

Blood Replacement

a comedy about drama and authenticity and finding stand-ins on the playing field
by Jennie Webb

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Working Draft

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Characters:

THE HOPEFUL WOMAN - Not quite 30. Not at all a wallflower, but not an early bloomer. While appearing open on the surface, has a hard time trusting and is somewhat of an outsider. Is maybe ready to do what it takes to invest in herself, in all respects. Needs to believe

THE DYNAMIC WOMAN - Not quite 40. Not afraid of making a statement, and a loud one, usually. Which means she doesn't have to listen much or look past the surface. Always on, she appears ready to run but maybe should stick around for awhile. Needs to leave an impression.

THE ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN - Not admitting to being past 40. Not as inflexible as she appears to be. Good at self promotion, on the surface anyway. Invests in the decisions she has made; if she can handle the worst she can handle anything. Maybe. Needs to be needed.

Setting:

Someplace that looks an awful lot like an outdoor athletic field from most perspectives

Time:

Day into night

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We see a young woman alone onstage, standing on what looks to be an outdoor athletic field. Or rather on the sidelines. There's a locked gate in back of her, and behind it, a swimming pool. But there's something about the place that's a bit off. Not quite right. You can't put your finger on it, but...

Beside the woman is a small camp chair and a blanket. Even though she's wearing a jacket and thick stockings, it's chiller than she'd planned. She looks hopefully out front. And may have caught sight of someone in the distance she's been waiting for.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(to herself) Is that...?

She waves to that unseen someone.

(loudly) Hiiiiii?

Apparently there's no response.

(to herself) No? Wait. Yes. That's... Really? Wow. *(louder)* Hey!! Here!!

Nothing.

(louder still, accompanied by impossible to miss movements) Helloooooooooo!!!

We hear a voice which, although distant, is still quite dynamic.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(offstage) Ah, yes! Hallo! I'm right there!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(loudly) Great!! *(to herself)* Okay! Brrrrrr.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(offstage) Goodness! How on earth did you find this place? I never would have guessed in a million years that this was here...

The dynamic woman comes tottering onstage carrying one or more bulging paper grocery bags and a small chair. She's wearing sunglasses that make a statement, significant heels and an oversized coat; maybe it's fur.

And you! Here you are standing, shivering like a little lost lamb in the wilderness...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah, it got cold! I didn't expect to see you; can I help with those?

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She moves to take the bags.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But of course! Merci. A ton. And look what I found!

She displays her darling little chair to full effect; it's like a child's throne or small settee.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Wow!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It was on the side of the road; I pulled over and picked it up on the way here. Could that be more perfect? What better way to spend the day outdoors than sitting in style like the Moorish princess I one day hope to become!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha—that's seriously a goal?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, I certainly wouldn't mind being hand-fed a date or two by a man in a loincloth. *(taking off her sunglasses, looking around and out front)* So where is everyone?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I know. I'm kind of bummed that no one— I mean, hardly anyone else could—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) I don't mean us, I mean them.

She gestures out front.

The men, the boys, the playahs in their sweet, sweet musclebound shorts.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. Yeah. I guess we're early.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We're definitely early. *(looking around and behind her)* Significantly early. Ridiculously early which is absolutely unheard of for me, I have to say. Ha ha ha. So how about we go somewhere cozy and come back when we've got company to warm us up?

The hopeful woman has pulled out her phone and is texting.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah. I mean no... I'm trying to figure out what...

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DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Didn't you say the game started at 11?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Match. In rugby it's a match.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Right. So what time is it now; how late am I?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(scrolling through texts) Almost noon. I don't know what...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

"Almost noon." If that doesn't sound like a cue for Bloody Marys I don't know what does.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It might have gotten switched to the afternoon. The match. I would have called you, but I had no idea you were coming.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And I have no idea what happened to my phone, so it wouldn't have mattered, ha ha ha! Now how will we find out? About the "match"?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(looking up from her phone) I've been texting him.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

How clever of you. What does he say?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I haven't been able to... You know how it goes. I talked to him last night and told him I'd be here, and maybe some friends. But things get switched and they don't always tell them. Or they tell them at the last minute.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But the last minute would have been, when? An hour ago?

Short pause. The hopeful woman returns to her phone.

Okay. It makes no difference. So we're matchless. Let's go somewhere and brunch. Bacon and mimosas. Man, it's been too long!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Right, but I really can't—

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DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Wrong, you really can. You look positively malnourished and I'm sorry, I'm not going to let you stand around another second waiting for—

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) Things get complicated on match days.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I know! Believe me, I know complications. Let's go someplace and simplify, just you and I? Do or die. My my my.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. I can't leave, though.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Text him or something and tell him to meet us.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No, it's not—

Short pause.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's not what?

Short pause.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You'll never guess who just texted me she was coming!

Pause.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I thought she said she had to go into work today. She sent that "Oh, I'm so important I can't abandon my boss on a weekend watch me tweet" e-mail. To everyone. Like anyone fucking cares.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

She did go in; she was able to finish early, though.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Fancy that.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

So she's on her way.

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DYNAMIC WOMAN:

She, what: sent you her satellite position?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah, well...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Just the person you wanted to take you up on your kind rugby invitation, I'll bet. Lucky girl. And it was so lovely spending time with you! We must do this again, sooner than later; I do not see enough of you!

She takes a stab at picking up her bags.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Don't be silly. You two have to get over this.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But I am over it! Believe me—miles above it in every way! Should I leave my chair or do you think she'll sit in it?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Come on.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You knew she was coming and you didn't tell me.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Even if I— I didn't know *you* were coming.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, you are a wiley one. You're a wretch and you're forgiven. However, I have to admit that I am just not up for this sort of confrontation today.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(getting a new text) Hold on—now they're on their way.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

"They?" Who's she got with her, then? The whole gang? Not Alice.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

She didn't mention her daughter.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

There's a first.

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HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But I mean the guys. The guys are coming; the team. (*referencing her phone*)
The time did get switched; it's earlier than it normally would be for an afternoon match, but, well, that's how it goes sometimes. You're already here; you might as well stay. You two—you know you love each other!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh. My. God. Fine.

She gives up on the bags and pulls out a thermos.

So it's only her? No one else? Irish coffee?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. No. I...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No is not an answer. You must join me as I take necessary steps to prepare for her arrival. Not to mention the burly rugby lads.

She drapes the blanket around the hopeful woman and pours into two cups.

Salud!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Cheers!

They drink.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Now! Refresh my memory again—what's the story of this fellow?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He was working at the restaurant close to where I work.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, yes! The waiter!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He was actually filling in behind the bar.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That's right. The bartender.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But just temporarily. I always go in there; the guy who runs it is great. Anyway, he had this friend who was helping him out.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Aha, so it's the helpful friend. Does he have a name?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Sam.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Sam. Could not be sweeter. And you and Sam have been seeing each other for how long now?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

About six months, but I'm not sure if "seeing each other" is the right—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) It's just sex?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I'm sorry. I've had a very long very dry spell and was hoping to live through you.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It's—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Never mind. Whatever it is, it is. Tell me about him. He's not a waiter and not a bartender...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He's between jobs.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I feel close to him already.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But he works as a volunteer firefighter, and is a trained paramedic.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

An ad hoc first responder?

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HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. Pretty much. He's doing something in construction right now.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, he sounds absolutely fascinating! Does he have a brother and do you need a refill?

