

# TALK

By

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TALK/Sergel

### Talk Cast of Characters

Fran...40's

Inner Fran

Graham, her husband...40's

Inner Graham

Anna...50's

Inner Anna

Carl, her husband...late 50's/early 60's

Inner Carl

Peter...late 20's

Inner Peter

Sheila, his girlfriend...late 20's

Inner Sheila

### Setting

A cabin on a secluded lake in the woods of Wisconsin

### Time

One late summer weekend, the present

TALK/Sergel

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

*A nicely decorated cabin with rustic touches. It has a small, well equipped kitchen, stage left, with a door that leads to the back of the house and the lake. There is a comfortable living room, center stage, which also has a large, wooden table that can accommodate six people. Stage right, there is an entrance that leads to a hallway. Further stage right, there is a small bedroom with a Picasso poster hanging above the queen size bed. A bathroom door leads off the bedroom. Moonlight pours through the windows.*

*A man can be heard struggling with the door.*

GRAHAM

Come on, open up!

*Graham Foster enters, carrying a small overnight bag. He flips on the lights.*

Ah, illumination. At least we'll be able to see each other.

*Fran Foster enters, also carrying a small bag. Another couple enters, both carrying large suitcases, which they place at the rim of the stage. Fran and Graham completely ignore them.*

FRAN

I'll have to go to the store first thing tomorrow. Coffee's here and I got croissants but I've got to be up and out early. Can you get sheets to the rooms?

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Fran)*

Sex?

GRAHAM

Sheets. Yeah. Sure. Where are they going?

FRAN

Picasso-

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN  
*(To Graham)*

-you son of a bitch.

FRAN  
-we'll put Anna and Carl in Picasso. I haven't had time to think about where to put the Peter guy and his girlfriend, since I just found out they're coming up too-

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Graham)*

-bastard-

FRAN  
-but I guess they'll go in Giacometti.

INNER GRAHAM  
No sex.

FRAN  
*(Looking in refrigerator)*  
No cream. For the coffee. What should we do about cream? I've got condensed milk in the pantry, I think. Could you straighten that thing on the couch?

*Graham straightens the throw on the couch.*

GRAHAM  
Sure. What else?

*Fran writes a grocery list as she peers in the refrigerator.*

INNER FRAN  
Do I have to dictate every single thing, every single time we entertain? Figure it out, dammit!

GRAHAM  
*(Referring to throw)*

How's that?

*The throw is still crooked.*

INNER FRAN  
Are you blind?

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Perfect.

GRAHAM

Sorry about Peter and Sheila-

INNER GRAHAM

-I screwed up-

GRAHAM

-but I love hanging out here, showing the place off, showing you off. He's a nice guy, really wanted to come.

*Fran hands him a small overnight bag.*

I know Carl and Anna will like him. And you're amazing. You can handle anything.

INNER GRAHAM

Sex?

*Inner Fran hoists another small bag across the room, smacking Inner Graham in the chest with it.*

INNER FRAN

Bullshit.

GRAHAM

And maybe we could carve out a little "you and me" time. You know, sort of a secret, under wraps romantic-

INNER GRAHAM

-sex-

GRAHAM

-weekend. Since Anna and Carl could talk to Peter and...um...Sheila...

INNER GRAHAM

You owe me. No Tuesday.

GRAHAM

Pretend we're really newlyweds and these strangers just barged in unannounced and we have to entertain them.

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Graham)*

Sell it!

GRAHAM

Honey, again, I'm really sorry.

FRAN

I'm still mad at you.

INNER FRAN

*(To Fran)*

You gotta. It's Friday. Remember, he was out of town Tuesday.

FRAN

Just don't screw up again and you may get your chance for one, tiny romantic moment.

*Graham exits.*

INNER GRAHAM AND INNER FRAN

*(In unison)*

Sex.

*Inner Graham and Inner Fran exit and return, struggling to carry a large, heavy, cumbersome truck. They place it at the edge of the stage. Inner Graham exits.*

INNER FRAN

Check the bathrooms. Suntan lotion. The canoe. Turn up temp on water heater. The good jelly. Steak or pork chops? Meat. Blood. Bug spray. Warn about ticks. Suck blood. Sex. George Clooney. Cobweb under table. Cream. Shave legs in the morning. Am I frigid? Apples for the pie.

*Headlights flash across the window.*

INNER FRAN

They're here!

*Fran races about, straightening the throw, turning on a few more lights and then opening the door.*

FRAN

*(Calling)*

You found us!

TALK/Sergel

*Anna Anderson and Carl Anderson enter. In their late forties, both carry overnight bags. Inner Anna and Inner Carl enter right behind them. They place large, heavy suitcases at the rim of the stage. Inner Anna is wearing a large, heavy backpack which she never takes off.*

FRAN

*(Embracing Anna)*

How was the drive? It's a long drive.

INNER FRAN

How's the cancer?

ANNA

God, it's so dark and silent. The woods at night. Amazing. And the cabin. I love it-

INNER ANNA

-I'm so tired I want to slap somebody-

ANNA

-I see your handprint everywhere.

CARL

Nice digs, Mrs. Foster. Stash a husband anywhere?

INNER CARL

*(To Anna)*

Don't die.

FRAN

He's getting the bedrooms ready. Let me get him.

INNER FRAN

Graham, get your ass back in here! I'm not telling them about Peter and...um-

FRAN

*(Calling)*

-honey. Anna and Carl got here.

ANNA

Can we help?

INNER ANNA

Sleep.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Drink?

INNER ANNA

Decline.

CARL

Sure.

INNER ANNA

Carl!

ANNA

Honey, Fran's tired.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Carl)*

I'm tired.

ANNA

We'll visit in the morning.

FRAN

Beer? Pop?

INNER CARL  
*(To Carl)*

She's tired.

CARL

No, nothing. We should hit the sack.

FRAN

You sure?

INNER FRAN

Good. Go to bed.

*Graham enters.*

CARL

Hey there!

GRAHAM

Hello, hello!

TALK/Sergel

Finally.

INNER FRAN

*Graham and Carl shake hands warmly while Inner Graham and Inner Carl hug.*

Finally.

INNER GRAHAM

You're looking fine, my friend.

CARL

Good friend.

INNER CARL

How was the drive?

GRAHAM

Lie.

INNER CARL  
*(To Carl)*

Fine.

CARL

Directions okay?

GRAHAM

Had to get a map. You have the handwriting of a serial killer.

INNER CARL

I know all the shortcuts *(to Anna, as he embraces her)* Lady, you sure are looking terrific.

GRAHAM

How's the cancer?

INNER GRAHAM

Sad clown.

INNER ANNA

You're looking great too. Working out? You've lost some weight-

ANNA

-only twenty more to go. You should try some chemo-

INNER ANNA

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

-Atkins?

GRAHAM

Just the gym a lot. Well, my friend, you up for some fishing this weekend, my friend?

INNER FRAN  
(*To Graham*)

Tell them.

CARL

Sounds great.

INNER FRAN

Don't get the fishing thing.

INNER ANNA

Don't get the fishing thing.

ANNA

Great. You guys fish while we lie in the sun and read fashion magazines.

INNER FRAN

I always liked you.

FRAN

I like how your mind works.

ANNA

We'll have fun.

INNER FRAN  
(*To Fran*)

Oh, water heater (*To Inner Graham*) Tell them.

ANNA

But now I have to go to bed. Carl, I'm going to bed.

INNER ANNA  
(*To Carl*)

Come on.

GRAHAM

Well, good night.

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM  
(Pleading)

Franny, you tell them.

FRAN

Graham, you forgot to tell them about...

INNER GRAHAM

Called your bluff.

ANNA

What?

GRAHAM

Um...a friend from work, Peter, really great guy, and his girlfriend may be-

INNER GRAHAM

-are-

GRAHAM

-joining us this weekend.

INNER ANNA

Strangers? Graham!

ANNA

Oh. Okay.

CARL

You know, Anna has to take it easy.

INNER CARL

She's sick and you're springing this on her?

GRAHAM

I know, I know, but it'll be fine. He's really nice. It'll be great.

INNER GRAHAM

I screwed up. Fran!

FRAN

This will be a relaxing weekend if I have to shoot these people with horse tranquilizers. I may even miss my aim once and hit my husband.

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN  
*(Pointing to Graham)*

He invited them. His fault.

ANNA

It'll be fine. We'll be fine-

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Graham)*

-not mad-

ANNA

-just know I'm not always up for socializing.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Fran)*

But you two have to entertain them.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Anna)*

Got it.

CARL

Don't worry, honey.

FRAN

Graham and I've got it covered. Graham, did you get the...?

GRAHAM

The sheets are on the bed, guys.

INNER GRAHAM

No, I did not fuck up the sheets assignment.

CARL

When are Peter and...his girlfriend showing up?

GRAHAM

Tomorrow. She had an audition or something.

INNER GRAHAM

Actress. Probably hot.

INNER CARL

Actress. Probably hot.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

So she's an actress.

ANNA

Probably hot.

CARL

No one's hotter than you, baby.

INNER CARL  
*(Observing Anna)*

She's pale.

CARL

Sorry, Fran. You're a close second.

FRAN

Thank you, sir.

GRAHAM

Photo finish, my friend.

INNER GRAHAM  
*(To Fran)*

Sex?

INNER ANNA

Bed.

ANNA

Bed. I'm off.

FRAN

Third door on the right. The Picasso room. You'll see.

INNER FRAN

Are you tired because of the cancer?

ANNA

Night everybody.

FRAN  
*(Stopping Anna)*

I have to stock up at the market so just coffee and croissants in the morning.

TALK/Sergel

INNER ANNA  
*(To Fran)*

Shut up.

ANNA

Sounds great. Good night.

*Anna exits, followed by Inner Anna.*

CARL

Well, looks like she's off. Me too then. Good night.

*Grabbing suitcases, Carl and Inner Carl exit.*

GRAHAM  
*(Calling after him)*

Good night *(To Fran)* Okay, how can I help?

INNER GRAHAM

Sex?

FRAN

Could you turn up the water heater temp and pull the pads out of the unit thingy for the outdoor chairs...people might want to sit out in the morning.

INNER FRAN

Do I have cancer? Dead ladybugs on the window sill.

FRAN

Did we ever replace that dust buster?

INNER GRAHAM

Earth to Fran.

GRAHAM

Honey, leave it.

INNER FRAN

Oh, that's helpful.

GRAHAM

Let's just do it all in the morning.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

People are going to want hot showers in the morning.

GRAHAM

I know! I'll do that.

INNER GRAHAM

I'm tired, you're obsessing. Sex is remote.

GRAHAM

But let's leave everything else. We're both tired. Come on.

FRAN

Okay.

INNER FRAN

*(Screaming)*

The WATER HEATER!

FRAN

*(Clenched but sweet)*

Honey, the water heater.

GRAHAM

Oh, yeah.

END SCENE ONE

TALK/Sergel

SCENE TWO

*Anna and Carl in the bedroom. Anna sits on the bed, picking at a sandwich wrapped in paper. Carl is getting undressed. Inner Anna sits in a downstage chair facing Anna's side of the bed, Inner Carl leans against the upstage wall on Carl's side of the bed.*

ANNA

It's so quiet up here.

INNER ANNA

Chemo Monday.

CARL

How do you feel?

ANNA

Okay. Tired. My gums hurt but I'm still hungry. Odd. I didn't expect that. I thought chemo killed your appetite.

INNER CARL

Have they killed it?

INNER ANNA  
(To Carl)

God, you're so scared.

INNER CARL

Is it dead yet?

CARL

Well, only three more rounds. Maybe all the fresh air will make Monday easier. You know, strengthen you up.

ANNA

I'm not looking forward to dealing with new people this weekend.

CARL

Graham's great but he can be an idiot sometimes.

INNER CARL

I'll protect you.

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

He's just a pushover. That's why you like him so much. Why we both like him-

INNER ANNA

-why I came up.

ANNA

He's such a nice guy-

INNER ANNA

You need a friend.

ANNA

-probably got cornered into asking these people.

INNER ANNA

*(To Carl)*

You need to stop being so scared. You need to rest. Graham will help *(To Anna)* Change subject.

*Anna lies back on the bed, head at the foot of the bed, feet on the pillows. She looks at the Picasso poster.*

ANNA

What do you think?

CARL

Scares the shit out of me. What is it?

ANNA

It's cubism.

INNER ANNA

I love you.

CARL

Sweetheart, you've always been the brains in this outfit. You tell me to like it and I'll like it. But, I mean, what's the point of it?

INNER CARL

Stall. Don't sleep.

ANNA

Well, what little I know about cubism-

TALK/Sergel

INNER CARL

You're so smart.

ANNA

-the point is, cubists were attempting to show all aspects, all dimensions of a subject on a two dimensional surface. By revealing, say, the bottom, side and back of the nose, the viewer could essentially see every aspect of the nose, all while standing in one spot.

CARL

But it's ugly. She's ugly.

INNER CARL

Stall.

INNER ANNA

Relax.

ANNA

Not so ugly. Honest? A brutally honest way of looking at something. And, as art, I would say it was a success with you.

CARL

Because I hate it?

INNER CARL

Love you.

ANNA

Because it generated a reaction.

INNER CARL

You're a selfish bastard. Let her rest.

CARL

Well, my reaction is I think we should go to bed.

