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*To Mrs. L, Betty Ann Lasley, lover of language, theater, and students, who inspired me to demand a quality education.*

## Cast of Characters

### *First Year Minnows:*

FLANDER FLOUNDER

TONY TUNA

SHARLENE SHARK

CUBBY GUPPY

OTHER MINNOWS (non-speaking parts)

### SECOND SEASON MINNOWS (CHORUS)

### *Adult Fish:*

MR. FLOUNDER

FIONA FOUNDER

GWEN GUPPY

MR. SALMON

SIMONE SALMON

NANA ABIGAIL ALBACORE

MRS. SHARK

GRADY GREAT WHITE

TEACHER TURTLE

ANGELA ANGELFISH (non-speaking part)

LUNCH LOBSTER

SEA HORSE (non-speaking part)

## Production Notes

### Synopsis of Scenes:

Scene 1: The underwater cave home of the Flounder family—morning

Scene 2: A school cave on the reef—day

Scene 3: The kelp forest—afternoon

In a small theater group, actors can play multiple roles (adult fish becoming second season minnows), using costume changes to signify the different characters. Also, the parts of Angela Angelfish and Sea Horse can be easily eliminated for smaller casts.

This play is appropriate for performance by a children's theater group. It can also be performed by adults to an audience of children.

Actual running time is 35 minutes. There are two scene changes of approximately 5 minutes each. Complete performance time is 45 minutes.

## Acknowledgments

*Flander Flounder Goes To School* was first presented on July 28, 2004 by Casper Children's Theatre in Casper, Wyoming and was directed by Becky Morris and Renee Naquin. Technical direction, set design, and sound were by Gale Peterson, lights by William Cassidy, and class volunteers were Kaylin Potter and Amber Pollock. Production photos were taken by John Naquin. The play was performed by the following cast:

FLANDER FLOUNDER.....Jacob Narotzky  
FIONA FLOUNDER.....Katie Moriarty  
ANGELA ANGELFISH.....Hannah Morris  
MR. FLOUNDER.....Jesse Davy  
TEACHER TURTLE.....Kegan Wells  
CUBBY GUPPY .....Josh Kirkman  
TONY TUNA .....Andrew Potter  
SHARLENE SHARK.....Hailey Erbert  
SECOND SEASON MINNOWS.....Katie Moriarty,  
Ana Katz, Garth Hickey,  
Andrew Wildman, Kailee Hernandez,  
Jesse Davy, Hannah Morris, Emma Narotzky  
LUNCH LADY LOBSTER.....Kailee Hernandez  
MRS. GWEN GUPPY.....Ana Katz  
BISCUIT, THE SEA HORSE.....Hannah Morris  
SIMONE SALMON.....Emma Narotzky  
GRADY GREAT WHITE.....Garth Hickey  
NANA ABIGAIL ALBACORE..Kailee Hernandez  
MR. SALMON .....Andrew Wildman  
MRS. SHARK.....Kegan Wells

# FLANDER FLOUNDER GOES TO SCHOOL

## by Bernie Strand

### Scene 1

*(The underwater cave of the flounder family – MORNING.)*

*(FIONA FLOUNDER sets tasty sea weed on the coral in front of FLANDER. He digs in. Outside the cave opening, ANGELA ANGELFISH passes by, silently, several times. SEA HORSE's tail is tied around a reed or coral near a corner by its tail.)*

**FLANDER.** And Teacher Turtle said we're going to learn how to turn as a group and which anemone are safe to hide in and where the best plankton float and EVERYTHING!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** My GOODNESS! And this is just your second day of school.

**FLANDER.** I know.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** They sure teach a lot more things than when our season of minnows started school! We didn't learn about anemone until our second season!

**FLANDER.** I KNOW!!!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Please don't talk with kelp in your mouth, Flander. It's very unattractive. We don't want the other fish to think you grew up in a shell, do we?

**FLANDER.** No, Ma'am.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** That's all right, Flander. We know you're excited to join the big minnows in the school. Teacher Turtle taught our school when we were minnows. It seems like she's been around forever.

**FLANDER.** Is she very old, Mama?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** No one knows how old Teacher Turtle really is, Flander.

