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Cast of Characters

(in order of speaking:)

WILL
VIVIAN
JOY
MYRNA
PETER
WENDY
DEREK
JASON
BILLY
RICHARD
MARTIN

Place and Time

Act I: new york city. the not too distant past.

Act II: hawaii, alaska, and inner borneo. the not too distant future.

Production Notes

all sound cues should, ideally, be generated by humans— including the animal sounds and the sounds of subways, airplanes, trucks, bells and whistles, waves and snowstorms. hawaiian music and christmas music should be live, if possible, as well as muzak and ambient airport announcements in act one.

Acknowledgments

Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls received its World Premiere in the 1999 Humana Festival of New American Plays at the Actors Theatre of Louisville. The cast and staff was as follows:

WILL/DEREK Bruce McKenzie
VIVIAN..... Carla Harting
JOY/LEE.....Peter Pamela Rose
MYRNA/RICHARD..... Nick Garrison
JED/EFRAN..... Todd Cerveris
WENDY Caitlin Miller
JASON.....Derek Cecil

Scenic Designer..... Paul Owen
Costume Designer..... Jack Taggart
Lighting Designer..... Pip Gordon
Sound Designer Malcom Nicholls
Properties Designer..... Mark Walston
Production Stage Manager..... Debra Acquavella
Assistant Stage Manager Jennifer Wills
Dramaturg..... Amy Wegener
Casting..... Laura Richin Casting

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

Aloha, Say the Pretty Girls received its World Premiere in the 1999 Humana Festival of New American Plays at the Actors Theatre of Louisville.

ALOHA, SAY THE PRETTY GIRLS

by Naomi Iizuka

act one

1.

(in darkness, WILL is a tiny figure standing on the edge.)

WILL.

adios. good-bye. hasta la vista.

catch you later, catch you on the rebound, gotta run, gotta jet, outta here, i'm outta here, i'm history—

farewell.

auf wiedersehen.

aloha.

aloha means good-bye.

(a light goes on within.)

2.

(a miniscule apartment in the city. a large house plant looms. VIVIAN is making a piñata with paper-mâché and wire. it's a large, indeterminate animal.)

VIVIAN. will? will, is that you?

(enter WILL.)

VIVIAN. hi.

WILL. hi.

VIVIAN. guess what? i quit my job. yup. i just, i just quit. i know, it's—well, it's kinda out of the blue, but then, you know, it hit me all of a sudden, it just hit me, there was just no point, there was just no future, and that really troubles me, you know, the absence of a future, because i would like to have a future, because i think it's sorta key. *(holding up her creation:)* how does it look?

WILL. nice, really nice.

VIVIAN. it's a piñata for myrna's class. isn't that neat?

WILL. yes, very, vivian—?

VIVIAN. it's a komodo dragon. a komodo dragon is like a living dinosaur, that's what myrna says. to look at a komodo dragon is to look at something prehistoric and strange. i hope the kids like it, i hope they can tell what it is, they'll have to use their imaginations, and that's ok, because kids are really imaginative, don't you think? god, i love kids, kids are great, they really are, they're what it's all about. don't you think? will?

WILL. i don't love you anymore.

VIVIAN. what?

WILL. i love joy.

VIVIAN. what?

WILL. her name is joy, you don't know her, she's no one you know, she's nothing like you, we're deeply and profoundly in love, don't ask me why, i don't know why, i don't know how it happened, it all just kind of snuck up on me. i finally know what people mean when they say they're in love, say something, vivvie, please.

VIVIAN. wow. i mean, wow. i mean—weren't we in love? i thought we were. i thought we had been for a while now, and now you're saying you stopped, you just kinda stopped—and doesn't that seem a little random and arbitrary and strange, doesn't that seem a little strange to you? will?

WILL. i guess i want more.

VIVIAN. more of what?

WILL. ok, look, vivian, i know this is hard, but these things happen to people, they happen all the time, and people live, they go on, they do ok, they survive, say something, vivvie, please.

VIVIAN. i think i'm going to be sick.

WILL. say something else.

VIVIAN. ok. i wish you and joy nothing but the best.

WILL. no hard feelings.

VIVIAN. no, none, none whatsoever, really.

WILL. great. ok.

VIVIAN. ok. alright then. i'll see you, will, i'll see you around.

(VIVIAN exits with the komodo dragon. the sound of animals in the jungle. strange birds. molting snakes. JOY appears in a bubble of light.)

JOY. will?

WILL. joy?

JOY. will.

WILL. joy.

JOY. will.

WILL. joy.

(WILL and JOY embrace in a bubble of light. enter VIVIAN with the komodo dragon.)

VIVIAN. will?

(the bubble of light instantly bursts as though pricked by a pin. darkness. the sound of unseen animals caw cawing and clicking in the shadows. the house plant appears in a bubble of light. VIVIAN sees it, goes to it, and tries to pick it up. the komodo dragon and the large house plant are too much to handle. she has trouble. a bird call.)

VIVIAN. will? will, is that you?

(MARTIN appears in a bubble of light. he wears dog ears. VIVIAN sees him, shrieks, drops the komodo dragon, and runs off with the plant. MARTIN picks up the komodo dragon. jungle sounds grow louder.)

(the jungle sounds turn into the chatter of antic children. MYRNA appears. MARTIN remains in his bubble of light. he holds the komodo dragon.)

MYRNA. all right, children, that's enough. this is a komodo dragon. a komodo dragon is a lizard. it lives in the jungles of inner borneo. the komodo dragon is like a living dinosaur. this is what we used to look like, we all used to look like this, and then things changed, and we changed, and the only thing that didn't change was the komodo dragon which stayed exactly the same. animals don't look like this anymore, they all died out, except for the komodo dragon which lives on, we know not why, it's a mystery. not much else is known about the komodo dragon. it hides in the tall grass. it eats this and that. this is also a piñata. it's a komodo dragon and a piñata. komodo dragon, piñata. piñatas come from mexico which is nowhere near borneo, and that's ok, the world is full of contradictions such as these, life goes on. piñatas are made of paper-mâché and wire, and are filled with all kinds of sweet-tasting surprises. in mexico, little children put on blindfolds, and take the piñata, and smash it with sticks. it's a tradition. i don't have a stick so i'm just going to use my hands. one, two, three. hoopa.

(MYRNA tries to pry the komodo dragon from MARTIN. a struggle ensues. the komodo dragon is ripped into pieces. MARTIN exits. MYRNA exits. the sound of frenzied animals in the jungle. then silence.)

4.

(muzak. a miniscule pet store. no animals in sight. PETER gazes into a giant, densely foliated terrarium. enter WENDY.)

PETER. hi there. can i help you?

WENDY. yes, you can— *(reading his name tag:)* pet.

PETER. pete. the name is pete. the "e" fell off.

WENDY. hi there, pete, i'm from the temp agency, some girl quit like out of the blue, i got a call. o wow, i'm going to love this job. i love animals, i love them so much, their musky smell, their mute, animalistic heat. right now, i'm an actress, i just played laura in

glass menagerie, tennessee williams' *glass menagerie*, which is kinda like a zoo, and laura, she's kinda like the zookeeper, but the animals aren't real, they're made of glass and they break, and frankly, you know, i'm not sure what i think about that. i mean, why glass? why do the animals have to be made of glass? why can't they be real? why can't they have fur? because i think, you know, laura needed that. i mean i think we all need that. a little fur. so where are they?

PETER. what's that?

WENDY. the pets. this is a pet store, and yet i see no pets, pete.

PETER. uh, well, the turtles are over there, and we just got some hermit crabs in yesterday, little baby hermit crabs. they're over there. by the turtles.

WENDY. no, no, i'm talking about the mammals: kitties and puppy dogs, hamsters, giraffes.

PETER. o, you know, we don't stock mammals here. they're really high maintenance, mammals are very high maintenance. the owner feels it's just not worth the hassle. store policy.

WENDY. is that right?

PETER. personally—if it was up to me, we'd have mammals. we'd have all kinds of mammals. i like mammals. i think mammals are great. we, we are mammals. first and foremost, when you strip it all away, that's what we are: mammals.

WENDY. what are you saying?

PETER. i don't know. nothing.

WENDY. no, i mean, what are you getting at? what do you mean?

PETER. you know, i don't know. i don't know what i mean.

WENDY. what are you thinking? what are you thinking right this second?

PETER. i don't know. you know. stuff.

WENDY. "stuff"? what does that mean, "stuff"? are you hiding something? what do you have to hide? who are you? who are you really? are you really who you say you are? i mean you say you're

pete, but are you really pete? or are you somebody else? and if you're somebody else, what happened to the real "pete"? did something bad happen to the real "pete"? i want to know. i want the truth. where are you going? i have more questions.

PETER. i need to feed the turtles.

WENDY. i'll help.

PETER. that's ok, i think i got it covered.

(PETER exits. WENDY follows. a ruckus in the jungle.)

5.

(a miniscule apartment in the city. JASON, MARTIN, and DEREK are squeezed in together in a too tiny space. DEREK tries to write. MARTIN wears dog ears. he wants to roam. he makes dog noises.)

DEREK. quiet, please. i need quiet. quiet.

(silence ensues. JASON begins to click.)

DEREK. i can't take it anymore. i'm beginning to unravel, i'm beginning to come apart at the seams. *(to JASON:)* please, please don't.

JASON. you know—i think martin, i think he's maybe depressed.

DEREK. martin is a dog. dogs don't get depressed.

JASON. o, you know, i don't know about that. i mean, the way martin's mind works, it's like god's own little mystery. like when he's sleeping, and his eyes roll back in his head and he makes these little "oof oof oof" noises, and i think he's maybe dreaming some weird dog dream, but there's no way i'll ever know, 'cause he can't tell me, that's the deal with dogs, they keep you guessing.

DEREK. martin is evil. arentcha, martin? martin hates me, dontcha? dontcha, martin?

JASON. no, derek, no. see, dogs don't hate. dogs love. dogs are all about love.

DEREK. are you high? he's got a plan. he's got a plan and he's big. do you see how big he's getting? he's too big. nobody should have a dog this big in the city. something bad could happen, something very very bad.

JASON. dude, you need to relax, get out more. nothing bad's going to happen. i mean, what could happen?

DEREK. i don't know. nothing, nothing at all. you're right. i'm wrong. what am i thinking? i don't know what i'm thinking. i'm a little addled. i'm not myself. i don't know who i am. aren't you going to be late for work?

JASON. yeah, i guess. man, i hate my job. i better feed him before i go, take him for a walk.

DEREK. i'll take care of it.

JASON. really?

DEREK. sure. you go on. i got it covered, i got it all taken care of.

JASON. thanks, derek. just, remember: don't let him out off leash. and no people food, ok? kibble, only kibble.

DEREK. i'm on it, i'm all over it. don't you worry about a thing.

JASON. thanks, man. i owe you one.