ANNA

You know what I love about you?

CARL

What?

ANNA

That you can read my mind.

TALK/Sergel

*Anna crawls under the covers. Carl turns off the lights and climbs into bed. Carl remains propped up on the pillows, wide awake. Inner Carl crosses over and squats next to Anna. He stares at her, his face inches away from hers. After a moment, Anna begins to breathe rhythmically, falling asleep. Inner Anna stands and removes her backpack. It drops to the floor with a loud thud. Carl remains awake, staring straight ahead.*

END SCENE TWO

TALK/Sergel

SCENE THREE

*Inner Graham and Inner Fran enter the bedroom. They remove the Picasso poster, slide it under the bed, and replace it with a framed Renoir poster. As Inner Fran speaks, Fran enters and moves around the room, putting things away, adjusting the curtains, putting her cosmetic bag in the bathroom, etc.*

INNER FRAN

Call Julie and check how the Santiago wedding went. Did I put food convention dates in my book? Look into new supplier at convention. Larry is making me nuts. Pistachios for Carl. Prune back that bush around the grill. Clean the grill? Coals. Bombfire? Get wood. Matches. Peter and Sheila. Smoke? No smoking sign or just tell them? Ashtray outside. Cigarettes. Cancer. Anna. Chemo. Death. Talk. Ask. Not chatter. Talk. Touch. Close. Kids. Call kids. Graham. Tuesday. Sex. Tired. So tired. Avoid divorce. Sex. Relax. Fantasy. Fantasize. Necking. Passion. Tension. Erotic. So tired. Fantasize.

*Graham's footsteps can be heard in the hall.*

No time.

*Fran exits into the bathroom. Graham enters and begins getting undressed.*

GRAHAM  
(Calling)

Water will be hot in the morning.

INNER GRAHAM

Am I off the hook now?

FRAN  
(From bathroom)

Thanks, honey.

INNER FRAN

Honey on the list. Remember cheese curds. Curdle. Cream.

*Fran enters.*

GRAHAM

Anna looks good. Carl too. They seem happy.

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM

In the mood?

FRAN

I thought she looked a little pale.

GRAHAM

Well, it's a long drive.

INNER GRAHAM

Let's not talk about death.

GRAHAM

Carl looks good.

INNER GRAHAM

My one friend and he has to retire.

FRAN

Miss him at the office?

GRAHAM

It's just different.

INNER GRAHAM

Yes.

GRAHAM

No one gets my jokes.

INNER GRAHAM

King of the pithy sound bites but no one really likes me.

FRAN

I get your jokes.

INNER FRAN

Do I still love you? I can't remember.

GRAHAM

Hold still.

FRAN

Why?

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

You just look so pretty. So pretty in the moonlight.

INNER GRAHAM

God, I love you.

INNER FRAN

Sex. Okay. I'll probably be too tired tomorrow.

FRAN

Thank you.

INNER FRAN

I miss passion.

GRAHAM

I miss you.

FRAN

We missed Tuesday.

INNER FRAN

Now he's going to touch my breast.

*He touches her breast.*

INNER GRAHAM

She always likes this.

*She runs her hand up his thigh.*

INNER FRAN

He always likes this.

FRAN

You like?

GRAHAM

Always.

INNER FRAN

I'm bored. Try something new.

*She pushes him backwards by his shoulders.  
Catching him unawares, he slams his head into the*

TALK/Sergel

*headboard.*

FRAN

Oh! Sorry! Sorry! I was trying something new.

INNER FRAN

He'll still be horny.

GRAHAM

It's okay. I'm okay. Okay. I like new moves. Where did you get that one? The Corleones?

FRAN

Hey, don't forget the cannoli.

GRAHAM

I'll show you a cannoli.

FRAN

Promises, promises.

INNER FRAN

I love you. I just remembered. I love you.

*Graham kisses Fran deeply.*

INNER GRAHAM

Ah. Cream.

END SCENE THREE

TALK/Sergel

SCENE FOUR

*Sunrise. Anna sits at the table with a laptop computer in front of her, sipping a cup of coffee. Inner Anna sits facing her, also sipping a cup of coffee. They look at each other.*

INNER ANNA

Maybe a storm?

ANNA

Maybe. I don't like the name Pablo for the farmer.

INNER ANNA

Yeah. Too obvious *(They both take a sip of coffee)* How about some sort of natural disaster thing? The creek overflowing-

ANNA

-good. Good.

*Anna begins to type.*

INNER ANNA

*(Suddenly jumping to her feet, dictates to Anna)*

Got it! The dam breaks and-

ANNA

*(Typing furiously)*

-a flood of-

INNER FRAN

*(Entering with Fran)*

-talk to repair man. Talk to the kids. Talk to-

FRAN

-Anna.

INNER ANNA

Damn. Finish.

ANNA

Morning.

FRAN

You're up.

TALK/Sergel

*Anna types a few last words very quickly.*

INNER ANNA  
*(To Anna)*

Got it.

*Anna saves her work and closes her computer.*

ANNA  
I'm up. Morning is my favorite time to work. The muse hasn't gotten occupied with extraneous distractions yet.

FRAN  
Extraneous distractions are my muse's life blood.

INNER ANNA  
Nicely put. Revealing.

FRAN  
You made the coffee.

ANNA  
No. You made the coffee. I pushed a button.

FRAN  
I've got to go into town soon. Get supplies.

INNER FRAN  
Juice. Bread. Insect repellent. Fruit. Talk.

ANNA  
Talk to me for a second.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Fran)*  
Carpe diem.

*Fran sits.*

FRAN  
What are you writing?

INNER FRAN  
Am I in it?

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

A short story. A collection.

INNER FRAN  
(*To Fran*)

Sound smart.

FRAN

Any unifying theme?

ANNA

Well, always the authentically lived life versus the life lived for others, for society, for religion but-

INNER ANNA

-haven't got it yet-

ANNA

-I haven't got it yet. The major theme.

INNER ANNA

That's okay.

ANNA

It'll come. It'll reveal itself. It always does. Eventually. How are the kids?

FRAN

Oh, fine.

INNER FRAN

Shit, not the kids conversation.

INNER ANNA  
(*To Fran*)

I want to know. (*To Anna*) What is my theme?

ANNA

Junior high?

INNER FRAN

I'm so boring.

FRAN

Yes. 6th and 8th.

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN

I want to talk about themes and muses and creativity.

FRAN

They're great kids. Probably driving their grandparents to distraction.

ANNA

To know a person from the moment of their inception. To watch the life take shape. To see their facets, tastes, defenses...develop.

INNER ANNA

I'm still jealous. I can't believe I'm still jealous.

FRAN

Are you jealous?

ANNA

Yes.

FRAN

Me too. The novels. The freedom. The students gathered at your feet. You're used to that though. Does it feel different since you've been...sick? Has having cancer changed how you write?

INNER FRAN

I can't believe I'm saying this.

ANNA

Yes. Yes, it has.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Fran)*

This feels good. Talking.

FRAN

How?

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Anna)*

God, it feels good to talk about something real.

ANNA

It's made the work, all of the work, teaching, everything, more...delicate. Pure. Almost refined. As though a clean summer light is shining on each word, every exchange. Hence the short story format. I'm trying to capture moments. I don't need a novel to indulge my

TALK/Sergel

ANNA (CONT'D)

ramblings. It's like the difference between a big, rich Thanksgiving meal or a small, simple, delicious pear just plucked off the tree.

FRAN

Sounds lovely.

INNER ANNA

Death.

ANNA

Amidst the pounding, screaming fear of death, yeah, it's alright.

INNER ANNA

I think I'm dying. Flood. Fear. Oh my god. Get out. I need an out.

ANNA

How's the catering business?

INNER FRAN

She's stepping back.

FRAN

Good.

INNER FRAN

Moment over. Peas. Onions. More wine?

INNER ANNA

Moment over.

ANNA

The view of the lake is extraordinary.

FRAN

How's Carl?

ANNA

Sleeping. His sleep has been... disrupted lately.

INNER ANNA

Sleep. Death. Is sleep what dying feels like? Do I want to talk about this?

ANNA

But he's fine.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

He likes retirement?

INNER FRAN  
(*Calling offstage*)

Graham, get up. I need to get to the market.

ANNA

I thought he wouldn't. I thought he would miss work. He isn't exactly a hobby, sports, volunteer for the homeless kind of guy. But he started cooking, he took a class, then I got sick, and well...

FRAN

Nice of you.

ANNA

What do you mean?

FRAN

Getting cancer. I mean, you gotta admit. It's a hell of a hobby.

INNER FRAN

Will she laugh? Did I go too far?

ANNA

Well, you know me. I'm a giver.

INNER ANNA

Bold. Fun!

FRAN

Big of you. What are you gonna do for him next year?

ANNA

When I'm done with the cancer...I'm thinking Parkinson's.

FRAN

Maybe MS?

ANNA

A little predictable. Heroin addiction?

FRAN

Nice. The unexpected choice.

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Anna)*

I do like you.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Fran)*

I do like you.

*Graham stumbles in, Inner Graham behind him.*

INNER GRAHAM

Coffee.

*He sees Anna.*

Oh, yeah. People.

GRAHAM

Morning, Anna.

INNER GRAHAM  
*(Pondering, to Anna)*

Will I have to shave?

ANNA

Morning.

GRAHAM  
*(To Fran)*

Hey, honey.

FRAN  
*(Handing him coffee)*

Remember, no cream until I go to the market.

INNER FRAN

I've got to go to the market!

INNER GRAHAM

I feel good. Why do I...oh, yeah, sex.

GRAHAM

I feel good. How are you ladies?

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

Fine, Graham.

INNER ANNA

He looks like a puppy. I miss Carl.

ANNA

Time to rouse the beast.

*She exits. Inner Anna follows her out.*

GRAHAM

Honey?

FRAN

Hum?

INNER FRAN

*(To Fran)*

Make another pot. This one was too strong. Hot water. Shower. Did I bring the green shorts? Shave legs. My legs look fat in the red shorts. Fat. Get skim milk.

GRAHAM

Honey?

FRAN

What?

GRAHAM

How do you feel?

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Fran)*

Praise my lovemaking. You didn't come. Did you come?

INNER FRAN

*(To Inner Graham)*

You want to know if I came.

FRAN

Good. I feel good. Honey, I need to get to the store.

GRAHAM

Did you make the list?

TALK/Sergel

I did.

FRAN

I didn't.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Graham)*

END SCENE FOUR

TALK/Sergel

SCENE FIVE

*Fran is chopping vegetables. There is a bowl full of fruit on the table and a few bottles of wine and soda pop on the counter.*

*Anna is sitting on the patio in one of four lounge chairs reading a book, downstage left on the patio, facing the lake. Inner Anna lies on a chair right next to her.*

*Carl and Graham sit on top of all the luggage the Inners brought in, downstage right. They are both holding fishing poles with the lines dropped over the lip of the stage. Inner Graham sits on the trunk and Inner Carl sits behind Carl.*

CARL

So you took 41 all the way up? 'Til the Kenosha merge?

GRAHAM

94 backs up with the weekend rush.

*Carl and Graham look at the water.*

INNER GRAHAM

Been coming up for ten years.

CARL

Yeah...but 41 has the local traffic.

INNER GRAHAM

I know you think I drive like an old lady.

CARL

And all the lights.

INNER CARL

I know my way around. And you drive like a girl.

GRAHAM

You took the 894 bypass, right? Even with the construction, it's still faster. Even if I do drive like a girl.

*Carl laughs.*

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INNER CARL

How the hell did such a nice guy survive so long in advertising?

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Inner Carl)*

Not one ticket. Not one accident.

CARL

You don't want to have to go through downtown Milwaukee.

GRAHAM

Yup.

INNER CARL

That oncologist is in Milwaukee. Anna.

*Carl searches the horizon.*

GRAHAM

That stadium they've got is nice.

CARL

Brewers.

INNER CARL

There she is. She's okay.

*Carl waves. On the other side of the stage, Anna waves back.*

GRAHAM

Now, that roof. Is it on hydraulics?

INNER CARL

What if she dies?

GRAHAM

What do you think?

CARL

What?

GRAHAM

Hydraulics.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Hydraulics.

GRAHAM

The roof. The stadium.

INNER GRAHAM

Where are you?

CARL

Oh. Yeah, yeah. Would have to be.

GRAHAM

Would have to be.

CARL

Sort of takes the sport out of it.

INNER GRAHAM

He's back. Sort of.

GRAHAM

But it's a business.

INNER GRAHAM

Work sucks.

INNER CARL

Work.

GRAHAM

Miss a game because of Wisconsin weather-

INNER CARL

I miss work.

CARL

-two, three million, gone.

GRAHAM

No way. More! Much more. Five, even six million.

INNER CARL

Work was fun. Had stuff I could fix.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Six? Six million? For one cancelled game?

INNER CARL

Game with silly stakes. Play. For Graham.

CARL

I say two, at most.

GRAHAM

Well sure, I guess it depends if it's cancelled before everyone's at the stadium. But still, ratings lost-

INNER CARL

A battle for nothing.

GRAHAM

But if folks are already there, they've paid for parking, eaten something.

INNER CARL

Losing something didn't mean death.

GRAHAM

Come on. Admit it. I'm right!

INNER GRAHAM

Right?

INNER CARL

Let him win.

CARL

You're right.