**FLANDER.** It's a good thing she lives such a long time. It takes her for-EVER to get anywhere!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Flander! Don't you DARE repeat that at school.

**FLANDER.** Aw, Mama.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Teacher Turtle is older than some parts of the reef! She's very wise.

**FLANDER.** Gosh! I bet she's even older than that ugly old oyster growing on the metal reef.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** It's called a Man Boat, Flander. Use its proper name now that you're in school.

**FLANDER.** I'll bet she's even older than the metal, than the Man Boat even!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Yes, she may even be older than the Man Boat. We used to hear her talk about our great grand spawners — that would be your great, great, grand spawners, Flander. Anyway, she used to tell us stories of the crashing surf that brought the Man Boat to the reef. There were many treats for the reef dwellers that day!

**FLANDER.** Is that why the sound of the surf tells us it's lunch tide?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** That's what we've always heard. Just the sound of surf makes our mouths water!

**FLANDER.** Mine, too!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** But remember, Flander, not all the reef dwellers are friendly.

**FLANDER.** I KNOW, Mama!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** You're going to meet a lot of other fish in school, from different kinds of families. Some of those families are...

**FLANDER.** Are what, Mama?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Well, let's just say, we weren't exactly thrilled to see you swim home with that Shark female yesterday after school.

**FLANDER.** Aw, Mama. Sharlene is nice. She's not like other Sharks. She's my friend.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We know, Flander. She seems very nice. You never know about a Shark. They can be very unpredictable. Now we like that Guppy male. He seems very nice.

**FLANDER.** I like Cubby Guppy, Mama, AND I like Sharlene Shark.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** It's just...it's just that you are growing up so fast. We're not sure we want you to be one of the big fish, yet. We like that you're our little minnow.

**FLANDER.** I'll always be your minnow, Mama, but I won't always be LITTLE.

**FIONA FLANDER.** Of course.

**FLANDER.** I'm tired of being little, Mama. It's boring, always swimming around the same old coral. I know everything there is to know about our cave. I'm ready to explore the rest of the reef, the kelp forest, the continental shelf, maybe even some tide, the OCEAN!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Yes, we remember how excited we were to swim away from our own caves when we were minnows. We knew every rock, every grain of sand, every barnacle on our section of the reef.

**FLANDER.** Three hundred seventy four.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** What?

**FLANDER.** Barnacles. I'm not sure about the sand. Every tide I'm almost done counting, a swell moves it around, and I have to start all over. It's very irritating!

**FIONA FLANDER.** We know you won't be a minnow forever. *(Loud bubbles are heard from off stage:)* There's your school bubbles. Better be on your way.

**FLANDER.** *(Heads for the cave opening.)* Bye, Mama.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Don't forget your lunch. *(She fins him a yolk sack.)*

*(FLANDER puts his fins through the harness and the small yolk sack hangs mid-belly in front of him. He looks at the contents of the see-through sack.)*

**FLANDER.** Mmmm! Snails and sea urchins. My FAVORITES! Thanks Mama.

*(Loud bubbles sound off stage and FLANDER exits.)*

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Be safe. STAY WITH YOUR SCHOOL! They grow so fast.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** *(Enters from a different opening.)* Was that the school bubbles?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Yes. It's hard to believe he's big enough to join the school.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Nonsense! Flander's already as big as we were when we started swimming with the school.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Three hundred seventy four barnacles. *(Gestures around the cave.)*