DEREK. you bet. see ya.

(JASON exits. MARTIN growls at DEREK.)

DEREK. look what uncle derek has. *(retrieving a large slab of meat:)* mm. prime rib. fetch.

(DEREK opens a window, and wings the piece of meat into oblivion. the whistle of a missile shot out into the void. MARTIN exits after it. DEREK shuts the window.)

6.

(the roar of a subway. a deserted subway platform. BILLY and VIVIAN are waiting. VIVIAN is wearing a coat. she has a purse. she also holds the plant.)

BILLY. nice plant.

VIVIAN. thanks.

BILLY. it's big. it's green.

VIVIAN. yeah, it's pretty green. although, you know, i'm noticing there's a little yellowing happening here, in the leaves, and i don't what that's about, because i water. i mean not too much. because i know it's bad to water too much. and i also get these little plant vitamins you put in the dirt, they're like these little vitamin sticks you just stick in the dirt, you just stick them in. and i do that, you know, i take care of the thing the best way i know how, and i don't what more i'm supposed to do.

BILLY. give me your purse.

VIVIAN. what?

BILLY. give me your purse.

VIVIAN. i don't think i'm understanding you.

BILLY. *(pulling out a gun:)* give me your purse or i'm gonna blow your head off.

VIVIAN. ok, you know what? i don't think i can help you.

BILLY. i got a gun.

VIVIAN. ok, wow, you're not really listening to me, or maybe i'm just not making myself clear: i'm having a really weird and crummy day, which happens to be just one in a string of weird and crummy days that i've been having recently, for reasons which i don't even want to get into with you, because frankly it's personal and none of your business, and i don't know if it's this city or if it's me, but right now, i'm telling you, i really don't need this nonsense.

BILLY. are you retarded or what? i got a gun.

VIVIAN. we're not communicating very well, are we?

BILLY. give me your purse or i swear i'm gonna do something.

VIVIAN. you're going to do something? that's so open-ended. what does that mean: "you're going to do something?" maybe i'm going to do something. what do you think of that?

(BILLY and VIVIAN struggle.)

7.

(somewhere in oblivion MARTIN eats a piece of meat. the roar of a giant truck. headlights. the lights bear down on MARTIN. the sound of a jungle. the roar of stampeding elephants. somewhere else, BILLY pries away VIVIAN's purse. VIVIAN falls. BILLY flees.)

VIVIAN. help. help me.

8.

(suddenly, WILL and JOY appear in a bubble of light. they are happy, young lovers. they live in a perpetual bubble of bright, happy light. VIVIAN sees them. she darts behind a shrub. she clutches her plant.)

JOY. will?

WILL. joy?

JOY. what was that?

WILL. what was what?

JOY. i heard a noise. many noises. i heard strange animals and the sound of a large truck and a woman saying "help. help me."

WILL. it's all in your head.

JOY. all that noise? in my head? i guess that makes sense.

WILL. of course it does.

JOY. o will.

WILL. joy.

JOY. will.

WILL. joy.

JOY. i love you.

WILL. i love you.

JOY. i love you, too, will.

WILL. will you marry me?

JOY. o will—sure. yes. yes, i mean, yes.

(WILL and JOY exit. enter RICHARD. He passes VIVIAN hiding behind the shrub.)

RICHARD. vivian? vivian, is that you?

VIVIAN. richard. hi.

RICHARD. girl, i haven't seen you in a million years. how are you?

VIVIAN. o you know.

RICHARD. how's will?

VIVIAN. o well, will and i broke up. i actually just ran into him and his new fiancée, joy, he has a new fiancée, her name is joy, i run into them everywhere i go, they didn't see me, they were too busy being in love, it's like they're really in love, it's like they're really truly happy, it's like they're the happiest people in the whole wide world, isn't that weird, don't you think that's weird?

RICHARD. vivvie, honey, you're babbling. here, you have twigs in your hair.

VIVIAN. thanks. ow. you look great, richard. do you live here? in the city?

RICHARD. i'm bi-coastal. *(retrieving a business card:)* here's my card.

VIVIAN. uh huh, and how is that?

RICHARD. it's great, it's the best. i had a little startup. we went public a few years back. got in and out at just the right time.

VIVIAN. congratulations, richard.

RICHARD. it's something else. sold all my shares. i now have a net worth of seventy six million dollars. yay.

VIVIAN. yay.

RICHARD. can you believe it? i'm a multi-millionaire. it's the wackiest thing.

VIVIAN. you know, richard, my life is not as it should be.

RICHARD. you know, i feel that way, too, sometimes. people think i have it made. they think because i'm rich beyond my wildest dreams, and i never have to work another day in my life, that it's a walk in the park, but it's not. it's really not. i have my bad days. i have my demons. i get sad. i cry.

VIVIAN. o my god, richard, i don't know what's happening. i don't know what to do.

RICHARD. life is complicated. it's unbelievably complicated. if it's not one thing, it's the other. i feel your pain, vivvie. i know where you're coming from. i'm going through my own troubles myself. i mean, i'm very rich, you know, i'm a very rich person, but i'm also very tense. i'm very, very tense. i need to learn to relax, i need to learn to have fun, but you know what? i can't, i just can't, i don't know how. fun? what's fun? you ask me, and i don't know.

VIVIAN. ok, you know what, richard, i think i'm going to go.

RICHARD. already?

VIVIAN. yeah, i'm afraid so.

RICHARD. vivvie, honey, are you ok?

VIVIAN. no, richard, i'm not, i'm really really not.

RICHARD. listen, vivvie, why don't you come work for me? i'm serious. why not. o come on, vivvie, a little change in scenery, a little change of pace, shake things up. what do you have to lose? new place, new life, new you. you think about it.

(the sound of a jungle. exit RICHARD. Exit VIVIAN. somewhere else, DEREK types the last words of his work-in-progress.)

DEREK. “and they live happily ever after. the end.” blackout.

(the sound of howling. DEREK nervously snaps the last page out of the typewriter, and leaves the apartment, manuscript in hand.)

9.

(muzak. a pet store. a giant terrarium. inventory is broken and askew. PETER is in disarray. the sound of a truck. the truck stops. a bell. enter JASON pushing a dolly filled with cases of beer.)

JASON. hey.

PETER. hey.

JASON. i got your beer. where do you want it?

PETER. excuse me.

JASON. the beer you ordered. i got eighteen more cases out in the truck.

PETER. this is a pet store. we don't drink beer.

JASON. maybe i'm confused—pet.

PETER. pete, the name is pete.

JASON. wow. what happened here?

PETER. there was a temp. she was insane, is there anything else i can help you with?

JASON. do you guys have anything for a dog?

PETER. what kind of dog?

JASON. well, he's pretty big, he's a big dog.

PETER. does he fetch?

JASON. not really, no.

PETER. does he play tug-o-war?

JASON. no, not to my knowledge, no.

PETER. is he in any way playful?

JASON. you know, he likes to chew. he likes to sit around and chew.

PETER. *(retrieving a giant ear:)* here. it's a pig's ear. go to town. can you, can you maybe leave me one of those?

JASON. you bet. here you go *(tossing PETER a beer:)* thanks.

(JASON exits with the ear. PETER cracks open a beer. a bell. enter BILLY with vivian's purse.)

PETER. can i help you?

BILLY. i wanna to buy a gift. for my mom.

PETER. uh huh. how about a turtle? would mom maybe like a turtle?

BILLY. i was thinking more like a dog.

PETER. a little puppy dog, huh? a little furry bundle of joy.

BILLY. they say a dog is man's best friend.

PETER. so i've heard. sadly, we don't carry dogs. we don't carry dogs or cats or mammals of any kind. can i interest you in a frog? or perhaps you might want to look at a crab?

BILLY. i don't want a frog. i don't want a crab.

PETER. well, that's too damn bad, 'cause that's all we have. sorry.

BILLY. *(spotting the terrarium:)* what's in here?

PETER. that's a giant python. sixteen feet long. this guy can eat a small pony for lunch.

BILLY. yeah? wow. how much?

PETER. o no, see, the snake belongs to the owner. he's not for sale.

BILLY. screw that. i want that snake. that snake is mine.

PETER. sorry, buddy, you're out of luck.

BILLY. i don't think so, pet shop boy. *(pulling out a gun:)* hands in the air, now.

PETER. o god don't shoot.

BILLY. *(gazing into the terrarium:)* i don't see him. where is he?

PETER. he's hiding. he's shy.

BILLY. i want the terrarium, the terrarium comes with.

PETER. take it, take it all.

BILLY. cool. here. *(throwing vivian's purse at PETER:)* keep the change.

(BILLY exits taking the terrarium with. the sound of a jungle, birds and snakes.)

10.

(the sound of a dog growling. turns into the roar of a subway. a deserted subway platform. DEREK and WENDY are waiting. WENDY is eating candy. DEREK clutches his manuscript. he seems agitated.)

WENDY. what's that?

DEREK. nothing.

WENDY. can i see?

DEREK. no.

WENDY. are you a writer? you are, aren'tcha? i'm an actress. well, actually i'm a temp. but the thing about temping is that it's temporary, and not what i really am, because what i really am is an actress, i act. you know, you seem really wound up. i can tell. i'm a very intuitive person. i'm like a human tuning fork. what's the matter?

DEREK. nothing.

WENDY. i think you're lying

DEREK. i think you're weird.

WENDY. ok, that's fine, that's your prerogative. but this is the thing you gotta remember: when you lie, ok, your soul shrivels up little by little, and before you know it, it looks like one of those little, shrunken heads, they look like little, dried kumquats, do you know what i'm talking about, do you know what i mean?

DEREK. alright look, maybe it's none of your business, ok? maybe there's something called appropriate distance. maybe i don't feel like baring my soul to some stranger.

WENDY. i get you. no problem, it's cool. the thing is i like true stories. i like them a lot. i think they're kinda sexy.

DEREK. o?

WENDY. uh huh. i think of the truth as a kinda mating call in the wild. the truth is sexy, it's very, very sexy. it's like the soft, gooey part inside the shell.

DEREK. you know, you have a very small mouth, and yet you talk so much with it.

WENDY. i'm very very verbal. (*offering candy:*) spree?

DEREK. sure. sure thing.

(*DEREK eats candy. the roar of the subway.*)

11.

(*the sound of the jungle. somewhere else, MARTIN is rumpled and bruised. his dog ears are askew. he's alone in the void. there's an echo in the void. the echo is disconcerting.*)

MARTIN. woof. woof. what. what. what am i? what am i? where am i? who am i? am i a man? or am i dog? or am i dog who thinks i'm a man who thinks i'm a dog? and also, what's going on with my ears? are these ears my ears? are these paws my paws? are these paws even paws? they look more like hands. or maybe they're paws that only look like hands.

(*enter MYRNA. MYRNA sees MARTIN.*)

MARTIN. woof.