INNER GRAHAM

He doesn't make winning a big deal. I miss him.

INNER CARL

I miss this.

CARL

So who is this Peter guy?

INNER CARL

Is he going to be work?

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

He's a young guy. A new guy. Smart. Good. Pretty good. I kinda got...I'm just talking about going away this weekend, the cabin, and he's listening. We're just talking. You know, how you talk at work-

*Graham casts his line. Carl casts his line.*

INNER GRAHAM

-to fill the time-

INNER CARL

-fill the time.

GRAHAM

-and I mention...something like "you'd love it." And then he's asking me for directions, if his girlfriend can come to.

CARL

Shit. You're kidding?

GRAHAM

No! I almost got out of it. Just said no.

CARL

Why didn't you?

GRAHAM

I couldn't. He had this look in his eye. Just for a second, he wasn't...slick, you know? I couldn't. It would have been like...kicking a puppy. A puppy in a twenty-four hundred dollar suit.

INNER GRAHAM

Think I'm a schmuck?

INNER CARL

*(Fondly)*

Schmuck.

CARL

Schmuck.

GRAHAM

Yeah. I am. And you know I'm a firm believer in not mixing work and...not work. It's too much...work.

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM

Except us. We always worked.

CARL

How is it? Work?

GRAHAM

Work.

INNER CARL

No work.

*They reel in their empty lines and then cast out again.*

GRAHAM

How's Anna? How are you guys?

INNER GRAHAM

-you?

CARL

Fine.

GRAHAM

Fine?

CARL

Yeah.

GRAHAM

And...?

CARL

And?

GRAHAM

Yeah. And...?

INNER GRAHAM

And...

CARL

Sort of...surprised.

GRAHAM

Surprised?

TALK/Sergel

INNER CARL

Tell.

CARL

Graham, you never think it's going to happen to you. To your wife.

INNER CARL

It's happening.

INNER GRAHAM

Cancer. Anna. Fran? Could she-

CARL

It's like a nightmare. Standing right in front of your wife but missing her desperately. You have no idea.

INNER GRAHAM

Yeah, I do.

CARL

I thought, when I retired, we would, I dunno. It would be different. We would go places and...

*Carl reels in his line and looks at his empty hook.*

INNER CARL

It's not fair. Work and Anna. I was work and Anna.

*He recasts.*

CARL

Listen to me. Anna's the one with, you know....and I'm the one complaining.

INNER CARL

Selfish schmuck!

CARL

I'm a schmuck.

GRAHAM

You're allowed to feel cheated.

INNER CARL

Cheated.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Cheated? I'm not the one who's...you know....

INNER CARL

Dying. Anna. Dying. Anna is dying. No. Too much. Turn away.

CARL

And the broadcast. The bars. People won't sit and eat and drink and watch the game. Might be ten million.

INNER CARL

When was the last time I sat in a bar, watching a game?

INNER GRAHAM

Carl, talk.

*Silence.*

CARL

*(Gesturing to lake)*

Anything in here?

*Fran walks onto the patio to join Anna. Inner Fran follows right behind.*

ANNA

It's heaven up here.

INNER ANNA

Is there a heaven?

FRAN

Where are the guys?

ANNA

*(Pointing out)*

Out there.

INNER FRAN

Fish. You catch 'em, you clean 'em. Gut a fish. My gut is too big for this suit.

*Carl waves and Anna waves back.*

ANNA

Nice suit.

TALK/Sergel

INNER ANNA  
*(Looking at Fran)*

Healthy. Strong.

FRAN

I think it makes my stomach look fat.

INNER ANNA

Fat is meaningless.

ANNA

Every bathing suit makes our stomachs look fat.

INNER ANNA

We're alive and-

ANNA

-we have stomachs.

INNER ANNA

Alive. Get it? Alive.

FRAN

What do you think they're talking about out there?

ANNA

Oh clearly, their deepest fears, hopes and ambitions.

*As they talk, Fran and Anna get more and more relaxed and Inner Fran and Inner Anna lounge back, growing increasingly languid and drowsy.*

FRAN

Oh yeah, of course.

ANNA

Because, we both know that men just love revealing their inner emotional life to each other.

FRAN

Talk about their feelings.

ANNA

Their mothers.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Their failings at work.

ANNA

Whether God exists.

FRAN

Inadequacies in the bedroom.

ANNA

And, of course, creeping hair loss.

FRAN

And when they're finished, having embraced and thanked each other for their friendship-

ANNA

-they're going to row back in-

FRAN

-remembering to bring in everything from the boat-

ANNA

-check and make sure things are picked up around the living room-

FRAN

-wipe up around the sink after washing their hands, and, oops, noticing that the hand towel is dirty, wet and frayed, run to the linen closet and replace it-

ANNA

-and, finally, make sure everything is chopped and prepared for dinner tonight.

FRAN

So everyone else can relax and enjoy themselves. Always thinking of the comfort, ease and feelings of others, those guys!

ANNA

I finally got a cleaning service. I couldn't take the rage.

FRAN

I hate strangers poking around my house.

*She pauses.*

Why is it so hard for them? For men? It's just having the desire to notice what another person needs to make her day easier. Smoother. In the moment and in the future. What

TALK/Sergel

FRAN (CONT'D)

would make Anna's day easier when she wakes up tomorrow morning? Would having clean underwear in her top drawer, ready to go without having to dig in the dryer, help her? Well, then, I'll do that for her today. Because I love her. And I'm going to do it without her having to ask me to do it, how to do it, when to do it, and then ANNOUNCE to the world that I am doing it so I get credit the afternoon before, when I'm doing it, then praise the next morning when she pulls open her drawer and has that flush of pleasure...she better thank me again, then, for this wonderful act of generosity and love. You know, emptying the dishwasher is an act of love. Picking up your shoes so your husband doesn't trip over them and bang his shin in the middle of the night, on the way to the bathroom, and is then lying awake for the next hour, worrying about that delivery, the two employees with the flu and how she's going to fit in that trip to the dentist, is an act of love. Want to get me excited? Scrub the toilet. Want to kiss me? Do a load of laundry. Want to make me come? Drive the kids to soccer so I can take a fucking nap.

ANNA

Put a little thought into this?

INNER ANNA

Ever told Graham this?

FRAN

Just a bit.

INNER FRAN

Think I'm crazy?

ANNA

The crazy comes from not talking about it. (*Pointing out to Carl and Graham*)  
Can you explain the fishing thing to me?

FRAN

As far as I can tell, the point is to catch a really big one but it completely doesn't matter if you don't.

ANNA

Sounds quite metaphoric.

FRAN

I suppose. But leave it to a guy to be looking for his metaphor at the end of a long, hard pole jutting out between his legs.

ANNA

Casting about for it in the lake of desire.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Fishing for answers.

ANNA

Always hoping they have the biggest one.

FRAN

It was this big. Boy, it feels good to be bitchy and sarcastic. Why is that?

ANNA

Beats having all those comebacks banging around in your head with no place to go.  
(Pause)When is that other couple coming up?

INNER ANNA

Are they going to ruin this mood?

FRAN

Don't really know.

INNER FRAN

Don't really care.

*A moment passes.*

Should care.

*Another moment.*

Don't care.

*Inner Fran smiles and closes her eyes.*

*Silence except for the water lapping at the shore.  
All the Inners are asleep, the Inner men sleeping on  
the luggage, the Inner women sleeping on the chairs.  
A knock on the front door. No one moves. Another  
knock is heard. The door opens and Peter Tyler and  
Sheila Young enter. Both are in their late twenties.  
Peter is dressed perfectly in crisp chino shorts and  
a designer casual shirt. Sheila is a tall, thin,  
willowy woman. She is in very urban, hip summer  
clothes. They both carry overnight cases.*

TALK/Sergel

Hello?

PETER

SHEILA

here is everybody? Is this the place?

*Inner Peter enters, carrying a large suitcase, which he plops down with the others. Inner Peter is a slim, artistic, sensitive man. Inner Sheila enters. She is dressed in loose, ugly clothes. She carries multiple bags and sacks, all overflowing with clothes and memorabilia (framed pictures, notebooks, an umbrella, a liter of coke, a toilet brush, food, etc.) She drops everything on the luggage pile and looks around.*

*Peter looks at a photo on the shelf.*

PETER

Yes, this is it. This is of Graham and his wife. Must be his wife. What do you think?

INNER PETER

It's amazing. Please love it. I love it.

SHEILA

It's sort of...old.

PETER

*(Calling)*

Hello?

*Fran jumps up and as she pulls on a cover up, frantically waves to Graham to row in.*

INNER SHEILA

I hate it. I won't fit in. I don't get it.

*Fran enters.*

FRAN

You got here. You must be Peter.

INNER FRAN

Wow.

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Mine.

PETER

Peter. Yes. Peter Tyler.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Fran)*

Old. Flabby.

PETER

And this is my girlfriend, Sheila Young.

INNER FRAN

Young. Sleek.

FRAN

So glad you could come.

INNER SHEILA  
*(To Sheila)*

He's not looking at you.

SHEILA

Yeah.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Sheila)*

You think I'm fat. Boring. Suburban.

INNER SHEILA  
*(Casually, to Inner Fran)*

Oh yeah.

SHEILA

The drive took forever.

INNER SHEILA  
*(To Sheila)*

Will I be the thinnest one here?

FRAN

Did you have trouble getting here?

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN

I am fat, boring and suburban.

PETER

No, the directions were great.

INNER PETER

Directions totally sucked-

PETER

Is Graham here?

INNER PETER

-but don't care. I'm here.

FRAN

He should be rowing in *(To Sheila)* Would you like something to eat-

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Sheila)*

-bitch?

FRAN

A snack after the long drive?

INNER SHEILA

What are you going to offer us? Some Lunchables and a package of HoHos?

FRAN

Some fruit? A little hummus and pita bread?

INNER SHEILA

Oh.

PETER

Honey, you hungry?

SHEILA

Hardly. *(To Fran)* We thought it would be better to eat in the city before we came up to the middle of nowhere.

INNER PETER

Why did you just say that?

TALK/Sergel

PETER

If we could just drop our things where we're sleeping?

INNER PETER

See the rest of the place.

FRAN

Of course. You're in the Giacometti.

SHEILA

Huh? The what?

FRAN

Oh, we name the rooms.

SHEILA

That's weird.

FRAN

You'll see-

INNER FRAN

-you condescending brat.

*She leads them out of the living room. They all follow her except Inner Sheila. After moment, she rolls her eyes and joins them.*

*Inner Sheila and Inner Peter enter the bedroom first. They take the poster off the wall, slide it under the bed, pull out a reproduction of a Giacometti statue and place it on the headboard. Fran, Peter, Sheila and Inner Fran enter.*

FRAN

-before I started the catering business, I worked in the Art Institute gift store. I couldn't resist the discount.

INNER FRAN

Resist crush. Blush.

PETER

It's great. Thank you.

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

Is that the bathroom?

FRAN

Yes-

INNER FRAN

-bitch, it is.

*Inner Sheila strides into the bathroom and slams the door shut.*

SHEILA

Good. I've gotta have my own bathroom.

*Sheila follows Inner Sheila into the bathroom.*

PETER

It's been a long drive.

INNER PETER

*(As Peter sets bags on the bed)*

It would be so great if you pretended to believe that she's pissing instead of being rude.

FRAN

Of course-

INNER FRAN

*(To Peter)*

-you stupid schmuck. A million nice girls in the world-

FRAN

Well, I'll go dig up Graham-

*She notices the Kleenex box by the bed is empty.*

INNER FRAN

-must be good in bed. Sex. Kleenex.

*Fran exits. Peter and Inner Peter flop on their backs on the bed and exhale deeply. The toilet flushes. Both Peters jump up. Inner Peter stands, rigid, in the corner as Peter begins unpacking his overnight case. Sheila and Inner Sheila enter.*

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

Hey beautiful.

PETER

Hey beautiful.

*Peter and Sheila kiss across the bed.*

INNER SHEILA

*(To Sheila)*

Hey, ugly pig, tilt your head more! Loosen your lips.

*They end the kiss.*

PETER

Nice.

INNER SHEILA

Now glide.

*Sheila seductively crawls on to the bed.*

INNER SHEILA

I said glide, fat pig.

INNER PETER

God, she wants to do it.

SHEILA

Wanna fuck, beautiful?

PETER

Now?

INNER PETER

Right now?

INNER SHEILA

Hair. Suck stomach.

*Sheila gently shakes her hair.*

PETER

There isn't a moment that goes by that I don't want to make love to you-

TALK/Sergel

INNER PETER

No.

PETER

-but I believe that we have some people to meet.

INNER PETER

Please impress them.

PETER

So why don't you get your gorgeous self off the bed-

INNER PETER

Get up!

PETER

-and let's go meet Graham and everybody else.

INNER PETER

Graham hates me. I cornered him into inviting me. What have I done?

SHEILA

Whatever you say, gorgeous.

INNER SHEILA

*(To Sheila)*

They're all going to hate you. You're fat. You'll lose him 'cuz you're too fat.

PETER

*(Listening)*

Is that them? Let's go.

SHEILA

Do I have to be rustic? I don't wear plaid and I don't eat cheese.

INNER SHEILA

Remember, I'm hot. Don't dump me.

PETER

Just be yourself.

INNER PETER

Don't be rude.