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Really. Well, that's...let's see. Three hundred seventy four minus three hundred thirteen. Hm. Is that algae-bra or conch-ulous.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** It's sub-traction, and the answer is sixty one.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Yes. Sixty one. That sounds about right. Tides sure are changing from when we were minnows.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Imagine how poor Gwen Guppy must feel! Little Cubby isn't nearly as big as Flander. She was over here yesterday and couldn't keep herself busy enough! She stayed the whole day, just folding, and RE-folding the kelp.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** He's ready to go, Mother. We can't keep him a minnow forever.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We know they're old enough to join the school, but we worry about them. They are such tiny minnows.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** He's going to run out of yolk sack one of these days, and he'll need to keep up with the other fish on the reef.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** You're right. We've been treating him like a minnow for far too long.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** We Flounders come from a long line of strong fish. Remember those stories about my great grand spawner, Floyd Flounder. He was foraging on his own for sea urchins before his yolk sack had completely absorbed. He'll be fine, My Little Fish Lips. He's a good minnow, and smart as a Porpoise!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Let's not give it another thought. Snails and sea urchins for you, too, my Turtle Dive?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Don't go to any bother. We'll just grab some plankton when the current brings it our direction. Got to swim! The swarm bubbles will be here any minute. *(A beat.)* We didn't want to say anything while the minnows were around, but all the reef dwellers have been as nervous as Salmon in a storm swell.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Nervous? Now that you mention it, Angela Angelfish has been darting by our cave at least a dozen tides this morning. Is she guarding her den again? You know how she gets just before she spawns.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Angela has good reason to be darting around.

*(He looks through opening.)*

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** What are you looking for?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Shadows.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** NO!

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Afraid so.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** But it's been so many seasons.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** More seasons than, well, than we have fins.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Surely we're a Sanctuary by now!

**MR. FLOUNDER.** No. Not yet, I'm afraid.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We haven't seen shadows in these parts for ages.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Just because we haven't seen one doesn't mean they aren't still out there...

**FIONA FLANDER.** Who can fathom why we aren't a sanctuary yet? Who decides such things?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Other shadows?

**FIONA FLANDER.** They must be in league with each other. Who... who is missing?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** One of the Tuna.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** NO!

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Abernathy Albacore swam toward the continental shelf yesterday morning, and hasn't been seen since.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Old Abernathy, he's a bit adrift lately. Maybe he's just...

**MR. FLOUNDER.** The current spread the news. Sharks circled by twilight and Porpoise Cove was packed like Sardines by dark.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Poor old Mr. Albacore. What a lovely fish. We'll miss him around the reef. (*A beat.*) The school? What about the minnows?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** The minnows are fine. Abernathy is a large fish...*WAS* a large fish. The Porpoises are on patrol today and there's a rumor that Great White is headed our direction.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Great White himself? There will be a terrible cost!

**MR. FLOUNDER.** There is always a terrible cost when the Sharks are called in, but it's out of our fins now.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Nana Albacore's probably in her cove. Abigail will need help with those 65 grand spawn of hers on a day like this. It's so unfair! Their own minnows had to leave the reef to avoid the Man Boats, and now, left to raise this hatch of minnows all alone, poor Dear.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** *(Bubbles sound off stage.)* There's the swarm bubbles. Can't keep them waiting, especially on a day like today! It's important that we stay alert in tides like these.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Bubble us if you hear news. Goodness! Look at us! Our gills are all aflutter. We can barely float still.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Stay in the caves if you can and travel the anemone trail if you go out.

**FIONA FLANDER.** Gwen Guppy will probably go along to the Albacores. After lunch we'll go by the kelp forest and forage some fresh fronds for tonight. *(A beat.)* Perhaps we should have left-overs instead?

**MR. FLOUNDER.** There's lots of cover in the kelp forest. And fresh sea weed sounds delicious. Don't drift about, though. Just snag what's loose, and swim right back here.

**FIONA FLANDER.** All right.

**MR. FLOUNDER.** We're safest if we stick together and stay out of sight.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** You don't have to tell me twice! We'll finish foraging and be back here in the flick of a tail!

**MR. FLOUNDER.** There may be Porpoise Krills today. Shadows seem to come in clusters. *(Sound of bubbles off stage.) (To Sea Horse:)* See you, Biscuit. Don't get lost in the kelp fronds.

*(Lights down.)*

## **Scene 2**

*(A school cave on the reef – DAY.)*

*(TEACHER TURTLE addresses the school who listen attentively. She gestures in front of her. The MINNOWS look where she gestures, as if they can see what she indicates.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** And here we see the common blue plankton. You can always distinguish the common blue plankton from its cousin the green plankton by its shiny underside.

*(Leans her head to one side as if examining the underside. The MINNOWS lean their heads the same direction, as if looking at the underside of the plankton.)*

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** Oooh, pretty!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Yes, it is, rather pretty. Pretty tasty! *(Takes a bite at the air, chews, and swallows.)*

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** *(They bite the air, chew, and swallow.)*  
Mmmm.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** I got a blue one!