MYRNA. uh huh.

MARTIN. woof.

MYRNA. uh huh.

MARTIN. woof. woof woof. woof woof. woof woof.

MYRNA. alright that's very nice. now get outta here. go on. shoo. shoo. go on shoo.

(MARTIN exits. MYRNA forges on.)

12.

(a miniscule apartment. the large plant from the top of the play, its leaves shriveled and yellow. VIVIAN lights up a bong with difficulty. MYRNA begins packing.)

MYRNA. there are wild dogs roaming the streets. there are also strange men. it's all a little disturbing.

VIVIAN. bad things are happening to me, myrna. is there a reason? is this a test, am i being tested?

MYRNA. vivian, you are the architect of your own destiny.

VIVIAN. i don't know what that means. what does that mean?

MYRNA. you are the lone wildebeest at the edge of the herd.

VIVIAN. wow. where is my herd? i think my herd is hiding. i have a brother, but i think he's maybe in a different herd.

MYRNA. face it, honey: you have no herd. you're herdless. people sense this. they smell it off your skin like a pheromone.

VIVIAN. i forget what that means.

MYRNA. pheromone. a glandular scent, a distinctive musk that signals fertility, sexual readiness, and on occasion, fear.

VIVIAN. i'm not afraid, just deeply deeply depressed.

MYRNA. depression is anger turned inward.

VIVIAN. i don't know what to do with that information.

MYRNA. don't fret. you fret too much, vivvie. you're doing just fine.

VIVIAN. are you going somewhere?

MYRNA. i am, honey, i am. myrna's moving on. i've done all i can here. there's so much to do in a global sense. can you fill in for me at school tomorrow by any chance?

VIVIAN. sure, no problem. i love children. i love them so much.

MYRNA. what's going on, vivian? something's up, something is different, i don't know what it is. what is happening to your posture? here, sit up, up, don't be such a limp noodle. you know, vivian, you should smoke less pot. pot dulls your senses. it makes you silly. pot makes you silly. did you know that men who smoke pot grow breasts? do you want to be a man with breasts? is that what you want out of life, to be a man with breasts?

(VIVIAN falls asleep. MYRNA exits with suitcase. darkness. jungle sounds. a loud staccato caw caw.)

13.

(WILL and JOY appear in a bubble of light. a tiny bed. WILL is reading a book. JOY is listening to the jungle sounds.)

WILL. do i want to be a man with breasts? tiresias was a man with a breasts. he was a wise man who could predict the future, but he was also a man with breasts. you can't have everything. that's the deal. something's gotta give. so what do you give up? your eyeball? your thumb? your lips? if you could have eternal happiness, would you be willing to cut off your own lips?

JOY. i don't know, will. that's a biggie.

WILL. i think about these things, joy.

JOY. i know you do, will. your brain is very big. you're a big brain.

WILL. thanks, joy.

JOY. will?

WILL. yes, joy.

JOY. what am i?

WILL. what do you mean?

JOY. well, if you're a big brain, what am i?

WILL. i don't know, joy. you're nice. you're so nice. you're the nicest girl i know. i love you, joy. joy?

(the sound of growling. it grows progressively for the remainder of the scene.)

JOY. what was that?

WILL. i don't know.

JOY. go look.

WILL. i don't think that's necessary.

JOY. please just go and look.

WILL. it's nothing, joy, trust me.

JOY. something's happening, something's out there. i want you to go look. for chrissakes, will, you're the man.

WILL. what is that supposed to mean.

JOY. i don't know, i don't know. just go, please, will. will you please, will you just please— *(giving WILL a pen light:)* here—just, go.

(WILL goes reluctantly. he disappears into the darkness with only a tiny beam of light to guide him. the sound of predators. the howling of small prey.)

14.

(the sound of chaos in the jungle. MYRNA appears with suitcase. piñatas in the sky like little constellations.)

MYRNA. this is a baboon, this is a sea turtle, this is a salamander, this is a fruit bat, this is an amoeba, it's hard to see, it's very small. these are all fossils. these are also piñatas. remember piñatas? fossil, piñata. fossil, piñata. this is a mummy. a mummy is kinda like a

fossil. it, too, is a piñata. mummy, piñata. mummy, piñata. this young lady was ritually sacrificed and buried at the lip of an active volcano the incans called ampato. there she lay under the permafrost for centuries, wearing only festive, native textiles and a head-dress made of brightly colored macaw feathers. german tourists stumbled across her shrunken body while hiking in a remote region of the andes. they named the mummy edelweiss after a pretty, alpine flower.

(a burst of simian activity. chaos in the jungle.)

15.

(VIVIAN hears a noise and wakes up. WILL enters. he wears prosthetic breasts.)

VIVIAN. will? will, is that you?

WILL. look, this is the thing i need to say, and i'm sorry, but i just need to say it, i need to make myself clear—i don't love you anymore, i don't want to be your friend, i don't want to keep in touch, i don't want to get together for coffee. frankly, vivian, i wish you'd just disappear off the face of the earth, so i wouldn't keep running into you.

VIVIAN. will?

WILL. what?

VIVIAN. why do you have breasts?

WILL. i don't. these are not real breasts, they're a projection, a crisis of identity, a grappling with the other—i don't know why i have breasts, vivian, don't change the subject. why is it that i see you everywhere i go? what is that all about?

VIVIAN. o please, will, it's not like i'm following you. don't flatter yourself.

WILL. were you hiding behind a shrub earlier today?

VIVIAN. i wasn't hiding.

WILL. because either you're following me or i'm losing my mind. i don't know what's happening, i don't know what's going on, i'm ambivalent, i'm in denial, i don't know what i am—do you have something you want to tell me, vivian? i sense you're keeping something from me, some little secret, some piece of unfinished business.

VIVIAN. what does this have to do with your breasts, will?

WILL. i don't know what it has to do with my breasts, i don't know what these breasts have to do with anything.

VIVIAN. i have nothing i want to say to you.

WILL. god, you always do that, you always make things so difficult, everything's got to be this complicated production with you, only this time i'm not going to play. i refuse.

VIVIAN. ok, will. whatever.

WILL. don't say that, i hate when you say that. "whatever." it's so high school.

VIVIAN. whatever.

WILL. god, what did i ever see in you?

VIVIAN. what did i ever see in you?

WILL. what did i ever see to love?

VIVIAN. what did i ever see to love?

WILL. i hate you.

VIVIAN. i hate you.

WILL. is this a dream? is life a dream?

VIVIAN. "is life a dream?" wow, will, that's really profound.

WILL. o just go away.

VIVIAN. you go away. this is my place, you idiot. you're the intruder, not me. you're the one who messed it up, will, not me. you, you did. never mind. fine. i'll go. i don't care. it'll be refreshing not to be left for a change.

WILL. don't you try to guilt me out. i refuse.

(VIVIAN exits. she takes the plant.)

WILL. i refuse to feel guilty. the heart wants what the heart wants. and right now it wants to go. i'm going. i'm going now—vivian? vivian, is that you?

(the sound of growling. it grows. WILL disappears into the darkness. somewhere in the darkness, the sound of a large raptor going in for the kill. the flapping of feathers. the shriek of a small mammal.)

16.

(the sound of unseen animals prowling in the dark. panic in the jungle. JOY appears.)

JOY. will? will is that you?

(the sound of a truck. headlights bear down on her. the truck screeches to a halt. JASON appears, holding the ear.)

JOY. o my god, you scared me.

JASON. i'm looking for my dog. i think he ran away. i've been looking all over for him. have you seen him?

JOY. i don't think so. i'm sorry.

JASON. he's big, he's really big. he's kinda hard to miss.

JOY. i'm sorry.

JASON. don't be sorry. i mean, the only reason to be sorry is if you did something wrong. did you do something wrong? did you like run over my dog or something?

JOY. i didn't run over your dog. i'm on foot. you're the one behind the wheel. you're the one who almost ran me over. you almost ran me over, you maniac.

JASON. i'm sorry, i'm sorry. you're right.

JOY. please, can you just leave me alone.

JASON. ok. are you ok?

JOY. i'm fine.

JASON. are you sure?

JOY. yes, i'm fine, i'm fine. everything is fine, it's all just fine, really, fine.

17.

(DEREK and JOY appear in two bubbles of light, suspended in the darkness like distant stars in far-off galaxies.)

DEREK. ok, this is the thing—my roommate has this dog. his name is martin.

JOY. i just got engaged to this guy, his name is will

DEREK. and he's not like other dogs, and it scares me—

JOY. something, i don't know what, scares me, it really scares me—

DEREK. i started having these dreams, these really weird dreams—

JOY. i'm going to get married to the man i love, his name is will, will's the man i love—

DEREK. i dreamed of teeth and meat, and i was the meat—

JOY. but this is the thing—

DEREK. this is the thing—

JOY. my face hurts from smiling and if i hear myself say “i love you” one more time, i swear i'm going to barf—because i don't want to spend the rest of my life with will, because the thought of spending the rest of my life with will make me want to hyperventilate—

DEREK. hate, i hated that dog, because in my heart of hearts, i knew that dog was smarter, and stronger, and more highly evolved than i will ever hope to be, and that just sucks, because i'm a human being, i'm a homo-sapien for chrissakes, i should be king of the hill, i should rule—

JOY. because i don't love will, not in the way that love should be, and there's a way it should be, i know it, like i know there are strange see-through fish at the bottom of the sea, and i know i should just count my blessings and be happy, but i'm not, because i'm not happy, because maybe i don't know how to be happy.

(a sound like a sound heard in the heart of darkness, in the deepest darkest jungle. an animal breathing.)

JOY. will? will, is that you?

(the sound of growling grows. the shrieks of unseen animals. the sound of jungle mayhem. bones crunching, flesh ripping, feathers flapping. and then it stops.)

18.

(darkness. a bubble of light. WENDY and DEREK. a bed. WENDY is reading Derek's manuscript. it is the same bed WILL and JOY were in. WENDY is where JOY was. everything feels similar, but different. DEREK feels tremors of extreme déjà vu. it agitates him.)

WENDY. o my god. did you kill your roommate's dog?

DEREK. no. i didn't kill him. i just, i just, i let him go, i just opened the door, and let him go, and now he's gone, and i don't know where he went, he's gone, he's really gone, and i don't think he's coming back. do you think what i did was evil?

WENDY. o yeah, i mean, in a karmic sense, your ass is gonna fry.

DEREK. what am i going to do? i feel so guilty.

WENDY. no, don't do that. guilt is bad, it's toxic, it'll clog you up, and your soul will become just like a little la brea tar pit. do you know the la brea tar pits? they're the most amazing thing. they're these pits in the middle of la, and they're filled with tar, and back in the day, the animals, they'd think it was like a watering hole, and they'd wade in for what they thought was going to be a nice, refreshing drink, and then they'd realize that it wasn't water, but tar, but by then it'd be too late, and they'd get stuck in all this hot, bubbling goo, and they'd die this slow, horrible death.