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Control. Me. Him-

SHEILA

-for you, anything-

INNER SHEILA

-anything but yourself.

*They exit the bedroom. Fran is in the kitchen, cleaning up. Every time Inner Fran points to something, Fran moves on to doing that. Carl and Graham enter living room.*

CARL  
(To Fran)

We caught nothing.

GRAHAM

Nothing.

INNER GRAHAM

It was great.

INNER CARL

Great.

*Graham kicks off his shoes in the middle of the room and sits.*

GRAHAM

I love this place.

CARL

Twelve years of owning this place, you still don't know how to fish-

INNER CARL

-my friend.

*Fran hands Carl a bottle of beer.*

INNER FRAN

The other crackers. Cobweb in the door jamb. Chill extra beer.

TALK/Sergel

You've got to get up earlier.

FRAN

She's right.

GRAHAM

*Referring to Carl's beer.*

That looks good.

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Inner Fran)*

Beer.

*Fran hands him a beer.*

Thanks, honey.

GRAHAM

Sure-

FRAN

*Crossing to the kitchen Fran trips over Graham's discarded shoes.*

-sloppy son of a bitch.

INNER FRAN

*She picks up the shoes. Inner Graham peers into the refrigerator.*

Made any of that good dip, Franny?

GRAHAM

*Peter and Sheila enter, followed by Inner Peter and Inner Sheila.*

Graham.

PETER

Oh yeah. Great. Peter.

GRAHAM

*Graham rises.*

TALK/Sergel

PETER

This is my girlfriend, Sheila.

INNER CARL

Hot.

INNER GRAHAM

Hot.

GRAHAM

Nice to meet you.

*Sheila and Inner Sheila are momentarily preoccupied, watching Fran as she sets out a plate of appetizers. There is a short silence. Inner Graham finally nudges Inner Sheila.*

SHEILA

Oh. Yeah. Hi.

INNER SHEILA

*(To Inner Graham, pointing to Sheila's body)*

Hot. *(To Sheila)* Fat.

INNER GRAHAM

*(Summing up both Sheilas)*

Bitch. Cold. Damn.

GRAHAM

This is Carl.

PETER

Nice to meet you.

SHEILA

Hi.

INNER SHEILA

*(Summing up and dismissing Carl)*

Old.

CARL

Hello.

TALK/Sergel

INNER CARL  
*(Summing up Sheila)*

Bitch. Nice tits. Check on Anna.

CARL

Excuse me. I'm going to find Anna.

FRAN

She's on the...

CARL

I know.

INNER FRAN

Make a break for it.

*Carl and Inner Carl exit out the back door.*

FRAN

I know you two aren't hungry-

INNER FRAN

-hungry...passion...youth-

FRAN

-but I'm putting out appetizers.

PETER

Wow, those look great. Wisconsin cheese?

INNER PETER  
*(To Inner Fran)*

Like me. Like me.

FRAN

The cheddar up here is amazing.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Peter)*

I like you. In spite of her.

GRAHAM

So, how did you and Peter meet?

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

Bar. A bar.

GRAHAM

I guess a lot of people still meet that way. Bars.

*Everyone nods. Silence.*

*Graham continues on, struggling.*

Sociologists say it's because churches no longer play the central role-

INNER GRAHAM

-Fran, help-

GRAHAM

-in the social life of the community.

INNER FRAN

*(To Inner Graham)*

Your guests.

SHEILA

Thank god. Wouldn't want some priest raping me while I was trying to meet a guy.

INNER SHEILA

Shock value. *(To Sheila)* No value.

GRAHAM

So, you guys want to see the rest of the place? The lake?

INNER GRAHAM

*(To Inner Sheila)*

You ain't so tough, honey.

PETER

Yes. Absolutely. The drive up here was beautiful.

INNER GRAHAM

You better be nice, make up for this girlfriend.

INNER PETER

*(To Sheila)*

You look different up here.

TALK/Sergel

*Carl and Anna enter.*

ANNA

I heard a rumor about some appetizers and new arrivals.

INNER ANNA

Let's see the bitch.

PETER

Oh my god.

SHEILA

Honey?

PETER

Dr. Anderson.

INNER PETER

Oh my god.

PETER

*(Stammering)*

I'm a-

INNER PETER

-failure-

PETER

-former student. Peter.

INNER PETER

She's looks sick. Is she sick?

ANNA

Yes, Peter-

INNER ANNA

Strong prose. Kind soul.

ANNA

-Peter...Tyler.

PETER

Yes. Wow. Amazing memory.

TALK/Sergel

INNER PETER

In about thirty seconds she's going to find out I'm a failure.

ANNA

Good to see you again.

INNER ANNA

He's panicking. Not a writer. Buy him time.

ANNA

You must be...Shelley?

SHEILA

Sheila.

ANNA

Sorry.

INNER SHEILA

*(Eyeing Anna)*

Are you important?

ANNA

Peter is a former student of mine.

INNER CARL

Another disciple.

PETER

*(To Sheila)*

Sheila, this is Dr. Anderson, Anna Anderson, the novelist. I studied...she's...you're such an incredible-

INNER PETER

Pull it together.

PETER

I loved "Bread of Affliction."

ANNA

Thank you.

INNER SHEILA

Smart. Famous. Threat.

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

Never read it. Sorry.

ANNA

You've met my husband, Carl?

PETER

Yes.

INNER CARL

I love that they love her.

INNER ANNA

Deflect focus.

ANNA

*(Eyeing appetizers)*

Well, looks like Fran has done her magic again.

INNER SHEILA

Competition. Threat.

ANNA

We're lucky to all be staying with a world class hostess and chef. Let's reap the benefits.

*Anna begins to prepare a plate of food.*

So you and Graham work together.

PETER

I was one of Dr. Anderson's students.

INNER SHEILA

I get it.

SHEILA

Yeah? Was he good? Did he write anything? Was it a writing class?

ANNA

Yes, it was a writing class and he was quite good.

INNER ANNA

*(To Peter)*

Relax, Peter *(To Anna)* Ignore her.

TALK/Sergel

PETER

Thanks. I didn't...I don't...

ANNA

Not everyone can be a novelist. Or should be. And you use your skills for your work, right?

INNER ANNA

Don't apologize for your life.

PETER

I guess you can call it a kind of writing-

INNER PETER

-failure.

GRAHAM

*(Slapping Peter on the back hard)*

Welcome to the empty, hollow feeling of material success, my friend.

INNER GRAHAM

Payback time-

*Graham flops back on the couch, grabbing his beer.*

GRAHAM

Make sure this nasty little fact never creeps into your spots-

*Graham polishes off his beer.*

INNER GRAHAM

-twisting an invite outta me.

GRAHAM

*(Pitching beer across room into the garbage)*

Consume endlessly but never feel satisfied. Never buy imitation but always feel like a fraud.

INNER CARL

The game.

*Carl plops in a chair, swinging his legs up on another one.*

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Buy the new car but never know where you want to go.

INNER GRAHAM

The game.

FRAN

Here we go.

GRAHAM

Flood your existence with crap but lose the life preserver.

CARL

*(Pitching his empty beer can across the room into the same garbage can)*

Drown in the sea of your own satiated desires.

*Carl starts popping cheese curds into his mouth.  
Fran hands a couple of beers to Inner Graham and  
Inner Carl, who take them to their Outers.*

GRAHAM

*(Taking beer)*

Eat, seek and feel harried.

CARL

*(Taking beer)*

These are the should old days.

CARL AND GRAHAM

*(In unison)*

No! Never say old!

GRAHAM

Young.

CARL

New.

GRAHAM

Fresh.

CARL

Sexy.

TALK/Sergel

Hot. GRAHAM

Wet! CARL

Hard! GRAHAM

Tight! CARL

Power! GRAHAM

Buy! CARL

Big! GRAHAM

And the big fish is...I mean, big finish is... CARL

*Carl and Graham begin to guffaw at Carl's unexpected slip of the tongue. Now, both shaking with laughter, Graham leaps up and grabs a fishing pole.*

GRAHAM  
Yeah, but what's the fuckin' hook, Graham? You've forgotten this delightful part of the advertising game, Carl. We need a hook for the son-of-a-bitch client by five o'clock or this company, no, you lose us a eight-hundred thousand dollar contract. Hook the goddamn fish, Graham. What's the hook, Graham? Why, there's no hook! We need a hook. You're on the hook for a hook so start fishing around that head of yours and reel in another idea or you're gonna lose. You're gonna make us all losers. And we can't have that. Shit, no! No losers allowed.

*Graham hurls the fishing pole into a corner where it clatters to the floor. The room has fallen silent.*

*(To Peter)* Welcome to the joyful life of the successful advertising executive.

*Stunned, Inner Peter is looking back and forth from Graham to Inner Graham.*

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM

I'm a big lie.

INNER PETER

Help him. Try.

PETER

Graham....you forgot "tits."

*Carl and Graham groan.*

GRAHAM

How could we forget tits?

*Fran hands Peter a beer.*

INNER FRAN

*(To Peter)*

Thank you.

CARL

Tits are good. How did we forget tits?

GRAHAM

I never forget tits.

INNER FRAN

True.

ANNA

You forgot tits. Thank you, Peter. If you weren't here-

FRAN

-they would have forgotten tits.

INNER PETER

I fit.

INNER SHEILA

Shit.

FRAN  
*(To Peter)*

Sit.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

On an idea, this young shit has truly lit!

GRAHAM  
(To Peter)

But do you have a slogan in your kit?

CARL

Tits are a hell of a bit.

GRAHAM

So don't quit-

CARL

Yes, the youngin' has some wit-

GRAHAM

Although I spy a zit-

CARL

The tits will be a hit-

PETER

If the rhythm does fit-

GRAHAM

A few fancy photos to git-

CARL

A pretty gal, well lit-

PETER

A director who's not the pits-

SHEILA

Do you have any diet soda?

*Silence. Everyone looks at Sheila.*

FRAN

Diet? Yes-

INNER FRAN

-you-

TALK/Sergel

INNER ANNA

-angry-

INNER FRAN

rude-

FRAN

What kind?

INNER ANNA

Be kind.

ANNA

What kind of actress are you?

SHEILA  
*(To Fran)*

Any kind.

INNER SHEILA  
*(To Sheila, taunting)*

You're not a star.

SHEILA

Theatre. On camera.

FRAN

Anything we might have seen?

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Sheila)*

-Heard of?

PETER

Sheila was in that Bank One commercial-

INNER PETER

Sell her.

PETER

Teller with the lollipops for the kids.

INNER FRAN

Call the kids.

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

And I was in “Six Characters in Search of an Author” at Insight Theatre last fall-

INNER SHEILA

-last season.

INNER ANNA

Fall coming. I’m falling.

PETER

She was terrific.

ANNA

I love Pirandello. That must have been fun. He’s-

INNER ANNA

*(Closely observing Sheila)*

-so angry.

ANNA

An inventive writer.

INNER ANNA

Write her-

ANNA

Such good characters.

INNER ANNA

-good character.

*Inner Anna begins jotting down a few notes as she looks at Sheila.*

FRAN

Speaking of characters, I’m going to kick all of you characters outside while I get dinner ready, so-

INNER FRAN

Get out.

FRAN

-go! Enjoy the sunset!

*Everyone begins exiting out the back door.*

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

Need any help, honey?

FRAN

Just keep 'em outside so I can work.

*Fran is moving around the kitchen as she talks, mixing, testing the heat of a pan, selecting a bottle of wine.*

GRAHAM

Really?

INNER GRAHAM

Really?

FRAN

Really.

INNER FRAN

Really.

FRAN

This is the part I love. The making. The creation. After all the grunt work, putting the parts together to make-

INNER FRAN

-magic-

FRAN

-a meal. An experience.

GRAHAM

You're an experience, baby.

*He kisses her and exits. The Inners stay in place in the living room. As Graham, Carl, Anna, Peter and Sheila stand on the lip of the stage, watching the sun begin to set; Fran continues to move around the kitchen.*

CARL

What a day.

TALK/Sergel

Night.

INNER CARL

*Fran smells a piece of fruit and Inner Fran takes a deep whiff of the fresh air.*

Fragrant-

INNER FRAN

Fran.

INNER GRAHAM

*Sheila at his side, Peter observes the dramatic sunset.*

Man! What can you say?

PETER

Words. Food.

INNER PETER

Say nothing. You are nothing.

INNER SHEILA

*The sun sets, lower and lower.*

There it goes.

CARL

Disappear.

INNER SHEILA

Dark.

INNER CARL

Gone.

INNER ANNA

Day breaks-

GRAHAM

-and night falls.

ANNA

TALK/Sergel

I think night breaks.

Me too.

Me. Broken.

I made it.

Will I make it?

One more day.

Dinner.

CARL

GRAHAM

INNER SHEILA

INNER ANNA

INNER CARL

INNER ANNA

*All stare for a moment.*

FRAN

*(Leaning out the window, announcing)*

*Fade to black.*

END SCENE FIVE  
END ACT I

TALK/Sergel

ACT II  
SCENE ONE

*Carl, Anna, Graham, Sheila and Peter sit around the table in a stunned silence. The Inners lounge around the living room except Inner Sheila, who has pulled up a chair and sits directly behind Sheila. Empty dessert plates and coffee cups litter the table and the dishwasher sits open in the kitchen, loaded to the brim with dirty dishes. Fran struggles in the kitchen, trying to open a jar.*

FRAN

Come on, open up.

