

PLAY FOR 5 WINDOWS

This play was written to be performed at a party, with the actors leaning out of open windows of a 3-story house. The audience is watching from the front yard, looking up at the performers.

The cast should be reflective of the world.

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Notes on the style:

Please just be yourself as you talk, a version of the yourself you would be if you were in these particular circumstances saying these particular things. You are in both the fictional reality of the conversation and the real reality of the party. The worlds are one or two depending on what's happening—don't worry about it, just speak from whichever one whenever you seem to be there. It will make slippery sense and that's what we want.

Notes on the text:

A blank space after character number indicates time/inner response. Please pay attention to these and give them the time they want.

Anything in [brackets] probably doesn't need to be spoken, but it is definitely the flavor of the communication.

A "/" between numbers, like "1/2" means both people speak together, using the corresponding half of the slashed lines. For example, in the line "1/2 sure/ok", 1 says "sure", 2 says "ok", and they say it together.

A "/" between words in one person's line means the next person starts talking then (this is the Carol Churchill slash).

Notes on the acting:

For the most part, 1, 2, and 3 all speak as though they have something else going on in their heads. They are there talking, but it's a little dispassionate, a little disconnected. The big emotions, the vast majority of the time, stay way inside, protected.

4 is more excited than that.

5 is way more excited than that.

Oh yeah, and 2 is not an astronaut. And 1, of course, knows that.

THE PLAY

The people in the yard are eating and hanging out. They are the audience.

The 2 3rd floor and 3 2nd floor windows are illuminated.

At some point, 1 comes to stand in the top R window, looking down.

At another point, 2 comes to the top L window and looks down.

After awhile, a conversation starts.

2 hey

1

1 hey

2

2 what's going on?

1 oh not much. Just ate some snacks

2

2 what'd you have

1 nuts and raisins. I'm not eating cheese, so

2 there was a lot of cheese

1 so much cheese !

2

1

2/1 So I told Damion/ So what are you

2/1 Sorry/ oh. no, it's fine

silence.

4 comes up to the middle 2nd fl window and looks out.

2 so I'm looking for a job

1 you left your job?

2 it's a long story

1 oh

4 leaves the window

1

1 so what kind of job are you trying to get?

2 I don't know. I'm not qualified to do much other than what I've been doing. Astronaut stuff. You know.

1 oh yeah. Space Exploration.

2 Space Exploration

2

1 you could be an algebra tutor. I hear astronauts are really good at algebra

2 I am good at algebra

1

3 shows up in the far left 2nd floor windows and hunkers down, looking out.

2

1 so where are you looking

2 I told Damion / I was looking for

1 oh, *Damion*

2 Damion told me if I switched to oceanic exploration he could probably get me a job in Newport at that research place.

1 they do say it's like deep space

2 newport?

1 the ocean. [That's so not funny.]

2

2 Yeah well. I told him I didn't want to be that close to you, so

1

1

1

2

1

1 newport isn't that close

2

2 I really don't want to run into you on the street somewhere. Or in a restaurant.

1 Well

1

1 I eat meat now so we'd probably be in different restaurants

2 you don't eat cheese but you do eat meat?

1 it's the paleo diet

2 like paleological?

1 I could eat elephant if I wanted to. It's on the acceptable foods list

2/1

3 have you ever tried it?

They look down at him. He peers up at them.

1 no. are you kidding? Eat an elephant? When they do things like link their trunks to a dead friend's trunk and stand there for hours in solidarity and mourning? No.

2 plus I don't think it's actually legal

3 in this country, maybe

1 and 2 have a moment of solidarity:

2/1 mmmmmm I think in all countries/ I think they're universally endangered?

1/2/3

1 I did eat, um, yak. It was pretty good. When I was in Nepal. Yak Steak.

3 has a moment of excitement:

3 [that's so cool] oh yeah. yeah I saw Yak meat advertised around here somewhere. Like a yak farm or something, right?

1 well that would be weird because yak is a high elevation animal, so I don't understand how they could be living here, at like, sea level.

4 comes to the middle window on the 2nd floor and looks at the tree.

3 maybe it's a scam

4 this is a really great tree. I've never really noticed it before.

3 have you been here before?

4 yeah lots of times.

Brief silence from all.

4 I like it here

3

3 I don't like it that much

4 really? Why?

3 the colors the rooms are painted make me uncomfortable.

4 oh. I like that.

4

4

1 I don't like the red room but I like the yellow one a lot

4 and I like the floorboards. They're really wide. That's rare.

2 that is pretty rare

3 yeah, I like the floorboards ok

4/1

1 plus they probably have really interesting conversations

2 the floorboards?

1 [that is so not funny] the people who live here

things speed up a bit here

2 why, just because they paint their rooms like that?

1 yeah, I guess

2 you think it's artsy?

1 I think it shows an aesthetic urge that I appreciate

2 so you think they're artists

1 I don't know

2 and because they're artists they have interesting conversations?