DEREK. i can't believe we just had sex.

WENDY. i know, but the thing is, for me, i try to have sex in a really casual, sort of low-key way with guys i don't know that well or guys i don't like that much, because with most guys, i find, it's better that way. like you. i'd never in a million years want to be involved with someone like you. i mean, it's not like you're repulsive or anything, but the more i get to know you, the more i realize you're kind of insecure, and i think you have a lot of anger, and the whole thing with the dog, that really gives me pause.

DEREK. you're the one who wanted the truth, miss i-love-true-stories.

WENDY. yeah, well, what do you want? a medal? you don't get a medal. you're a psychopath.

DEREK. i don't believe this. you know what? i may have a lot of anger, and i may be just a wee bit insecure, but you know what you are, you're a fruitcake. you're a kook. and another thing, i don't know if anybody's ever said this to you before, but you talk way too much, you're a goddamn motormouth, and it's not like every word out of your mouth is exactly what i'd call a pearl, so maybe in the future, you should consider giving your jaw muscles a little rest.

WENDY. wow, that was kinda hostile.

DEREK. you're right, you're totally one hundred percent right. god, what am i doing here? i don't even know what i'm doing here. *(pulling on his pants, getting dressed:)* look, i gotta go, i gotta get out of here, i'm sorry, forget what i said, forget everything, forget tonight, forget you ever met me.

WENDY. ok. vaya con dios. that means, go with god, in spanish.

DEREK. yeah, i know what it means. you, too. vaya con dios.

(DEREK exits with his manuscript. the sound growling turns into an airplane roar. the sound of an airplane roaring overhead.)

19.

(light. a park in the city. a tiny park bench. JOY is sitting in on the bench, holding a small, cardboard box. enter VIVIAN with her plant. it's shriveled and yellow.)

VIVIAN. hi. i'm vivian. you don't know who i am, do you?

JOY. i don't think so.

VIVIAN. will never mentioned me, i guess. no need to introduce yourself. i know your name is joy. will told me all about you. in fact, i ran into the two of you just the other day. you were kissing in the street. i was behind a shrub. it was one of those weird coincidences. i wasn't following you, i don't care what will thinks. this is will's plant. he left it at my place. where is he? is he around? will? in there? o my god. you cremated him, and i didn't even know he was dead.

JOY. no, no, you don't understand. it's not actually will inside. i mean, we never found will. his body, i mean.

VIVIAN. so, what's in the box?

JOY. air.

VIVIAN. air? in other words, it's empty.

JOY. i don't like to think of it that way. for me, it's a symbol of will. who will was once.

VIVIAN. you know, joy, this all seems very strange to me. are you saying—what? what are you saying exactly?

JOY. i'm not sure. i mean, i heard this noise, and then i saw this thing, and it was big, it was really big, and then it was gone, and will, he was gone, too.

VIVIAN. wow. maybe he was abducted by aliens.

JOY. i really don't think so.

VIVIAN. o? you think that's far-fetched, joy?

JOY. yeah, vivian, i'm afraid i do.

VIVIAN. well, how do you know, joy? you don't know. you don't have a handle on what happened, you don't have a handle on anything. you just have a cardboard box.

(VIVIAN snatches the box.)

JOY. please, ok, this whole thing has been kinda hard for me.

VIVIAN. i'm sorry. i had a dream last night. at least i think it was a dream. will was in it. we had a fight. he had breasts.

JOY. i don't think i need to be hearing this, vivian.

VIVIAN. you're right. i'm sorry. i'm sorry. you know, will and i, i think we used to love each other, but then one day, i don't know when exactly, we just kinda stopped.

JOY. you know, i don't think it was meant to be, this thing with will and me, but still i think i'm having trouble with how people enter and leave each other's lives, how suddenly they're just out of your life, there's no warning, they're just gone, and everything's different, and all you can think is how exactly did i get here. do you notice that ever?

VIVIAN. yeah. yeah, i do. listen, i should, i should go. i'm leaving town, i'm actually moving, it's kinda crazy, i mean, it's been kinda crazy, i never knew everything could get so crazy. it was nice meeting you, and maybe we'll run into each other sometime, in some other life, in some other incarnation, i somehow doubt it, but who knows. so good-bye, and good luck, and that's about all, i guess.

JOY. vivian? you, too, good luck.

(VIVIAN exits with plant. JOY exits with box. the roar of an airplane.)

20.

(an airport. the intermittent announcements of flights arriving and departing. a soothing, female voice ticks off flight numbers, gate numbers, random destinations. PETER wears an air steward's uniform. enter RICHARD with a suitcase.)

RICHARD. o my lord, help, help me. i need to be on that plane, i need to be on it right now.

PETER. i think they're about to close the doors.

RICHARD. o god no. hurry, hurry, it's an emergency. if i don't get on that plane, i'm going to miss my meeting, it's a very important meeting, it's critical, time is of the essence, i'm late, don't you see, i'm already late, i'm very, very late, and i'm about to lose my mind. can you possibly, can you maybe move just a wee bit more quickly—pete?

PETER. i'm new. i'm doing the best i can.

RICHARD. can you maybe do it a little more briskly?

PETER. i'm trying sir, i really am. bags to check?

RICHARD. no. no bags.

PETER. window or aisle?

RICHARD. window, no, aisle, no, window, no, aisle, o i don't care. give me that thing.

(exit RICHARD. enter BILLY with terrarium. PETER sees BILLY, and exits. enter JASON with surfboard. enter and exit DEREK.)

JASON. hey. do you work here?

BILLY. nah, i'm just passing through.

JASON. is that yours?

BILLY. sure is. pretty cool, huh?

JASON. what?

BILLY. there's supposed to be a snake, but i think it's maybe empty.

JASON. i used to have this dog, but then he ran away. he was big, you know, and my world, i think my world, it was just kinda small. i gotta get a bigger life, i think, a whole like bigger way of being.

BILLY. hey, hold up. did you see that? something moved.

JASON. in there? i missed it. i guess i wasn't looking.

BILLY. i'm goin in, see what's what. you wanna give me a hand?

JASON. sure.

BILLY. thanks, man. watch my back.

JASON. you bet.

(JASON gives BILLY a leg up into the terrarium. exit JASON. enter WENDY with a suitcase. re-enter DEREK. re-exit DEREK. re-enter PETER with the dolly of beer cases. he cracks open his beer. WENDY startles him.)

WENDY. hi.

PETER. hi.

WENDY. what are you doing here?

PETER. oh, you know, i'm here, i'm just here.

WENDY. life is weird.

PETER. uh huh.

WENDY. i no longer temp.

PETER. o?

WENDY. it's not for me. lots of things are not for me. i'm changing my life, i'm talking complete and total overhaul. why aren't you tending the pets pete?

PETER. no more pets. it was too much for me. everything's been a little too much for me, pets, people, people, pets.

WENDY. you know, i kinda liked you.

PETER. uh huh.

WENDY. i kinda liked the pet store.

PETER. oh?

WENDY. i could have seen that. you. me the pet store.

PETER. i think i need to go now.

WENDY. why?

PETER. because you're scary, because you're weird and scary, because everything is just a little too weird and scary.

WENDY. ok then. bye.

PETER. see ya.

(exit PETER. exit WENDY. enter MYRNA with a suitcase. re-enter DEREK with his manuscript.)

DEREK. if i don't get out of this city right now, my head is gonna explode.

MYRNA. airports can be very stressful. all that coming and going. it brings out the worst in people, a kind of shrill panic, an impending sense of doom. gum? mint? towelette?

DEREK. no. don't you get it? i'm not happy.

MYRNA. i'm sure you'll live.

DEREK. but, see i don't want to just live. i want to be happy. when i was a little boy, i was happy. i want to find that happiness i had as a child.

MYRNA. ok look, buddy, i used to be a schoolteacher, and the whole happy childhood thing, that's just a big fat myth. take it from me, children are not happy. if they're not cruel little power mongers, they're anxious and unhappy loners, i see them everyday, chewing their cuticles and roaming the jungle gyms in search of a friendly face.

DEREK. who are you?

MYRNA. i'm the grownup in the room. now if you'll excuse me, i have a plane to catch.

(exit MYRNA. exit DEREK. enter MARTIN with his dog ears. the ears are crooked. enter JOY with a suitcase. she wears a wedding veil.)

JOY. excuse me, i don't know where i'm going, i don't know where i'm supposed to go. i'm on standby. i mean, we're on standby, me and my husband. i just got married. it's a little strange. i was supposed to get married to this one person, but i ended up getting married to somebody else. we're going on our honeymoon now. he went to get me a snack. i'm not sure i need a snack. i'm not sure what i need.

MARTIN. i'm lost. i think i'm lost.

JOY. what happened to your ears?

MARTIN. they're not my real ears. they're not real.

JOY. here, wait, hold on.

(JOY tries to straighten MARTIN's ears.)

MARTIN. i think they're broken. i think i'm just gonna, i think i'm gonna just take them off.

(MARTIN takes off his ears.)

JOY. that's much better.

MARTIN. i don't know who i am. i don't know what i'm supposed to be. is everything going to be ok?

JOY. you know, i really, i don't know. i mean, i think about that myself all the time, but i don't know, i don't think anybody knows. or maybe somebody does, but if they do, whoever it is, they're not telling, you know, i should, i should really, i should just go. i need to find my husband. i hope it all works out for you, whoever you are. goodbye.

(exit JOY. MARTIN looks at the terrarium, and clambers in. the sound of the jungle.)

21.

(the chatter of children's voices. VIVIAN clutches a suitcase, the plant, and a large map of the USA. she can't carry everything. she puts down the suitcase and the plant.)