*The jar finally opens, spilling beans everywhere.*

Well, I didn't expect that *(To the others)* You've gotta try these chocolate covered espresso beans with the coffee.

ANNA  
*(Protesting)*

No.

CARL  
*(Groaning)*

Fran, stop.

GRAHAM  
*(Moaning)*

Honey, you're killing us.

PETER  
*(Surrendering)*

I can't. It was all amazing, Fran. I can't eat another bite.

ANNA  
You outdid yourself. Again. What time is it?

INNER ANNA  
*(Fully reclined)*

Bed.

PETER  
Feels late.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

It's only nine.

INNER CARL  
*(To Carl)*

Stay awake.

CARL

Fran, is there more coffee?

FRAN

Sure.

ANNA

Carl? You sure?

INNER ANNA

Coffee?

SHEILA

I'll take some.

FRAN

Coffee?

SHEILA

No, the espresso beans. I'll have some.

INNER SHEILA  
*(To Sheila)*

Fat.

CARL

Youth. To have the metabolism of a hummingbird.

PETER

Sheila can eat anything and not gain an ounce.

*Fran pours the espresso beans in a bowl and places it on the table. Sheila starts methodically popping them in her mouth, one at a time. Every time she puts one in her mouth, Inner Sheila says "fat."*

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Anna)*

Sleep.

*Anna rises.*

ANNA

Night everybody.

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

GRAHAM

Night.

CARL

Night, honey.

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

INNER FRAN

Cancer.

FRAN  
*(To Anna)*

Sleep well.

*Fran begins clearing the dessert plates.*

ANNA

You too.

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

*Peter gets to his feet.*

PETER

Good night, Dr-

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

ANNA  
*(Friendly warning)*

-Peter.

PETER  
*(Laughing, nodding)*

Okay. I mean, Anna...I meant-

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

PETER

-Anna.

ANNA

Good night, Sheila.

*Sheila, consumed with the espresso beans, doesn't hear Anna.*

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

ANNA

Sheila.

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

ANNA

Sheila?

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

PETER  
*(To Sheila)*

Honey?

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

TALK/Sergel

PETER  
*(More abruptly)*

Sheila.

INNER PETER  
*(Yelling to Inner Sheila)*

Come on!

SHEILA

What?

INNER SHEILA

What? Caught. What?

ANNA

Lost yourself in those espresso beans, eh?

INNER ANNA  
*(Observing Sheila)*

Lost soul.

SHEILA

Sorry. Night.

ANNA

Night.

*Anna exits.*

INNER CARL

Night. Trouble.

CARL  
*(Rising)*

Help, Fran?

FRAN

Under control, Carl-

INNER SHEILA

Control.

INNER CARL

Sleep.

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

FRAN

-thanks. More beans, Sheila?

SHEILA

No-

INNER SHEILA

-control.

SHEILA

-thanks.

FRAN

You're welcome.

*Silence.*

PETER

Well, I guess we should be getting to bed too. Dinner was wonderful, Fran. This is like a dream. This cabin, the food, all of you, Dr...Anna being here. Graham, you've got it made. Work, here. Best of everything.

INNER GRAHAM

Looks that way.

GRAHAM  
Thanks, Peter-

INNER SHEILA  
*(Looking at Peter)*

He's nice.

GRAHAM

-nice of you to say.

INNER SHEILA

Did I know that?

INNER GRAHAM

Now take your bitchy girlfriend and go to bed.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Sleep well-

INNER FRAN

-Peter. Sex. Hard.

FRAN

The mattress is a little hard.

SHEILA  
*(Cuddling Peter)*

Oh, I like things firm.

INNER SHEILA  
*(To Fran)*

Mine.

INNER PETER

Don't ruin-

PETER

-this...this all has been great. I'm sure it will be fine. Come on, honey. Good night.

GRAHAM

Night.

CARL

Good night.

FRAN

Sleep tight.

*Peter, Sheila and their Inners exit.*

INNER FRAN

Sex.

INNER GRAHAM

Sex.

INNER CARL

Sex.

FRAN

Cream?

TALK/Sergel

CARL

*(Peering in creamer)*

No, I've still got some *(He stands and looks out the window)* Sure is dark out there.

FRAN

Should be a good night for stars.

*Carl opens the back door and walks onto the back patio. The lights fade on the kitchen as Fran and Graham chat. Peter walks through the living room, stops and says something to Fran and Graham, and then exits out the front door. Carl looks up at the stars.*

INNER CARL

Endless black. Day has disappeared. Anna. Disappearing.

*He begins to cry.*

No...I am.

CARL

One more night. She's gotta make it one more night.

*Fran calls out from the kitchen.*

FRAN

Can you see them?

CARL

Yes.

END SCENE ONE

TALK/Sergel

SCENE TWO

*Sheila and Peter enter the bedroom, followed by Inner Peter.*

PETER

*(Looking out window)*

Really, we should go out and look at the stars. It's only 9:30. It'll be fun. Can't ever see the stars in the city.

SHEILA

Hey, you're lookin' at a star. In fact, in case you forgot, you are the lucky bastard who gets to fuck one on a regular basis.

PETER

*(Still looking out the window)*

How could I forget?

INNER PETER

*(Turning and looking at Sheila)*

Why does she seem different?

*Peter now turns away from the window and looks at Sheila.*

PETER

I'm a damn lucky man.

SHEILA

Don't forget it-

INNER SHEILA

*(Off stage)*

Get rid of him.

SHEILA

-but you're going to have to earn it.

PETER

Okay. Name your price.

SHEILA

I forgot my jacket in the car. Fetch it for me, serf.

TALK/Sergel

Stars.

Your wish is my command.

INNER PETER

PETER

*He exits. Sheila turns and calmly walks into the bathroom. A single light comes up on a toilet. Inner Sheila is standing, straddled, above it. Sheila and Inner Sheila stare at each other for a moment. Then Inner Sheila grabs Sheila by the back of the hair and forces her head down into the toilet. At first Sheila resists. Then she gives up and drops to her knees. Inner Sheila efficiently pulls back Sheila's hair while Sheila bends over the toilet and sticks her fingers down her throat.*

END SCENE TWO

TALK/Sergel

SCENE THREE

*Carl, Graham and Fran sit at the dining table. Carl is shuffling a deck of cards. Inner Fran and Inner Graham are in the living room but Inner Carl is in the bedroom, intently watching Anna asleep.*

INNER CARL

One more breath.

CARL

One more game. Double or nothing.

GRAHAM

Nothing. I'm going to bed.

INNER CARL

No, no, no.

GRAHAM

What time is it?

FRAN

*(Rising and clearing the last of the cups)*

Late. Almost one.

CARL

Come on, Fran. One more. You're on vacation.

INNER FRAN

Hardly.

FRAN

Party's over, Carl. At least for me.

CARL

Don't you want to sit around and talk? Cooking, the kids, give me some of your recipes. Spill the beans on all your inner secrets? Talk about life.

INNER CARL

*(To sleeping Anna)*

Life. Stay.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

No.

GRAHAM

Life will wait until morning, my friend.

FRAN

Night, guys.

*Fran kisses Graham and exits with Inner Fran close behind her. Carl starts dealing the cards. Graham picks up his hand and begins sorting it into pairs.*

CARL

That's the spirit.

GRAHAM

You've become the real nighthawk.

CARL

The exotic, rave-filled night life of the suburban retiree has swept me up.

GRAHAM

CNN or MSNBC?

CARL

History Channel, mostly (*Eyeing his cards*) Got any cigars?

GRAHAM

Cigars?!

CARL

Yeah. Later, we could go on the patio. I haven't smoked a cigar in years.

INNER GRAHAM

He hates cigars.

GRAHAM

You know, it's one in the morning.

CARL

Yeah. I'm just-

INNER CARL

-stalling-

TALK/Sergel

CARL

-enjoying hanging out with ya.

INNER GRAHAM

No, you're not.

GRAHAM

*(Discarding a card)*

How's Anna. Treatments going okay?

CARL

Great. Fine.

GRAHAM

She still writing?

CARL

Of course.

GRAHAM

How are you doing? You seem-

CARL

Fine.

GRAHAM

-at loose ends a little.

CARL

A little. Not much to do. Try to help but have to just sort of wait and watch.

GRAHAM

And hover.

*Inner Graham exits the living room.*

CARL

Hover?

*Inner Graham enters Anna's and Carl's room.*

*Inner Carl looks up at him.*

GRAHAM

You hover over her like a bodyguard. She should put you on payroll. Get a buzz cut. One of those ear things. Dig out one of those dark suits from work.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Funny (*Claiming one of Graham's discards*) Ah, I needed that. You'll be running for cover soon, my friend.

GRAHAM

A pretty elusive stalker to guard against though. Even now, you're really not here with me. The real Carl's somewhere else, watching for the bad guy.

*Inner Graham nudges Inner Carl. Inner Carl rises from Anna's bedside and Inner Graham leads him out of the bedroom.*

CARL

Hey, it's a job.

GRAHAM

Only one problem with your plan.

*Inner Graham and Inner Carl enter the living room.*

CARL

What?

GRAHAM

Anna's....not the cancer. Anna's Anna. But it's a though you're staring her down trying to stare down the cancer. You're counting her every breath. Man, Carl, you've gotta stop. Give her a break. Give yourself a break.

INNER CARL

He's right.

CARL

Point taken.

INNER CARL  
(*To Graham*)

Enough.

CARL

I get it.

GRAHAM

Anna's not slipping away, Carl. You are. Where are you?

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Where are you, huh? I don't exactly see your life overflowing with joy and delight either, Captain We-Need-A-Hook.

*Graham looks directly at Inner Graham. Inner Graham, shrugging, concedes the point.*

GRAHAM

Point taken.

*A flurry of discards and pick-ups. The game is growing more intense and competitive.*

GRAHAM

I'm just saying...you've got to start talking to somebody about this because you're just... disappearing.

*Inner Carl turns to return to the bedroom. Inner Graham moves to the doorway, blocking Inner Carl from exiting. They eye each other for a long moment. Graham lays his cards on the table.*

Gin.

*Inner Graham moves aside, making room for Inner Carl to pass. Inner Carl takes a step and then stops, standing motionless in the doorway.*

END SCENE THREE

TALK/Sergel

SCENE FOUR

*It is very late. Anna sits on the back patio, staring up at the stars. Her laptop computer sits opened on the dining table. Inner Anna remains in the living room. Peter enters the living room, stopping when he sees the computer. Anna hears him. Peering in the kitchen window, she waves to him and returns to looking at the night sky. Peter hesitates and then leans out the back door.*

PETER

You know what Oscar Wilde said. "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are-"

ANNA AND PETER

*(In unison)*

"-looking at the stars."

*Inner Peter enters. Inner Anna waves Inner Peter over to sit next to her in the living room.*

ANNA

He also said, "To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance."

PETER

Is that your favorite Wilde quote?

ANNA

Nope. Couldn't sleep?

PETE

*(Coming on to the patio)*

It's too quiet out here. Sheila's out though.

ANNA

Carl too. Finally. I wish...He worries a lot. About me.

PETER

Anna...um...

ANNA

Cancer. Doing chemo. Outlook...vague. Ooh! Look *(pointing to the sky)* Shooting star.

*She gestures for Peter to sit next to her.*

TALK/Sergel

ANNA (CONT'D)

So, what do you think of all of this? Graham's life. Carl's too. You appear to be following in their footsteps.

PETER

They seem to have it all.

ANNA

Think so?

PETER

*(He pauses)* No.

*Peter sits.*

INNER ANNA

Yes, you were smart.

PETER

Here, yes, this is a dream, but, work...No. At work...everyone's on him all the time. Deadlines, egos, the intensity. He manages it all and still...remains a really nice guy. The nice guy part is what I admire, not the-

ANNA

-life?

PETER

But to have this, you gotta do that.

ANNA

Perhaps.

PETER

What are you working on? Can I ask? Don't tell me if you don't...can't.

ANNA

A short story about a flood and a fruit orchard. And I just added a nice Picasso angle.

*She giggles.*

Picasso...angle...get it?

*Peter shakes his head.*

Cubism...angles...never mind.

TALK/Sergel

PETER

Oh, yeah.

*A moment.*

You're lucky you're not in the Giacometti room.

*Anna looks back up at the stars. Inner Peter rises and walks to the back door.*

INNER PETER

Tell her.

PETER

I liked your class.

ANNA

Thank you.

INNER PETER

Tell her.

PETER

No, I mean I really liked your class. It gave me a glimpse of something-

INNER PETER

-me-

PETER

-that I had never really considered before.

ANNA

What was that?

PETER

That someone-

INNER PETER

-I-

PETER

-could make a life from themselves. Not by doing something to someone else. But that just...you could be enough. And that maybe I could be smart enough to do that. Someday. Be me in my own life.

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

Are you doing it? Now?

PETER

Being me in my own life? Not even close.

ANNA

It's a tough nut.

PETER

You got it.

ANNA

I'm getting closer. Cancer helps. Takes the procrastination out of the equation. You hear that, Peter?

*He listens.*

PETER

What?

ANNA

It's the clock ticking.

INNER ANNA

Lost. Dig.

ANNA

So, you and Sheila are quite the pair.

PETER

Once you get to know her...she's quite, really...um...