She pours more for them both.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Thanks. I don't—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) I was kidding.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah, ha ha.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Kind of. I'll bet he's incredible.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Well, he's probably not what you'd expect!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And what's more unexpected than rugby! Here here!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha!

As they drink, another woman comes onstage. She is very put together and looks as if she's done great things. She's dressed for mild weather, perhaps in a light sweater. And carries a compact picnic basket.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well! I thought I was going to be late! Hello, ladies. *(to the dynamic woman)*
What a surprise!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Hi! You got here fast. *(holding up her cup)* Irish Coffee? *(to the dynamic woman)*
I mean, if it's...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's fine.

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

No thanks. A bit too early in the day for me.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's not past noon yet?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

If I start now the whole day's shot, and my boss is expecting me back at the office.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So! It's great to see you. How are you?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I'm wonderful. Just fantastic. And you?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Terrific. Does that mean you got the lawsuit all straightened out?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That's still a complete disaster, but what's new?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Always something! Some things never change.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What can I say? My mad, mad life.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You've gotten away with it this far, right? Keep on keeping on!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha. How quaint. Do people really say that?

Short pause.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Wow, it warmed up, huh?

She sheds the blanket.

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I hope it doesn't get too hot. The air conditioning is out in the office.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I thought you were moving to a new office?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

We are. We're in a temporary loft space. It's actually very cool.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Cool, but no air conditioning. How tragic.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Non-functioning; not quite a tragedy. And look at you.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha, yes. Do you like it? Isn't this fun?

The dynamic woman has removed her coat and is dressed in tight-fitting, flashy rugby gear. Set off rather notably by her high heels.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

That's really great! Where did you get that!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

An ex-boyfriend of mine. Fabulous, right? I didn't even know I had it then was looking through some boxes and...

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Do I even want to ask under what circumstances you wore that?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, please. I didn't, he did.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

On Halloween?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha. You can't see me dating a rugby player?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Really?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Really! It was ages ago; short-lived but passion-filled, let me tell you. During my athletic phase. Or athlete phase. He was a wonderful man.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A small man.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

What?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

To fit into *that* outfit. Did I ever meet him?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I don't believe so.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I like it. The guys will go nuts.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Was he the strange little fellow you brought to that New Year's Eve party in New York?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Was he?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That's what I'm asking you.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I really can't... He may have been. When was that?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It was a couple of years before I had Alice, so—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Yes! Were we staying at his brother's?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You were. I'd rented the hotel room for the two of us to share and then at the last minute you decided—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) That's right! Boy, that was a wild night, wasn't it?

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

In so many ways.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We all went out and got matching tattoos the next morning?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You're seriously just now remembering?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(to the accomplished woman) Wait. You have a tattoo?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Had. It's gone now.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(looking down her shirt at her breasts) I sometimes forget I still have mine. And look! My tits were so much smaller then; now I've got drooping rose petals to be reckoned with.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(to the accomplished woman) But you— You told me not to get one.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I didn't tell you that.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You did. I still have the e-mail. I said I was thinking of getting a tattoo and you told me—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) I told you not to do it haphazardly, without giving it serious thought.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, come on. A few tequila shots is all the serious thinking we did.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Which is exactly why I gave her my sage advice.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

That's not what you—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting, to the accomplished woman) Fuck sage advice. *(to the hopeful woman)* So when was this? You contemplating ink, as it were. Did I know about this?

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HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Early last year. When my friend Michael died.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course. I'm so sorry. Poor soul; he was a very dear boy.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He was amazing.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

He had such a lovely spirit.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

And I wanted a tattoo to keep him with me, a part of me.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ohhhhh, that's just beautiful, it's not too late, you know. Let's go! I'll get another one!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I... I already did.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You did?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You did! Fabulous! Congratulations! Can I see it?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

When?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Awhile ago.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What did you get?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Why didn't you say anything?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I didn't think you'd want me to. This was it. For Michael.

She pulls back her hair and-reveals a small mark behind her ear.

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DYNAMIC WOMAN:
How sweet is that?! And it's a... what?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
A lizard. Kind of silly, I guess.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
No! It's lovely!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
A lizard?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
It was kind of our thing. He liked lizards.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
It's a symbol of survival; you lose your tail, you keep moving.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
I— Yeah.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Behind your ear—that must have hurt.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
I don't remember.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
(holding her breast) Oh, I certainly remember. I was sore for weeks.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
But that's different, that's fat tissue.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Not then, so much. But thanks.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
There's no fat at all behind the ear is what I'm saying, and it's very sensitive.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Any my boobs aren't?

The hopeful woman's phone begins to ring.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
That's not what I—

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HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting, into on the phone) Hi! What? Hang on.

She starts to move to get a better signal.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(to the women) I'm just...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Sure! *(loudly)* Hi Sam! *(to the hopeful woman, under her breath)* That is Sam?

The hopeful woman nods and hurries off.

Alone, the other women consider each other and their surroundings. The dynamic woman wedges herself into her petite seat and strikes a pose. The accomplished woman takes in the picture.

After a moment,

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Did you know this was here? I never would have know this was here.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You didn't bring it? It looks just like the sort of thing you'd acquire.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha, yes. It's too perfect, isn't it? I meant this. *(gesturing out front)* This whole... *this*.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Oh, yes, I did. I think this was where they had that farmers market/reduced carbon footprint benefit and I consulted. Virtually.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course you did.

As she extricates herself from her chair, the accomplished woman decides that the hopeful woman is out of earshot.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So how are we going to help our little friend? Poor baby.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Help? Why does she need help?

She moves toward the accomplished woman's picnic basket.

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DYNAMIC WOMAN:
What do you have in there?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
She's doing it again. Some nice cheeses. Olives.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Wine? Doing what again?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
No wine.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
No wine?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
No wine. The guy.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
What guy? The dead guy? What are these?

She pulls a small bag out of the picnic basket.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Green almonds. I got them at that Middle-Eastern market by my house. I can't eat them, you know. But try one.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
They're furry.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Here. *(moving to her and opening an almond)* You can open them with your fingernail; eat the inside. How I miss nuts.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
(eating) Hmmmm. Interesting. Tastes... green.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
But I meant the new guy. Even though they're all really one and the same.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
What are you talking about? *(going back to the picnic basket)* You said you have cheese?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Yes, in the little container. There's also some Manchego wrapped in paper. I love it, but shouldn't have too much. Because of the chemo.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Mmmmmmm. Yummy.

This was not the quite the reaction the accomplished woman was hoping for.

And look what we have here!

She lifts a collapsible table from amongst her bags and sets out plastic glasses and an assortment of small containers and odd utensils from the basket.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Where'd you get that?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I found it on my way in, left by some forgetful picnickers. Très convenient, no?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I suppose. Put one of those napkins over it. So! About her guy....

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Right. He sounds absolutely adorable.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'm sure he's adorable. But he's gay.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Why would you say that?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Because he is.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I thought— When did you meet him?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I didn't; I haven't.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

They why do you think he's gay? You think everyone's gay!

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Everyone is gay! Everyone she dates.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That is ridiculous.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Please. Her friend Michael?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

She wasn't dating Michael.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

She thought she was. Before he told her he was gay.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That's not— Michael was obviously gay. Everyone knew he was gay.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Everyone but the woman in love with him.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

There are different ways to be in love with someone.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well, I love you but I'm not getting a tattoo when you die.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No, you got a tattoo when you were drunk.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

And before there was Michael, there was Javier. And before that, Scott. It's all heart-breakingly inappropriate and she's doing it again.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What I'd like to know is where you get your information. If you've never met him, how do you—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) Look at where we are.