**FLANDER.** I like the green better.

**TONY TUNA.** I'd be nothing but scales and bone if I had to survive on this stuff.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It all tastes like sea weed to me.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Minnows, Minnows! ALL TOGETHER! After many seasons with this school, we know that the minnows who stay together live a long, happy, safe life on the reef.

*(Enter SECOND SEASON MINNOWS.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** You there!

**SECOND SEASON MINNOWS.** *(As one:)* Yes, Teacher Turtle? Can we help you?

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Lovely! Wasn't that just lovely! Lost their yolk sacks only last season, and look at them now!

*(SECOND SEASON MINNOWS turn, as one, demonstrating their coordination, then exit.)*

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** Oooh!

**FLANDER.** I can't wait till we can do that!

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** *(Except for FLANDER:)* Shhh.

**FLANDER.** Oops!

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** *(Except for FLANDER:)* Shhh!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** It's very hard to learn to work as a group. It takes concentration, patience, and "want to." Who wants to?

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** I do! I do!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** "WE" do.

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** We do! We do!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Very good! Now are we all ready to practice turning as a school?

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** Yes, Teacher Turtle.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Then on your tails! Very good! Now, watch first. *(She demonstrates the turn.)* A-one and two and three and TURN.

**FLANDER.** A-one and two and three and TURN.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Tide it with the current, and stay together with the count. Slowly at first. *(They all sway with the current.)* A-one and two and three and TURN.

*(They perform the turn, but there are a few stragglers.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Not bad, for minnows. You'll have to do better than that if you want to swim against the current to the Second Season Cove. Let's try that again! A-one and two and three and TURN.

*(They are together this time.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Much better! You're looking like a real school of fish now!

*(Loud clicks and whistles are heard off stage.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** PORPOISE KRILL!

*(The MINNOWS scramble to hide in nooks and behind boulders.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Very good! That was a Porpoise Krill. Your spawners have obviously been practicing with you.

**TONY TUNA.** *(Swishes CUBBY GUPPY with his fin.)* You're "it"!

**CUBBY GUPPY.** *(Swishes FLANDER with his fin.)* You're "it"!

**TONY TUNA.** Get Sharlene. She's not looking.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** MINNOWS! (*The MINNOWS swipe at each other for a moment, then look at TEACHER TURTLE.*) No Sea Horsing around during the Porpoise Krills! This is very serious business. We never know where danger lurks on the reef.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Silly males!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** You can come out now. The cove is clear. Come on, flick your tails and get back into formation.

*(The MINNOWS return to center stage.)*

**FLANDER.** Teacher Turtle?

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Yes? Flander Flounder, isn't it?

**FLANDER.** Yes Ma'am. My spawner says the Porpoise Krills are to keep us safe. Is that true?

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Yes, it's true, Minnows. Many seasons ago, before the reef was as big as it is now, before the Barnacles and the Mussels cemented themselves to the metal Man Boat at the far end of the coral, before the metal Man Boat had even been part of the reef, there was a tide when we did not have Porpoise Krills. It was a very dangerous tide to live on the reef.

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** Oooh!

**TEACHER TURTLE.** The ocean was deeper then. At least it seemed deeper. Of course we were much smaller Turtles in those days, so maybe it's just a matter of perspective. Yes, well, where were we?

**TONY TUNA.** You were saying that there were no Porpoise Krills before the metal Man Boat was part of the reef.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Yes, thank you Tony. Quite right. It was the season of the Man Hunters.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Teacher Turtle?

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Yes, Cubby Guppy, isn't it?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Uh huh.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** We had your older brothers last season, didn't we? And your three sisters the season before that? Goodness, there certainly are a lot of you Guppies. Every tide we paddle around, it seems like there's another spawn coming along. Why, you could practically start a school of your own!