ANNA

Nice?

PETER

No. She's not nice. But she has other qualities.

INNER ANNA

Wait for it.

PETER

She doesn't care what anybody else thinks. I admire that. I need more of that, I think.

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

Most of us do. But it is important that she cares what you think, a little at least. And that she's nice to you. Especially if you're looking at a future, marriage, kids.

INNER ANNA

Will I know what happens to him?

PETER

I just gave her the key to my place.

INNER ANNA

You know she isn't the key.

PETER

So, you...you and Carl...you didn't have any...?

ANNA

Kids. No. My stories-

INNER ANNA

-students-

ANNA

-are my kids. You still write?

PETER

Sometimes. No. The desire gets buried under an ocean of...work, people, talk. I didn't even bring my laptop up here. I was trying to get away from work but...anyway.

ANNA

That's my favorite thing about writing. Seems to shut up the babbling...or, at least, gives you a place to put it all. A place to put the words, the people-

INNER ANNA

-and me. Anna.

*Anna gathers her sweater and rises.*

ANNA

Well, if you get the urge to navigate the ocean-

INNER ANNA

I don't have the energy to guide you, but-

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

-you're welcome to my laptop. Help yourself.

INNER ANNA  
(To Inner Peter)

Help yourself.

PETER

That would be a new angle. Me, writing on Anna Anderson's computer...so, what's your favorite? Wilde quote. Do you have one?

ANNA

Oh, yes. "The Soul is born old, but it grows young; that is the comedy of life. The Body is born young and grows old; that is life's tragedy."

*Peter stares at Anna as she looks up at the stars. He runs his hands through his hair and looks down at his feet. Inner Peter, in a moment of true exasperation, groans, crosses to Peter and grabs him by the shoulders.*

INNER PETER

Look up, idiot!

*Inner Peter and Peter stare at each other for a minute. Inner Peter releases Peter and goes back to Inner Anna, shaking his head. Peter glances back at Inner Peter, looks at Anna and then looks up at the stars.*

*Now all four of them are looking at the night sky filled with stars.*

PETER

Oh my god.

END SCENE FOUR

TALK/Sergel

SCENE FIVE

*A cold, blue light bathes the stage. A single faint note plays unbroken throughout the entire scene.*

*Anna is handing things to Inner Anna. Inner Anna reads each title aloud and then drops each item into the backpack.*

INNER ANNA

*Taking a book.*

The Dead.

*Another book.*

Tropic of Cancer.

*Paperback mystery.*

Death on the Nile.

*A stack of DVDs.*

Night of the Living Dead. Death Becomes Her. Dead Man Walking. The Quick and the Dead.

*Anna finally hands Inner Anna the laptop, which Inner Anna has trouble fitting into the stuffed backpack.*

*(To Anna)* I'm afraid it isn't going to fit.

*Inner Graham is sitting precariously on the edge of the boat downstage. Graham is just outside of it, occasionally rocking it gently.*

INNER GRAHAM

Don't fall in. Don't fall in. Pretend. Pretend you can swim and you won't fall in. Fake. Fake it. Faker. No Fran. Don't fall in.

*Inner Graham looks around frantically.*

TALK/Sergel

INNER GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Fran? Fran?

*Graham rocks it harder. Inner Graham sees Inner Fran in the kitchen and begins waving frantically.*

Hey, Fran! Fran! Help! Fran!

*Inner Fran is in the kitchen, Fran is next to her. Inner Fran is searching the kitchen while Fran watches.*

INNER FRAN

I can't find the beans. The beans.

*Inner Fran suddenly stumbles.*

The beans. You spilled the beans. You can't spill the beans. Get them! Pick them up.

*Inner Fran drops to her knees and begins frantically trying to pick up all the beans off the floor and eat them.*

Eat them. Eat them. Eat the beans. Don't spill the beans. Eat them. Eat the beans.

*Inner Peter is lying face down on a patio lounge chair, with his head hanging over the top, looking at the floor. He is handcuffed to the lounge chair. Peter sits on the floor, facing him, holding a large, shiny key. Inner Peter twists violently on the lounge chair.*

INNER PETER

Why can't I see them? I know they're there. Get up. Get up.

*Inner Peter strains against the handcuffs.*

Get up! Get the key and get up. Get up and look at them. Get it. Call for help.

*Inner Peter groans, a muffled scream as though he can't open his jaw.*

*Inner Carl is lying in a single spot, face up, wearing a bathing suit, on top of the Inner's luggage. Carl sits right behind his head. As he speaks, the spotlight becomes smaller and smaller, until it is*

TALK/Sergel

*only focused on his face.*

INNER CARL

I can't move. Why can't I...I can't feel...Oh god, I'm disappearing. Anna. Anna!

*Inner Sheila is standing rigid inside the toilet bowl, facing the tank. Sheila kneels on the floor, fingers resting on the handle of the toilet.*

INNER SHEILA

*(Commanding Sheila)*

Flush. Flush. Flush now, chicken. Flush. Flush. Flush your guts. Flush the vomit. Flush the poison. Chicken! Empty and ugly. Ugly. Empty the toilet. Flush. Flush. Flush. Flush it. Flush. It. It. It. Flush it. Flush me.

*Single musical note intensifies.*

*Blackout*

END SCENE FIVE

TALK/Sergel

SCENE SIX

*It is early morning. Warm light floods the kitchen. Fran is sweeping, carefully looking for the last of the spilled espresso beans. There is a full pot of coffee made.*

INNER FRAN

Toilet paper. Paper towel. Bagels. Lox. Cut an onion. Defrost the chicken. Grill? Shish-ka-bob. Skewers. Skewer. Skewer Sheila. Be nice. Be a nice hostess. Peter. Cute. Gentle. Sexy. Sleep. Nap?

*Graham enters. Fran doesn't notice him. Inner Graham, right behind Graham, nudges Graham forward.*

Bed. Rest. Dead. Anna? Writer. Write list.

*She reaches over on the counter for her pad, holding the dustpan full of beans. Inner Graham nudges Graham forward again. Graham grabs Fran from behind.*

GRAHAM

Gotchya!

FRAN

No!

*Startled, she spills the beans.*

Graham!

GRAHAM

Fran, you keep spilling those beans, I'm going to start calling you beanie baby.

*He envelopes her in a hug. Fran, still holding the dustpan, hugs him back.*

FRAN

You're up early.

GRAHAM

I woke up, you were gone.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

*(Ending the embrace)*

Had to get things started for everybody.

INNER FRAN

Everybody. Everything.

GRAHAM

I wish I could get you out of this kitchen and onto that boat.

INNER FRAN

Help me here, I'll go there.

FRAN

*(Emptying dishwasher)*

Doubt that's going to happen this weekend.

INNER GRAHAM

Reach her.

GRAHAM

Honey?

INNER GRAHAM

Look at me.

FRAN

Hum?

GRAHAM

Fran?

INNER GRAHAM

Stop.

FRAN

*(Busy with dishes)*

What?

GRAHAM

Would the world fall apart if you let everybody just...if you stopped catering to everybody?

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN  
*(To Fran)*

Can't stop.

FRAN  
Graham, I'm the hostess. You made me that when you invited everybody.

INNER FRAN  
Your fault.

*She looks under sink*

Garbage.

GRAHAM  
You wanted Carl and Anna.

FRAN  
Well, they're so easy and nice that I knew I would stop...worrying, after awhile, with them.

GRAHAM  
Stop worrying about what?

INNER FRAN  
Juice on the table.

*Inner Graham crosses to Fran and looks closely and intently at her. Fran gets a pitcher of juice from the refrigerator and crosses to put it on the table. She slips on a bean, catching herself but slopping some juice on the floor.*

INNER FRAN  
*(To Fran)*  
Spill.

FRAN  
*(Wiping up juice)*  
You have no idea how hard this is! How much work it takes just to keep a house going in a day. The endless minutia that I have to do just so everybody has toilet paper to wipe their shit with. Graham, do we need toilet paper? How much-

INNER FRAN  
-shit-

FRAN

-do we have? What if we run out with a houseful of people? This is what I'm worrying about. This is what's running through my brain. You take a crap, you think, "Ah, nice crap, I should do this again tomorrow." I think, "Crap, do I have to run to the store for more toilet paper today? This toilet always backs up. Is the plunger here? Should I call the plumber anyway? We do have that drip in that other sink too. Drip. Drip. Oh, yeah, that drip Freddie at the conference center...I have that catering gig Tuesday. So, Fran, remember to call Julie about Freddie the Drip." So call the plumber and call Julie and call Freddie the Drip and call the dry cleaner 'cuz you won't and by Thursday you'll be complaining, "Honey, where are all my suits?" Yelling at me at six in the morning, so it's easier to just call the fucking dry cleaner, when I should be thinking about whatever you want me to...oh, yeah, you want me to stop thinking. Great idea. I'll do that after I've taken care of everybody's shit. "Fran, remember to add 'Stop Thinking' to the list."

GRAHAM

No, not as another thing to do. I mean...just...have you tried?

INNER GRAHAM

Try.

FRAN

I can't. It's like a tidal wave of...need.

GRAHAM

But, Franny, what do you need?

INNER GRAHAM

*(Gently touches Fran's hair)*

You. I need-

*Peter enters, Inner Peter leans in the doorway.*

PETER

Morning everybody. Great, coffee. Um, Fran, where's more toilet paper?

*Inner Fran grabs Inner Graham by the shirt and throws him up against the wall, holding him there.*

INNER FRAN

*(To Inner Graham)*

See!

FRAN

I'll get it for-

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

No! *(To Peter)* It's in the hall closet.

INNER GRAHAM

*(Still against the wall, to Peter)*

Get out.

PETER

Thanks.

*Peter exits, with Inner Peter behind him. Inner Fran slowly releases Inner Graham. Inner Graham and Graham look at each other.*

INNER GRAHAM

I had no idea.

GRAHAM

You'd be surprised how much I know.

FRAN

You are a smart guy. A Yale man.

INNER GRAHAM

A fail man.

*Carl and Inner Carl enter.*

CARL

Morning. You didn't wake me for fishing.

INNER CARL

Thank god.

GRAHAM

Wasn't in the mood.

CARL

Do I appear to be complaining? Hey, Fran.

INNER CARL

Coffee?

FRAN

Morning. Coffee?

TALK/Sergel

CARL  
(Nodding "yes")

Coffee.

INNER CARL  
(To Fran)

Get it for me.

GRAHAM  
(Leaping up)

I'll get it. Fran, sit, talk to Carl.

CARL  
Fran, do you have any Bactine or calamine lotion? Anna got a few mosquito bites last night.

*Graham gives Carl his coffee.*

FRAN  
(Getting up)

Sure.

GRAHAM  
(Stopping Fran)

Honey, I'll-

INNER GRAHAM

-do it.

GRAHAM

-get it.

FRAN

Okay.

INNER FRAN  
(To Fran)

Try it. Be still.

*Fran sits back down.*

GRAHAM  
(Pause)

Where is it?

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN

Nice try.

CARL

Don't worry about it. Anna's still asleep. Get it later.

FRAN

In the top of the linen closet-

INNER FRAN

-next to the toilet paper.

*Peter enters.*

PETER

Morning, Carl.

CARL

Peter.

*Peter crosses to the coffee pot. Inner Peter enters.*

PETER

Coffee looks great, Fran. Where are the cups?

FRAN

I'll get you-

GRAHAM

*(Opening a cabinet for Peter, revealing mugs)*

Right here.

PETER

Great.

*He pours himself coffee.*

So, how did everybody sleep?

CARL

Fine.

INNER CARL

Didn't.

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

Great.

INNER GRAHAM

Couldn't.

FRAN

Good.

INNER FRAN

Awful.

FRAN

You?

PETER

Great.

INNER PETER

Liar.

*Sheila enters, fully made up, in a suggestive outfit, followed by Inner Sheila. Inner Graham and Inner Carl don't notice Sheila. Both Sheila and Inner Sheila take note of the lack of interest.*

SHEILA

Hi, everybody.

GRAHAM

Morning.

*Sheila leans in and kisses Peter.*

INNER PETER

*(As they kiss, to Sheila)*

You were a mistake.

CARL

Good coffee, Fran.

INNER CARL

Anna. Still asleep.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Thanks. Morning, Sheila. Coffee?

SHEILA

*(Lounging and smiling at the men)*

Actually, I prefer tea in the morning.

INNER FRAN

Try it again. Try just stopping.

FRAN

*(Pause)*

The tea pot's under the sink. Tea's in the top drawer under the coffee maker.

INNER GRAHAM

Well done, Franny.

INNER SHEILA

Oh. Different.

*Sheila crosses to the kitchen and begins making her tea.*

INNER SHEILA

No one's talking. Should I? Talk?

SHEILA

So, what do you do up here?

GRAHAM

Do?

SHEILA

Yeah.

INNER SHEILA

No.

SHEILA

Do. No T.V., no DVD player, no stereo, no internet...

GRAHAM

Got a radio.

*The others chuckle.*

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

But, um, there's no place to go.

CARL

Sheila, this is the place to go. You're here. This is where the going is supposed to get you.

INNER CARL

Why don't you get it?

SHEILA

Yeah-

INNER PETER

Why am I with her?

*Anna enters, followed by Inner Anna.*

SHEILA

-but, what do you do? Here? Once you've gotten here.