Short pause.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

An athletic field?

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A pitch. In rugby it's called a pitch.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Acch. *(returning to the basket)* Are you sure you don't have any wine in there?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I've had to cut back. Because of the chemo. I looked them up.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Looked whom up?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

The team. When I was at work this morning I was re-reading her post and I had this feeling and looked them up online. This is gay rugby.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's not just rugby, it's gay rugby.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You're making that up.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I am not. This is a gay rugby team. The rugby team is gay. I'd heard of it before; it's actually a huge, huge thing.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Gay rugby?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Uh huh. There's an international association. It's all over the world and this team is proud to be rucking with the best of 'em.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I don't believe you.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's on their website. And even if it wasn't...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Wasn't what?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

“The Penetrators?” The team’s called the Penetrators.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Seriously?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So let’s just say there are no secrets here; these particular boys do not scrum in the closet.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

“Scrum?”

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It’s a rugby term.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Tell me, why do you know about rugby and “rucking”?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You’re the one wearing the knee socks and nylon; why don’t you?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It’s not like I ever went to a game, for christ’s sake.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A match.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Right. Whatever. Back to Sam.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Sam.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Sam, her new boy?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Right. Sam.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Just because he plays gay rugby, does he have to be gay? Why can’t he just be on a gay rugby team?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Accidentally? He'd have to know.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course. But is it exclusive? Aren't there laws in this country? Equal opportunity?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Come on. What straight guy would choose to play on a gay team?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

An enlightened straight guy?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Or a not-so-straight guy.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt. He sounds lovely, and she seems crazy about him.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Which is precisely why I got myself over here today.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

To do precisely what? Scare him straight, or scare him away?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

To make sure our friend doesn't do the same thing she's done time and time again. She gets in these relationships that aren't real.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What are they, then?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You know what I mean. They're not real relationships.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course they're real.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What I mean is they're not real in the way she thinks they're real.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Or the way you think they should be? You being the arbiter of healthy coupling? She's having fun!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

She's chasing after a missing gay rugby player, inviting us to see a game that is never going to take place.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You don't know that and she seems absolutely fine! It's exciting, the whole thing. Did I remember to bring that champagne?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Listen to you! This has "tragic ending" written all over it. I can't believe you can't see that!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What I see, is she's deliriously happy!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

"Delirious." Exactly! This is all a fantasy! But why should I be surprised you can't be bothered to consider the pain that's ahead for her. You are entirely—

Short pause.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Entirely what? Just what am I, entirely? What were you going to say?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Does it matter?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course it matters.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Like you ever really listen to anyone?

The hopeful woman runs back in, flushed.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I'm so so so so so so so sorry! The connections are crazy out here. The league messed up the scheduling so everyone's running all over the place and— What's wrong?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I'm not quite certain! Apparently something's wrong, and that something has to do with... my hearing problem? Or is it my vision, not seeing the path of inevitable doom. I left something in the car. I'll be right back.

She leaves hurriedly.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Is she okay?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Oh lord. Is she ever okay? I'm sorry, I just can't take the drama anymore.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
What happened?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
I was just trying to have a real conversation with her.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Maybe there are things that are hard for her to talk about.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
How about anything or anyone besides herself?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
No, I mean, even with you.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Or especially with me. Because I call her on it. It's always been like this and she could get away with it when we were younger, but now it's finally backfiring on her! She's all alone and alienating her friends and refuses to ask for help.

Short pause.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Looks like it's going to be a nice day!

She takes off her jacket to reveal a long-sleeved blouse and a skirt over her stockings.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Yes! It's much warmer here than downtown. I honestly would have been over sooner if I'd have known you needed me to run interference. I can't imagine how glad you were to see me; I'm beginning to think I'm the only one that can handle her anymore. How pathetic is that?

The hopeful woman checks out the picnic items on the table.

Listen, about your tattoo: I just didn't know you had done it, and I'm protective of you. I don't want to see you hurt. So it was a surprise.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
To me, too. I was surprised how much it... changed me.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Of course! Because you did it at a time when you were acting out of grief, or rather reacting. We all make mistakes. And I had to live with mine until, you know: the surgery.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

The— Oh! Right! I'm sorry, it was...*(touching her breast)*

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Yes. But you were smart to get one where no one can see it. You don't want to go the route I did!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I don't. No.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So! Did you get the deal about the game? I mean, the match.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

As close to the deal as anyone has. I'm sorry. This was so not supposed to be like this. I thought that... I feel awful.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I understand.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Thank you. I know this kind of thing drives you bonkers and, well, to be honest, it makes these guys even crazier. They can get very fussy so I hope they behave!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Uh huh. Do you see them play a lot?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Not a lot. Sam is kind of an extra guy, an alternate substitute. When he plays, it's mostly as a blood replacement.

Short pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A what?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

A blood replacement. Funny, huh?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's rather frightening, actually. This is a position on the team? A blood replacement?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Kind of. The rules say he only goes in if someone gets hurt in the match, and he replaces them until they, well, aren't bleeding.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

He plays until the blood flow stops.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. Yeah. Or sometimes it doesn't stop and he has to take over.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

When a limb is severed?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No, no. It's mostly nosebleeds or cut lips or scrapes.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

If you say so.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I mean, it's all very civilized.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Sounds like it.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

"A game for hooligans played by gentlemen."

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Yes, I have heard that. I just don't know what the appeal is, there.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

As opposed to football. "A game for gentlemen—"

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) Sure sure sure. I'm obviously not the right audience, seeing as how I avoid organized violence altogether.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But that's it—it's not violent.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

With a “blood replacement” written into the rules?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It’s rough. But it’s fast, and just so... physical in a pure way. Elegant but forceful. And exciting! You’ll see!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

In this lifetime?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah. Sorry. *(taking her phone out again.)* I don’t know what...

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Listen, sweetie, I got off track here. So you’ve seen the team. I mean, you’ve seen them play.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(still fiddling with her phone) Sure. They’re really...! Well, let’s just say you’d never know that it’s gay rugby.

Short pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Oh.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I told you that, right?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Um, no. But I... I knew.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah, there’s sort of this big subculture. I never would have dreamt. Sam told me he found out about it from this guy he met on the side of the road. He was a hooker.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A what?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

A hooker.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

On the side of the road. This is getting worse and worse, you know.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No! It's not. See, Sam was driving home late one night and saw this guy who's motorcycle had spun out or crashed or something so of course he pulled over—he's trained as a paramedic—and ended up taking care of the guy until the ambulance arrived and it turned out this guy played rugby as a hooker—that's a position, the lead guy in the scrums, which are like the huddles, and he's the guy who tries to get and mostly throws the ball? Anyway, Sam always wanted to play rugby but... the right situation never really presented itself. It's complicated. So after he met this guy he went to check out the team and they loved him and he just started playing with them. I mean, whenever he can, especially during fire season because he's a volunteer firefighter and he's away for weeks or even months. But when he plays I try to come, even though it does get complicated. A lot of the time.