**CUBBY GUPPY.** It's as noisy as a school at our cave. I like coming to school where it's quiet.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** What is your question, Cubby?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** My brothers say the reef is safe now because it is a Sanctuary. It's so safe that pretty soon we won't need the Porpoise Krills anymore.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** If only that were true, Cubby. Who knows what a Sanctuary is? Sharlene Shark. What is a Sanctuary?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** A Sanctuary is a safe place, where the reef dwellers don't have to worry about dirty water, and I don't have Man Straws or Man Cigarettes or Man Bottles floating through our cave. My spawner told me that he thinks the reef has become a Sanctuary, because there's no good Man Tires around to munch on, but I like being a Sanctuary. It smells saltier.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** That's part of what it means to be a Sanctuary, Sharlene, but there are many different kinds of Sanctuary. Tide will tell what kind of Sanctuary we are. Some Sanctuaries are safe from dirty water and floating Man Trash, but not safe from Man Nets. There are even Sanctuaries where Man Hunters with spears continue to swim above the reef dwellers.

**FIRST SEASON MINNOWS.** NO!

**FLANDER.** They don't hunt minnows, just old fish that are too big and eat too much.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Many fish are not safe from Man Hunters with spears, but they do not hunt minnows with spears.

*(MINNOWS sigh with relief.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Not so fast. Man Hunters sometimes hunt with nets that are so small even the tiniest minnow can be trapped.

**FLANDER.** Not me! I'd lie real flat and slide right under it!

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I'd slice the net with my teeth!

**TONY TUNA.** I'd use my muscles to stretch the holes in the net until they were big enough to swim through.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** I'd...I'd...I'd probably slip through anyway, 'cause I'm so little.

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Cubby, that's very clever. It takes a great deal of courage to escape a Man Net. **HOWEVER** you escape is brave and clever!

*(Sound of wave splashing.)*

**TEACHER TURTLE.** Lunch tide.

*(The LUNCH LOBSTER enters moving backwards and is herding plankton and tidbits of sea food with her claws ahead of the SECOND YEARS, who enter after her. They are eating from the "buffet". One of the SECOND YEARS moves away from the group and the LUNCH LOBSTER snaps at it.)*

**LUNCH LOBSTER.** Together, Second years!

*(SECOND SEASON MINNOWS, moving as one, gather the straggler back into the group.)*

**LUNCH LOBSTER.** Remember, the minnows who stay together live a long, happy, safe life on the reef. *(Exits and the SECOND YEARS follow the LUNCH LOBSTER off stage.)*

*(The FIRST SEASON MINNOWS eat things from their yolk sacks.)*

**TONY TUNA.** Squid! Oh, GOLLY! My favorite!

**FLANDER.** Yuck! How can you eat that stuff?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** I tried squid once. That sucker kept sticking to the side of my throat. I thought I'd never swallow that tentacle!

**TONY TUNA.** You have to chew it up first, silly.

**FLANDER.** Not gulp them whole! I'd rather have a nice slippery snail or a squishy sea urchin any day. *(He slurps one from a container.)*

**TONY TUNA.** Hey, guess what.

**FLANDER.** What?

**TONY TUNA.** I think my sister is being courted.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** What's that?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** YOU don't understand "COURTED"? It runs in your family, a LOT!

**FLANDER.** It's when a male likes a female, then he peri-WINK-les at her and they move into a cave.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** And they spawn and live happily ever after.

**TONY TUNA.** I think it's gross. They make fish eyes at each other and wiggle their gills and scrape the sand and everything.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It's a perfectly natural part of life.

**FLANDER.** It sounds embarrassing!

**CUBBY GUPPY.** It sounds DISGUSTING!

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Where do you think YOU came from?

**FLANDER / CUBBY GUPPY / TONY TUNA.** YUCK!!!

**FLANDER.** I don't want to think about it.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** How do you think I feel?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Did you notice anything fishy going on today?

**FLANDER.** Fishy? Around here?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Now that you mention it...

**TONY TUNA.** My family was packed into our cove this morning, but nobody would tell me anything. I think something is up.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Whenever my spawners start whispering I just figure there's more of us on the way, so I go to my Cubby hole and play my Swish Station.

**FLANDER.** You've got a Swish Station?

**TONY TUNA.** This season's or last?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Fresh from the bubble wrap.

**FLANDER.** Wow!

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Something's up. I can smell it.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** What does it smell like, Sharlene?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It smells like T...*(Looks at Tony Tuna, then stops.)* Uh, trouble. Uh, I can't smell anything else.

