fine. (*She crosses and slides into her shoes, goes back to kitchen counter and grabs her earrings.*) Let's go.

GRANT. You're mad again.

MEG. No. I am frustrated. Very very frustrated. Goddammit. (*Beat.*) I'm afraid, too. I'm afraid I'm going to do something flamboyantly stupid and lose you forever. I'm afraid...that I like you too much not to. But...honestly...I'm afraid that you want me to be the one to force things and that my fear of losing you will stop me and that we'll just go on and on playing this immensely aggravating game of cat and mouse forever. And I'm *terrified* that your poetic soul and your sweetness and your totally fucked up sense of humor has drawn me in too far and that I haven't got a chance to walk away unscarred.

GRANT. I am not trying to hurt you. I swear.

MEG. But you do.

GRANT. Maybe we just shouldn't see each other anymore.

MEG. That's your answer? My, God, Grant, I have not thrown you to the ground because I don't want to lose you and now I could lose you anyway? That's so fucked up. If we're not going to see each other anymore, we might as well just strip and go to town right here, right now and make it worth all the time we've invested over the last two years.

GRANT. Meg! Dammit. Dammit...you keep forgetting one thing - the most important, actually the only reason why. I'm married. I cannot just have sex with you because I feel like it.

MEG. But Dana said you can!

GRANT. What? How the hell do you know that?

MEG. She didn't tell you? Oh, god, she didn't tell you.

GRANT. Tell me what?

MEG. She came over here today...to talk. About you and me.

GRANT. (*Furious.*) No fucking way. Oh, my god. Who does she think she is??

MEG. She's your wife.

GRANT. She cannot do this to me. Fuck.

FISHING

MEG. She thought she was doing the right thing...she knew you'd never...

GRANT. I thought that was the point of being married. Never... doing.... anything. With anyone else.

MEG. I thought you knew. I'm so sorry.

GRANT. This is humiliating. It's like my mother talking to my teacher or something.

MEG. It was a good talk.

GRANT. Yeah. She's good at that. She makes things sounds really reasonable.

MEG. What is so unreasonable about it?

GRANT. (*Stops – stares at her.*) You, too? Women. You're nuts, all of you.

MEG. No. We're not. You're just terrified. You're shaking in your boots. You're like a toddler in the goddamned dark, ready to pee your pants rather than take a step forward.

GRANT. Fuck you.

MEG. Yeah, right. You're not man enough! (*They glare at each other.*) Why are you here, Grant? Why are you standing in my living room right now?

GRANT. Because...god, I don't know. I don't fucking know.

MEG. Because you love me, you idiot. You want to make love to me but your sense of honor won't let you. Instead, you've chosen to make a wreck of yourself, of both of us, by being intimate with me without ever being truly intimate with me. Stop being afraid. You have nothing left to be afraid of. (*Meg steps toward him and he does not back away. She slowly takes off her shirt, then her skirt and takes another step forward. He is breathing heavily but does not move. Meg takes another step toward him, places her hands on his chest. His head drops down and she leans forward, wraps her arms around him.*) Are you man enough, Grant? (*Grant's arms come up around her, hands stroking her back.*)

GRANT. God. I want to be.

MEG. You are. I wouldn't want you if you weren't.

GRANT. Promise me one thing.

MEG. Yes.

FISHING

GRANT. You won't sit around in some coffee shop comparing notes with my wife.

MEG. I promise. (*Grant kisses her fiercely as the lights dim to black.*)

INTERMISSION

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