Short pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Was he okay?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Was who okay?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

The hooker on the bike.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. Yeah. I guess so. He's not on the team anymore but I think Sam said he made a big deal with the players about what a hero he was—Sam; that he'd saved his life and everything. Which may have been part of the reason they were all over him!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

And he's handy to have around when there's blood.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha! You don't know the half of it! He used to be a cop—or maybe a reserve cop? Or something. Anyway, he says it's almost like that's his destiny; he can't get away from it because when there's an accident or a crime or people get hurt or need rescuing, he just always seems to be in the right place at the right time.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That sounds like the wrong place at the wrong time

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But it's the way he's wired, deep down inside. He's incredibly courageous. It's unbelievable the things he's been through. He's done so much to make himself who he is. I mean, seriously. Literally. He really has.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well. I can't wait to meet him!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You think that'll happen today? I have to pick up Alice at her father's by—

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) Ack! I'm sorry, I...

She returns to reading her phone.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

And my boss wants me back at the office. Let me check in; Alice had an interview for what could be quite an advantageous internship abroad but I'm not sure she was really prepared...

She pulls out her phone. Both women begin to text. They both carry on their individual, unseen conversations— or attempts at conversations—for an extended period.

Then the dynamic woman makes an entrance. She is wearing an extravagant plasticized outfit topped by a rain coat and rubber boots and brandishes a large, colorfully patterned outdoor umbrella. She's not pleased that the women are otherwise distracted and haven't acknowledged her arrival.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Psssst! Am I interrupting some sort of world wide secret communique?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Hey! I was just trying to find out what's going on.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So guess what Alice just—!

She looks up from her phone and notices the dynamic woman's getup.

Good lord, what are you dressed as?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(ala "Winne the Pooh") Tut tut! Looks like rain!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(looking up at the skies) Ooof! It really does! Where'd those clouds come from?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But look what I found in the parking lot!

She props up the umbrella.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You found that?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

By the rubbish bins. Isn't it marvelous?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It'll come in handy. *(considering the clouds)* Yeesh.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That is very, very strange. They didn't say rain...

She goes back to her phone to do some research.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

"They" didn't, huh? Well, be sure you give them an electronic lashing or two.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(reading her phone) Cloud patterns generally don't seem to have shifted but this place... seems to be in it's its own weather zone.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Imagine!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That can happen, you know. *(finding a reference to display)* Micro-climates.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You know, my friend, I have to tell you: You and your... device are becoming quite inseparable these days. It's rather off-putting.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That I choose to be informed and reach out, rather than hiding from my friends and retreating into clutter and chaos?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha. If that's me you're obliquely referring to, it is the first time I've ever been painted as, what? a shrinking violet? that's for certain.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Nothing oblique about it, and I didn't saying you're shrinking.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Thank you for noticing.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Not that you make it easy. I haven't seen you in how long?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Only because I haven't heard from you.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

How would you know? You don't answer your phone—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) I don't know where my mobile is, and my home phone seems not to be ringing!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I know that; it goes straight to voice-mail.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But I never set up the voice-mail so I can't get the messages!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Obviously. And e-mail? What about e-mail?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I don't even have a computer!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What do you mean you don't have a computer? I went with you to—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Not one that works! That one broke; I have to get it fixed!!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Is that champagne?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I was ask—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Why yes, as a matter of fact! This *is* champagne in my pocket, and I *am* glad to see you, ha ha ha!

She pulls a bottle of champagne out of a large pocket in her raincoat.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(moving to the table) I'll get glasses.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(popping the champagne) Hooray!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

No, none for me.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Come on. A taste won't kill you.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Easy for you to say. I really shouldn't.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Neither should we, ha ha.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well, maybe if I eat something. I can't drink on an empty stomach. The chemo.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

The— Oh!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Then let us eat cake.

She lifts a fancy cake box out of a bag.

Not bad for a last meal, huh?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha but really: What's the occasion?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

This is the occasion! You are the occasion. We are the occasion.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Is that from that bakery on 6th? Alice's father loves that place. It's...?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Lemon-filled, with Amaretto.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

My favorite!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Let me... *(she takes the cake; to the dynamic woman)* Do you have a cake knife?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(moving toward her picnic basket) I brought some biodegradable cheese knives...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Is that what those are? They're not real knives.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

They're good for events.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

They're absurd; we'll use this.

She picks up a grand silver knife from the ground.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Whoa, where'd that come from?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Detritus from a quinceanera, perhaps? After a little Latin virgin was sacrificed to christ?

She wipes the knife on her clothing to clean it.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

They do have a lot of parties here.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That looks like it's real silver.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What can I say? The universe provides. It looks a bit like my mother's, actually.
the hopeful woman) Big piece or small piece?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's got to be filthy!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Another reason for alcohol!

She splashes some champagne on the knife.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Big, please.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That's my girl.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I have wipes. And plates.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Superfluous.

She cuts a piece for the hopeful woman, then grabs a chunk for herself with her bare hand.

Yum-a-roo. *(to the accomplished woman)* You don't know what you're missing; I'm actually enjoying this cake through every one of my pores. Will anyone mind if I slather it all over my body?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Ha ha indeed. Well. Maybe I'll have just a taste.

Using one of her awkward tiny cheese knives, she attacks with unexpected vigor.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course you will!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Ummm! Ooooooh, I hope I don't pay for this later. It's so rich. And my digestive system is completely out of whack.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Right. You know, I'm so sorry I didn't ask before. How have things been going?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Thanks! As well as can be expected. Actually, the doctors are quite pleased. So that's good news.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It is! Very good! Cheers!

The women toast with glasses and/or cake.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Unfortunately this cake and champagne are beyond very good! I'll be right...
Where is...?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

In the back of the building, up by the main parking lot?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That's where I parked?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Was there a building?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Yes.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Then yes.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Right.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Will you be okay? Do you want to take the umbrella?

They both consider the dynamic woman's oversized umbrella.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I've got one in the car if I need it.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Hurry back or there won't be any cake left!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That's the idea.

She heads off and the hopeful woman watches her leave.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I feel terrible.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

This will help.

She refills the hopeful woman's glass.

My lord! Who'd have imagined she could become even more high maintenance?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ack. I totally forgot about her cancer. I thought they got it all. Now chemo? Did I know that?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

She does try to keep it a secret.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Man. And for a minute I was afraid you'd brought cake because... Oh, jeez. She looks great! I guess I don't really talk that much to her; I mean, we facebook...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

The true meaning of modern friendship. How incredibly twisted.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

She's on there all the time, but she just posts about her job and her house and her dog and Alice and college abroad and all these amazing things she's involved with so I thought she was done with everything. You know, that everything was fine.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh she was. It is. Was that a rain drop?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But she still has to do chemotherapy?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

She doesn't have to, she wants to. Help me put this umbrella up.

Blood Replacement

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Huh?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
I'm not letting this cake get ruined!

The hopeful woman moves to help her raise and arrange the umbrella.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
But no one *wants* chemo.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
You have not been around her as long as I have, or you would not say that. It would not be enough for her to just have cancer, she has to have some kind of rare, special cancer. That even the specialists can't diagnose. So when the doctors recommend a simple lumpectomy, she tells them to take half her breast. When they insist they got it all, she forces them to give her chemo anyway. Not that it surprised me. I just refuse to validate her decision. To me that's like adding to the poison.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
That is awful!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
That's what I thought. But have you ever tried to stop her when she sets her mind to something? Nice, huh?

The umbrella is up-and she poses under it.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
No, I meant, how can you say—? Oh. That is rain.