**TONY TUNA.** What do you mean you can't smell anything else. Sharks can smell everything!

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I...I...I just can't! *(She moves off, away from the others.)*

**TONY TUNA.** What's eating her? *(To Flander:)* Are those snails?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Snails? Really? I love snails!

**FLANDER.** Yep! My mom got them from her Porpoise friend. They were on the side of the continental shelf and as thick as beach sand.

**CUBBY GUPPY / TONY TUNA.** Imagine that!

**FLANDER.** Keep it up, you'll definitely make "teacher's pets".

**CUBBY GUPPY.** We're not either!

**TONY TUNA.** *(At same time as CUBBY GUPPY:)* We're not either! We're just learning how to survive on the reef. You heard what Teacher Turtle said. "The minnows who stay together live a long, happy, safe life on the reef."

**FLANDER.** I know. I think it's a good idea and all, but, gosh, don't you think it's hard work?

**TONY TUNA.** It's a little hard.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** It's hard for me, too. But my family is so little. All my life I've heard my spawner say "stay with your school, and you'll stay in school for a long, long tide!"

**TONY TUNA.** Mine too, and we're big, strong fish. Everyone in my family is strong. Even my sister is big. You should see her school. They're almost 100 pounds this season!

*(FLANDER and CUBBY giggle.)*

It's not funny! She can't help it if she is a big fish! It's in our genes!  
*(He exits.)*

**FLANDER.** Tony, wait, we didn't mean anything by that.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** What's he so crabby about?

**FLANDER.** Aw, we were just kidding around. He said his sister's school is almost 100 pounds this season.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** I think we hurt his feelings.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** What did you say?

**FLANDER.** Nothing. REALLY!

**CUBBY GUPPY.** We sort of laughed.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Tuna are sensitive about their weight. Don't you know anything? They don't like to think about getting too big for the reef.

**FLANDER.** It's just part of their destiny. We all worry about that.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It's just, well, today was not a very good day to tease him about that.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Why today?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I smelled blood.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** BLOOD?!?!?

**FLANDER.** What...what kind?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Tuna, I think.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** For real?

**FLANDER.** Maybe you have a cold?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** If she had a cold she wouldn't smell anything.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Maybe I made a mistake. I get squid and octopus mixed up all the time. You smell one tentacle, you've smelled them all.

**FLANDER.** Sure, that's it. You mixed them up.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Probably some old Anchovy stinking up the place.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It wasn't an Anchovy.

**FLANDER.** I kind of like that Tony's going to be a big fish. You never know when a strong friend might come in fin-y, *(A beat.)* or a little guy who can help out when you're in a tight squeeze.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I used to be sensitive about my species. Everyone says the meanest things about Sharks. You don't have to pretend. I KNOW what fish say. "You can never trust a Shark! They'll sink their teeth into you the first chance they get." I know the reef dwellers are scared of us.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** We're not scared of you.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** It's easy now, because I'm just a minnow, *(Removes a slab of food from her yolk sack.)* but you wait and see. In a few seasons, you'll both be looking at me like I'm a Hammerhead during a feeding frenzy. *(Aggressively tears a bite out of her lunch.)*

**FLANDER.** *(Gulp.)* Nah, never happen.

**CUBBY GUPPY.** *(Extends fin.)* Friends, forever.

**FLANDER.** Friends forever. *(Puts fin on top of Cubby's fin.)*

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Really?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Sure. Come on Sharlene.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** *(Adds her fin.)* Friends. FOREVER!

**FLANDER.** Want to dart around until the next surf?

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Sure!

**SHARLENE SHARK.** *(Swishes at CUBBY.)* You're it! *(Swims off without looking back.)*

*(CUBBY GUPPY cradles his fin like it smarts.)*

**CUBBY GUPPY.** *(To FLANDER:)* What EVER you do, don't scrape against the coral or who knows WHO Sharlene will have for desert!

*(Lights down.)*

### **Scene 3**

*(The kelp forest – AFTERNOON.)*

*(GWEN GUPPY carries a sea shell into which she places plankton she picks from in front of her. FIONA FLOUNDER leads BISCUIT, the Sea Horse, around on a halter. Several detached fronds are draped over the back of the sea horse's neck.)*

*(SIMONE SALMON enters.)*

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Simone Salmon! How long has it been?