ANNA

Talk.

FRAN

Drink coffee.

INNER FRAN

*(To Anna)*

Coffee?

*Anna nods. Putting her hand on Graham's shoulder, Fran rises and goes to get Anna her coffee.*

INNER FRAN

*(To Graham)*

For her, I'll get up.

CARL

Fish.

GRAHAM

Swim.

PETER

Look at stars.

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

Sleep.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Carl)*

Sleep.

FRAN

Cook.

GRAHAM

Eat.

INNER GRAHAM

Sex.

CARL

Eat.

INNER CARL

Rest.

ANNA

Eat.

INNER ANNA

Life.

GRAHAM

Eat some more.

*Everyone laughs, except Sheila.*

ANNA

Hey, no one said think.

FRAN

I think I said think.

ANNA

I don't think so.

FRAN

You think?

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

Constantly.

FRAN

I'm trying to break the habit.

ANNA

It does seem to get in the way of being.

INNER ANNA

-alive.

GRAHAM

You two are quite the pair.

INNER SHEILA

Odd man out. Again. Fat.

INNER FRAN

Pair. Pear.

FRAN

Pears.

GRAHAM

What?

FRAN

We need pears. For the dessert tonight. From the pear tree.

ANNA

You've gotten my attention.

*Fran and Inner Fran begin looking at the list on the counter.*

INNER FRAN

Wait to whip the cream until later.

ANNA

I love pears.

FRAN

Should I make more coffee?

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

So what delightful concoction do you have planned for our dessert tonight?

INNER FRAN

*(As Fran begins to make more coffee)*

Defrost the chicken. Get the inner tubes out for swimming. Towels.

ANNA

Fran, what are you going to make?

GRAHAM

Honey.

*Fran is completely focused on the coffee.*

INNER GRAHAM

She's gone again.

ANNA

Fran?

FRAN

What? Sorry. What?

ANNA

You and Sheila are two peas in a pod. *(Fran, Sheila, Inner Fran and Inner Sheila look up, startled, at Anna)* She loses herself in espresso beans; you lose yourself in coffee beans.

INNER FRAN

I'm lost?

FRAN

I'm lost.

ANNA

It was just...you didn't hear what...never mind. It doesn't matter. None of our silly chatter matters. Thank you. Thank you for taking such good care of all of us.

*Inner Anna walks up to a startled Inner Fran and gives her a big hug.*

END SCENE SIX

TALK/Sergel

SCENE SEVEN

*Fran stands center stage, holding a basket with a few pears in it. Inner Fran stands behind her, holding a branch with pears on it above Fran's head. As Inner Fran speaks, Fran plucks pears, examines them calmly for bruises and then places them in the basket.*

INNER FRAN

Beans. Swept the beans. Sweep. Sweep off your feet. Sheila. Peter. Young. Sex. Sheets. Laundry. Clean. Swept. Tired. Sweep. Under the rug. Sweep under the rug. Cover. Rage. Sheila. You. Fat. Fear. Noise. My noise covering...what? Chatter. My silly chatter. Me. Rug. Doormat. Wiping my feet on me. Dirt. Clean. Dirty. Sex. Peter. Passion. Graham. Cold. Failure. Me. Am I like her? Sheila? *(Pause)* No! I'm nice. Anna's nice. Am I nice? Or am I just faking nice? Nice? What is nice? Peter. Peter's nice. Graham's nice. Is Peter Graham? Am I Sheila? Will Peter and Sheila be me and-

*Fran drops her basket of pears on the ground.*

FRAN

Shut up! Just for a minute!

*Fran turns and stares at Inner Fran. Inner Fran stares back.*

INNER FRAN

If you want to stop the talk, open your mouth.

*Inner Fran takes a big bite of a pear.*

END SCENE SEVEN

TALK/Sergel

SCENE EIGHT

*Sheila sits on the patio, sunbathing, wearing sunglasses and earbuds, listening to an iPod and reading a fashion magazine. Inner Sheila sits on the chair next to her, looking at Sheila's body.*

INNER SHEILA

Look how short your legs are. God, you have the worst frame. Look at those models. It's because you eat too much. Fat pig. No discipline. If a stupid model can do it, you can.

*Sheila twists and turns and then grabs her iPod and turns up the volume. Inner Sheila raises her voice louder.*

You can't drown me out, bitch. Stupid, fat bitch. Drowning in your own fat. You're gonna lose him, you know. Guys hate fat women. He's been looking at you. It's your ass. Fat ass.

*Sheila turns up the volume again. Inner Sheila raises her voice even more.*

Fat. Boring. Stupid. No control. No strength. They all hate you. Think you're stupid. Empty. Empty, fat, stupid Sheila.

*Sheila sits up, looks around, rips off her headphones, strides into the kitchen and pulls open the refrigerator door. Grabbing a package of sandwich meat, she returns to her chair. She throws some meat down in front of Inner Sheila. They both hunch over and methodically begin shoving the meat into their mouths.*

*Peter, Carl, Anna and Graham enter through the front door, followed by their Inners.*

CARL

I'm going to make some coffee.

PETER

Carl, I've never seen someone consume so much coffee in my life. I'm ready for a nap.

GRAHAM

That's the spirit. I do like these ambitious, young people.

TALK/Sergel

*Sheila quickly wraps up the meat and hides it in her bag.*

ANNA

You always were an innovative thinker, Peter. Carl, honey, it's all the rage with the young folk. Sleep. They call it the new heroin.

CARL

Funny.

INNER CARL

Stop telling me what to do!

ANNA

Well, off to partake. Dreamland is calling me.

*Anna exits.*

INNER PETER

Dream. Trapped.

INNER CARL

Dream. Dead.

INNER GRAHAM

Dream. Alone.

PETER

I'll take some of that coffee.

GRAHAM

I'll make a big pot.

*He leans out the back door and calls to Sheila.*

Hey, Sheila. Want some coffee?

INNER SHEILA

*(To Sheila)*

Don't go in. You don't fit in.

*Sheila, pretending not to hear him, keeps flipping through her magazine.*

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

Your girlfriend's lost herself to her music.

PETER

She knows a lot about music. The music scene.

CARL

Really?

PETER

Yeah. She's quite the mover and shaker in the theatre, the arts.

INNER GRAHAM

You should shake her.

GRAHAM

Well, wake her, see if she wants some coffee.

*Peter goes onto the patio, going to sit where Inner Sheila is sitting, forcing her to jump up. Inner Peter leans against the door jamb.*

PETER

*(Waving his hand in front of her face)*

Hey, beautiful. I'm back.

SHEILA

*(Removing her headphones)*

How was the walk around the lake?

PETER

Nice. You should have come.

SHEILA

I don't remember you inviting me.

PETER

I did. I invited you. I did.

INNER SHEILA

He didn't want you.

SHEILA

Oh yeah. But I could tell you weren't really into it. I wanted to relax anyway.

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

INNER PETER

Relax, Sheila.

INNER SHEILA

Fat.

PETER

Did you?

SHEILA

What?

PETER

Relax?

*Sheila looks directly at Inner Sheila, then back at Peter.*

SHEILA

*(Looking right at Inner Sheila and then Peter)*

No.

INNER SHEILA

*(Warning)*

Sheila. He won't like me.

SHEILA

*(Backpedaling)*

I mean, yes. Sort of. Did you? Did you relax?

PETER

Yeah. Yeah, I did.

INNER SHEILA

Keep him on his toes.

SHEILA

Without me. I'm so flattered.

PETER

Well, you said you didn't want to come. Did you want me to have a bad time?

TALK/Sergel

SHEILA

No, I want you to have a...relaxing time. I want to relax...for you to relax.

PETER

Well, mission accomplished. I am-

INNER PETER

-was-

PETER

-relaxed.

*Peter swings his feet up to lie back on the lounge chair, knocking Sheila's bag over in the process causing the contents to spill onto the patio.*

INNER SHEILA

Hide! Hide the food!

SHEILA

Peter! Fuck!

PETER

What? Sorry. I just-

*Sheila shoves his hands away as he reaches to help her.*

SHEILA

Shit.

PETER

What's that?

SHEILA

I needed a snack. I just grabbed-

PETER

My key.

SHEILA

What?

TALK/Sergel

PETER

*(Picking up a single key from the scattered contents)*

My key. The key to my apartment.

INNER PETER

*(Remembering)*

My nightmare. The key.

*Sheila shoves the meat back in her bag and picks up her key chain off the patio.*

SHEILA

Oh. Yeah. Haven't had time to put it on my key chain.

INNER PETER

Chained.

INNER SHEILA

Key...food...hide the food...hide...

*Peter takes the key chain out of her hand and easily slips the key on the key chain.*

PETER

Well, there you go.

END SCENE EIGHT

TALK/Sergel

SCENE NINE

*The end of an early dinner. The sun is low in the sky. Everyone sits around the dinner table, remnants of a meal in front of them. Fran stands in the kitchen, holding the coffee pot. The room is silent.*

FRAN

Coffee?

*Everyone looks up to Fran. All the Inners begin speaking, simultaneously, creating a wall of noise.*

*One after another, Anna, Graham, Peter and finally Carl look at Fran and shake their heads. Sheila doesn't respond.*

INNER CARL

Coffee...stop...sleep...Anna. Guard her. Cancer. Guard the cancer or guard her? Stare down the killer. Killing her. Killing me. Us. Me. Dead. Me. Tired. Sleep. Weary. Fight. Weary of fighting. Weary.

INNER FRAN

Cream. Bed. Sex. Tonight. Graham. Us. Dying? Anna. Living. Eating. Food. Work. Kids. Miss. Miss me. Miss them. Miss feeling feeling. Feeling Peter. Passion. Graham. Words. Talk. Peter and Sheila. Pair. Pears. Stop.

INNER GRAHAM

Meal over. Move over. See Fran. Kitchen. See her. Alone in kitchen. Alone. Work. Alone. Lone wolf. Wolfing down work. Make money. Make a fake. Fake. Me. Fake. Stop. Faking me. Faking this. I'm not me. I'm faking a person. A faking success.

INNER ANNA

Night. Bed. Morning. Leave. Chemo. Quiet. Be quiet. Death. Noise. Life. Sort the noise into work. Work the noise. Noise. Noisy kids. Kids. Children. Ovaries. Cancer. Ovaries make kids. Ovaries make cancer. What do I make? People or stories? People in stories. Listen.

INNER PETER

Grind. Grinding work. Grinding life out of me. Me. Work. Write. Writing. Working. Writing working. Is Sheila working? No. We aren't working. Here. Do we work there? Why? Do I care? Care. Care about what? Books. Thoughts. Thinking.

INNER SHEILA

Drink. Food. Drinking calories. Dinner, one thousand. Breakfast, two hundred. I know, two hundred. Then, lunch. Three hundred. The meat. Eight hundred. But, I got it out.

TALK/Sergel

INNER SHEILA (CONT'D)

Absorbed...three hundred. No, four hundred. Get away. Flush dinner. Soon. Flush soon. Go. Get out. Dessert. Poached pears.

*All the Inners but Inner Sheila have now stopped speaking. Graham, Carl, Anna and Peter sit, still and relaxed. Fran puts down the coffee pot and looks calmly out the back door.*

Poached in what? What did she say they were poached in? I'm poached. Poached in bile. No. No. Not bile. Acid. No. Food. Poison. Hide. You. Get up. Feel the fat. Feel the food. You're not empty. Get empty. Get it out. Get out. Get the fat out. It's cancer. It's growing. You're growing fat. Fat and empty. Get empty. Fat. Get more food. More. Bigger. Smaller. Get tiny. Disappear. Empty. Disappear.

FRAN

The silence is so nice.

*Everyone nods in agreement. Inner Sheila nudges Sheila.*

INNER SHEILA

Come on. It's time.

SHEILA

Excuse me for a minute.

*Sheila remains seated.*

INNER SHEILA

Come on! Let's go. Before it turns to fat.

*Sheila slowly rises and Inner Sheila begins pulling her out. But at the doorway, Sheila hesitates.*

INNER SHEILA

*(Gently)*

You'll feel better afterwards.

PETER

Sheila, you okay?

SHEILA

*(To Fran)*

It was a very nice dinner. Thank you.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Thank you, Sheila.

INNER FRAN  
*(Surprised)*

Nice.

FRAN

You're coming back, aren't you?

SHEILA

Yeah, I just have to...um...

INNER SHEILA  
*(Truly considering this option)*

I don't have to.

SHEILA

...you know. Freshen up.

INNER SHEILA

Throw up. Grow up. Grow old. Grow fat. No, no! Go. Go!

SHEILA

Excuse me.

*Inner Sheila takes Sheila's hand and leads her out.*

PETER

Look, the sun's beginning to set.

INNER PETER

Over soon. Here. Sheila? Us.

ANNA

It was nice. Having an early dinner.

*Anna waves to the table.*

Fran, you made this...

INNER ANNA

Just tell her. Moments count...words count now.

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

You are special. You make special things happen. I couldn't have dreamed up a more-

*She holds up her dessert plate.*

-“pear-fect” weekend.

*Everyone groans at the pun.*

FRAN

Thank you.

INNER FRAN  
*(To Inner Anna)*

Thank you, Anna.

INNER ANNA  
*(To Inner Fran)*

We do notice, Fran.