She joins the dynamic woman under the umbrella.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
So if— *when* the boys arrive, will they play in the rain?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
What?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
The boys, the boys, your beefy rugby pups.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh, yeah. They love it. And they really are like puppies—rolling around, the muddier the better.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

How wonderful. (*still sampling the cake*) If I wasn't such a piglet I'd let them roll around in this cake, too!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(*scanning the horizon, or her cell phone*) But it's been hours; I don't know what could have happened. And now she's sick...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Trust me: she's fine.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I guess this was a stupid idea.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Darling, it's a brilliant idea! I can think of nothing I'd rather do than meet "The Penetrators!" Sounds like they're right up my alley, ha ha ha!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. Yeah, well, they'll definitely love *you!*

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And it's been so long since I've made an entire team happy! Ready?

She refills both their glasses.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Thanks...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Sit!

She squeezes back into her chair and the hopeful woman finally sits in hers.

This is very nice, isn't it? Shelter from the storm. How marvelous to spend time with you. I feel like we're getting closer and closer.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I just wish...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What? Oh what, my little friend I don't see nearly enough, whom I adore to no end?
Your wish is my command!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Never mind. This is nice.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Isn't it though?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Can I show you something?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

But of course, my pet!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It's this. I got it not long after my first one.

She opens a few buttons on her blouse and reveals another small tattoo near her collar bone.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And it is... rabbit paws?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Tracks. Wolf tracks.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Wolf tracks! A lone wolf?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

To help me move forward, to trust in myself.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I love that! Can I tell you how much I love that? Wolves are very powerful. Very spiritual. Symbols of family.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Family? Really?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Would I make that up?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

That makes sense! It really does.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course it does!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Because I was “lone” when I got it. But I wanted was to feel like I was, I don’t know, part of something. Like I belonged. Like you guys!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Like—?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) I mean, not just you two, but all of you. All of you women. You’re so close to each other, and there for each other, like a family’s supposed to be. I never had that.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oooh, well, you’ll never get away from us now!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Awwww. Thanks. I never had a lot of girlfriends, either. So I felt kind of funny asking you here today but somehow it was important that I did ask. And that you did come.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Why wouldn’t we?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But really! It feels so important! I mean, even if it hasn’t turned out exactly how I expected. But I’m starting to get—to trust—that things aren’t going to be what you expect and maybe that’s okay. That sometimes life pushes you in a direction and you can’t figure out what it is it’s telling you. It’s like you’re just hanging there, for forever, and nothing gets in or seems real, but then when you do something that’s... undeniable, sometimes everything just falls into place and suddenly you’re ready. Finally. You’re finally ready to—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) What do we have here?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Huh?

The dynamic woman picks up something covered in dirt; a little wiping—and maybe some champagne—reveals shiny metal.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's... a watch. A man's watch.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. Yeah. Could be one of the guys'. They played here last weekend.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's been here awhile...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It looks old.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's mine.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. I should ask the team, in case. Whenever they get here...

She pulls out her phone again.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No. I mean, it is mine. It's my watch.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(involved in her phone) Uh huh...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's my watch from... ages ago. An ex gave me this watch when I was... in my twenties. *(winding the watch)* It was his dad's.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Huh?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ah! *(holding the watch to her ear)* It's still working.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Whose was it?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Mine! My ex-boyfriend gave it to me after his dad died. Bless his heart. I used to wear it all the time, but then I must've lost it somewhere.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You said you'd never been here.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I haven't! Isn't that incredible? I have to set it. What time is it?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(checking her phone) 3:33.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Really? Three-three-three?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yes.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That is even more—! All right: This older man? Whose watch it was? He was so dear and old fashioned and I adored him to no end. Anyway, he didn't like digital clocks. Or that was even before they were actually digital; they were those flip type clocks?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Because he said they weren't real clocks, it wasn't the real time. But then his wife got one, right before she died, god rest her soul. And after she was gone he was going to get rid of it—he said he kept hearing the flip-click-clicking in the middle of the night. But then he noticed something: every time he looked at the numbers on clock it would say twelve-twelve. Or four-four-four. Or...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Three-three-three?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Yes! It was like his wife was reaching out to him. Telling him that she was there. That she loved him. That she was with him and everything would be okay.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Wow. That's—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) I knooooow! just remember thinking, "I want something like that! I want that kind of genuine connection. The kind of relationship that I can count on until the end of time, no matter what!." Ahhhhhhh!

She starts to sob uncontrollably. The hopeful woman is at a loss, until the accomplished woman returns.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Hello. And I thought the rain clouds had cleared.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(quickly recovering from her tears) Oh, I can't apologize enough. I must look ridiculous! But I guess we just needed a good cry. *(to the hopeful woman)* Didn't we?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Hmmm. It is a rather strange picture: blue skies, cool breezes and you two, huddled under there in the dark like little rodents.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We're very cozy. You're welcome to join us, you know.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(getting up, to the accomplished woman) Here, sit down.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'm fine. Although I do have to be careful of the sun. The chemo.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Really, sit! I'm gonna figure out what's going on.

She goes back to her phone.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(to the accomplished woman) Look here! You'll never believe what I found!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

A dirty watch?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You don't remember this watch? The watch I always used to wear? From my ex-boyfriend's dad?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

The old guy with the time story?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Yes!

Blood Replacement

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You lost it, like you lose everything.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That's what I'm saying! I just found it.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Where?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Right here. Right on this field.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Pitch.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Whatever!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

We're not actually on the pitch. We're past the touch.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That can't be the same watch.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It is!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's impossible.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It's incredible! And do you know what time it was when I found it? Three-thirty-three. Three-three-three.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Let me see.

She looks closely at the watch on the dynamic woman's wrist.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Do you believe this?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Hmmm. I don't—

Blood Replacement

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) I do. It's my watch.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Then you must have brought it with you.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You must—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) How could I possibly have done that? You said it yourself, I lost it years ago. How could I bring it with me?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

For all you know it could have been in one of those paper bags for years, and fallen out here today.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

It could not have. It was half buried.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You could have stepped on it and buried it.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

So, what? You think I'm trying to pull some giant hoax? You make it sound like I'm intentionally lying to you.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Lying to yourself, is more like it.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Extraordinary things happen. Things we can't explain. They happen to me every day.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Oh, I'm sure they do.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That maybe, just maybe, you look for extraordinary things. You see them because you need them. The ordinary isn't enough for you, there always has to be some great drama or crisis.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, please. I'm not the one who pretends that—

Short pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Pretends what?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Never mind.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What were you going to say?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I was going to say I'm starving. What else you have in that micro basket of yours?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I—

Her phone is making a noise.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I have to take this. It's Alice.

She moves away to take the call as the dynamic woman retrieves a bag from the basket.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(under her breath) Of course it's Alice. *(calling to the hopeful woman, holding out the bag)* Here. Have some green almonds. They taste... green.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Thanks. *(taking one)* They're fuzzy.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Right.

The dynamic woman takes off her raincoat. She is wearing a loud tropical outfit appropriate for poolside display—perhaps a colorful sarong over a swimsuit.

Blood Replacement

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Whoa!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Isn't this something? I never get to wear it, so when I saw the pool...

She takes off the rubber boots to reveal new heels which scream "Cabana."

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha. Too bad the gate's locked.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I don't actually know how to swim. But I have known my share of lifeguards.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I'll bet.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ahhhh, the sun, the sun, the glorious sun. Our lady of self-induced carcinogens doesn't know what she's missing!