VIVIAN. hello. i'm vivian, i'm your substitute teacher, sort of. your real teacher, myrna, she's gone away for a little while, so she asked me to cover for her even though i'm not sure it's legal, because i'm not technically a teacher, and i don't know what i'm supposed to be doing exactly, which is how i feel often these days, not just here. anyway i can't stay that long. i didn't know what to say to you guys, so i brought this map. this is a map of the continental united states. right now, we're here. this is new york. i'm leaving new york. i'm flying all the way across all these states, and i'm ending up here in california, and after california, there's nothing but ocean as far as the eye can see, and then the next real land mass you get to is hawaii, i guess, which really, if you think about it, is just a few tiny islands in the middle of this huge, enormous ocean, in the middle of nowhere, so tiny you can barely see them, and they're so far away. i mean, it's a whole different map that i didn't happen to bring with me today, maybe not even a map, maybe more of a globe, which i don't have, i have no globe, and anyway, it's not like i'm even going to hawaii, so i don't even know why i brought it up, so never mind hawaii, forget hawaii, because where i'm going is here: california. i wasn't really planning on going to california, but i have this friend, i don't know if friend is the right word, he's kind of a friend, i mean, he was a friend once, but to be honest, i don't know exactly how i feel about him, because i think we're actually very different people, and i'm not sure we communicate very well, and i'm not sure we have all that much in common anymore, but friend, i guess, is the only word out there, and so my friend, what he did, which was really a very kind thing and something that a friend would, in fact, do, he got me a job working for him, doing something, i'm not sure what, but it doesn't even really matter, because it's a job, and it's a whole new beginning for me, and that sounds really good right this second, because the thing is, i really need something like that in my life right now, because i'm finding i have this need lately to feel settled and safe and sane, which it feels more and more like i never am here, i'm not sure why, because the

thing is, i just found out a little while ago that i'm going to have a baby. wow. that was weird. that just came out. you're the first people i've told. i was going to tell will, but then things got strange, and one thing led to another, and anyway, you don't know will, i'm not sure i know will. i don't know why i'm telling you all this. i don't know you, and maybe it's not appropriate to talk about this kind of stuff with small children, but for some reason, i don't know why, i feel really at ease with you. you all seem very wise for your years. i'm not ready for all of this, but it's not really about me anymore, because the thing is it's not just me floating around in space now. it's also this little person inside of me, who's also kinda floating around in space, and who probably looks kinda like a little fishy right about now, and that is so scary to me, but it's also kind of amazing. you were all little fishies once. and all of you have mommys and daddys, too. well, my baby doesn't have a daddy which is a little complicated and strange and not how i wanted it to be or thought it would be, but you know what? it's ok. i mean, there was a daddy once, but he fell in love with somebody else, and then after that, he kinda disappeared. we think he maybe got eaten by a giant animal or maybe he was abducted by aliens. nobody knows for sure. it's a mystery. this all happened here in new york, in brooklyn actually, which is right about here. i like maps so much. i like how everything is pink and orange and aquamarine, and all the countries and states look like little, funny-shaped candies. i like how all the names of the places are written in these perfect, block letters. i like that. maps tell you where you are, and how to get to where you're going. but the thing about a map, the best thing of all, you look at it, and places that are really big and far away, don't seem so big and far away. a whole continent is the distance from your thumb to your fingertip. a whole entire ocean is as big as the palm of your hand. magic. truly. well, i guess that's all i have to say for now. it was very nice being your substitute teacher. you were very good today, and i hope you all eventually grow up to be happy and productive people in the world. i guess it's recess now. good-bye.

(a bell rings. voices, laughter, the sound of chairs scraping against the floor. the sound of happy children running into the sunshine. the sounds of the jungle, the joyous caterwauling of monkeys and birds in the trees, the call of one lone elephant to his herd. VIVIAN picks

up her suitcase and the plant, and goes. the roar of an airplane. darkness.)

end of act one

act two

(the sound of the hawaiian music. and then the sound of surf. a beach in hawaii. a bright, blank place. the sky is fuchsia and tangerine. PETER is the lifeguard. next to him is the dolly filled with cases of beer from act one. PETER cracks open a can, and drinks. enter WENDY in grass skirt.)

PETER. hi.

WENDY. hi.

PETER. small world huh?

WENDY. i'll say

PETER. i'm the lifeguard. i save lives.

WENDY. *(grabbing a beer:)* good for you.

JOY. *(off:)* wendy?

WENDY. o christ.

(enter JOY and RICHARD in swimsuits.)

JOY. hi.

PETER. hi.

JOY. this is richard. richard almost drowned just now, but then i saved him. i pulled him back from the brink.

RICHARD. i thought i was going in for a little dip, and before i knew i was being sucked out to sea. i saw my whole life pass before my eyes. you saved my life. she saved my life.

JOY. it was nothing. i was glad to be of help.

WENDY. *(to PETER:)* isn't that your job, pete?

PETER. the beach is big.

WENDY. the beach is big but the world is small that makes a whole lot of sense.

RICHARD. could i get one of those? do you mind? you know, you look very familiar to me. where do i know you from? i feel like i know you from somewhere.

JOY. wendy?

WENDY. you have seaweed on your face.

JOY. i do? where?

WENDY. here.

JOY. ow!

WENDY. so what brings you to the aloha state?

RICHARD. o my lord, where to begin? i was in the airport, and i was very late, i was very late, and the thing that slowly began to dawn on me was that i was so late, i was never going to get where i was going, it just wasn't going to happen, and i should've just given up, i should've just gone with the flow, but i don't know how to do that, because that's not who i am, because i haven't evolved, i haven't evolved to that point where i can look at my whole life imploding before my eyes, and just say, que sera sera, or whatever it is people say, because this is not about missed connections, this is not about air travel, because in a larger sense, i'm going to miss my flight, and then i'm going to be on stand by, i'm just going to be standing by, or maybe i'm going to be bumped, i'm just going to be bumped, and then i'm going to be stuck in this airport for the rest of all eternity like some suitcase nobody ever claims, one of those sorry, old samsonites that just keeps going round and round on the carousel, all dented and coming apart at the seams, and the clothes are coming out every which way, and there's some duct tape maybe wrapped around the middle, and maybe a little string, and the bag is a mess, it's just a mess, and all you can think is: how did this bag get to be this way? whose bag is this, and where is this person now? what happened to them? did something bad happen to them?

JOY. maybe they were abducted by aliens.

RICHARD. excuse me?

PETER. maybe they were polynesian. i think we're all polynesian, you know, in a larger sense. the polynesians were the first hawaiians. they rowed over from polynesia in these big, double canoes. they had no clue. they rowed for a very long time. they thought

they were going to fiji, but then they got out into open sea, and they got waylaid. people, not just polynesians, get waylaid.

JOY. i get waylaid. i get waylaid all the time.

(JASON walks by with a surfboard.)

RICHARD. surfer.

WENDY. he looks strangely familiar.

JOY. what does that mean?

WENDY. it means he looks strangely familiar. relax, joy.

JOY. please don't tell me to relax. you relax.

WENDY. i'm very relaxed.

RICHARD. are you really? how do you do that?

WENDY. unlike some people, i know how to enjoy myself. i know how to have fun.

RICHARD. o uh huh? so for you, what does that mean exactly? "fun"? what do you do for fun?

WENDY. parties are always good. i'm always up for a good party, a little shindig.

RICHARD. i haven't been to a party in a million years. a party would be nice.

WENDY. it would be so nice.

PETER. this is kinda like a party.

WENDY. please. we're talking about a real party. we want to go to a real party. we want to be festive. we want to get drunk and do stupid things, but in a party setting.

PETER. i think i want to do that, too, but in a larger sense.

JOY. you go to luaus all the time.

WENDY. luaus don't count. that's work. i want to go to a party where i don't have to wear a grass skirt and hula all night long.

RICHARD. i wouldn't mind going to a luau. i saw a brochure in my hotel room.

JOY. luaus are amazing. i would love to go to a luau. i would love to eat some roast pig somebody roasted in the ground, and poi, i would love to eat some poi. but most of all i would love to watch you hula. i love to watch you hula. she's a wonderful hula dancer. she can hula like you wouldn't believe.

WENDY. look, i'm not a hula dancer, ok? i'm an actress. i act. the hula thing is temporary. it's not who i really am.

PETER. i don't know who i really am.

WENDY. you're a lifeguard, in theory, a guarder of lives.

PETER. i mean it like in a larger sense.

WENDY. you know, i think you spend way too much time thinking about stuff in a larger sense. just think small. what's for lunch?

JOY. where are my keys?

RICHARD. what am i going to do with my hair?

PETER. hold that thought.

(PETER exits.)

WENDY. you know, that guy's a terrible lifeguard. i mean, who's in charge here? you know what i'm saying? who's manning the store?

RICHARD. o my god, nobody. we're all alone. we're on our own.

JOY. he seems nice.

WENDY. niceness doesn't save lives, joy.

JOY. maybe he's just kinda mellow.

RICHARD. i would like to be more mellow.

WENDY. the guy's a lifeguard. he's not supposed to be mellow. he's supposed to be vigilant. and he's not vigilant. he's drunk. he's drunk and he's dumb. i really think he's kinda dumb. jeez, i can't believe i had a thing with that guy.

JOY. what kind of "thing"?

WENDY. you know. a thing. one of those stupid-what-was-i-thinking-live-to-regret kinda things.

RICHARD. the waves are big. the sand is black. why is the sand black?

WENDY. volcanic ash.

RICHARD. o yeah? uh huh?

WENDY. these islands, they're all volcanoes. right now, we're sitting on top of a live volcano. any second, it could blow, and we'd all be entombed in hot, molten lava.

JOY. wendy, please.

WENDY. what?

JOY. there's no need for that kind of negativity.

WENDY. i'm not being negative, joy. i'm explaining something about our environment.

JOY. don't you fret, richard. you have nothing to worry about.

WENDY. that's so not true. personally, i think he's got plenty to worry about. he could die any second now, in any number of ways.

RICHARD. ok, lookit, i came to hawaii to relax. i thought it was supposed to be a relaxing place.

WENDY. it's not.

JOY. what is wrong with you?

WENDY. o many things, joy, big and small. what is going on with my skirt?

JOY. when exactly did you have your "thing" with the lifeguard?

WENDY. i don't know. i forget.

(DEREK walks by with his manuscript.)

WENDY. ok, is it me, or is the world just like shrinking?

JOY. what? you know that guy?

WENDY. i wouldn't say i know him. i mean, "knowing"—what does that mean, joy? i mean, do any of us really know each other?

JOY. you had a "thing" with him, too, didn't you? o my god, wendy, how many "things" have you had?

WENDY. i've had a few "things."

JOY. you've had a lot of "things," wendy. you know, sometimes i think i have no idea who you are. i mean, i think i know who you are, but i don't, i really don't. i mean, who are you? who are you?

RICHARD. she's wendy, you're joy, and maybe we should just not discuss who we used to have sex with, maybe we should just not do that. it's all just water under the bridge. lots of water. a bridge.

JOY. fine.

WENDY. fine.

RICHARD. ok then. great.

(exit JOY, WENDY, RICHARD. the sound of the surf turns into the sound of a snowstorm. somewhere else, in alaska, VIVIAN is very pregnant. enter MARTIN, carrying plants. he wears a parka and a hat.)

VIVIAN. hi, hello. gosh am i glad to see you. cold, huh? who knew it could get this cold?

MARTIN. where do you want these?

(MARTIN loads in plants as VIVIAN talks.)

VIVIAN. o anywhere, anywhere's fine. great, great, that's great, that's just, that's—oops, careful. look at all these plants. wow. you know, i had this plan, but then it kinda fell apart, i find a lot of things in my life kinda fall apart, but now that i'm getting kinda used to it, it's not so bad, and on good days, it's sometimes exciting, so here i am, in alaska. i just told the man at the airport, please choose a place for me, i have a map, just pick a place, and so he picked alaska, and now i'm here, and it's ok, i mean, it's a little cold and gray, and i think, you know, in a place like this, people really need plants, little green, leafy friends to brighten up their day.