**SIMONE SALMON.** Fiona Flounder! Gwen Guppy! Too long! We haven't seen each other in a season!

**FIONA FLOUNDER / GWEN GUPPY.** We've been nesting.

**SIMONE SALMON.** Ah yes, Little Flander and Cubby must be big enough for school this season. And how are you, Dears?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Not too well.

**GWEN GUPPY.** Who would be?

**SIMONE SALMON.** Oh, dear, what are those rascal spawn of yours up to now?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** No, no, Flander is fine.

**GWEN GUPPY.** All the minnows are fine.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Flander is learning so much from Teacher Turtle.

**SIMONE SALMON.** You must be so proud. Yes, you are! Look at you! You are positively phosphorescent!

**GWEN GUPPY.** It's her first spawn. After the second hundred the charm wears off.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We're telling ourselves to wait until the reports come in with the tide, but we're sure he'll get high water marks. He is a smart one. So clever about darting. He always finds the best nooks!

**SIMONE SALMON.** Why they can't be out of yolk sack yet, can they? It seems like only yesterday that they were floating entirely inside them!

**GWEN GUPPY.** They absorb so fast.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Flander has been an absolute joy. We're very lucky.

**GWEN GUPPY.** We have gallons to be thankful for.

**SIMONE SALMON.** All right, out with it, Females! We've known each other long enough for us to tell when something is fishy.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Have you heard about Abernathy Albacore?

**SIMONE SALMON.** *(Suddenly serious:)* Who hasn't? It's all anyone is gurgling about on the reef. The eels were shocked when they heard and the parrot fish have been repeating the news up and down the reef. Even the lobsters are simply scurrying for cover at the hint of a shadow!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We swam over to the Tuna's to help Abigail Albacore with the grand minnows. She hasn't had a moment to float still since it happened. Horrible! And so sudden!

**GWEN GUPPY.** Out of the blue!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Who would have expected such a thing?

*(They all look around, then laugh nervously.)*

**SIMONE SALMON.** We're being silly. Sanctuary doesn't mean the same thing it used to. That's for sure.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** All the Tuna fish are just nettled.

**GWEN GUPPY.** We haven't told the minnows yet.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We're not sure how much longer we can keep it from them.

**GWEN GUPPY.** We're simply not safe, not ANY of us!

**SIMONE SALMON.** We Salmon are so fortunate we spawn in the mountains.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** But what about bears?

**GWEN GUPPY.** And coyotes?

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** And hooks? We remember when you told us about hooks. GHASTLY!

**GWEN GUPPY.** We couldn't eat a thing for days.

**SIMONE SALMON.** Anyone with a brain over an ounce can avoid those sort of things. But a Man Hunter with a spear!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** We were told you hear a soft "whoosh".

**GWEN GUPPY.** It's so fast.

**FIONA FLANDER.** It's impossible to flick away!

**SIMONE SALMON.** We'll take our rocky creek with grizzly bears any day. What a terrible way to go!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** When we saw Abernathy's little grand minnows, we, we just...Oh, Gwen!

**GWEN GUPPY.** We promised each other we weren't going to cry anymore.

**SIMONE SALMON.** There, there, Dears. You just let that fresh water out.

*(A shadow passes over them. The SEA HORSE bolts, and runs off, dragging the kelp fronds with it. FIONA FLOUNDER and SIMONE SALMON freeze, motionless.)*

**SIMONE SALMON.** Be very still.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** It can't be.

**GWEN GUPPY.** Clam up!

*(Their eyes move together, following a shadow as it passes over.)*

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Is it gone?

**GWEN GUPPY.** It's gone.

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Look at us. We're shaking like sea weed at the edge of a tidal pool!

**GWEN GUPPY.** This is too terrible to be true!

**SIMONE SALMON.** We must alert the Porpoises!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** And the spear! That was a spear wasn't it. It was so shiny!