She pulls the chairs out into the sun, setting them in basking positions.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Argh, you shouldn't—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting, sitting and baring almost all) But you should! Darling! It's time to shed some of those layers; you're not in a Mormon Temple! Show the world where those wolf tracks might lead!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Ha ha ha.

She looks toward the accomplished woman.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

There's really no need to be afraid of her; it's all a bluff, her little act. You should have seen her in her wild days!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Her wild days?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, yes! She was completely reckless. Made me look like a Catholic school girl. Not that that's a very good comparison because I actually was a Catholic school girl and, well... Ha ha ha.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh, tell me!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, we don't have nearly enough time. She was always trying to prove something, that she was wiser and more worldly, like I could forget she was older.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

She was?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Significantly older and always will be! Which to be honest seemed like an advantage at one point. But then she married that jerk and had Alice, and that showed us all, didn't it? The woman with the tight ass we see here today is living proof of the cost of motherhood.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

That's terrible; don't say that.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I'm sorry. I am terrible. I'm completely irresponsible and a total waste, just like she says. Of course she's right, as always, and I need another drink. You?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. Sure. But she doesn't say that; she doesn't think that.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I know exactly what she says, and exactly what she thinks.

She refills their glasses from a new thermos, trying to hold back alcohol-fueled tears.

And what she doesn't realize is that I'm onto her. She's built up her tidy little everything's Jake facade, but now is panicking because Alice is leaving the country and her beloved ex- wants nothing to do with her and that other asshole will never— Well, she'll be all alone, won't she? She can look down on me and my choices from her glass ceiling or loft space solarium or whatever the fuck it is, but I tell you this: I wouldn't trade what I've got for anything in the world. Or for anything she's got, anyway.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Especially not cancer.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh. Yes. Well. There's that. Too bad I haven't earned that particular badge of honor. Pre-cancerous was all I ever achieved. I'm as good as benign while she has cancer and Alice! How much better can life get?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Are you okay?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, I'm fine. Fabulous. For a woman whose life is falling apart and facing 40 alone, childless, destitute with a house full of animals. Even my neighbors aren't talking to me anymore. My god, what a cliché I've become. *Me* of all people! After the life I've led, to be reduced to...!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What?

The accomplished woman has returned.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Hi.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Reduced to what? Dancing at the Tiki Ti for spare change? Look at you.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha. Yes, do. Please. But I was just babbling. You've caught me with my knickers down, metaphorically speaking. Not that I'm actually wearing any, ha ha ha!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Stop. Will you please just stop?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Now you've joined the panty police?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

No, as your friend, I'm telling you to stop the show. We've had enough. We're tired of the performance. We don't want costumes, we want to see the real you, your authentic self.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

My "authentic self?" Oh, that's fabulous. *(to the hopeful woman)* Isn't that fabulous? *(to the accomplished woman, lifting the thermos)* Mai Tai?

Blood Replacement

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Seriously?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Nah, just joshing with you. I'll be right back.

She and her thermos leave in a hurry.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Argh! I don't know what to do. I really don't. She's going off the deep end. I mean, a deeper end.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
And she can't swim.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Exactly!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
(taking a sip of her drink) Wow. This is a Mai Tai.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Of course it is. What else do you expect from a Polynesian circus clown? Honestly, she couldn't find her authentic self even if she was stripped naked. Especially then! But are you with me on this?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
On what?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
An intervention. And I'm not just talking the booze, here. It's time for her re-think her whole "look at me" act. She's getting too old for it.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
She looks fantastic!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
When you get to our age...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
I thought she was younger.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Barely. Not enough to matter.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But I love that she just puts it out there. It's so much easier to hide and say—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) A statement is one thing, if it's an authentic statement. But her whole femme fatale on steroids *is* her way of hiding. She hasn't had sex in 10 years.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

What?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

She says she has absolutely no interest in it, anymore, which is fine! I mean fine for her. Myself, I love sex. But do you see me advertising it? No! What she's doing is living a complete lie. And the upshot is, there's no there, there, so it's impossible for her to be there for anyone else!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

In her own way she's—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) But you know that *I'm* here for you, right? Because I am an open book. What you see is what you get. I love her but even after all these years, I'm saying give me a clue, a genuine clue into who you truly are. Only then can I truly see you, and only then can I truly accept you. And find a way to help you!

As a response, the hopeful woman lifts up her shirt to reveal a large giraffe tattooed along her rib cage.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You mean like this?

Short pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Is that a giraffe?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's very... large.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

And when did that appear? Why didn't I know about this?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I didn't tell you. You said that a tattoo was a painful violation of your body. A mark of shame.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

When did I—?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) In your e—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(interrupting) I may have been talking about the history of tattoos. In some regions.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

And you didn't even tell me that you had one.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I don't! Anymore.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

So when you said a tattoo was like a brand, an indelible symbol of objectification, disconnection, de-humanization?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(holding her breast) That might have been a reaction to the surgery.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You know what? For me it was exactly the opposite. *(touching behind her ear)* With the first one, I felt this kind of healing that actually... connected me.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

To Michael? All right, well—

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) No, not to Michael. I mean, he's *why* I got it. But when I got it, it was like... it went deeper. Through this small spot I couldn't even see without a mirror, I was suddenly connected to myself. To my body. It was like this little lizard made me more human, made a part of me more real. More present. Protected, even.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

From hepatitis C, I hope. This is a very serious business.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It is. *(opening her shirt collar to reveal her tattoo)* And it was because of this, I think, that I found my way here.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well. Look at that.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

So after the wolf tracks I wanted something I couldn't ignore, that couldn't get lost.

She ties up her shirt and touches her ribs, exploring new territory.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Who told you to get a—?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting) No one. I did. I didn't know why I chose a giraffe, but I knew it needed to be something big. Something at my core. And then I met Sam and somehow, even before we were together, I felt safe showing it to him. Even though I was embarrassed he was like, in this incredibly gentle way, "No it's cool; I've never seen a giraffe tattoo how did you think of that?" And I couldn't answer him but when I found out—about his past and his choices—it seemed perfect. He said what a giraffe had was a higher perspective. A giraffe can see all around him at a distance but is still on the ground.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Okay. I'm your friend, and I love you. We all do. But from my perspective, I'm a bit concerned about this "Sam."

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Shit. It's almost six o'clock. I wonder if something did happen!

She checks her phone

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

No, I—

The dynamic woman makes an entrance wearing She wears extravagant pajamas and a robe. And heeled slippers.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Don't let me interrupt you, but it's getting late and I thought it was time to slip into something more comfortable. Is that a giraffe?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah. A giraffe.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Not that one ever needs a reason for a giraffe, but...?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He's incredibly flexible and incredibly strong, and that can help us own our bodies, our physicality, in a complete, intuitive way.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Why that is remarkable! *(to the accomplished woman)* Look at the detail. It's extraordinary!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That's all right.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

A little flexibility frightens you?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I didn't bring my glasses.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Use these.

She picks up a pair of eyeglasses from the ground.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Those are—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting, handing them over) They're fine. They'll work. *(to the hopeful woman)* A giraffe of one's own. What a singular idea.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(holding the eyeglasses) I used to have—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(examining the tattoo) Are those ears? Or wait: Horns? What are those little knobs they have?

The accomplished woman moves away, examining the glasses.