MARTIN. so, who do you think's going to buy all these plants?

VIVIAN. i don't know. people.

MARTIN. i'm a person.

VIVIAN. yes, yes, you are.

MARTIN. i am, i'm a person. what makes you think persons like myself are going to buy your plants? maybe persons like myself have all the plants we need. or maybe we're just not really plant persons. have you thought this through, have you thought this through at all? i think not. i mean, here you are, and you're very, very pregnant, and you're stuck in alaska with a whole bunch of plants nobody's going to buy. nobody's going to buy these plants. i mean, who's going to want to buy these crummy plants? look, i'm just giving you my honest opinion. the truth hurts. it hurts like hell. alright. alright, look, that's a very nice shrub, and i would like to purchase it. *(taking out cash:)* here.

VIVIAN. can you just go? i would like for you to go now. just please, go. go.

MARTIN. fine.

(MARTIN starts to go.)

VIVIAN. o. o wow.

MARTIN. uh oh.

VIVIAN. help. i need you to help me. o.

MARTIN. o.

VIVIAN. o.

MARTIN. o.

VIVIAN. ok alright, let's just go. go, go, go.

(VIVIAN and MARTIN exit. the sound of the snowstorm morphs into the sound of the surf. somewhere else, WENDY, RICHARD, and PETER are drinking a beer. RICHARD opens a bag of chips.)

RICHARD. for me, you know, the past is dead. it's over. it's finished. it's dead. like they say, this is the first day of the rest of your life.

PETER. who says that?

RICHARD. people. many people. it's something that's said. chip?

PETER. thanks.

(PETER eats a chip. an awkward silence.)

WENDY. you know, there was a time in my life i used to fuck guys.

PETER. uh huh.

WENDY. i used to fuck a lot of guys.

RICHARD. i know a lot of people who are choosing to be celibate. it's one way to go. i'm just throwing it out there.

PETER. i would like to have sex. i would also like to maybe fall in love. and then get married. i wouldn't mind getting married, having a baby.

WENDY. why? i mean, why is it that all of a sudden everybody you know starts wanting to get married and have babies, and everything that comes along with getting married and having babies? is it just some kinda instinct, some kinda lizard brain instinct, like turtles or lemmings or moose in spring, or is it maybe this sudden awareness that kicks in that you're not getting any younger, and someday you're maybe gonna get sick and old and then maybe you're gonna die—well not maybe—you are, i mean you are gonna die, we're all gonna die, that's the deal—but whatever, maybe you're having trouble with that concept, or maybe you just don't want to be doing all of that stuff alone, and i think you can think of this in terms of musical chairs, i think it's actually a lot like musical chairs, and so there you are, having spent most of your twenties playing this game of musical chairs, and suddenly it's like you turn twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and somebody turns the music off, and it gets really quiet in the room, and you look around, and the thing is, right, there's not enough chairs to go around, somebody's gonna be left chairless, somebody's gonna get screwed, and before you know it, everybody's scrambling around, looking for a place to park

their ass, and people are getting knocked to the ground, and there's shoving happening, and elbows in the eyes, and it's ugly, ok, it's really ugly, but you're right in there, you're in the fray, and so finally you get yourself a chair, and you're happy because you're like seated, but then before too long, you know, you turn to look at the people sitting next to you, and it's like, who are you again? and what am i doing sitting next to you? do i really want to be sitting next to you? and also, this chair, i'm not so sure about this chair, i mean maybe i don't even want to be seated, maybe i want to stand.

RICHARD. the music, the chair, uh huh.

WENDY. so now, ok, this is the thing: i used to fuck guys, and now i fuck girls, and i'm personally very happy about that little change of scenery, but you'd think, you know, that it's a different thing, that this whole musical chair thing, it's a guy/girl thing, and now that i'm doing this girl/girl thing, the whole musical chair thing, it's not going to be the same thing, but it is, it's like the exact same thing, it's like musical chairs only with different chairs.

(enter JOY.)

JOY. wendy, i have something i want to say. wendy—i love you.

WENDY. o my god, stop.

JOY. i love you. and i was thinking: we could get married. we could have a baby. it would be a little untraditional, but i think that's fine. you'd just have to be a lot nicer to me. but the main thing is i love you. i mean, you're a deeply damaged individual, and you're also kinda mean and slutty, but for some reason, i don't know why, i love you.

WENDY. i hate when people say that. people say it all the time, and what does it mean, what does it really mean, nobody knows what it means.

JOY. ok, i don't love you. i feel nothing for you. we're just sharing some oxygen, that's all.

WENDY. just can you please not talk, can you do that for me?

JOY. human beings talk. that's part of being a human being.

WENDY. please, talking is so overrated. i used to talk, i used to talk a lot, and it was exhausting to myself and to others. now i just want to be like one of those guys at the airport with the little flags, no talking, just little flags, waving my little flags.

JOY. but i love you.

WENDY. o my god, are you retarded or what?

(JOY exits.)

WENDY. fine, go, bye, see ya.

RICHARD. you know, i think we maybe need to talk less and be a little nicer to each other.

WENDY. i'm plenty nice. i'm so nice, you have no idea. it's just that some people, they're like these hothouse orchids, and she is such an orchid. it's really hard to be nice to an orchid. whatever. i gotta go, i gotta go hula. i feel like kicking somebody in the head, but instead i'm gonna go hula, i'm gonna go hula like there's no tomorrow.

PETER. aloha. aloha means good-bye.

(WENDY exits. somewhere else, DEREK is clutching his manuscript.)

DEREK. ok, aloha. i've been thinking about this. aloha means good-bye, but it also means hello. it actually means a lot of things. it's all about how you say it. you could say it as you're going, and the plane's about to take off, and you're waving, and you could just say aloha, just let one fly, and if you were to say aloha like that, with the wave and everything else, i think everyone would be pretty clear about your meaning, but now let's say you're arriving here, you know, in hawaii, and the airplane touches down, and the door opens, and suddenly you get a whiff of that air, do you know what i'm talking about? warm and moist and all smelling of plumeria, which is like a kind of orchid, i guess, and you're making your way down the little metal staircase, and the light is so bright, it's blinding, and you're reeling from the smell of orchid, it's like the whole world is one big, bright orchid somebody just shoved in your face, and you are so overwhelmed, you don't even know what to do with yourself, and so what you do is you trip, you don't mean to, but

you do, you just kinda fall, you fall down, and before you know it, you're flat on your back on the tarmac, and this pretty girl is standing over you, and maybe she's wearing a grass skirt, or maybe not, but it doesn't really matter 'cause the key detail, alright, is that around her neck, she's wearing all these leis, and before you know it, she's slipping one of her leis over your head, and you're overcome with this smell of orchid, and she's leaning real close, and whispering in your ear: aloha. she says, aloha. and i don't think it means good-bye in this situation. i think it means something else.

(DEREK disappears. the sound of waves crashing. enter JASON. enter JOY holding a giant, stuffed fish. she's distressed.)

JOY. hi.

JASON. hi. do i know you?

JOY. i don't think so, sorry. and you are a surfer, i take it.

JASON. i do some surfing, yeah. and you?

JOY. i came to hawaii on my honeymoon, me and my husband, i mean, my ex-husband. one day he went for a swim, he said: "i'm going for a swim," and then he went, and he never came back, and i don't know what happened. i think he was maybe sucked out to sea. and then after that, i fell in love with a hula dancer. but i don't know if that's going to work out. i think i'm kinda unlucky in love.

JASON. what's up with the fish?

JOY. something bad happened to this fish. somehow it got separated from its loved ones, and then somewhere along the line, it got stuffed and shellacked.

JASON. i used to have this dog. he ran away from home. and then who knows what happened after that.

JOY. maybe he got stuffed and shellacked.

JASON. you know, i'd like to think that maybe some little kid found him and adopted him, and now he has this whole new adopted family, and maybe he thinks about me sometimes, but basically it's all about this new family.

JOY. i would love to have a family. i would love that so much. a huge, enormous family where there's a lot of talking and laughing, and everybody is related and we all have nicknames and little traditions and all these family things we do together. what exactly do families do together?

JASON. i don't really know. i'm still kinda figuring the family thing out. listen, i gotta go. i got a plane to catch. bye.

JOY. see ya.

(JASON exits. JOY exits with fish. the roar of an airplane. somewhere else on the beach, RICHARD is drinking beer. PETER is looking out at the ocean with binoculars, and drinking beer. the sound of the surf.)

RICHARD. i'm very drunk right now. is my face doing weird things? it feels like my face is doing weird things. you know, you're very quiet. are you always this quiet?

PETER. pretty much, uh huh.

RICHARD. hawaii. wow. not much happens in hawaii. the sand is very black. the sun is very pink. the beer is very bad, this is very bad beer. do you think we're going to die?

PETER. yeah, eventually, yeah.

RICHARD. no, i mean like soon, are we going to die soon? are we all going to be entombed in hot, molten lava? is this something i should be worried about? are we just going to be covered up like those people in pompeii, remember pompeii, all those little people from pompeii just doing their thing, and then suddenly they're all shriveled and gray and dead, that's the main thing, ok, they're dead? i don't want to die. i don't want to die in hawaii. hawaii would be a really bad place to die.

PETER. you know, i think most places would be a really bad place to die.

RICHARD. i don't want to die. if i die now, i will have led a really stupid and meaningless life, and i don't want to lead a stupid and meaningless life, i don't want to do that, and it's not like i want to be great or anything, i'm not talking about greatness, i'm just talk-

ing about a little meaning, a little meaning is a good thing. i think it's the least you can hope for. i think i'm having a panic attack.

PETER. breathe.

RICHARD. ok.

PETER. are you breathing?

RICHARD. i think so.

(RICHARD breathes. PETER studies the ocean. RICHARD, too, studies the ocean.)

RICHARD. wait a minute, wait a minute, what is that? did you just see that? there?

PETER. where?

RICHARD. here, wait, gimme those. *(grabbing the binoculars, and scanning the horizon.)* wow.

PETER. what? what is it?

RICHARD. i don't know. it looks like some kind of dog, some kind of really big dog. look, i think i'm gonna go in. i think i'm gonna get a closer look. i'll be back.

(RICHARD exits. PETER exits. the crash of the surf transforms into the whistling wind. somewhere else, in Vivian's room. the plants have grown. a small jungle. VIVIAN holds a baby. JASON coos.)

JASON. hey, little guy, hey there, tiny person. i can't believe you're a mom, vivian. you're a mom. that is so bizarre to me. weren't we just like recently kids ourselves? am i like remembering this wrong?

VIVIAN. i think we're grownups, jason. i think we have been for a while now.