**SIMONE SALMON.** It was hypnotic! We were frozen! We'd better get hidden before the Man Hunter comes back.

*(They swim for cover, the shadow passes over and stops.)*

*(TONY TUNA swims into the forest. The shadow passes overhead. TONY wanders around the forest tasting. The shadow above circles closer.)*

*(The Porpoise Krill sounds. TONY looks confused.)*

*(There is a glint of light. FLANDER, CUBBY, and SHARLENE enter. A spear cuts through the water, nicking FLANDER's tail just as he nudges TONY TUNA out of the way. Part of his costume falls away with the spear. He swims furiously, but makes little progress. The shadow now circles FLANDER.)*

*(CUBBY waves his fins, darting in front of the Man Hunter while SHARLENE uses her teeth to grab FLOUNDER and drag him to safety.)*

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Hey, you, Man Hunter, over here!

**FLANDER.** Quick, Sharlene, he's got another spear.

*(CUBBY darts in front of the shadows.)*

*(The shadow continues to circle overhead. FIONA FLOUNDER swims around fussing over FLANDER, and does not notice she is exposed to the Man Hunter. Another spear slices through the water, narrowly missing her, and she freezes. The shadow stops directly over her.)*

*(CUBBY darts in front of the shadow.)*

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Hey, Man Hunter! Over here! Come on, you big bully! You ca-an't hit me! Nanner, nanner, NAA-ner!

*(TONY TUNA swims out and nudges FIONA FLOUNDER until she snaps out of it. TONY returns to his safe nook and FIONA FLOUNDER tries to find one big enough for her to hide. CUBBY also hides, and the shadow moves around. GREAT WHITE enters and the shadow disappears. GREAT WHITE circles FIONA FLOUNDER for a moment, then SHARLENE emerges.)*

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Hi, Uncle Grady! Am I ever glad to see you!

*(FIONA FLOUNDER swims away from center stage.)*

**TONY TUNA / FLANDER / CUBBY GUPPY.** Uncle Grady???

**CUBBY GUPPY.** Great White is your uncle?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Yup!

**TONY TUNA.** Uncle "Great-y". I get it!

**FLANDER.** Awesome!

**GREAT WHITE.** Sharlene. What are you doing feeding when you should be with your school?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I'm not feeding, Uncle Grady. I'm hanging out with chums.

**GREAT WHITE.** The older we get the harder it is to tell the difference, Sharlene. Stay together minnows. You'll live a long, happy, SAFE life on the reef.

**FIRST SEASON MINNONS.** Y-y-yes Sir, Mr. Great White.

**GREAT WHITE.** Be alert and listen for the Porpoise Krills. Even the mighty Sharks respect the clever Porpoises.

(GREAT WHITE *exits.*)

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Bye Uncle Grady! Bon Appetite!

**FLANDER.** Bon Appetite? What's that?

**SHARLENE SHARK.** I told him to have a nice dinner.

**FLANDER.** Wicked!

(MR. FLOUNDER, ABAGAIL ALBACORE, MR. SALMON,  
*and* MRS. SHARK *enter.*)

**MR. FLOUNDER.** Are you minnows all right?

**GWEN GUPPY.** Oh, Cubby, We're so proud of you! You were so brave for such a tiny minnow!

**FIONA FLOUNDER.** Flander, you scared the life out of us! Whatever possessed you to do such a brave, foolish thing?

**TONY TUNA.** Did you see that, Nana?

**ABAGAIL ALBACORE.** Tony, Tony, our precious little one!

**TONY TUNA.** She barely touched Flander with her teeth! The fin's history, but WOW! She could have filleted him with those suckers. Look how sharp they are! That was close!

**ABAGAIL ALBACORE.** We were so frightened. What were you thinking, straying away from the school? Don't you ever scare us like that again or we'll filet you ourselves!

**MRS. SHARK.** (*To SHARLENE:*) Let's have a look at you.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** Oh Mama, you would have been so proud of Uncle Grady! He scared that Man Hunter right off!

**MRS. SHARK.** We keep an eye on our favorite minnow, after all.

**SHARLENE SHARK.** You should have seen that Man Hunter head for shore! It was like he was on a hook and someone was reeling him in!

**MRS. SHARK.** We'd better go and leave the other fish so they won't be afraid.

**ADULT FISH.** Mrs. Shark?

## **THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

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