(to the accomplished woman) Come on! You're missing all the fun! As usual.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I think I'll sit down. It has been a long day and I'm getting a little fatigued.

The accomplished woman is thrown off balance by a strong gust of wind.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Ah!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Watch out!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You okay?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Fine. That just came out of nowhere.

She perches uncomfortably on the folding chair.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

As I was saying, things happen if you let them! I've learned to expect the unexpected.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(to the dynamic woman, considering her giraffe tattoo) Does this seem strange?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Ha ha ha. It's not predictable, that's for certain. But I think it's spectacular. My breast petals pale in comparison. Especially now that gravity has rendered them into something completely unrecognizable. If only I had known! Anyone else thirsty?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

What if you had? Would you have chosen something different?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I told you, we were three or more sheets to the storm. I really don't spend much time thinking about it.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Which is not to say that you shouldn't, darling! I'm sure you and your curious animals will be happy together for years to come. My tattoo and I seem to have grown apart, that's all.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It doesn't feel like it belongs to you?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, no. But neither does the 20 lbs I've put on in the last 10 years. Or, for that matter, certain of my personal parts.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

You look great.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, thanks. I suppose I might feel different if I decided to actually live in my body anymore, ha ha ha.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Well, some of us don't have that choice, ha ha ha.

She shifts painfully. The wind has picked up.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Are you all right?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I wish they made these chairs with a little more support, that's all.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Do you want to try the other one?

She's grabbed the dynamic woman's fancy chair.

(to the dynamic woman) I mean, if it's okay.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Fine.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's probably not the chair. It's just me. The chemo.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I'm sorry.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We all are.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Can I get you anything?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

No, I'm fine.

She fights against the elements and extracts herself from the chair.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

At least until the itinerant fireman policeman paramedic comes to sweep me off my feet.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Oh. Ha ha. Yeah. Where'd that wind come from? I am so sorry! (*back to her phone*) This is not like him, it really isn't!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Which is precisely what we need to address. This is what happens with these guys. They start out like the sweetest guys on the planet, here to save the day, and then...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Then what?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'm worried that you've got yourself mixed up with a controlling bully, my dear.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

What?

Very short pause.

Ha ha ha ha! No! That is so far off base!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

He thrives on violent sports, sweetie!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No! Wait until you see! You've got it all wrong. Any rugby club—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(*interrupting*) Club?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Club. Team. Same thing.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That makes it sound even more Neanderthal.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Squad then.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Like the paramilitary?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No! That's what I was trying to say! Rugby's not like that. I mean, I can't even watch football or soccer or boxing or anything like that because of when I was a kid, but rugby is totally different! I mean, the guys are strong and they run and knock each other down and smash into each other but they're not those huge, appliance-like monsters inside of padding and helmets. They're real men. And Sam is one of them. They're a bunch of different guys who are gay and straight they come together when they play in this indescribable way and they sweat and they bleed and lock up in these fierce formations where they embrace each other and become part of one another. It's amazing to watch, they push toward the opposition in this unrelenting, powerful and incredibly beautiful way where every man is bound by a sort of unifying energy. They're one force but at the same time each teammate is taking care of the other and compensating for one another and there's nothing frightening going on, they're not trying to hurt each other—even the opposition. The rules make it so their arms have to be around each other, they're bound to each other, like when they're mauling or rucking or—

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Mauling?!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And just when I was getting all hot and bothered.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But that's just it. Nothing's like it sounds. Nothing's what it seems, before you really understand, before you get it. Then it's all very... safe. And for me, it lets me, for the first time in such a long time, not be afraid of things like, well, okay, men and sex and pleasure and letting someone in and belonging and being a couple and... It's opened doors for me. That's what I'm saying.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Maybe it's the wrong doors!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

And maybe it's not.

There is another gust of wind.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

But maybe it doesn't matter. Because look at me. Here I am. Standing here. Waiting. A lone wolf. (*short pause*) Fuck!

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You know, I did bring a chair. With special padding. It's in my car.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I'll get it.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Take my keys.

Keys in hand, the hopeful woman hurries off.

Suddenly the wind blows down the umbrella, or lifts it offstage entirely. The women start to batten down any loose objects; the accomplished woman efficiently re-assembles her picnic basket.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Did I tell you that we've found a host family for Alice for her first year? Which will help enormously in a foreign country. Keep her in the right place, with the right people; that's one nightmare averted.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You did. In multiple e-mails.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Yes, I— I thought you said your computer wasn't working.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Sometimes it works, most of the time it doesn't. I have to get it fixed.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Oh. If you want I can take it to my computer guy

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No, it's okay. I think I can handle it on my own.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Okay.

Their business is finished.

So. What are we going to do about Sam.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What's there to do?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

He might not be gay, but he's still a very dangerous person.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Even though he's not gay.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Absolutely. I'm not at all surprised he's kept her waiting like this. It's typical for his kind of hero complex.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

"Hero complex?" Where did you get that?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

She and I had a private conversation.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

He's unemployed. Can you have a hero complex if you're unemployed?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's all part of the package, and that's what makes it dangerous.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Did you hear her? Sounds there's nothing at all wrong with his package.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Except he's always looking for tragedies so he can save people, and he may even create those tragedies!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Gee! That sounds a lot like someone I know!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So you understand that we have to protect her.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Protect her from whom?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

This man! He's a... blood replacement, for christ's sake!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Why is it so hard for you to be happy for my friend?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Your friend?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Or for anyone, for that matter. You can go ahead and revel in your own tragic possibilities, but the rest of us are pretty much over it.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What are you talking about?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Other people have terrible things happen to them, too, you know. We move on. We pick up and live our lives and we manage to do it without wearing our chemotherapy like a fucking wrist corsage.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

How dare you!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Please.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I have devoted myself to being the best kind of friend to you and yes—you've had some hard times; I know you had some hard times; I was there. But now that I'm facing cancer—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) You are not facing cancer. You kicked cancer's ass and it's running away, terrified. There is no cancer within 50 miles of you, I'll guarantee that.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So you think I made it up? They took half my breast!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I was there, remember. You gave it away. As if some crippled child in India had a use for it.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I cannot believe what you're saying to me.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What I'm saying is that other people have breasts. Yours are not the only tits on the planet.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

This is really rich, coming from you. We've been talking, you know. About the need for an intervention.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

An intervention? Who's we?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Me, the girls, everyone.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Not Alice?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Alice has better things to do.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Like get as far away from her mother as possible?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You have always been jealous. Ever since I had Alice. You've always been jealous of everything I have.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

That is ridiculous. But I will have another Mai Tai!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I should have known that escape route was coming.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Being the authentic self that you are.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I completely see through you, you know. You can spend all your time picking through trash in an alcoholic haze—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting, searching for her glass) I spend my time accepting what the universe has to offer.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Because you don't know what it's like to truly give!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What? I give you things all the time!

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'm not talking about *things!*

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

There's a first.

The hopeful woman comes back in carrying a padded chair, and her phone.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Okay. I've had some time to think, and I cannot apologize enough. I haven't been able to reach anyone, and I've decided that I am pretty much done with being humiliated here today. Let's just say the match has been cancelled. Thank you for coming and you might as well go home.

She sets down the new chair with the others.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No, we can't. Not yet. I'm apparently the most selfish person on the planet, so I must make up for that now.