JASON. look at you, look at you. look at these weird little hands.

VIVIAN. do you have weird, little hands? you do, don't you, yes you do.

JASON. vivian? are we like the weirdest people in the universe? i mean, you're my sister, you're like my sibling, and when i stop to think about it, i actually kinda like you, i mean, i think you're ok,

you're pretty cool, but i don't really know you, and i don't think you really know me, and we never see each other, even when we lived in the same city, we never saw each other, and we don't really talk, i mean, we never talk, and we're just not really part of each other's lives, because we're not close, we've never been close, i think you could even say we're strangers, i think it would be fair to say we're strangers, and we lead completely separate lives, and now you have a baby, and the whole thing is just kinda weird to me.

VIVIAN. what can i say? we are deeply fucked up individuals.

JASON. whoa, you just said the "f" word in front of your kid.

VIVIAN. i think it'll be ok. look, here, will you hold him for a sec? i gotta spritz my plants. (*giving JASON the baby:*) it's ok. you'll be fine, just careful of his neck. he's got a little spaghetti neck.

(VIVIAN spritzes her plants.)

JASON. you know, in hawaii, in traditional hawaiian culture, the maternal uncle is key. that's me, little guy. i'm your maternal uncle. you know, i'm thinking christmas. i'll fly back. i'll bring a ham. i mean, i'm not a big christmas person, but we can have a tree, you know, and tinsel, we can have some tinsel.

VIVIAN. i like tinsel. tinsel is nice.

(the baby starts to cry. VIVIAN scoops him up.)

VIVIAN. o, o, o little baby, little baby. there, there, ssh. ssh,

(VIVIAN coos to the baby. the baby gurgles. JASON checks out the plant life.)

JASON. wow, look at these plants, they're so big. they're so green. it's like a jungle in here. o wow, check it out.

(JASON disappears into the foliage. enter WENDY.)

WENDY. hi.

VIVIAN. hi.

WENDY. i'd like to get some flowers. for a friend. what's that?

VIVIAN. it's a bird of paradise.

WENDY. uh huh. it's very pointy and strange and a little bit disturbing, it's kinda disturbing, but i think it's kinda perfect, i think it's perfect. thank you, thanks.

(WENDY exits with the flower. enter MARTIN with more plants.)

VIVIAN. hi.

MARTIN. hi.

VIVIAN. it's so nice to see you. look. come look. his name is billy.

MARTIN. billy looks like an alien. look at that head? what's going on with his head?

VIVIAN. i think that's just the way his head his. you want to hold him?

MARTIN. o no.

VIVIAN. you sure?

MARTIN. uh huh. i have something. for the baby, i mean.

(MARTIN retrieves a small, stuffed dog.)

VIVIAN. o that's so sweet.

MARTIN. it's a puppy dog.

VIVIAN. i see that. he's so cute. hello, little puppy dog. hello there.

MARTIN. woof. woof woof. woof. alright, i'm going now.

VIVIAN. no, wait. it's actually, it's my birthday today. today is my birthday. my brother's here, he's around here somewhere, i don't know where. anyway, what i'm trying to say is, it's my birthday, and i have a cake. *(retrieving a birthday cake:)* i baked a cake. and i would really like it if you had a little bit of birthday cake. do you like cake?

MARTIN. i like cake. no candles, huh?

VIVIAN. it would be a lot of candles, you know, for a cake this size.

MARTIN. *(retrieving a large candle:)* it's an aromatherapy candle.

VIVIAN. yes, i can tell. it has a very nice aroma.

MARTIN. here *(sticking the candle in the cake, and lighting it:)* make a wish.

(darkness. light on JOY holding the stuffed fish. light on DEREK clutching his ever-growing manuscript. they are suspended in the darkness like two stars from distant galaxies.)

DEREK. fate, you know, i think about fate, the concept of fate. and i think, what i think is that i don't believe in fate. i think, i think everything is kinda random, and also that the rules of time and space, which i think we often take for granted, are really kinda unreliable and strange. are you waiting for the tattoo guy?

JOY. yes, i am.

DEREK. hawaii is a wonderful place to get a tattoo. here, it's an ancient art form. it's part of the cultural fabric of the islands. they use ink-dipped pegs and a little wooden hammer. i just got one actually. you want to see?

(DEREK shows JOY his tattoo. it is a very small tattoo.)

DEREK. what do you think?

JOY. it's small.

DEREK. it's not that small.

JOY. it's pretty small. i'm going for something bigger myself.

DEREK. tattoos are painful. i'm not sure you understand how painful tattoos can be.

JOY. you know, i'm ok with pain. pain wakes you up. it gets you thinking. i want pain. i want lots and lots of pain. this fish had pain. somewhere along the line, this fish had a lot of pain, and if he can handle it, so can i.

DEREK. that's the stupidest thing i've ever heard. that fish is dead. that's a dead fish.

JOY. ok, you know, this fish may be dead, but you have a really bad tattoo, and every time someone looks at you from now on, all

they'll be able to think is: there goes a man with a really bad tattoo. now if you'll excuse me.

(exit JOY. enter WENDY with flower.)

WENDY. joy? joy, is that you? you're not joy.

DEREK. no, no, i'm not.

WENDY. have you, by any chance, seen my girlfriend? her name is joy. i don't know what the hell she's up to. normally, what happens, right, we fight and she takes off and eventually she comes back, and then we make up, and it's nice for like three minutes, and then we fight and she takes off, and so it goes, only this time she's gone, and i don't think she's coming back, and it's kinda throwing me for a loop, and i guess you could say i miss her, i guess i kinda miss her. you know, my skirt is made of grass. i live in a place where people wear skirts made of grass. how did that happen? is that a tattoo?

DEREK. yes, yes, it is.

WENDY. it's very small. it's a very small tattoo. in some cultures, men and women, their whole bodies are tattooed, head to foot until they're just one big, walking tattoo with a face and some hair. it's a thing.

DEREK. uh huh? well, i don't think that thing's for me.

WENDY. o yeah? well, no offense, but that tattoo is kinda wimpy. that's the tattoo of a man who can't decide, a man who can't commit a man who dithers. and you know what you're just too old to be dithering. we're all too old to be dithering. i mean it's one thing when you're a kid. you can dither all you want as a kid. but as you get older, dithering is really, really unattractive.

DEREK. why is everyone all of a sudden attacking my tattoo?

WENDY. as far as i'm concerned, the tattoo is just the tip of the iceberg. now if you'll excuse me, i need to find joy.

(exit WENDY. DEREK examines his tattoo. Light on PETER. PETER is looking through binoculars. he's beginning to resemble a komodo dragon.)

PETER. have you seen a dog? a really big dog?

DEREK. no. why? why do you ask?

PETER. never mind. i think my vision is going or something. i don't know what the deal is. i mean, all this stuff could be happening out there, and i just wouldn't even know because i can't see, i can't see a damn thing. i don't know what's wrong with me. i'm feeling very prehistoric and strange. where did you come from?

DEREK. just up the beach a ways. i'm writing this thing, it's kinda autobiographical. i mean, it's about me. i mean, i didn't start out writing about me, and to be honest, you know, autobiography, it only works if you're willing to bare your soul, and i worry sometimes that i have a shitty little soul that i should maybe keep covered up.

PETER. you want a beer?

DEREK. you know, a beer would be swell.

(DEREK cracks open a beer, and drinks.)

PETER. i'm a very bad lifeguard.

DEREK. i'm sure you're doing the best you can.

PETER. yeah, but what if that's just not good enough. don't you get it, i'm the life guard. i'm the guarder of lives. also, i have a tail.

DEREK. i wasn't going to say anything.

PETER. i think something strange is happening to me. my skin is kinda turning green, do you see what i'm saying, do you see what i'm talking about?

DEREK. there's a little bit of greenishness going on, uh huh.

PETER. and i have a tail. i didn't used to have a tail.

DEREK. age.

PETER. you think?

DEREK. time passes. people change. we age. it's only natural.

PETER. what about the tail?

DEREK. the tail is weird, but who can say? we're strange and mysterious creatures. we move in mysterious ways. we change.

PETER. you know, i don't think i'm very good with change.

DEREK. change is hard. life is hard.

PETER. easy for you to say. *(grabbing DEREK's manuscript:)* you don't have a tail. you're not turning into a goddamn lizard. ok, i think i'm going now. i think it's time. i need to find some leafy greens, some shade.

(PETER chucks the manuscript into oblivion.)

DEREK. o my god. no, no, no.

(exit PETER. DEREK chases down the sheets of paper as they fly away. light on MYRNA. she wears a santa hat.)

MYRNA. "jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way, o what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh, hey. jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way, o what fun it is to ride in a one horse open sleigh. dashing through the snow, in a one horse open sleigh, through the fields we go, laughing all the way, bells on the bobtail rings, making spirits bright, what fun it is to laugh and sing this sleighing song tonight."

(light off MYRNA. somewhere else, VIVIAN is decorating her foliage-filled room. BILLY emerges from the foliage.)

VIVIAN. merry christmas, billy. gosh, you've grown. i remember when you were a baby. i remember it like it was just yesterday.

BILLY. i hate christmas.

VIVIAN. christmas is a happy time. it's a time when everybody is happy.

BILLY. i don't buy it. i think lots of people are miserable at christmas. i think lots of people just want to shoot themselves in the face at christmas.

VIVIAN. okay, time for school.

BILLY. i hate school. school sucks. except for glee club. and band. next year, i'm going to be in a band. in the meantime, i want some

drums. can i get some drums, can i get some drums for christmas? and a tattoo. i really want to get a tattoo, a big tattoo like on my butt or maybe my face.

VIVIAN. tattoo, no. drums, maybe. you know, billy, you have gotten very big. all of a sudden, you've gotten very, very big.

BILLY. is my hair weird?

VIVIAN. your hair is beautiful.

BILLY. i have no friends. i'm a big fat loser.

VIVIAN. you have me.

BILLY. you're my mom. it doesn't count. i want a dog. can i have a dog? can i have a dog for christmas?

VIVIAN. o I don't know. you know, a dog is a lot of responsibility.

BILLY. i'm responsible, i'm so responsible. please, can we get a dog, please?

VIVIAN. we'll see.

(enter MARTIN holding a small, artificial christmas tree with colored balls and tinsel.)

MARTIN. hi.

BILLY. hi.

MARTIN. you used to be very small. now you're very big.

BILLY. why does everybody say that? i'm not big. i'm normal.

VIVIAN. yes, you are. you're very normal. merry christmas, martin.

MARTIN. merry christmas.

BILLY. what's that?

MARTIN. it's a little, baby christmas tree. it's plastic. it'll last forever.

BILLY. that's the stupidest thing i've ever seen.

VIVIAN. alright that's enough. you're going to be late. off you go. i said, off you go.

(BILLY exits. MARTIN gives VIVIAN the tree.)