4 [let me be helpful] they're artists and 1 phd.

1

1 yeah, artists and smart people have really interesting conversations

2

2 interesting to whom

1 to me, ok? I like conversations that artists and phd's have

2

2 well I'm just saying

1

1 well you're being kind of a bitch

5 arrives at the center window, 2nd floor and speaks to 3/4

5 I just tried out the vibrating armchair. Have you sat in the vibrating armchair yet?

4 yes I definitely sat in it. It's what I did first.

5 did you love it?

4 yes I loved it

3 did it relax you?

4/5 yes/ it did. it did. it totally relaxed me. You should try it.

3 I'm not going to try it

5 everyone should try it. I'm going to make sure everyone tries it.

5 leaves to come downstairs to the yard to get people one at a time. When she brings them past the window on the way up to the 3rd floor, she has them announce to the audience "I am about to sit in the vibrating arm chair." When they return, they stop in the same window and the audience member says: "the vibrating arm chair was good." These interruptions can happen at any moment, and the window-speakers will pause for it. There is an indication in the script after which point there should be no more interruptions/trips to the chair.

3 this is really going to liven things up

1

1 why would you say that to me?

2 what?

1 about not wanting to run into me. [That was really mean]

2 well it's true

1

1 that doesn't matter

2 well I just said it

1 well

4 (to 3) what did she say?

3 I don't know

1 she said she didn't want to look for a job near here because she didn't want to run into me

4

2 well it's true/

1 it's fine. She can be mean to me. It's fine.

3 why is it fine?

1 I did a really bad job of breaking up with her

4 what did you do?

1 I'll tell you later

2 you can tell her now

1 I don't feel like telling her now with all these people watching.

2 why not you already did a show about it

3 you made a show about your guys' break up?

1

2 I came on opening night

1 another mean thing

2 you made a show about it, how could I not come on opening night?

4 wait, time out. Are you two really a couple?

1 we were

2

3

4 oh. that's awesome.

Silence

Silence

3 [she does have a point] it is hard to live in the same town as your ex

2 well I probably won't live here / so

1 well I do live here, so

2

4 (to 2) so what do you do?

2 I'm a space engineer

3 like an astronaut?

2 I was

4 wow

3/4

3 what's it / like?

4 I never thought an astronaut could be out of a job

2 I don't support privatization

1 [give me a break] really? That's why?

2

2

2 I developed vertigo

1

1 dang.

2 in fact, it's incredibly hard for me to be standing at this window right now.

4 it makes you dizzy?

2 no. it's more like curiosity I'm not sure I can control. It comes in huge waves. My brain starts saying—well, your leg just could swing out over the ledge, and then your arms can go there and there and push off like that. It's like I can't trust my brain not to take the option when the option is there. It's exhausting to take sky rides.

3 but when you go out in space, it's not really an option to get out. To get out of the spacecraft.

1 yeah, you can't really get out of the space craft

2 you can on a space walk

1 but then you're tethered

2 I could sever it

1

3 [you're not really an astronaut] are you really an astronaut?

4 *has been thinking*

4 That happens to me when I'm driving across a really long bridge, like if it's 26 miles long, and for the longest time all you see is water and you can't tell there is land in front of you or behind you. And every so often the bridge rises up on a diagonal and it looks like it just ends up there. Heading into the sky. and you just have to trust that it *doesn't* end and there actually *will* be concrete under your

wheels when you pass over and go back down. But even without that slanting up I'm always terrified to go on it, because what if my arms turn the steering wheel and I'm suddenly crashing through the retaining wall and flying out over water. Ruining so many people's days.

You know?

*** no chair interruptions after this point***

It's such few degrees that your arm would have to turn, really. Like twelve degrees maybe. It's such a small move. And once you have the thought, what's holding your brain back from making that happen? What if the thing that's sending the signal to stay on the road, stay steady, don't move arms, what if that little sheet of energy is too thin to withstand that other signal of, let's try it. Just jerk the arms over. It would be so easy. Your brain can send signals faster than we can think them sometimes. What if it decides to do that? And even your not wanting to do it doesn't activate in time and then it's done and you're dead. Even though you don't want to be. I hate driving across bridges.

2/3/1

2 yeah: it's like that

4

2

1

3 look at those people out there

4 [I know what I should do.] I'm going to go *be* a person down there

4 leaves to go down to the yard

2 I'm going to go home

1 you can stay over if you want. You don't have to drive tonight

2

2 I'm going to have some snacks and think about it

3 there's a lot of cheese down there

2 I'm going to have some cheese and think about it

2 leaves

silence

1 I'm going to sit on the vibrating armchair

4 speaks from the front yard

4 you guys

3/1 yeah

4 you should come down here. there are people down here. It's nice

3 ok

1/3

1 I feel like down there is totally separate from up here

1/3

3 I feel like I should do something spectacular

1 right now?

3 at some point in my life

1

1 you probably will

they turn off their lights or leave the windows.

The end