She picks up a small photo in a frame, covered in dirt.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(to the hopeful woman) Here. Just wipe it off, it's good as new.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What is wrong with you? No one wants dirty rubbish.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(to the hopeful woman) Did you hear what she just called me?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You know what? You are selfish. You've made this whole day into your own selfish show and tell. It's what you always do. This is all a sham; you don't even know what it means to be a friend!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

I brought you a cake!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I don't—!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

(interrupting, clearing dirt from the photo) Wait. Who is this? In the photo?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

A pair of unknown lovers from picnics past. (*taking the frame back*) But it's a nice frame. We can just take the picture out, and— But look! Oh! My! You'll never guess who we have here!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Right. Is that—?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(*interrupting*) It is! The one and only beloved father of Alice! How's that for incredible? Look, how young he was. Look, how dashing. What a beautiful couple you were!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What? That can't be.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Whoops! You're right. My mistake!

She hands the photo to the accomplished woman.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

This was before you. (*to the hopeful woman*) And, obviously, before my profound hips! Wasn't I something? We certainly had a good time, let me tell you!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Where did you get this?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

You saw—it was right here.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

So that's what's going on. You set this whole thing up today! Because you're still angry I took him from you!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Took him? I gave him to you!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

He came running to me. You never gave him what he needed.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Like he needed to play your "happy family" game? (*to the hopeful woman*) Obviously the start of her fabricated internet romances.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I am not the one who lives in a fabricated world!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No, it's more like a virtual reality. *(to the hopeful woman)* One that I'm obviously not good enough to be a part of.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What are you talking about? You're the one who always kicked *me* to the curb whenever a new man showed up!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(to the hopeful woman) Hey, I have an idea! Why don't we put in a picture of her and her boss in here!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What are you—?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Your boss? Who you've been fruitlessly fucking for the past decade?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I— *(to the hopeful woman)* She doesn't know what she's—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Oh I know. Everyone knows. And we also know it's just another go-nowhere non-relationship, no matter how many corporate blow jobs you give him!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Ah! You are— I should—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What? Attack me with one of your biodegradable cheese knives?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You don't think I will?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Go ahead. Let's really get real here. I've been waiting years for this.

She picks up the messy cake knife as the accomplished woman dives for her picnic basket.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

AaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

The hopeful woman starts to cry. Or maybe she screams. Whatever the outburst, it's significant and raw and leaves her naked.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh! My duckling! I'm sorry. We just got carried away. Are you all right?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No. No, I'm not. You two are— It's like the nastiest divorce ever. I thought what you had was... I was wrong. This was a mistake. I don't know what I was thinking. It is a sham, the whole thing.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

What's a sham?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

This. Here. Sam. The game.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Match.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Whatever. Everything. Men. And me. I thought it was different. I thought he was different. I mean, he is different, but...

She reaches down, and pulls up a sheet of the grass from the ground. It is Astroturf.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Huh.

She and the hopeful woman use it to wipe their very dirty hands.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(to the hopeful woman) I'm... I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I... You know I'm here for you.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah. Fine. Whatever. I'm going home now.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

No. No no no no. I'm sure he's on his way. What does your little phone tell you?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

It tells me I've wasted... a lot more than one day, that's for sure. It is late. It's too late, and I'm leaving while it's still light out.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Oh, it's hard to break those patterns. I know. Some of my best friends are gay, but it's never too late!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No. That's not... He's not gay. Well, actually, he was gay. But it's not about that.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

He *was* gay?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'm sorry. How can it *not* be about that?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Actually? He was a woman.

The air is now very, very still.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

What?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

He used to be a woman. But it's not about that, either.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, for me it is. Back up for a bit. This is fabulous.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Because he's a man. Now. I mean in terms of most things. The things that mattered to me.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

A lot of the rest is overrated.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I was so crazy about him! I mean I am crazy about him. He's so... different.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

I'll say.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I've never felt this way about anyone. Everything felt so right.

She looks at the now soiled Astroturf in her hands.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

And yet here I am. Once again. Believing in something I've totally made up.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh, my dove, you don't know that!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Where is he, then? Where is he? I should have known. I should have seen this coming. This happens every time. Every time I feel safe, like I can trust someone...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Maybe you can trust him!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

He's a tranny with a hero complex!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(to the hopeful woman) Don't listen to her.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I did trust him. I was ready to trust him. I thought he got it. He said he understood! What I had to do to own what had been done to me. To my body. Why I had to...

She rolls up one sleeve, and we see a tattoo of a large monkey on her forearm.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Oh! A monkey?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

A monkey.

DYNAMIC WOMAN :

Well! That's—

The hopeful woman rolls up her other sleeve.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(putting on the glasses) A barrel of them.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

They symbolize wisdom and knowledge. Some people say they're a sign of evil powers, but it's really that they represent human frailty. There are people that are capable of monstrous things. But we all make mistakes. Monkeys learn from theirs.

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Really.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

And monkeys help to protect children.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Well, of course they do!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

They do?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We can understand that. We get it!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yeah?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course! I love these monkeys! Those are marvelous monkeys.

After a moment, the hopeful woman pushes down one stocking to reveal winged creatures flying up her leg.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

(to the dynamic woman) And how do you feel about birds?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

They're sparrows. Freedom and loyalty. A sparrow can fly away but once he finds his soul mate, he'll always come back to her. There's always room but she's still complete without him.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

How perfect! I had a sparrow once, you know. They mate for life.

The hopeful woman reveals fish swimming down the other leg.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Love, courage and dignity.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

And female sexuality. The fish.

Short pause.

Blood Replacement

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Yes.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

You did all this for Sam?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No. I did it for me. Sam was just... able to read it.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

That doesn't mean he's the only one!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

Of course not.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

I've just been waiting so long...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

He's probably out fighting fires or stopping criminals!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Or picking up hookers

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

Right. I'm an idiot, aren't I?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

We're all idiots. But there'll be someone else if not Sam! Could be he just came at the right time!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

Too much earlier he would have been Samantha.

HOPEFUL WOMAN:

No, his name was... *(short pause)* Never mind. It's okay. I'm okay. I don't know, maybe I don't need Sam. I just know I don't want to become like—

Loaded pause.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:

It's getting dark out. Let's—

DYNAMIC WOMAN:

(interrupting) Wait. Is that someone coming?

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She's looking out front.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
What?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
(pointing) See?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Where?

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
There.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
No...

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Give me your glasses.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
They're not my—

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
(interrupting) It's... Sam.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Sam? *(to the accomplished woman, taking the glasses)* How can you...?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
I can't...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
I can.

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Really? Is it...

A light snow begins to fall.

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
Snowing! It's snowing!

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Wow, yeah. It is. Crazy, huh?

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ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Are you sure? I mean, about...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Yeah.

DYNAMIC WOMAN::
He's... sans squad? Just Sam?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Yeah. Just... (*shouting*) Sam!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
How can you tell that's...?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
(*shouting and waving*) Sam!!

DYNAMIC WOMAN:
(*to the accomplished woman*) Do you...?

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
I don't...

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
I do!

ACCOMPLISHED WOMAN:
Really?

HOPEFUL WOMAN:
Yes! (*shouting*) Sam!!!

With new energy, the hopeful woman moves purposefully offstage.

The dynamic woman and the accomplished woman stand alone in front of the three empty chairs and try to catch a glimpse of what the hopeful woman sees.

They two women look at one another, then turn back out front and watch as the snow covers their friend's tracks.

End of Play