MARTIN. here. merry christmas. it's for you. it's kinda stupid.

VIVIAN. no, it's lovely. it's really, it's lovely. thank you.

MARTIN. kids grow. plants grow. your plants have grown a lot.

VIVIAN. yes, yes, they have. i'm not sure what i think about that. you know, i'm thinking of having a little christmas get together, a little party. you're invited. i'm inviting you. that's what i'm doing right now, inviting you. i'm making cookies. christmas cookies. maybe you'll come by.

MARTIN. i'm not really a group person.

VIVIAN. you know, me neither.

MARTIN. i'll see.

VIVIAN. ok.

MARTIN. i'll try.

VIVIAN. ok.

(exit MARTIN. exit VIVIAN. the whistling wind transforms into the sound of the surf. somewhere else, DEREK is looking out at the ocean with binoculars. his papers are scattered. he's been drinking. MYRNA washes up on shore with suitcase.)

MYRNA. merry christmas. *(picking up DEREK's papers:)* what is this mess?

DEREK. is it christmas already? i think i'm a little bit confused about time. i think i'm also a little bit confused about space.

MYRNA. are you drunk?

DEREK. i would say i'm a little drunk, yes.

MYRNA. we drink too much, all of us, we all drink too much. we need to sober up, and get down to business. we need to get out our ice picks, and start hacking away, just start hacking.

DEREK. you have an ice pick?

MYRNA. i do. i also have a hammer. i had an axe, but i gave that away. i come prepared. the world is full of surprises. one has to be flexible. you never know.

DEREK. i'm alone in the universe. i have nothing to show. i have accomplished nothing. what have i been doing all this time? what the hell have i been doing?

MYRNA. have you been a good boy?

DEREK. no, not really.

MYRNA. well, that's alright. i'm sure you meant well.

DEREK. no, i didn't. i really didn't. i'm just rotten through and through.

MYRNA. well, you still get a christmas goodie anyway, just because. how's that?

DEREK. i'm too old for christmas.

MYRNA. you will never be too old for christmas.

DEREK. yes, i will. i am already. i look like hell. i've aged. i'm old. i'm ancient, when did this happen?

MYRNA. just pull yourself together, will you please. *(reaching into her pocket:)* here, have a sugar cookie. have two.

DEREK. they're the kind with sprinkles.

MYRNA. yes, yes, they are.

DEREK. i love the kind with sprinkles. but wait don't you see? i have problems. i have deep, unsolvable problems, and i'm basically fucked.

MYRNA. ssh. don't talk, ok? just eat your cookies.

(DEREK eats his sugar cookies. the sound of distant drumming. light on JASON. he swings an axe.)

JASON. derek?

DEREK. jason?

JASON. what's going on?

DEREK. o this and that, nothing much.

(DEREK flees. JASON follows. WENDY and JOY in a bubble of a light. WENDY holds her bird of paradise. JOY is covered head to foot in tattoos. each is in their own bubble of light.)

WENDY. hi.

JOY. hi.

WENDY. i've been looking all over for you.

JOY. i've been around.

WENDY. you seem different somehow.

JOY. i have tattoos over every square inch of my body. i think that's part of it.

WENDY. you look beautiful. here, *(giving JOY the flower:)* this is for you.

JOY. thanks.

WENDY. joy—i think i love you. i mean, i don't think. i know. i do. i love you, joy. i love you.

JOY. let's not use the word love, ok? it's not a good word. i think it may even actually be a really bad word. let's not even talk. let's just do other things. can we do other things, can we do that?

WENDY. ok.

(WENDY and JOY kiss. the sound of drumming continues. DEREK and JASON appear in the lush interior of a jungle.)

DEREK. o my god jason, please don't kill me, i didn't mean to do it, i didn't mean to do what i did, i wasn't thinking, i wasn't myself, i don't know who i was, and if i could take it all back, i would, i swear i would. and you're looking at me like you don't know what i'm talking about. because you don't know what i'm talking about. you have no idea. because i'm talking about—nothing, i'm babbling, i'm just babbling.

JASON. derek, man, you never change. good to see you, man.

DEREK. good to see you, too, jason. what's up with the axe?

JASON. o it's for the tree. i'm looking for a tree for christmas. every year, it's kinda like my deal, the tree. but this year, i don't know, all these trees are kinda shrubby, and tropical, and just wrong, they're all kinda wrong. i gotta keep looking. you want help me—i mean, if you're not doing anything else, that is.

DEREK. no—i'm—sure, ok, sure.

(the lush interior of a jungle. the drumming continues. enter RICHARD, disheveled and muddied. he has twigs in his hair. he clutches a komodo dragon. enter MARTIN holding a small, flowering plant.)

RICHARD. hi.

MARTIN. hi.

RICHARD. are the plants very big here or is it just me? maybe it's just me. maybe i'm just very small. maybe i shrunk. i hear you shrink with age.

MARTIN. i don't think it's you. i think everything here is kinda on the big side. why are you holding a lizard?

RICHARD. he's a komodo dragon. from a distance, i thought he was a dog.

MARTIN. is he lost?

RICHARD. i think he may be.

MARTIN. does he bite?

RICHARD. only if provoked.

MARTIN. do you think he's happy?

RICHARD. you know, he eats well. he takes little walks. he rests in the shade. he's not exactly setting the world on fire, but what the hey. i like him. i find him very soothing. i think if nobody claims him, i'm going to take him home.

MARTIN. home. that sounds so nice.

RICHARD. do you want to pet him?

MARTIN. *(petting the lizard:)* he's very still.

RICHARD. i think he's sleeping. so what brings you to the jungles of inner borneo?

MARTIN. o i'm on my way to a christmas party.

RICHARD. that's nice.

MARTIN. you want to come with?

RICHARD. o that's very kind, but you know, i think i'm going to have to pass. i'm a little pooped. it's been a very long day. can i get a rain check?

MARTIN. sure, whatever.

RICHARD. i mean it. i'd like that. i'd like that a lot.

MARTIN. ok.

(MARTIN exits. RICHARD exits. the drumming turns into christmas music. somewhere else, in vivian's foliated-filled room, it's christmas. tinsel and popcorn chains and little colored balls. enter MARTIN with his small, flowering plant. enter JASON with a christmas tree. enter VIVIAN bearing a platter. enter BILLY.)

JASON. merry christmas.

VIVIAN. merry christmas. i have eggnog and cookies and ham. i have a ham. look at this beautiful ham. this is a party. we're having a party. i'm very happy. right now, i am very, very happy.

MARTIN. i brought a plant.

VIVIAN. of course you did. o my god, wait i have cookies in the oven. don't go anywhere.

(exit VIVIAN. JASON sets up the tree. BILLY reluctantly decorates. MARTIN eyes the ham.)

JASON. nice plant.

MARTIN. edelweiss. i found it in the jungles of inner borneo. it was a surprise.

BILLY. edelweiss grows in the alps. it's like an alpine flower.

MARTIN. as i said, it was a surprise.

BILLY. how did an alpine flower get to the jungles of inner borneo?

MARTIN. well, billy, it's like this—this plant was once a little, tiny seed. it started one place and wound up somewhere else, carried on the back of a turtle, or maybe on the beak of a bird. these things happen, they happen all the time.

JASON. mother nature is weird.

BILLY. is my hair weird?

MARTIN. yes. *(to JASON:)* nice work with the tinsel.

JASON. thanks. do i know you? you look very familiar to me.

MARTIN. maybe in a past life. maybe we were both hermit crabs. maybe we lived in the same little terrarium.

JASON. huh. i guess that's one way of looking at things.

MARTIN. it's a theory.

BILLY. why does everything have to be so weird? why can't it just be normal? why can't we just be normal?

JASON. just please hang some balls, ok?

(enter MYRNA with a suitcase and an elf.)

MYRNA. merry christmas, merry christmas, merry christmas one and all. *(to JASON:)* can you help me with this bag. careful, it's very heavy. great, terrific, thank you. alright, enough chit chat. this is a very busy day for me. spreading good cheer is breaking my back. it never stops. *(to JASON:)* have you been a good boy?

JASON. yeah, you know, i think i have.

MYRNA. uh huh, and what about you, kid?

BILLY. i've been pretty good.

MYRNA. very good, keep it up. and you?

MARTIN. you know, i try.

MYRNA. well, that's all we can do, isn't it? *(to BILLY:)* hey, don't touch the elf.

BILLY. this looks like a mummy. we studied about mummies in school. they shove a straw up their noses, and then they suck out their insides.

MYRNA. she was a mummy in a past life. now she's an elf.

BILLY. i shoved a straw up my nose once.

MYRNA. i bet you did. now sit down and be quiet. it's time for gifts. *(rifling through the items in her suitcase:)* alright what do we have here? ah, ah. *(giving JASON a snowboard:)* i think this is for you.

JASON. o wow. snowboard, dude. check it out. that's just what i always wanted. thanks.

MYRNA. you're very welcome. alright, let me see, let me see. ah, here we go *(giving BILLY a drum:)* it's a little drum. isn't that you wanted? i thought you wanted a drum.

BILLY. this is kind of a weird looking drum.

MYRNA. it's a djembe. it's from mali.

BILLY. uh huh. i guess when i said drum, i had a different thing in mind. i was thinking more like, you know, "drums."

MYRNA. sometimes, we don't get exactly what we had in mind, and that's ok.

BILLY. i think that happens to me a lot.

MYRNA. how interesting. get used to it. now go play your drum. go on, shoo.

BILLY. what if i change my mind. what if i don't want a drum. can i trade? please. please.

MYRNA. o alright, just hold your horses, christ almighty. wait right here.

(MYRNA retrieves a smaller version of the giant terrarium from act one.)

MYRNA. merry christmas. no more trades.

BILLY. what is it? wow. o wow. *(reaching into the terrarium and retrieving a snake. a real snake:)* look. this is so great.

MYRNA. careful.

JASON. what do you say, buddy?

BILLY. thank you.

MYRNA. mmhm.

(exit BILLY and JASON.)

MYRNA. kids. alright next. who's next? *(to MARTIN:)* you. o. o dear. i'm afraid i have nothing for you. how did that happen? sorry about that. next year maybe. o but wait a minute, wait a minute, i have a message for you. i think it's for you.

(light on RICHARD.)

RICHARD. dear stranger, we met in inner borneo. you were on your way to a christmas party. i was with my lizard. i didn't get your name.

MARTIN. martin.

RICHARD. hi, martin. richard.

MARTIN. i didn't expect to see you. i thought you were in for the night.

RICHARD. i got a second wind. you want to maybe go to a movie or something?

MARTIN. sure.

RICHARD. great.

MYRNA. *(to MARTIN:)* go, go on. what are you waiting for? go.

(MARTIN and RICHARD exit together. enter VIVIAN with cookies.)

VIVIAN. myrna?

MYRNA. vivvie.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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