FRAN

Well, if anyone's hungry later-

*There are more groans from the table.*

-you know, midnight snack. I have lots of leftover pears. Unpoached but wonderful. The espresso beans too.

*She places a large bowl of pears on the table and pulls the jar of espresso beans out of a cabinet.*

Please, eat them. I don't want to have to haul 'em home.

INNER ANNA

Home. Chemo. Carl. Worry.

INNER CARL

Home. Anna. Cancer. Fight.

INNER PETER

Home. Fail. Work. Write.

INNER FRAN

Home. Kids. Call the kids. Do we need gas? Leftovers. Should I give some to-

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM  
*(Loudly)*

Fran!

FRAN

What?!

INNER GRAHAM  
*(To Graham)*

Say it!

GRAHAM  
Do not start worrying about tomorrow. Any of you. Now put those down.

*Fran puts down the espresso beans.*

And get that fancy, distracted ass of yours in the boat.

FRAN

The boat?

GRAHAM

We're going fishing.

FRAN

Fishing. Now? Fishing for what?

GRAHAM

I have no idea, woman. Now move.

ANNA

Have fun, Fran. Maybe you'll catch something.

*Graham and Fran exit so quickly through the back door, Inner Graham and Inner Fran are caught unawares. They look at each other, startled, and then scramble to follow them out.*

INNER PETER

Last night. Finished.

PETER

Did you finish your short story?

TALK/Sergel

ANNA

As a matter of fact, I did.

*Carl has picked up a pear from the bowl and is looking at it.*

INNER CARL

Finish chemo soon. How many more? When will we know? Ask doctor for...no...just get through this next session...finish the course...then get-

ANNA

*(Grabbing Carl's hand)*

Come on. Let's go look for some stars *(To Peter)* My laptop's in the bedroom. Since I'm done. If you want to...put down some thoughts, you're welcome to it.

PETER

Thanks, Anna.

INNER PETER

*(Rising)*

Thank you, Dr. Anderson.

*Anna and Carl exit to the patio and sit on the lounge chairs. Inner Anna and Inner Carl follow them out. Anna runs her hands through her hair, a hank of hair coming out in her hand. She looks at it for a moment and drops it on the patio.*

ANNA

It's finally beginning to come out. I'm surprised it took this long.

CARL

Sad?

*Carl surreptitiously picks up the discarded hair and puts it in his pocket.*

ANNA

A little.

*Looking at the pear in Carl's hand, she reaches over and takes it.*

You know what surprises me most about this...cancer?

TALK/Sergel

CARL

What?

ANNA

That this may be it. I'm fifty-six and I may be, could be, pretty much...done.

CARL

You're not done.

ANNA

I know. But I may be. Any of us might be, at any moment. It's just startling to me. Life feels like this relentless force that can't be stopped but it's really quite fragile.

*She looks at pear.*

Perfect and lovely but just a bruise away from the compost pile. But you know what makes it easier?

CARL

What?

ANNA

Knowing that if I do die, this time, from this, because, eventually, something's gonna get me, but, today, we'll just talk about this...is knowing that in fifty, sixty years, you're all gonna be dead too. I hate to say it, but that really helps take the sting out. Cancer is probably eventually going to get me in some form or another...but something's going to get you all of you too.

CARL

*(Laughing)*

Glad the thought my eventual death is bringing you comfort and joy.

ANNA

*(Inhaling the fragrance of the pear)*

Not joy, but definitely comfort. The thought, somehow, takes the lonely out of the whole thing.

INNER CARL

Lonely.

*To Carl.*

Enough. It's time. Speak.

TALK/Sergel

CARL

Anna, I'm can't sleep because I'm afraid I'm going to wake up and you'll be dead. I feel that...you won't die when I'm awake. I'll be able to stop it.

ANNA

Stop death.

CARL

Yes.

ANNA

You think you can stop death.

CARL

No. Yes. No (*Pause*) I need to do something.

ANNA

Carl, if I die from this thing, I'm going to fight it tooth and nail. It 'aint gonna be pretty. It's going to be a long, drawn out, protracted, dramatic affair. None of this "no extreme measures" for me. I'm going to be in the hospital, hooked up to so many tubes and monitors it'll make your head swim. I'm taking every, damn breath I can get. When I'm about to go, the place is going to sound like a brass band. Every bell, beep and whistle's going to go off so frickin' loud, will make such an ungodly noise, that it'll-pardon the expression- wake the dead. Trust me, there will be no sleeping through me making my exit. So, will you please, take a nap or something. You're beginning to look worse than me.

CARL

Promise?

ANNA

Have I ever lied to you?

CARL

We've been married for twenty-seven years. Of course you've lied to me.

ANNA

About the important stuff, mister.

CARL

Hey, be nice to me. In fifty years, I'm gonna die.

*They sit back and look up at the stars beginning to come out. Inner Carl gets up and crosses to Inner Anna's chair. He sits down next to her, helps her off with her backpack and lies down, with her in his*

*arms.*

*Anna, the pear cradled in one hand reaches over and takes Carl's hand into hers. They look back up at the stars. Inner Carl falls asleep with Inner Anna nestled in his arms. After a moment, Inner Anna smiles and closes her eyes.*

*Fran and Graham sit in the boat, fishing. Inner Fran sits on the large trunk, Inner Graham sits, leaning with his back against it. Both Inner Fran and Inner Graham stare down at the water.*

FRAN

So this is fishing.

GRAHAM  
*(Casting his line)*

Yes.

INNER FRAN

Bait. Fish. Line. Hide. Hide from line. Hide. Graham. Hide from Graham. What? Hide what?

FRAN  
*(Takes a deep breath and casts her line)*

I'm afraid I'm frigid.

GRAHAM  
*(Referring to her cast)*

Good.

INNER GRAHAM

Wait! What?

GRAHAM

What?!

INNER FRAN

Shhhh.

*As Fran speaks, Inner Fran begins to look at Inner Graham.*

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

I'm afraid I'm frigid. I don't know...I can't...I don't know what excites me anymore. I feel like my body is this robot. I just keep doing but it has no meaning. I feel like this fat-

*Fran searches for the right word.*

INNER FRAN

-bony, starved, old, rigid, frigid, asexual, cleaning, mommy, working machine-

FRAN

-thing. I clean and I do. I schedule and I book. I slice and I chop. I strip and I fuck. It's as though life is this-

INNER FRAN

-relentless force-

FRAN

-thing just pushing me ahead, pounding my body and my mind and my heart in different directions and I'm splitting apart-

INNER FRAN

I have split apart.

FRAN

I see me-

INNER FRAN

-my body, my soul-

FRAN

-far, far away in glimpses of what I used to be. Even when I cook now...what used to be that free-

INNER FRAN

-timeless-

FRAN

-safe-

INNER FRAN

-cocoon-

FRAN

-moment in my day is now just another chore. I throw the food together but it doesn't come together. It's just food-

TALK/Sergel

INNER FRAN

-fuel, a tool-

FRAN

-to impress, make money, another broken piece of me.

INNER FRAN

-fractured and dry and dull and screaming.

FRAN

I am failing in every crack-

INNER FRAN

-crevice-

FRAN

-corner-

INNER FRAN

-moment-

FRAN

-of my life and I'm afraid. I can't fake it anymore. I'm a big, fat, frigid fake. A fraud and a fake.

GRAHAM

I cheated on my SATs.

FRAN

*(Pause)*

Your SATs.

*As Graham begins to speak, Inner Graham begins to look at Inner Fran.*

GRAHAM

I want to help you but I'm a fraud too. I'm a big faker too. Me at Yale. So stupid. You know, what they don't tell you about cheating is that what it gets you is what you shouldn't have gotten in the first place. I've been playing fraud-fake-catch up ever since. I've been-

INNER GRAHAM

-drowning ever since-

TALK/Sergel

GRAHAM

-just keeping my head above water. I was always afraid somebody would figure out that I wasn't...me. Shit, Franny, I never wanted you to find out. I wanted to be perfect, at least, for you. But then you started drifting away, we started drifting. Then Anna...Carl. Anna could...die. Which means-

INNER GRAHAM

-you could die.

GRAHAM

I need you to know that I'm a fraud and I need you not to leave me alone with myself. I don't care if you're frigid. If you're frigid it's because I'm a rotten, terrible lover-

INNER GRAHAM

-failed you.

GRAHAM

I don't do the right things for you. I don't help you...how you want. I know I'm not what you want. I don't care if you're frigid, just don't leave me because I made you that way. Please, I'll take any piece of you I can get-

INNER GRAHAM

-body, mind, soul-

GRAHAM

-just be with me. Because I've been alone in my head for too long.

FRAN

We're just a couple of frauds, I guess.

GRAHAM

We're quite the pair.

FRAN

Perfect for each other.

*They grab each other and kiss. Long and deeply. He pulls her towards him and cradles her in his arms, still kissing her. He begins to kiss her neck.*

You know, sex in a boat might be a little tricky.

GRAHAM

It's all about balance, Franny.

TALK/Sergel

FRAN

Is it?

GRAHAM

Yes, it is. It's the key to life. We just lost ours for awhile. Oh, and, by the way, we're not going to have sex.

FRAN

We're not?

GRAHAM

We're going to neck.

*As they sink down into the boat, Inner Fran and Inner Graham begin to look up at the stars.*

INNER FRAN

Hard. Deep. Strong. Coffee. Strong coffee. Out of cream. Get cream...

*Fran abruptly pops back up and glares at Inner Fran.*

FRAN

*(To Inner Fran)*

Shut up!

*She lies back down and the boat begins to gently rock.*

INNER GRAHAM AND INNER FRAN

*(In unison)*

Ah.

*A moment.*

Cream.

*Peter, after staring at the bowl of pears, suddenly gets up and crosses to Sheila's purse, which is on a small table under the living room mirror. He reaches in and takes out her key chain.*

TALK/Sergel

INNER PETER  
*(Pointing to a specific key)*

That one.

*Peter removes it, puts it in his pocket, and replaces the key chain in the purse. He and Inner Peter then look at themselves in the mirror. Sheila enters, followed by Inner Sheila.*

SHEILA  
Where is everybody?

PETER  
Fran and Graham are on the boat. Carl and Anna went on the patio. Probably looking for stars.

*Sheila sits, picks a pear out of the bowl, and begins eating it. Peter and Inner Peter are standing behind Sheila so they cannot see she isn't paying attention.*

INNER PETER  
Last stab.

PETER  
Did you have a good time? I mean, I did...I like it here.

INNER SHEILA  
This probably has forty calories. Maybe fifty. Your ass is getting huge. He's gonna dump you if you keep this up.

*Sheila is completely focused on eating the pear.*

PETER  
I know it wasn't terribly hip...but I'm beginning to think I'm not a terribly hip guy. Would that bother you, Sheila?

*She finishes the pear and begins staring at the remaining bowl of pears. To Peter it still appears she is listening to him.*

INNER SHEILA  
You've got to keep the control. You can control the pears. Eat them, then get rid of them. You have the control.

TALK/Sergel

PETER

If I wasn't...if I was...wasn't making money...big money and we were doing more...quieter things...sometimes? Like...I dunno...looking at stars, sitting in a boat? Talking?

*Peter picks a pear out of the bowl.*

INNER SHEILA

Talking. He was talking. God. You blew it. Talk. Talk back.

SHEILA

So, you in the mood, beautiful? Wanna do the nasty? Everybody else has paired up.

INNER PETER

*(Looking at Sheila)*

Beautiful-

*Looking at Inner Sheila.*

-and nasty.

PETER

Actually, I may go out and look at the stars.

INNER PETER

Try. Once more. Maybe-

PETER

You want to-

*Sheila turns back to the bowl of pears and Inner Sheila begins eyeing the jar of espresso beans.*

SHEILA

-Okay. Whatever you want. Just give me a poke when you want to give me a poke.

INNER SHEILA

Sex keeps 'em...keep him. Control will keep him. Sex is control.

PETER

Good night, Sheila.

*He gently places the single pear in the center of the table, looks at Sheila for a moment and crosses to the hallway door and exits.*

*Inner Sheila grabs the jar of beans, it to Sheila, who struggles to open it. Finally getting it open she spills the beans across the table around the single pear. Sheila and Inner Sheila begin voraciously and methodically eating the beans and the pears, occasionally glancing around to make sure they're not being observed.*

INNER SHEILA

*(Through mouthfuls)*

Fat. Sex. Empty. Don't tell. Hide the fat. Hid. You. Fat. Under the fat. Hide you. Fat. Fat. Fat. Don't tell. Fat. Empty. Don't tell. Shhhhh.

*Peter enters Anna and Carl's bedroom. Peter sits on the bed, in front of Anna's laptop. Inner Peter leans against the wall. Peter struggles with opening the laptop.*

PETER

Come on, open up.

*Inner Peter reaches over and opens the computer for Peter. Inner Peter nudges Peter and Peter slowly begins to type.*

*The lights begin to fade, with a spot remaining on the single pear sitting on the table amidst the spilled espresso beans.*

*As Sheila eats, Peter types with Inner Peter looking over his shoulder, both their faces illuminated by the glow of the computer screen. Fran and Graham lie curled in the boat, quietly giggling and whispering. While Inner Fran, Inner Graham and Anna look up at the emerging stars, Inner Carl and Inner Anna lay peacefully in each others arms. Carl, still holding Anna's hand, is now fast asleep.*

THE END